

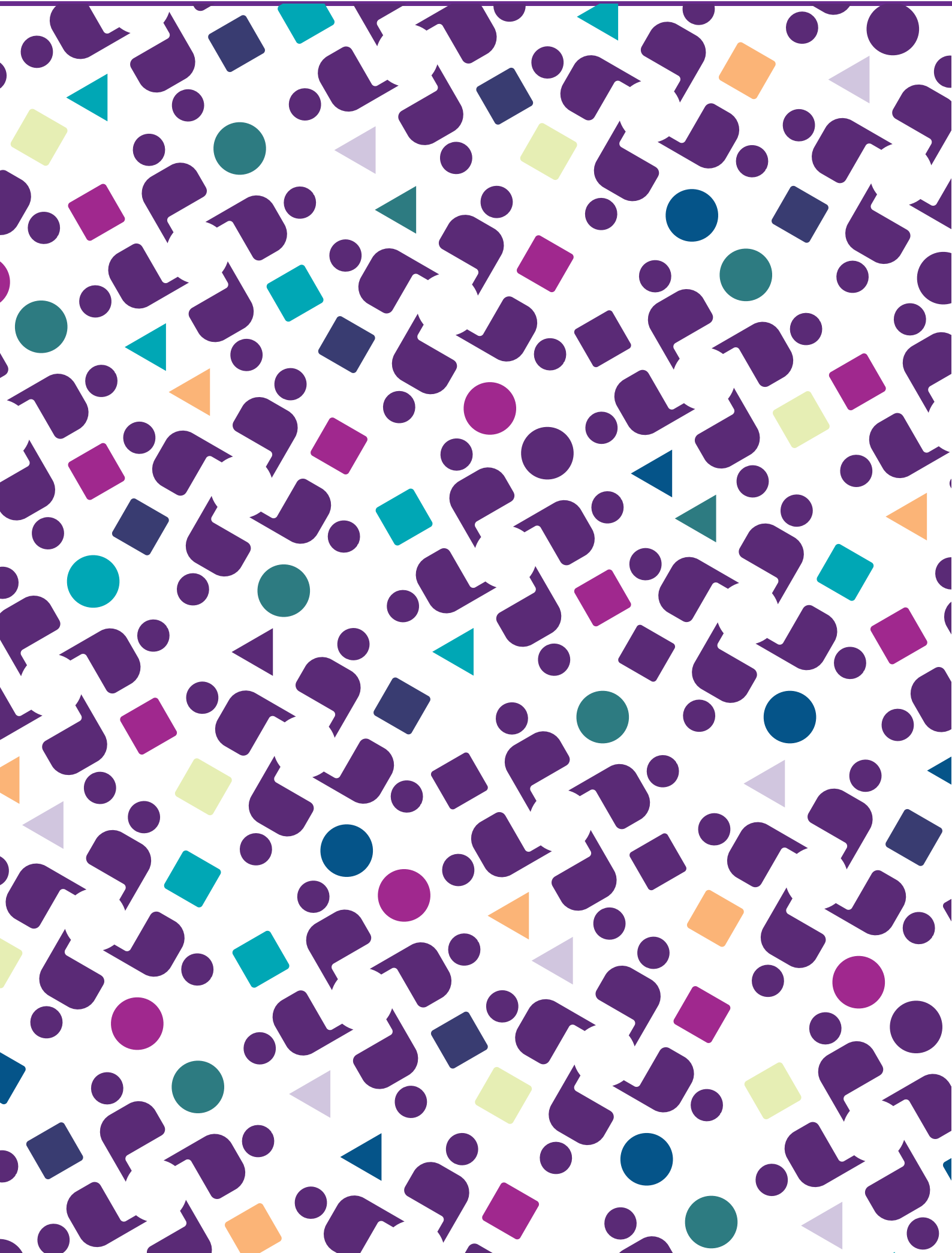


Government of **Western Australia**
South Metropolitan Health Service

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2026 – 2030

Equity supports us. Diversity reflects us. Inclusion connects us.





