



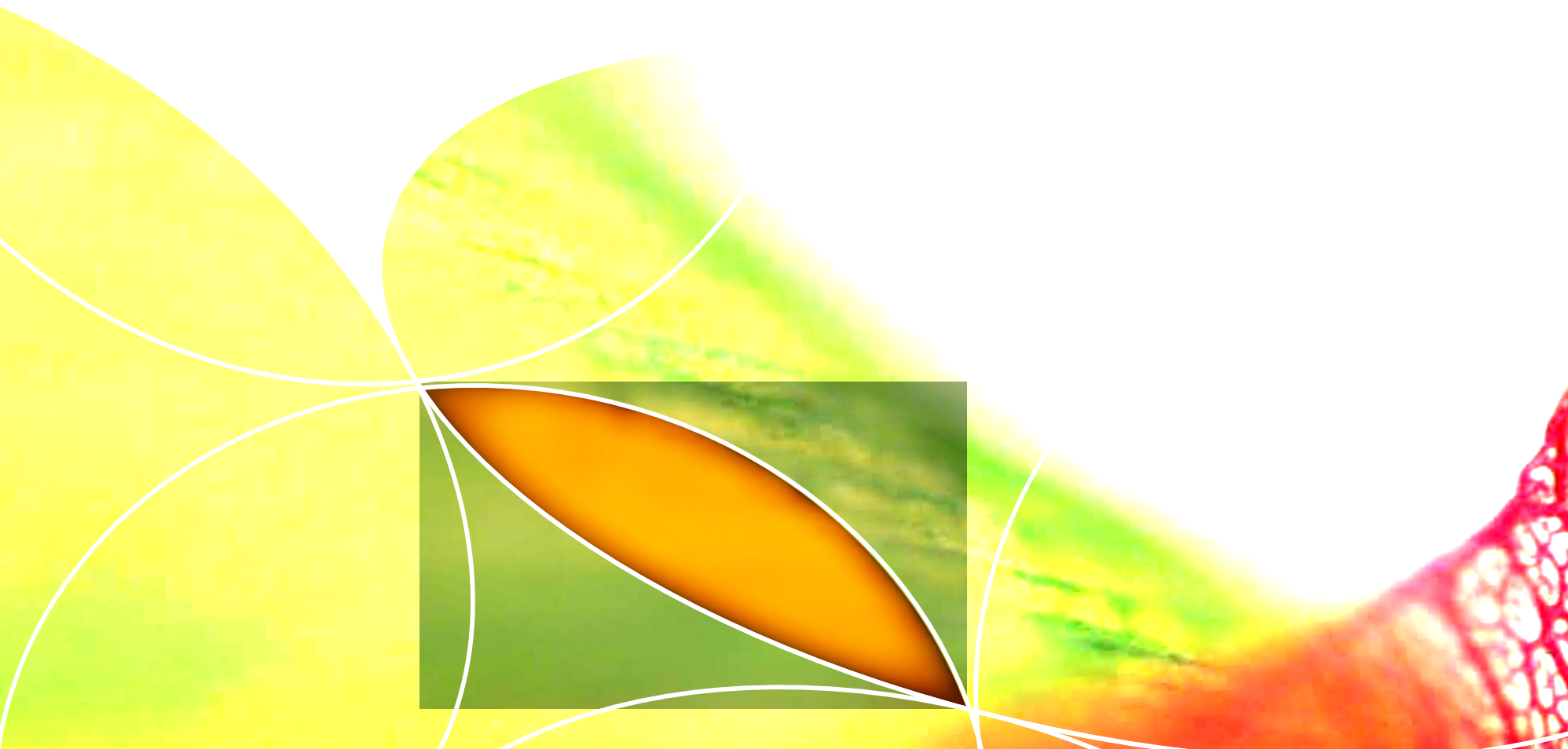
Australian Government

Australian Public Service
Commission

as one

Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy

Effective leadership Diverse workforce Capable organisations and workforce Employee conditions APS Values





as one



working together to transform the APS workforce



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Introduction

For most of our 165,000 employees based throughout metropolitan and regional areas in Australia and overseas the Australian Public Service (APS) is a great employer. We have a wide variety of jobs on offer – accountants, biologists, customer service officers, policy advisers, graphic designers, lawyers and IT specialists just to name a few. We also have a strong and well-publicised set of values, working conditions that emphasise work-life balance and a strong focus on career development and progression.

Like many other public administrations around the world, the APS is facing an ever-tightening financial climate. Our workforce is ageing, the labour market is shrinking and we are under greater pressure to do more with less. A diverse workforce is vital to our ability to respond to these challenges. The rationale is that if we represent the Australian population's diversity we are better placed to communicate with the broadest cross-section of the community, understand their different needs and work out how best to serve them.

This strategy responds to the National Disability Strategy (NDS) that was launched in February 2011. A key policy objective of the NDS is to improve the workforce participation of people with a disability across Australia. To be implemented over the period 2012–2014, the *As One* strategy will renew and refocus our attention and ensure a consistent approach is adopted.

It has two parts:

- At its core is the transformation of heart and mind, awakening the APS to the benefits of diversity. It sets out to **change the way people think about disability**.

