



Government Response to the Auditor-General Report No. 1/ 2026

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the ACT
Public Service

May 2026

Introduction

The Government thanks the Auditor-General for Report No.1 of 2026 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the ACT Public Service (ACTPS) (the Report).

The Report examines the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate's activities to develop whole-of-government frameworks, strategies and plans for diversity, equity and inclusion and support ACT Government agencies to implement them; and the activities of three agencies (the Education Directorate, Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate and the Emergency Services Agency) to recognise and implement the principles at key stages of the employment lifecycle.

The Report is a welcome and timely chance for the ACTPS to re-affirm its long-standing commitment to inclusive employment and workplaces where our people can thrive.

The Report has identified and made eight recommendations with sub-parts in relation to: prioritising development of a whole-of-government diversity, equity and inclusion strategy; provision of information; collection of diversity, equity and inclusion employment data; learning and development requirements; performance and accountability arrangements for cross-agency frameworks, strategies and plans; employment targets; State of the Service reporting; and assessing diversity, equity and inclusion maturity.

The ACT Government agrees to six recommendations in full and notes two recommendations. The Government's response to each recommendation is provided in the table below.

Delivering the agreed recommendations will contribute to further achieving the Government's long-standing position as an employer of choice for talented staff that wish to join a public service workforce that delivers a progressive, inclusive and sustainable Canberra for all Canberrans.

Importantly, CMTEDD will prioritise the development of a contemporary whole of Government Inclusion and Belonging Strategy that connects the valuable work already happening in key focus areas; incorporating contemporary concepts and reflecting relevance for all ACTPS staff. Further positive impact will flow from improved information that is clear and accessible for staff and continued efforts to improve diversity data, reporting and evaluation.



Recommendation

Government Response

Recommendation 1: Whole-of-government diversity, equity and inclusion strategy.

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD), in progressing the development of an overarching ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy, ensure that the Strategy specifically recognises and reflects:

- a) key contemporary concepts, such as belonging and intersectionality; and
- b) the broad range of the different diversity groups represented in the ACTPS and their specific needs.

Agree

The ACT Government agrees with recommendation 1, remaining committed to the adoption of a cohesive and strategic approach to ensuring inclusion and belonging across the ACT Public Sector workforce.

The Capability, Culture and Governance Group (CCG) within CMTEDD is reviewing and reforming strategies and systems with a focus on supporting inclusive outcomes, removal of inclusion barriers and enabling the Government's transformative agenda has continued. CCG's work has included:

- Supporting passage of nation-leading *Public Sector (Closing the Gap) Legislation Amendment Act 2025* (the Act) to give effect to the Closing the Gap principle as part of the core accountability and performance frameworks for members of the ACTPS Senior Executive Service and statutory officeholders. Work is being undertaken through co-design with the Elected Body and ACTPS Cultural Advisors to advance the Agreement's focus on genuine partnership and shared decision-making, ensuring implementation reflects community expectations;
- Development and implementation of the inaugural ACTPS Gender Equity Strategy and in-depth consultations to understand the experience of people with disability in the ACTPS;
- Delivery of programs that support careers and connections such as the Veterans and Family Members Peer to Peer network; Mentorship for Leaders from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds; and ongoing funding for selected staff to undertake the Public Sector Management Program;
- Developing and delivering refreshed and enhanced guidance on cultural capability, cultural load, identified positions, workplace neurodiversity, LGBTIQ+ inclusion, and inclusive terminology.

The ACTPS will state its clear commitment to workforce inclusion and diversity through a new Inclusion and Belonging Strategy. As noted in the Report, while this work has been delayed, it remains active and in development. In light of the Report's findings, CCG will seek

to incorporate the current number of individual ACTPS diversity strategies within this overarching strategy and identify priority areas for continued focused work.

Recommendation 2: Provision of Information.

CMTEDD should:

- a) enhance the information provided through the ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub by providing an accessible and identifiable roadmap of relevant legislation, frameworks, strategies and plans for diversity, equity and inclusion relevant to the ACTPS; and
- b) provide ACTPS policy and associated guidance about making workplace adjustments for people with disability through an alternative forum to the Rehabilitation Management System.

Agree

The ACT Government agrees with the recommendation. In line with the proposed response to Recommendation 1, CCG will develop an overarching Inclusion and Belonging Strategy which will improve accessibility and clarity of information and provide an identifiable roadmap of relevant legislation, frameworks, strategies and plans for diversity, equity and inclusion relevant to the ACTPS. This will enhance the information already available to ACT Public Servants through the ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub, which delivers user-friendly information about learning and allyship as well as legal obligations.

The Government agrees that providing information about making workplace adjustments for people with disability is an important part of ensuring that people with disability experience consistent and inclusive arrangements at work. CCG will continue to actively promote and make information about making workplace adjustments available to employees through a range of channels and links at the whole of government level including the ACTPS Employment Portal, the ACTPS Work, Health and Safety site, the ACTPS Culture, Inclusion and Belonging Hub, and the ACTPS Work rehabilitation site.

The Government recognises that workers may need to seek information about workplace adjustments for people with disability at various stages of the employment lifecycle. This includes workers who are away from work or otherwise unable to access ACTPS intranet systems. For this reason, information about workplace adjustments will also remain on the ACTPS Work rehabilitation extranet site that is designed to enable this access.