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Acknowledgement of Country

South Metropolitan Health Service respectfully acknowledges the Noongar people both past and present, the traditional owners of the land on which we work. We affirm our commitment to reconciliation through strengthening partnerships and continuing to work with Aboriginal peoples.

Using the term Aboriginal

Within Western Australia, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander may be referred to in the national context and Indigenous may be referred to in the international context. No disrespect is intended to our Torres Strait Islander colleagues and community.



Foreword

Embracing and recognising the value of inclusion and diversity is a responsibility we all share.

South Metropolitan Health Service (SMHS) remains deeply committed to strengthening our culture and building an inclusive workforce where every employee feels safe to be their authentic self, with all contributions valued and respected.

Serving an ethnically and culturally diverse population, and with numerous languages spoken across our catchment, we seek to build and sustain a workforce representative of the population we serve.

This refreshed SMHS Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2026–2030 provides a clear, practical framework to embed these principles into our everyday practices, fostering a genuine sense of belonging for our employees, contractors and volunteers. The strategy focuses on six key diversity priority groups:

- Aboriginal people
- culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) people
- people with disability
- people of diverse sexualities and/or genders (LGBTIQA+)
- women
- youth.

Embracing different perspectives is essential to delivering high-quality, responsive services to the communities we serve. To support this, the strategy is accompanied a targeted action plan that outline the steps we will take to strengthen workforce representation, engagement and inclusion across each cohort. At SMHS, everyone has the right to feel safe, empowered to contribute, and confident they belong as part of our team. We welcome diversity and inclusion, and recognise varied perspectives and lived experience strengthen our governance, decision-making and long-term sustainability, while sparking innovative, deepened thinking which drives meaningful change.

We are proud to endorse this updated strategy and encourage all staff to participate actively in its initiatives to bring this strategy to life.

Liam Roche
Board Chair
South Metropolitan Health Service

Neil Doverty
Chief Executive
South Metropolitan Health Service



Introduction

The *SMHS Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2026–2030* sets an integrated, organisation-wide approach to guide operational priorities and actions.

The strategy integrates and aligns existing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives from various action plans to:

- support the achievement of strategic workforce objectives
- realise the organisational benefits of embedded workforce equity, diversity and inclusion, including more positive experiences and improved health outcomes for patients
- establish a cohesive framework that guides organisational priorities and action over longer term (2026–2030)
- focus on building diversity awareness, strengthening workplace respect and enhance staff wellbeing, engagement and sense of belonging.

This strategy sets out the overarching approach for embedding equity, diversity and inclusion across all stages of the employment lifecycle within SMHS. It defines the principles, strategic pillars, governance mechanisms and expected outcomes that will guide the annual EDI action plan and workforce initiatives.

The WA Public Sector Commission (PSC) *Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for Public Sector Employment 2020–2025* provides the foundational guiding principles to the strategy.

Workforce diversity groups

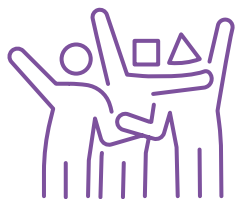
The PSC has identified the following workforce diversity priority groups:

- Aboriginal people
- culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) people
- people with disability
- LGBTIQ+
- women
- youth.

We continue to focus on the retention and increase of employee numbers across all diversity groups, with priority on increasing employment numbers for Aboriginal people and people with disability, both significantly underrepresented in our current workforce.

Key strategic workforce objectives

We strive to build an equitable, inclusive and psychologically safe environment that enables us to achieve the following six objectives:



Improve workforce diversity

Enhance targeted attraction and recruitment strategies to increase the representation of Aboriginal people and people with disability across all levels.



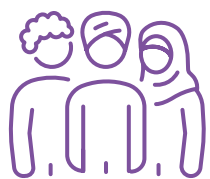
Ensure inclusive, fair and accessible employment pathways

Remove systemic barriers in recruitment, hiring, onboarding and development, ensuring practices are culturally secure, accessible and bias-free.



