



Parliamentary
Counsel's Office

Policy

Diversity and Inclusion at PCO

Policy Reference: 04/22

Approved by Parliamentary Counsel: Annette O'Callaghan, 3 March 2022

PART A - Policy

1. Background

Diversity represents the range of human differences such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, physical ability and attributes. Inclusion is the act of enabling genuine participation and contribution, regardless of a person's differences.

The NSW government is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workforce that is reflective of the diversity of NSW. The *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* states that workforce diversity includes (but is not limited to) diversity of the workforce in respect of gender, cultural and linguistic background, Aboriginal people and people with a disability. By bringing together the wealth of knowledge, backgrounds, ideas and perspectives of the community, a better understanding is formed of the communities that are served and facilitates the delivery of better outcomes for the people of NSW.

The Parliamentary Counsel's Office (PCO) is committed to providing a working environment that values diversity and inclusion. PCO's commitment is demonstrated through various diversity and inclusion strategies and initiatives detailed in PCO's Diversity and Inclusion Plan (refer Part B).

2. Application

This policy applies to all staff employed by PCO and people applying for employment at PCO.

3. Policy

PCO supports diversity and inclusion and aims to embed diversity and inclusion in PCO's daily operations ranging from recruitment processes and workplace culture to career development programs, customer service and policies and procedures. It aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- a diverse and skilled workforce that reflects the diversity of the NSW community and leads to better engagement with stakeholders and increased responsiveness to customer needs,
- a workplace culture that fosters inclusive practices and behaviours for the benefit of all staff,
- a work environment that values and utilises the contributions of employees with diverse skills, backgrounds, experiences and educational levels through improved awareness of the benefits of workforce diversity and successful management of diversity,
- awareness in all staff of their rights and responsibilities with regards to equity, integrity and respect for all aspects of diversity,
- improved employment and career development opportunities for people who are under-represented in the workforce through specific programs and initiatives where possible.

3.1 Providing services to support a diverse community

PCO supports the principles of multiculturalism, which recognise and value the different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds of the people of NSW, and promotes equal rights and responsibilities for all people of NSW. PCO's Diversity and Inclusion Plan details objectives and actions for assisting and interacting with diversity groups within the community.

3.2 Workforce Diversity

PCO has a commitment to maintaining a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community in order to better understand the needs of its stakeholders and the community.

PCO aims to attract and retain people with diverse skills, experience and background to deliver high quality drafting, publishing and information services no matter what their gender, race, age, religious beliefs, or personal commitments.

PCO is committed to creating a working environment that is fair and flexible, promotes personal and professional growth, and benefits from the capabilities of its diverse workforce.

PCO's Diversity and Inclusion Plan provides for the development and implementation of programs and initiatives that recognise and promote workforce diversity at PCO in the following areas:

- attracting and recruiting a diverse workforce,
- retaining and developing a diverse workforce by workplace arrangements,
- providing support for targeted diversity workgroups.

4. Responsibilities

The Parliamentary Counsel is responsible for:

- implementing multicultural principles at PCO (*Multicultural NSW Act 2000*), and
- implementing workforce diversity at PCO and ensuring workforce diversity is integrated into workforce planning (*Government Sector Employment Act 2013*), and
- ensuring information relating to workforce diversity at PCO is collected and is able to be provided to the Commissioner if required to do so (*Government Sector Employment (General) Rules 2014*).

Senior management is responsible for:

- implementing and monitoring the progress of the Diversity and Inclusion Plan objectives through the monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms listed in the Plan.

All staff are responsible for:

- supporting and respecting equity, diversity, ethical practices and workplace safety, and
- helping prevent unlawful discrimination and harassment or bullying in the workplace.

5. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

PCO's Diversity and inclusion Plan includes performance measures for its objectives and actions and these are reviewed within the time-frames noted in the Plan.

There are legislative and sector-wide requirements in place for monitoring and reporting about diversity and inclusion, together with supporting tools. These are detailed in the following table. Where applicable, they are referenced in PCO's Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