- It aims to give our employees the **opportunities and know-how to create a diverse workforce**. This involves new and improved tools, procedures and systems.

It has been prepared in consultation with key stakeholder groups, including employees with disability, APS leaders and hiring managers, peak bodies and private sector organisations, using a range of consultation channels, and has drawn on international experience and insight.

Feedback was consistent across all stakeholder groups and spanned the employment lifecycle of people with disability. We should:

- improve the accountability and commitment of APS leaders
- increase agency demand for candidates with disability
- improve recruitment practices to enable more candidates with disability to enter the APS
- foster inclusive cultures that support and encourage employees with disability.



Our response

The Australian Public Service Commission will work across the APS to develop and set an agenda for change and delivery.

To translate rhetoric and goodwill into actual results requires the engagement of all leaders and employees across the APS. With collaboration comes greater understanding of good practice, sharing and learning and access to expertise.

There is also a need to make workforce inclusion a priority for all staff, not just those working in human resources – everyone has a role to play.

Connecting with our stakeholders

To inform the strategy, a consultative process was carried out to seek the views of interested stakeholders. Interstate and international comparisons were also conducted to get a better appreciation for the range of interventions used in jurisdictions that had achieved inclusive workplaces. This process has contributed significantly to the richness and depth of thinking underpinning this strategy, and has helped shape a set of initiatives that have the potential to deliver change.

Taking action

The stakeholder feedback gives us a clear agenda for change. The initiatives are designed with the following principles in mind:

- Supporting and improving APS employment opportunities for people with disability
- Creating shared responsibility and ownership of the strategy across the APS
- Limiting the need for additional agency administration burden
- Having regard for budgetary constraints
- Identifying opportunities for agencies to join up and work together
- Driving long-term sustainable change
- Creating a systematic and consistent approach.

The following initiatives should be considered as an integrated set of measures to be applied across all levels of the APS, including the Senior Executive Service.

Fostering inclusive cultures

In a 2010 speech at Victoria's Parliament House, Disability Discrimination Commissioner Graeme Innes mentioned the 'soft bigotry of low expectations'

encountered by people with disability.¹ These words show the attitudinal challenges encountered by people with disability. They also remind us of the need to question our thinking and develop a better appreciation for what people with disability have to offer. If we don't do this employees with disability will feel disengaged and undervalued and more inclined to seek employment opportunities elsewhere. Retention is a key issue for this strategy – it requires agencies to be disability confident and offer rewarding careers, in which people are encouraged to perform at their best.

This section's initiatives are designed to shift mindsets and change perceptions. To do this we need to make disability a part of everyday business activities so that rather than being an add-on or afterthought, it becomes the 'the way things are done around here'.

The Australian Public Service Commission will:

- Review and where necessary enhance the commission's policy advice, products and services on managing mental health issues.
- Encourage agencies to incorporate diversity messages into training and human resources processes and procedures.
- Ask agencies to encourage the take-up of flexible working arrangements.
- Develop an online career tool, *My Career, My APS*, for APS employees and members of the public, particularly those who have a disability, who are considering a job in the APS.

¹ Speech made at the launch of the Action on Disability in Ethnic Communities (ADEC) DVD 'Can I Do It My Way' on 7 September 2010.

- Establish a network for representatives from agencies' disability networks to provide agencies with opportunities to share experiences and learn from one another.

Increasing agency demand for candidates with disability

This section's initiatives are designed to stimulate demand for more employees with disability. Employer fears about hiring people with disability vary but can include concerns relating to lower level job qualifications, poor performance, reasonable adjustment costs and negative reactions from colleagues and customers.² While there is no research to back up these perceptions, they continue to exist and prevent people with disability from entering the APS workforce. The Australian Public Service Commission will:

- Promote the value proposition and business case that disability and broader diversity has to offer.
- Publish a plain-English guide to the Commissioner's Directions on employing people with disability via disability employment services providers.
- Promote the use of work design as a tool to improve the work options for employees with disability.

² Lengnick-Hall M, Gaunt P, Kulkarni M, 'Overlooked and underutilized: People with disabilities are an untapped human resource', Human Resource Management, vol 47, no.2, summer 2008, pp. 255-273. Published online in Wiley InterScience <www.interscience.wiley.com>

Improving recruitment processes to enable more candidates with disability to enter the APS

We need to break the traditional ‘recruitment mould’ and give managers confidence to recruit a candidate with disability. Tightening budgets and time pressures will inevitably affect the degree to which a manager will take ‘risks’ with a new recruit. However, it is only through first-hand experience that managers come to appreciate that the management of an employee with disability is often just like managing an employee without disability.

This section’s initiatives are designed to insert flexibility in recruitment processes. The Australian Public Service Commission will:

- Implement a guaranteed interview scheme, whereby any candidate with disability who meets the minimum criteria for a job is interviewed.
- Establish an APS employment pathway for people with disability so that the APS can further strengthen and develop its workforce.
- Provide greater education for agency human resources personnel and hiring managers on how to apply flexibility to merit selection processes to meet the needs of people with disability and create level playing fields.
- Ask agencies to review their procurement procedures to ensure suppliers and panels include disability employment providers.
- Work with Disability Employment Australia to set up a working group consisting of a range of nationally based disability employment services providers, APS agencies and the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator, to identify and trial employment opportunities for people with disability.