Recommendation 3: Collection of diversity, equity and inclusion employment data.

Agree

The ACT Government agrees with this recommendation. CCG will continue to work to evolve the HR21 personal information options so that ACTPS employees have informed and accessible options to share key personal information. The first priority will be to find a solution to collect employment data for neurodivergent people.

CMTEDD should:

- a) collect employment data for people who identify as neurodivergent; and
- b) develop systems and processes for ACTPS employees to directly update key personal information.

In making this commitment, the Government notes that the respondents to the 2025 ACTPS Employee Survey were provided with the option to identify as a neurodivergent person. In 2025, CCG updated whole of Government systems and processes to allow ACTPS employees with system access to directly update their LGBTIQ+ status.

Recommendation 4: Learning and Development requirements.

CMTEDD should establish mandatory:

- a) workplace diversity training requirements for all staff and refresher courses for staff every two to three years;
- b) diversity, equity and inclusion training requirements for managers and supervisors; and
- c) diversity, equity and inclusion training requirements for ACTPS staff involved in recruitment.

Noted

The Government notes this recommendation and recognises the important role that employee, manager and leader learning and development plays in creating inclusive workplaces through the employee lifecycle.

CCG will work with ACTPS directorates to establish core inclusion capabilities and a baseline of mandatory knowledge through broader work to develop and implement a refreshed Whole of Government Learning and development Framework.

This approach will allow for the essential customisation of training and implementation arrangements that is required by Directorates due to the extensive scope of technical and occupation-specific requirements of different roles and working environments across the workforce.

Recommendation 5: Performance and accountability arrangements for cross-agency frameworks, strategies and plans.

When developing future frameworks, strategies and plans for diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, ACT Government agencies should clearly identify:

- a) strategic objectives and outcomes.
- b) actions with timeframes for implementation.
- c) performance measures with targets.

Agree

The ACT Government agrees with this recommendation and recognises that the intent is consistent with existing ACT Performance and Accountability Framework, the planning and performance reporting framework for ACT directorates and agencies.

CCG will include details of strategic objectives, actions with timeframes and measures of success as part of the continued development and implementation of a whole-of-service Inclusion and Belonging Strategy.

Responsibility for the implementation of this recommendation will be shared by all ACTPS government directorates and agencies that develop and publish diversity, equity and inclusion- related frameworks, strategies and plans.

Recommendation 6: Employment targets.

CMTEDD should establish employment targets for diversity groups, including LGBTIQ+, people with disability, older workers, veterans and people who are neurodiverse.

Noted

The ACT Government notes this recommendation and recognises the importance of meaningful workforce measures of success and accountability across the ACTPS diversity, equity and inclusion agenda.

An employment target for “9 per cent of ACTPS employees, including executive staff, being people with disability” has been adopted across the ACTPS.

CCG will continue to take an evidence-based approach to create meaningful organisational impact through a variety of methodologies that are tailored to deliver outcomes. In addition to existing metrics, CCG will consider appropriate measures of success that recognise the reality of intersectional, and complex lived experience in workplace settings.

These measures will move beyond isolated facets of identity or workforce groups and will be tailored to quantify and track improvements in experience, career trajectories, representation across organisational levels, and shifts in system-wide attitudes or behaviour.

Recommendation 7: State of the Service Reporting.

Agree

CMTEDD should improve annual State of the Service reporting by:

- d) including multi-year tracking and trend analysis of diversity, equity and inclusion data.
- e) incorporating analysis of diversity, equity and inclusion data from the ACTPS Employee Survey.
- f) including analysis of relevant and appropriate data from the Employee Assistance Program.

The annual State of the Service Report is prepared and published by the Head of the ACT Public Service under Section 5 of the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004*.

The annual State of the Service Report contains multi-year trend analysis on a variety of diversity, equity and inclusion topics, such as workforce representation and gender pay gap.

CCG will incorporate further multi-year tracking and trend analysis information of diversity, equity and inclusion data into future State of the Service Reports to support greater insight for readers. CCG will include data analysis from biennial ACTPS Employee Surveys in relevant years.

CCG will further consider the usage of relevant and appropriate data from the Employee Assistance Program to improve reporting in the ACTPS State of the Service report while adhering to essential privacy commitments for use of the data and in a way that maintains EAP users' trust in the security and privacy of their information.

Recommendation 8: Assessing diversity, equity and inclusion maturity

Agree

CMTEDD should:

- a) undertake regular review of ACTPS maturity in diversity,

CCG will incorporate a process of cross-service review and reflection into the development of the ACTPS Inclusion and Belonging Strategy, utilising better practice tools and approaches such as Australian Human Resource Institute's (AHRI) Diversity and Inclusion maturity model and Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB). CCG will establish ongoing review of ACTPS workforce Diversity, Equity and inclusion as part of governance arrangements for the implementation for the strategy.

equity and inclusion practices through self-assessment process against a relevant maturity model.

- b) consider using multiple better practice tools or approaches, such as the Australian Human Resource Institute's (AHRI) Diversity and Inclusion maturity model and Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB).



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