| Reporting mechanism, tool or requirement | Explanation |
|--|---|
| Workforce Profile | The Public Service Commission collects data annually from all agencies to prepare and publish a profile of the sector and each agency. That profile is used for a range of planning and assessment purposes. Diversity statistics from that profile are provided to agencies for inclusion in the Annual Report. |
| Diversity data collection | Diversity data is collected from new employees and included in the Workforce Profile statistics. |
| People Matter Employee Survey | Annual sector-wide survey conducted by the Public Service Commission. PCO receives a report that summarises employee responses. The Public Service Commission uses the results to report on the overall employee engagement across the public sector. |
| Annual Report | Workforce diversity information is required to be included in PCO's Annual Report (<i>Annual Reports (Departments) Regulation 2015</i>). |
| State of the NSW Sector Report, and associated agency survey | The NSW Public Service Commissioner is required to include workforce diversity information in an annual report on the state of the government sector (section 63(4) <i>Government Sector Employment Act 2013</i>). |
| Premier's Priorities | 'Driving public sector diversity' is one of the 12 Premier's Priorities. The current target is to increase the number of women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in senior leadership roles by 2025. |
| Disability Inclusion Action Plan | Departments are required to have a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (<i>Disability Inclusion Act 2014</i>). PCO is not required to have one as it is an executive agency related to a Department, not a Department. However, PCO currently has practices in place to ensure that people with disabilities are catered for in its operations and service delivery (see Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan) and reports on these practices in its Annual Report. |
| Multicultural Policies and Services Program | Public authorities are required to have a Multicultural Policies and Services Program (<i>Multicultural NSW Act 2000</i>). PCO has embedded its Multicultural Policies and Services Program within its business operations through this Policy, the Diversity and Inclusion Plan and workforce planning. |
| Workforce planning | An annual in-house document reviewing, analysing and planning PCO's workforce requirements for the upcoming year. |

6. Review and publication history

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if required.

PART B – Diversity and Inclusion Plan

PCO has a Diversity and Inclusion Plan that identifies objectives and actions in 4 areas:

1. Providing services to support a diverse community.
2. Attracting and recruiting a diverse workforce.
3. Retaining and developing a diverse workforce by workplace arrangements.
4. Providing support for targeted diversity workgroups.

It is reviewed in accordance with the performance measures and reporting tools shown in the Plan.

Abbreviations and definitions used in the Plan are as follows:

| | |
|----------|---------------------------------|
| ED | Executive Director |
| DPA | Director, Production and Access |
| MPC | Manager, People and Culture |
| Gulbarra | PCO's in-house wiki |
| PC | Parliamentary Counsel |
| PCO | Parliamentary Counsel's Office |
| PSC | Public Service Commission |
| WHS | Work health and safety |

PCO Diversity and Inclusion Plan

| | Objective | Actions | Performance measures | Timeframe | Responsibility | How/who is it reported? |
|----------|--|--|--|-----------|----------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Providing services to support a diverse community | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Facilitate easy access to legislation. | Provide accessible web design to ensure content is available to the widest possible audience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By adhering to guidelines for accessible web design. • Maintain conformance to W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. | Ongoing | DPA | ED |
| | | Use plain legal language in legislative drafting and communications. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Plain Language Policy is in place and followed. • Publish the policy on the Legislation Website. | Ongoing | PC | Annual Report |
| 1.2 | Provide assistance to diversity groups in their interactions with PCO. | Facilitate communications with hearing and speech impaired persons. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCO services can be accessed using the National Relay Service (NRS). | Ongoing | ED | Annual Report |
| | | Facilitate access to legislation for the visually impaired | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide copies of legislation in electronic format for the visually impaired at no cost when requested. • Ensure legislation is available in PDF format to enable the | Ongoing | DPA | Annual Report |

| | Objective | Actions | Performance measures | Timeframe | Responsibility | How/who is it reported? |
|----------|--|--|---|-------------|----------------|---|
| | | | use of accessibility tools in PDF software products. | | | |
| | | Provide suitable physical amenities for people with disabilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office design complies with legislative requirements. Disabled access is provided in the foyer and lifts. Bathroom facilities have disabled access. | Ongoing | ED | Annual Report |
| 2 | Attracting and recruiting a diverse workforce. | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Promote PCO as a workforce diversity employer of choice. | Ensure advertisements for PCO roles include PCO's 'Commitment to Diversity' statement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The statement is included on all advertised roles. | As required | MPC | ED (Review of requisition form on Taleo) |
| | | Participate in any cross-agency programs to improve employment outcomes and support for people from under-represented groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation is promoted and encouraged for any programs that are offered. | Ongoing | MPC | ED (Report attendance/participation in Annual Report) |
| 2.2 | Maintain accessible and inclusive recruitment and selection processes. | Provide a recruitment process that facilitates applications by people with accessibility issues. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include an invitation to discuss accessibility with the contact officer in all advertisements for roles and PCO's Guide for Job Applicants. Requests for accessibility are actioned. | Ongoing | MPC | DGO (Review of requisition form on Taleo) |