Improving leadership

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 our best.

This section’s initiatives are designed to encourage leaders to respond to the challenges of disability employment in the APS and drive changes to the way business is executed. The Australian Public Service Commission will:

- Hold annual diversity awards to celebrate and recognise APS good practice.
- Encourage agencies to include disability-related data in their internal reporting arrangements, such as scorecards and metrics.
- Encourage agencies to assign champions to help strengthen and progress the disability agenda.
- Provide greater support and guidance to disability champions.
- Ask agencies to set clear expectations of managers and senior executive staff to build and foster a diverse workforce.
- Use the Diversity Council to help reinforce and reinvigorate the commitment from APS leaders to implement the disability agenda.

Summary of actions

Fostering Inclusive Cultures

The Australian Public Service Commission will:

- Review and where necessary enhance the commission's policy advice, products and services on managing mental health issues.
- Encourage agencies to incorporate diversity messages into training and human resources processes and procedures.
- Ask agencies to encourage the take-up of flexible working arrangements.
- Develop an online career tool, *My Career, My APS*, for APS employees and members of the public, particularly those who have a disability, who are considering a job in the APS.
- Establish a network for representatives from agencies' disability networks to provide agencies with opportunities to share experiences and learn from one another.

Increasing Agency Demand for Candidates with Disability

The Australian Public Service Commission will:

- Promote the value proposition and business case that disability and broader diversity has to offer.
- Publish a plain-English guide to the Commissioner's Directions on employing people with disability via disability employment services providers.
- Promote the use of work design as a tool to improve the work options for employees with disability.

Improving Recruitment Processes to Enable More Candidates with Disability to Enter the APS

The Australian Public Service Commission will:

- Implement a guaranteed interview scheme, whereby any candidate with disability who meets the minimum criteria for a job is interviewed.
- Establish an APS employment pathway for people with disability so that the APS can further strengthen and develop its workforce.
- Provide greater education for agency human resources personnel and hiring managers on how to apply flexibility to merit selection processes to meet the needs of people with disability and create level playing fields.
- Ask agencies to review their procurement procedures to ensure suppliers and panels include disability employment providers.
- Work with Disability Employment Australia to set up a working group consisting of a range of nationally based disability employment services providers, APS agencies and the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator, to identify and trial employment opportunities for people with disability.

Improving Leadership across the APS

The Australian Public Service Commission will:

- Hold annual diversity awards to celebrate and recognise APS good practice.
- Encourage agencies to include disability-related data in their internal reporting arrangements, such as scorecards and metrics.
- Encourage agencies to assign champions to help strengthen and progress the disability agenda.
- Provide greater support and guidance to disability champions.
- Ask agencies to set clear expectations of managers and senior executive staff to build and foster a diverse workforce.
- Use the Diversity Council to help reinforce and reinvigorate the commitment from APS leaders to action the disability agenda.



Making the strategy happen

Overcoming the barriers

While the strategy focuses on solutions for improving disability employment, understanding the barriers to improvement is also important. Our barriers include:

1. Workplace cultures do not support diversity inclusiveness
2. Lack of managerial confidence and/or competence
3. Negative and incorrect attitudes
4. Poor data and evidence gathering
5. Inadequate recognition and celebration of success stories
6. Insufficient demand for employees with disability.

The two major barriers are poor attitudes and insufficient demand for candidates with disability.

A role for everyone

The Australian Public Service Commission has a key role in driving and leading the change agenda. However, sustainable change will only be realised when all employees contribute to the building of an inclusive workforce. This means that our challenges need to be tackled top-down, across the middle and bottom up.

1. APS leaders.

We need them to:

- engage in and understand the business drivers for diversity
- model and reward inclusive behaviours
- support, endorse and monitor disability initiatives, where appropriate
- encourage hiring managers to carry out disability-inclusive recruitment processes.

2. Agency human resources practitioners.

We need them to:

- diffuse and promote the strategy to all employees in their organisation
- develop effective diversity plans and disability action plans
- take steps to gain senior management buy-in for disability initiatives
- integrate disability issues into corporate policies, programs and training
- partner with the Australian Public Service Commission to progress disability employment initiatives
- provide opportunities for employees with disability to have their concerns/issues heard
- become expert resources for their agencies in inclusive management practices.

3. Hiring managers.

We need them to:

- learn about the benefits of a diverse team
- consider candidates with disability when recruiting
- be open to flexible working arrangements, and
- implement reasonable workplace modifications and adjustments for employees when they are requested.

4. APS employees with disability.

We need them to:

- identify as an employee with disability on their agency's human resource information system or directly on the Australian Public Service Employee Database, and
- recognise their right to ask for reasonable adjustments, workplace modifications and flexible working arrangements.

5. Potential employees with disability.

We need them to:

- consider the APS an employer of choice for people with disability
- apply for APS recruitment opportunities
- ask for reasonable adjustments (modifications), if required, during recruitment and on the job
- seek feedback from hiring managers when their application for a position is unsuccessful.