Strengthen career development, leadership and retention

Support diverse employees through mentoring, targeted development pathways and leadership opportunities.



Build culturally safe and inclusive workplaces

Embed cultural safety, psychological safety, anti-racism practices and accessible environments across all sites and teams.



Embed leadership, governance and accountability

Ensure EDI responsibilities are owned at executive, manager and team levels, supported by strong reporting and governance.



Strengthen diversity data and insight

Improve diversity data collection and self-identification to measure progress and assess the impact of EDI actions.

Defining equity, diversity and inclusion

Equity, diversity and inclusion are the core pillars that help create a psychologically safe environment where we can each thrive and achieve our potential.

Our strategy is based on the following principles:

- **Equity** is about ensuring that our workforce have fair and just access to opportunities, resources, and outcomes by recognising that different groups start from different places and may face unique challenges in achieving fair outcomes and enabling comparable results. SMHS is committed to implementing initiatives which acknowledge and redress diversity differences and historical barriers in participation. We must ensure equity before we can enjoy equality.
- **Diversity** encompasses identity and lived experiences, including characteristics like race, ethnicity, gender, sex, gender identity, ability, socioeconomic status, nationality, citizenship, religion, sexual identity, and marital status. Diversity in people results in diversity of thought, which can help us create new and innovative solutions, delivering the SMHS vision of excellent health care, every time.
- **Inclusion** in a workplace is achieved when the organisation strengthens behaviours, systems and structures; and intentional practices are intentionally designed to foster an environment where the workforce feels a genuine sense of belonging.
- **Intersectionality** recognises that we are not defined by a single characteristic - such as gender, race, disability, or age – but by the interaction of multiple identities that shape how we experience the workplace and society.
- **Belonging** is the outcome of effective EDI strategies and activities; resulting in a workforce that can be authentic, contribute meaningfully, and trust their voice matters.



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

The strategy establishes a clear and cohesive framework that guides organisational priorities and actions over a longer term (2026–2030).

The action plan will detail the activities across the six key diversity priority groups, necessary to deliver on EDI priorities and workforce strategy goals over annual periods (e.g. 2026–2027), providing SMHS the opportunity to ensure actions and outcomes remain current and responsive to external and organisational needs.



The foundations of the SMHS EDI Action Plan are structured around four pillars, aligned with those established by the PSC:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Educate and empower | Building knowledge and capability is a key priority in workforce planning for diversity and inclusion. |
| 2 | Attract and develop | Recruitment and development actively seek and nurture diverse talent and inclusive practices. |
| 3 | Lead and build | Deliberate leadership drives a culture where all staff are treated fairly and respectfully. |
| 4 | Account and celebrate | Responsibility is taken for improving workforce diversification and inclusion. |

Each year, the SMHS Workforce Strategy team in consultation with key stakeholders will develop an annual EDI Action Plan aligned to the strategy. Annual plans allow flexibility to address emerging priorities while maintaining strategic continuity. Action plan elements include:

- priority initiatives (mapped to each of the pillars)
- measurable key performance indicators
- roles and responsibilities
- timeframes.

The annual action plan is dynamic, live and designed to stay relevant through regular updates. The SMHS EDI Action Plan 2026–2027 will be published separately to the EDI Strategy.