| | Objective | Actions | Performance measures | Timeframe | Responsibility | How/who is it reported? |
|----------|--|---|---|--|--|---------------------------------|
| | | Ensure panel members are aware of PCO's diversity policies. | PCO's Diversity and Inclusion policy is made available to staff on Gulbarra and provided to the independent member of selection panels. | As required | MPC | Selection Panel Report to PC/ED |
| 2.3 | Integrate diversity through workforce planning | Consider diversity in the annual workforce planning process. | Diversity initiatives and strategies are reflected in PCO's workforce plan. | Annual | ED | PC |
| 3 | Retaining and developing a diverse workforce by workplace arrangements. | | | | | |
| 3.1 | Foster and facilitate a workplace culture that supports diversity and inclusion. | Provide information to new staff about PCO's diversity and inclusion policies during the induction process. | New staff complete and sign the New Starter Checklist confirming they have read the information on Gulbarra about workplace practice policies, flexible work arrangements and work health safety. | Induction is provided within first week of employment. The New Starter Checklist is signed within one month. | MPC Trainers listed on the new starter program. | ED |
| | | Provide information about diversity and inclusion and make communication channels available to staff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and information are available and updated on Gulbarra with staff being able to comment or ask questions. • Training, seminars and online learning is made available to staff. | Ongoing. | ED MPC | Annual Report (Diversity) |

| | Objective | Actions | Performance measures | Timeframe | Responsibility | How/who is it reported? |
|-----|---|---|---|---|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 3.2 | Provide an ergonomically safe work environment for all staff. | Arrange workspace assessments, adjustments and equipment for new and existing staff. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workspace assessments are conducted for all new employees and when required by other staff. Adjustments are made and equipment is purchased as required. | Within 3 months of new staff member arriving or as soon as possible for a reported problem. | MPC | ED (WHS Management Report) |
| 3.3 | Support staff by providing flexible work arrangements. | <p>Ensure policies are in place and staff are aware of the availability of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> flex time and flex leave, working remotely, part-time work, breaks from work for a range of reasons including parental and carer's leave, a carer break, study leave or other special needs, transition to retirement arrangements, staff having input into rostering for night time support of Parliament and weekend work, using leave for observance of essential religious or cultural obligations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant policies are made available to staff on Gulburra. All applications are assessed on their merit and staff are notified of the outcome and reasons. | Ongoing | ED | Annual Report (Human resources) |

| | Objective | Actions | Performance measures | Timeframe | Responsibility | How/who is it reported? |
|----------|---|--|--|--------------|----------------|---|
| 3.4 | Support the health and wellbeing of staff by providing support programs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide free counselling through employee assistance program Provide proactive support through information sessions and materials on a range of wellbeing strategies. | Feedback reports indicating that staff use the service and other resources. | As required. | MPC | Report from the provider to the ED. |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsor and encourage participation the free flu vaccination program and registration in the Global Challenge program. | Participation numbers in the programs. | Annual | MPC | DGO/PC (WHS Management Report) |
| 3.5 | Provide a discrimination-free workplace. | <p>Ensure policies are in place for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> anti-bullying and harassment prevention grievance and dispute resolution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grievances are actioned and recorded and statistics analysed for systemic issues. Staff responses in the People Matter Employee Survey are monitored. | Ongoing | MPC ED | PC Data analysis report from People Matter survey. |
| 3.6 | Partner with agencies in the cluster to develop strategies for diversity and inclusion. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend and participate in any forums or discussion that are offered with other agencies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any strategies or initiatives arising from forums are actioned. | Ongoing | ED MPC | PC |
| 4 | Providing support for targeted diversity work groups. | | | | | |
| 4.1 | Provide support for women. | Encourage and facilitate participation by women in | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at course, programs or seminars. | Annual | ED | Data from the annual |

| | Objective | Actions | Performance measures | Timeframe | Responsibility | How/who is it reported? |
|-----|---|--|--|-----------|----------------|---|
| | | career development and leadership programs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet or exceed the NSW government published benchmark figure. | | | <p>Workforce Profile Report</p> <p>Annual Report (Human Resources)</p> |
| 4.2 | Provide support for Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islanders. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support participation by Aboriginal employees in any indigenous programs offered or provided. Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to support indigenous programs across the sector by speaking at events or mentoring Aboriginal People or Torres Strait Islanders from other agencies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at courses, programs and seminars or participation in mentorship programs. Aim to meet the NSW government published benchmark figure (noting limitations due to agency size). | Annual | ED | <p>Data from the annual Workforce Profile Report</p> <p>Annual Report (Human Resources)</p> |
| 4.3 | Provide support for people whose first language spoken as a child was not English. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide and support any training activities required. Foster an awareness of cross-cultural issues arising in drafting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at course, programs or seminars. Aim to meet the NSW government published benchmark figure. Accommodating cultural requirements in the workplace when requested and possible. | Annual | ED | <p>Data from the annual Workforce Profile Report</p> <p>Annual Report (Human Resources)</p> |

| | Objective | Actions | Performance measures | Timeframe | Responsibility | How/who is it reported? |
|-----|---|---|----------------------|-----------|----------------|--|
| 4.4 | Provide support for people with a disability, including those requiring work-related adjustments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing suitable building access and workplace adjustments including specialist equipment, and flexible working arrangements. | See 1.2 and 3.2 | Annual | ED | Data from the annual Workforce Profile Report Annual Report (Human Resources) |

—End of Plan—