6. Disability employment service providers.

We need them to:

- promote the benefits of working for the APS
- help applicants with disability complete the application process
- continue building relationships with hiring managers and key human resources practitioners.

7. Peak bodies and other organisations representing the interests of people with disability.

We need them to:

- Partner with the Australian Public Service Commission and APS agencies over the long term to inform and improve disability employment.

8. Diversity Council members.

We need them to:

- provide strong, visible leadership on diversity issues
- share and translate good practice initiatives
- provide a strategic and coordinated approach to encouraging APS agencies' performance in improving employment outcomes
- foster inclusive cultures and practices in their own agencies and across the APS.

How we'll know if we've been successful

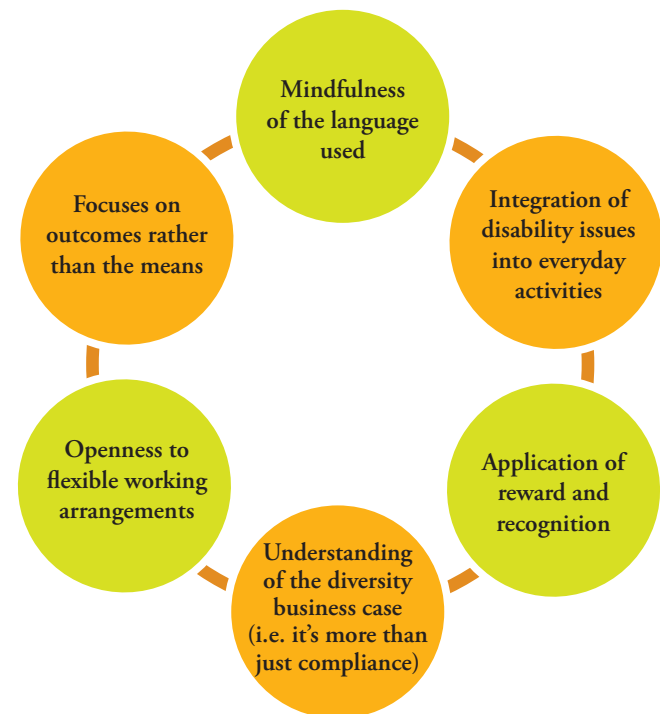
Most change processes, particularly those involving attitudinal shifts, are difficult and take time – time for employees to acknowledge, accept and adopt new ways of thinking and behaving. This strategy is no exception and we don't expect overnight change. But at the end of this strategy we do expect to see:

- **a reversal** in the long-term decline of the number of people with disability employed in the APS
- **an improvement** in reported job satisfaction for employees with disability
- **an increase** in our retention rates.

These achievements will be periodically monitored by the Diversity Council, using statistics sourced from our annual State of the Service Report.

At the conclusion of the strategy we will review our progress and consider whether a new set of initiatives are required.

We are aiming for the APS to become a disability confident employer. Common characteristics found in disability confident organisations include:



*Help with
the strategy*

For more information please visit:

- **The Australian Public Service Commission website** – our website has a comprehensive section on disability employment, with links to other relevant issues and publications such as the State of the Service Report. Go to www.apsc.gov.au/disabilityemployment.
- **Communities of practice on govdex** – a dedicated online community for sharing information and learning. The govdex site is open to all federal and state government employees. You can join by contacting abilityatwork@apsc.gov.au.
- **Agency support and advice** – the Australian Public Service Commission's Disability Employment Team is on hand to answer agency specific queries, offer good practice advice, and put you in touch with relevant experts. You can contact the team by emailing abilityatwork@apsc.gov.au.

See also the list of organisations provided in the Appendix.

Appendices

Appendix 1: How the APS is performing

For some time now the APS has committed itself to establishing a workforce that mirrors the diversity of the Australian population. Despite this, we have struggled to achieve tangible progress and people with disability remain significantly under-represented. Moreover, since the late 1990s, representation has actually been in steady decline, as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Representation of people with disability in the APS (1997–2011)



Source: APSED

Our performance is well behind other international jurisdictions. For example, the proportion of civil service employees with a disability in the United Kingdom was 8% in March 2011.³ At the same time, the proportion of people with disabilities in the Canadian Public Service was 5.6%.⁴ The APS could also do better in this area when compared to Australian state and territory governments, with jurisdictions such as Queensland having 5% of their public sector employees identifying as having a disability at 30 June 2011.⁵ See table 1.1 for the full set of figures.

³ Office for National Statistics, Civil Service Statistics, Office for National Statistics, London, 2011, viewed 16 April 2012, <<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/pse/civil-service-statistics/2011/stb---civil-service-statistics-2011.html#tab-Disability-Status>>.

⁴ Treasury Board Secretariat, Employment Equity in the Public Service of Canada 2010-11, Treasury Board Secretariat, Ottawa, 2012, viewed 16 April 2012, <<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/reports-rapports/ee/2010-2011/ee04-eng.asp#toc06>>.