Governance

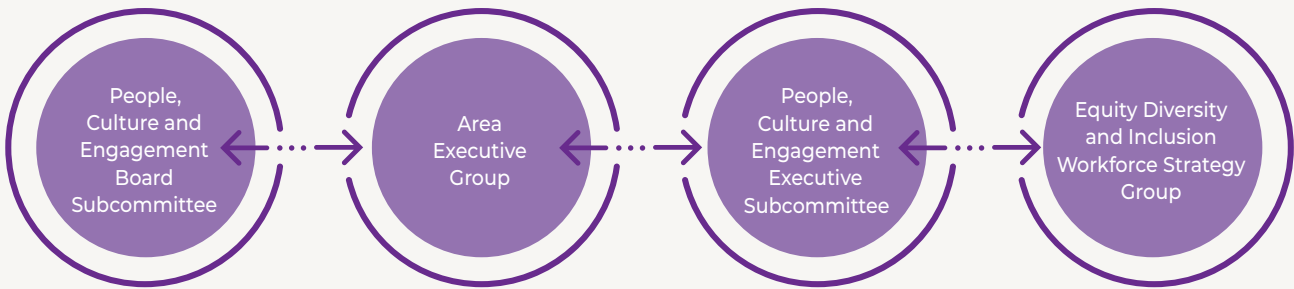
As we enhance EDI across our workforce culture and operations, strategic leadership will provide accountability, transparency and synergy. This will ensure ongoing traction to drive meaningful and sustained change of workforce EDI actions and projects.

The following governance provides accountability to the EDI Strategy:

- **People, Culture and Engagement (PCE) Board Subcommittee** provides strategic oversight and reports to the SMHS Board.
- **Area Executive Group** includes executives from SMHS sites with operational responsibility and reports to the SMHS Board and subcommittee such as the PCE Board Subcommittee.
- **PCE Executive Subcommittee** provides strategic direction and oversight of initiatives that shape SMHS as an inclusive, high performing and values-driven health service. It will monitor achievement of agreed strategic actions, ensuring alignment with organisational goals, transformation initiatives, and systemwide strategies and plans. The PCE reports to the SMHS Area Executive Group.

- The **EDI Workforce Strategy Group** undertakes quarterly monitoring and annual action planning. Action plan activities are managed separately, however are aligned to the strategy to reduce duplication.
- **EDI Advisory Groups** co-design, coordinate implementation and provide lived experience input to actions, which enables the EDI Workforce Strategy Group to undertake quarterly reporting. Examples of these groups include:
 - SMHS Aboriginal Workforce Working Group
 - SMHS Disability Advisory Network
 - SMHS Multicultural Access Plan Advisory Group
 - SMHS LGBTIQ+SB Inclusivity Working Group
 - site DAIP committees
 - SMHS Wellness Committee.

The following diagram outlines the governance for the EDI Strategy and EDI Action Plan.



Strategic frameworks informing our strategy

The following frameworks guided the development of the SMHS EDI Strategy:

- Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for Public Sector Employment 2020–2025
- WA Health Workforce Strategy 2034
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*
- SMHS Strategic Plan 2021–2025
- SMHS Wellbeing Framework Priorities 2025
- WA Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015–2030
- Reconciliation Action Plan, Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
- Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy Western Australia 2021–2029
- WA Health Aboriginal Workforce Policy
- SMHS Aboriginal Workforce Strategy 2023–2026
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Disability Services and Inclusion Act 2023*
- State Disability Strategy 2020 to 2030
- Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability – Final Report
- SMHS Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022–2027
- WA Multicultural Policy Framework
- SMHS Multicultural Plan 2026–2030
- National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People 2025–2035
- WA Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and asexual plus (LGBTIQ+) Inclusion Strategy 2025–2035

It was also informed by feedback and research:

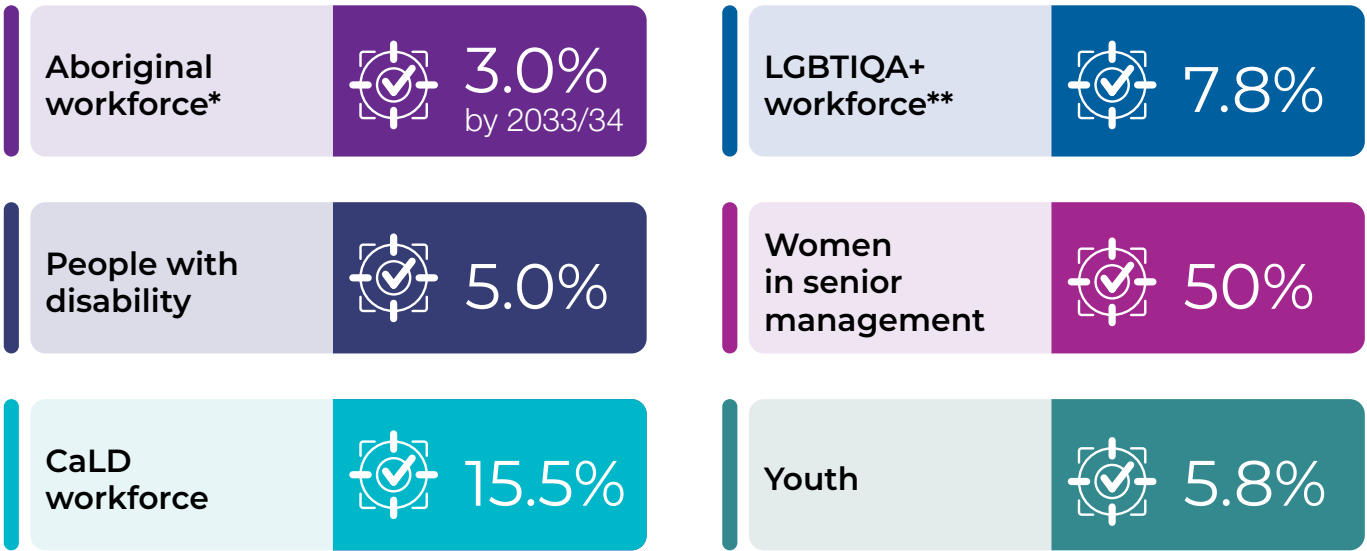


Workforce diversity targets

SMHS remains committed to working towards the aspirational targets outlined in the PSC Workforce Diversification and Inclusion Strategy for Public Sector Employment 2020–2025.

Through our continued participation in the PSC annual collection, high leverage actions are formally reported across diversity cohorts, with additional CaLD specific reporting to the Office of Multicultural Interests.

Volunteers are not reported in the SMHS diversity group dataset. Only paid employees are included for PSC reporting purposes however volunteers are included in all other aspects of the strategy.



Note: The targets and data reporting align to current PSC targets in effect and may be updated accordingly.
*Aboriginal employment targets are set by the Department of Health.
**LGBTIQA+ targets are based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data, and this data will be collected upon implementation of the WA Health HR Plus human resources and payroll system update.



Monitoring our progress

The strategy will operate from July 2026 to June 2030. During this time, it may be revised or updated to reflect changes in strategic direction.

To ensure we are on track in achieving outcomes and targets for each priority group, we will evaluate activities within the associated action plans.

SMHS will track EDI progress using EDI performance dashboards incorporating key metrics such as workforce demographics, recruitment, training, equity trends, and inclusion survey indicators. With EDI metrics embedded into our organisational performance frameworks, progress reports and EDI measures will be reviewed at scheduled leadership and governance forums to inform decisions and guide targeted actions and activities.

EDI outcomes will be monitored through a cycle of measurement, reflection, and improvement. This includes routine data collection, employee feedback mechanisms, audits of workforce processes, and targeted action planning. Insights will shape ongoing initiatives to strengthen equity, diversity, and inclusion at all levels of the organisation.

Metrics

Workforce metrics will be captured using existing data dashboards. Enhanced data metrics continue to evolve in partnership with SMHS Digital Health.

The following metrics sample will be used to highlight improvements:

- Equity index for diversity groups.
- Annual increase in employment of:
 - Aboriginal people
 - people with disability.
- Increased representation of diverse staff in leadership roles.

Reporting

- End-of-year progress audits are aligned to annual action plans for the diversity groups.
- A quarterly workforce diversity dashboard is provided to the People Culture and Engagement Committee of the SMHS Board and site Executive Committees.
- Annual reporting requirements include the SMHS Annual Report, Department of Health (Aboriginal Workforce) and PSC.

SMHS Workforce

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This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.

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