⁵ Public Service Commission (Qld), Annual Report 2010-11, Brisbane, 2011, p. 72, <<http://www.psc.qld.gov.au/library/document/catalogue/annual-reports/annual-report-2010-2011.pdf>>.

Table 1.1: Representation rates of people with disabilities by jurisdiction

Australian states and territories	
Queensland	5.0% ¹
Victoria	4.0% ²
New South Wales	3.7% ³
Australian Capital Territory	1.8% ⁴
Western Australia	3.4% ⁵
South Australia	1.7% ⁶
Tasmania	7.0% ⁷
Northern Territory	1.4% ⁸
Overseas	
United Kingdom	8.0% ⁹
Canada	5.6% ¹⁰
Republic of Ireland	2.7% ¹¹
United States of America	0.8% ¹²
New Zealand	8.0% ¹³

- ¹ Public Service Commission (Qld), Annual Report 2010-11, Brisbane, 2011, p. 72, <<http://www.psc.qld.gov.au/library/document/catalogue/annual-reports/annual-report-2010-2011.pdf>>.
- ² State Services Authority, The State of the Public Sector in Victoria 2009-10, Melbourne, 2011, p. 11, <http://www.ssa.vic.gov.au/images/stories/product_files/837_statevps200910main.PDF>.
- ³ Public Service Commission (NSW), EmployABILITY, Public Service Commission, Sydney, viewed 16 April 2012, <<http://www.eeo.nsw.gov.au/employability>>.
- ⁴ Chief Minister and Cabinet Directorate (ACT), ACT Public Sector Workforce Profile 2010-2011, Canberra, 2012, p. 36, <http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/294582/wfp1011.pdf>.
- ⁵ Public Sector Commission (WA), State of the Sector Report 2011, Perth, 2011, p. 70, <<http://www.publicsector.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/state-of-the-sector-report-2011.pdf>>.
- ⁶ As at 30 June 2009: SA Strategic Plan, T6.22 Target Fact Sheet, SA Strategic Plan, Adelaide, accessed 16 April 2012, <http://saplan.org.au/fact_sheets/295>.
- ⁷ Office of the State Service Commissioner (Tas), Tasmanian State Service Employee Survey 2010: Survey Report, Hobart, 2010, p. 14, <http://www.osscc.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/147477/employeesurveyreport2010.pdf>.
- ⁸ Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (NT), State of the Service Report 2010-11, Darwin, 2011, p. 69, <http://www.ocpe.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/54879/OCPE_SOS_2011.pdf>.
- ⁹ Office for National Statistics, loc. cit.
- ¹⁰ Treasury Board Secretariat, loc. cit.
- ¹¹ National Disability Authority, 2010 Report on Compliance with Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005 on Employment of People with Disabilities in the Public Service to Mr. Alan Shatter TD, Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, Dublin, 2011, p. 5, <[http://www.nda.ie/website/nda/cntmgmtnew.nsf/0/3DEC8437DD0A27B580257961003AE480/\\$File/2010partvreport8decPDE.pdf](http://www.nda.ie/website/nda/cntmgmtnew.nsf/0/3DEC8437DD0A27B580257961003AE480/$File/2010partvreport8decPDE.pdf)>.
- ¹² US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Annual Report on the Federal Work Force Part II, US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, accessed 16 April 2012, <http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/reports/fsp2010_2/index.cfm#ID>.
- ¹³ State Services Commission, Career Progression and Development Survey, 2005: Results for the New Zealand Public Service, Wellington, 2006, p. 111, <<http://www.ssc.govt.nz/sites/all/files/cpds05-body-minus-appendices.pdf>>.

The make-up of the APS workforce— key statistics

- Current reported representation of ongoing employees with disability in the APS is 3.0%, compared with about 15% of Australians of working age who report having a disability.⁶
- Since 2009-10, the total number of ongoing employees with disability has fallen by 4.3% (199 employees), while the total APS ongoing workforce increased by 1.9% (2939 employees).

Disclosure

- Employee self-disclosure is a complex issue, with most agencies considering their disability rates to be under-reported. This is supported by the Australian Public Service Commission's data. Results from the confidential employee survey (a survey of 10,222 APS employees) undertaken for the State of the Service Report 2010-11 show that 7% of ongoing employees reported that they had a disability.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, <www.abs.gov.au>. While this figure cannot be directly compared with representation in the APS, it gives context to the APS representation rate.

"I definitely made the correct decision when diagnosed about five years ago to limit the people and work colleagues who knew of my situation to a small number. Once the full extent of my situation became 'public' to work managers and HR, the barriers began to build. This took the form of well meaning but restrictive measures under the guise of 'duty of care'. Freedom of movement including no longer being allowed to drive a work vehicle meant the loss of a portion of my independence, even though there were no restrictions on my driving outside of work. The psychological impact was that for the first time I started to feel like a disabled person rather than a person with a disability. Believe me, they are two very different feelings."

Submission to Shut Out: *The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia*

- As at 31 December 2011, we had no data regarding the disability status of 29.4% of APS staff. This means there are 45,280 APS employees for whom we have no disability status. Factors affecting reporting include human resource information systems' effectiveness in capturing employees' disability status throughout their careers, and an employee's fear that disclosure will lead to discrimination.

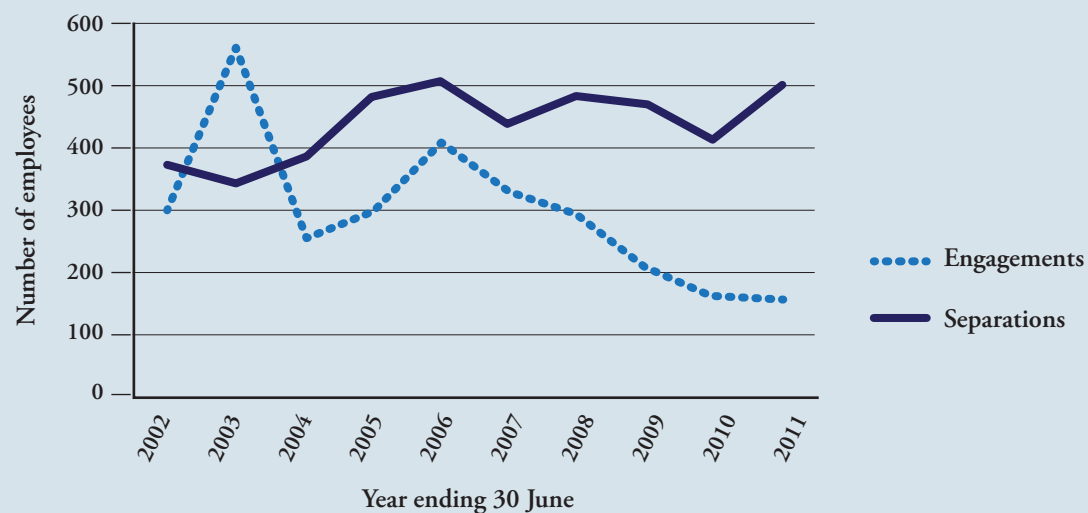
Engagements and separations

- The engagement rate of people with disability in 2010–11 was the lowest in over a decade at 1.2%.
- The 2010–11 separation rate was the highest since 2005–06 (4.8%) and was four times the engagement rate.
- Separations have outweighed engagements since 2003–04, and it's getting worse. See Figure 1.2.

Workplace culture

- Employees with disability were almost twice as likely as other APS employees to report experiencing bullying or harassment.
- Employees with disability were less likely to agree that their supervisor works effectively and sensitively with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Employees with disability reported lower rates of feeling respected and listened to by their colleagues, and lower rates of believing that their job will help their career aspirations.

Figure 1.2 APS employees with disability engagement and separation rates 2002–11



Source: APSED

Appendix 2: The business drivers for disability employment

Inclusive workplaces are central to the future of the APS for four important reasons:

Fig 1.3 Benefits from increasing the representation of people with disability in the APS.



Strategic benefits

- The APS touches the lives of all Australians. The effects of the laws, policies and services it delivers are important to the life of every Australian.⁷
- By recruiting and retaining more people with disability, the APS will increase the diversity of its workforce to better reflect the diversity in the Australian community. The Australian Bureau of Statistics found that 18.5% of Australians have a disability, where disability is defined as “any limitation, restriction or impairment which restricts everyday activities and has lasted or is likely to last for at least six months.”⁸ Increasingly businesses and individuals in the Australian community are looking to interact with organisations that reflect their own diversity.⁹
- Having a workforce that reflects the community will also result in the production of programs and policy

⁷ Advisory Group on Reform of Australian Government Administration, Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Canberra, March 2010, p. viii, <www.dpmc.gov.au/publications/aga_reform/aga_reform_blueprint/index.cfm>.

⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2009, cat. no. 4430.0, ABS, Canberra, 2010, p. 3.

⁹ Australian Employers Network on Disability, Opportunity, Switzer Media & Publishing, 2008, p. 6.

that take into account the experiences of people with disability. Our diversity has and will continue to increase the flow of diverse ideas and a broader range of perspectives. This is especially true when the APS is confronted by difficult and complex challenges.

- Having people with disability in the APS will ensure that laws, policies and programs respond to the needs of the community and deliver good practice.

Workforce planning benefits

- The APS can benefit from the retention of a talented and skilled workforce.
- The 2010 Intergenerational Report has highlighted that population ageing will put significant pressures on the economy, and employing the working age population will become increasingly important.¹⁰ According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), countries who experience skills shortages and an ageing population will seek to spur the recruitment and retention of workers who currently need

adjustments to fully participate.¹¹ Currently people with disability are an underutilised part of the potential workforce and are subject to unfounded attitudes by employers about their value as workers.¹²

- Around 44% of ongoing APS employees are in the 45 and over age group and will be eligible for retirement in the next 10 years.¹³ Almost three in four Senior Executive Service officers are in this category.¹⁴ We also know that disability prevalence increases with age and the majority of people of working age with a disability develop their condition while at work.¹⁵ This is borne out in the APS where the median age of employees with disability is 48 years, compared to the total APS workforce average of 42 years.¹⁶ There is also anecdotal evidence that many workers who develop a medical condition will leave an employer without fully investigating reasonable adjustments that could have enabled them to remain at work.¹⁷

¹⁰ Department of the Treasury, Intergenerational Report 2010: Australia to 2050: Future challenges, Canberra, 2010

¹¹ OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, 'Sickness, Disability and Work: Keeping on track in the economic downturn', background paper prepared for the High-Level Forum, Stockholm, 14-15 May 2009 : -<www.oecd.org/dataoecd/42/15/42699911.pdf>.

¹² Mark L. Lengnick-Hall, Philip M. Gaunt, Mukta Kulkarni 'Overlooked and underutilized: People with disabilities are an untapped human resource', Human Resource Management, vol 47, no 2, summer 2008, pp. 255-273; J. Graffam et al, 'Employer Benefits and Costs of Employing a Person with a Disability', Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, vol. 17, 2002, pp. 251-63.

¹³ State of the Service Report 2010- 11, pp. 101-2.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁵ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Disability programmes in need of reform: Policy Brief, OECD, March 2003.

¹⁶ State of the Service Report 2010- 11, p. 179.

¹⁷ Beatty, J. E. & Joffe, R. 'An overlooked dimension of diversity: The career effects of chronic illness.' Organizational Dynamics, vol 35, no 2, 2006, pp. 182-195.

Professional and technological benefits

- Flexible working arrangements enable people with disability to better manage their duties thereby increasing their team's efficiency.
- Technology can help employees with disability to fully use their skills. Conversely, the adoption of technology driven by the inclusion of people with disability will mainstream the productivity benefits of remote technology to all staff, such as those who travel, have work commitments outside a normal office or outside normal office hours.¹⁸
- Telework, for example, allows employees to work from different locations. A report commissioned by the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy estimated that if 40% of all workers in Australia undertook telework two days per week, the economic benefit would be \$40.5 billion a year.¹⁹ This includes the benefit of allowing increased participation of people with temporary and permanent medical conditions to enter and remain in the workforce.
- The APS is becoming increasingly open to new ways of working. By 2020, the Australian Government aims to at least double its level of teleworking so that at least 12 per cent of Australian employees report having such an arrangement with

¹⁸ Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, *Telework Forum: Bringing home the benefits of telework using the NBN*, record of the Telework Forum, Sydney, 3 August 2011.

¹⁹ Access Economics, *Impacts of Teleworking under the NBN*, Report to the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Canberra, 2010 <<http://www.nbn.gov.au/telework/why-is-it-important/>>.

their employers.²⁰ For example, IP Australia, the Commonwealth's intellectual property rights organisation, demonstrated how teleworking had enabled it to retain highly-qualified patent examiners in a very competitive market.²¹

Leadership benefits

- Most managers already have employees with disability in their teams but may not know it. Common conditions among the workforce include back pain, arthritis or recurring migraines.²² Also most people with common mental health conditions, such as depression, develop their condition while in the workforce and continue to work.²³

²⁰ Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, *Government Initiatives*, Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Canberra, 2012, viewed 16 April 2012, <<http://www.nbn.gov.au/telework/government-initiatives/>>.

²¹ Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, *Telework Forum: Bringing home the benefits of telework using the NBN*, record of the Telework Forum, Sydney, 3 August 2011, p. 9.

²² Begg S, Vos T, Barker B, Stevenson C, Stanley L & Lopez A *The burden of disease and injury in Australia 2003*, AIHW cat. no. PHE 82, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra, 2007. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) claims that more than three quarters of Australians are affected by at least one chronic illness: AIHW, Chronic diseases affect 15 million Australians, media release, AIHW, Canberra, 16 November 2006, <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/media-release-detail/?id=6442464665>>.

²³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Sick on the Job? Myths and Realities about Mental Health and Work*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2012.

- A disability confident APS will drive an increase in flexible management practices. Studies indicate that when employees can manage the demands of their work and personal lives, there are positive effects – such as job satisfaction, productivity and organisational commitment.²⁴
- The APS also aims to be a model employer. The APS Values, a statement of commitment to principles rather than rules, are a cornerstone of the Public Service Act 1999. The APS also administers the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and therefore aims to be a model for non-discrimination in employment for people with disability.
- The creation of employment opportunities in the public sector will show leadership to other Australian employers to eliminate barriers to the employment of people with disability. The public sector cannot force the private sector to employ people with disability – but it can lead the way. Australia is lagging behind in employment outcomes for people with disability, which affects the economic security and independence of individuals and comes at a cost to the community. The cost of the Disability

Support Pension alone was \$13.35 billion in 2010–2011.²⁵ All Australian governments, while recognising the importance of income support, have committed through the National Disability Strategy to increase access to employment opportunities as a key to improving economic security and personal wellbeing for people with disability.

²⁴ Diversity Council Australia, *Get Flexible! Mainstreaming Flexible Work in Australian Business*, Diversity Council Australia, Sydney, 2012, pp. 24-25.

²⁵ Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, *Annual Report 2010-11*, Canberra, 2011, p.86.

Appendix 3: Strategic links

The strategy embodies the principles and outcomes of other strategies and key policy drivers, including:

1. Management Advisory Committee (MAC) Report, *Employment of People with Disability in the APS*

Released in 2006, this report outlined eight objectives for promoting the employment of people with disability and identified a range of better practice strategies for meeting those objectives. Individual agencies were to pursue those objectives, tailoring strategies to their particular circumstances.

The Australian Public Service Commission has monitored progress against the recommendations from the report through the annual State of the Service Report. It is anticipated that the State of the Service Report will be amended slightly to give greater focus to the initiatives outlined in our new strategy.

For more information on the objectives, see: www.apsc.gov.au.

2. The National Disability Strategy

In early 2011, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) announced the National Disability Strategy (NDS), a 10-year plan to improve the lives of people with disability. This strategy will ensure

that the principles underpinning the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* are incorporated into policies and programs affecting people with disability, their families and carers.

The implementation of NDS actions is being led by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). This department has the main portfolio responsibility for the support of people with disability through programs, services, benefits and payments.

The plan contains six key outcome areas that drive government activities and reforms in mainstream and specialist disability service systems. The third priority action under the NDS is to improve the economic security of people with disability. Specifically, Action Item 3.4 makes a commitment to “improve the employment, recruitment and retention of people with disability in all levels of public sector employment...”. The Australian Public Service Commission is liaising with FaHCSIA on how work might progress against this action item, as well as briefing them on the state of disability employment in the APS.

For more information on the NDS, see: www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/progserv/govtint/Pages/nds.aspx.

3. The APS reform program

In May 2010, the Government accepted recommendations put forward by *Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for Reform of Australian Government Administration*. This blueprint outlines a comprehensive reform agenda aimed at strengthening strategic direction, citizen engagement, and staff and leader capability.

Under the following four key challenges sit nine reforms and 28 recommendations:

1. meets the needs of citizens
2. provides strong leadership and strategic direction
3. contains a highly capable workforce
4. operates efficiently at a consistently high standard.

Of particular interest are the following observations made by the blueprint:

- The need to ensure that the APS mirrors the diversity of the broader population across all classification levels.²⁶
- Diversity as an issue to be addressed through the development of a cross-APS Human Capital Priority Plan.²⁷

²⁶ *Ahead of the Game*, p. 25.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

- That the diversity of the APS can be improved through better recruitment and induction strategies and mechanisms.²⁸

With all 28 blueprint recommendations either complete or substantially underway, the reform program is expected to deliver results during 2012.

4. Disability employment and human rights

The *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, which Australia ratified in 2008, recognises the right of people with disability to work on an equal basis with others.²⁹ The convention explicitly obliges member countries to employ people with disability in the public sector, acknowledging the important role it plays in governance.³⁰ The Convention's right to employment goes beyond mere non-discrimination in employment. It requires member countries to create real employment and career opportunities for people with disability.

For more information on the Convention, see:

www.ag.gov.au/Humanrightsandantidiscrimination/Pages/UnitedNationsConventionontheRightsofPersonswithDisabilities.aspx.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁹ *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, Article 27.

³⁰ *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, Article 27(1)(g).

5. The National Disability Insurance Scheme

Following an inquiry by the Productivity Commission into a national disability long-term care and support scheme, COAG has agreed to work together to build the foundations for a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This is designed to provide people with disability the support they need over their lifetimes. In addition, an NDIS will make sure Australians with disability have access to the services they need to participate in society, no matter where they live or how they acquired the disability.

A new government agency is being established to lead the Commonwealth's work to design the launch of an NDIS.

For more information on an NDIS, see: <www.ndis.gov.au>.

Appendix 4: Key organisations

Organisation	Description	Website
Australian Network on Disability (AND)	AND is a not-for-profit organisation funded by its members who include large multinational corporations, small to medium enterprises, government departments and not-for-profit organisations. Its role is to help its members and clients so that they become more confident and prepared to welcome people with disability into their organisations. It does this by providing advices and services on disability to employers, government representatives and industry bodies.	<http://www.and.org.au>
Disability Employment Australia (DEA)	DEA is the peak industry body for Disability Employment Services (DES) providers. It has a critical role in monitoring the DES program's implementation to ensure it achieves outcomes consistent with the Disability Services Act 1986 and the Disability Service Standards. It also represents the interests of its members to government at the national level, promotes the sector through events and undertakes an educational role in best practice and innovative ways to find people with disability real jobs.	<http://disabilityemployment.org.au>

Organisation	Description	Website
National Disability Recruitment Coordinator (NDRC)	<p>NDRC is a government funded service that provides free, confidential information and expert assistance to employers about recruiting and working with people with disability. It does this by connecting its employment partners with job seekers who are registered with Disability Employment Services Providers.</p> <p>The NDRC sends information about the employer's job vacancies to Disability Employment Services Providers who service the area where the jobs are located and highlights the support available to people with disability through initiatives including workplace modifications and employer incentives. It offers a free pre-screening interview service at the point of recruitment to obtain suitable referrals of potential candidates for the vacancies.</p>	<http://www.workfocus.com/how-can-we-help/help-with-advice.aspx#ndrcanchor>
Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO)	AFDO is the peak national body for organisations for people with disability. It aims to promote the rights of people with disability in Australia and promote the participation of people with disability in all parts of social, economic, political and cultural life.	<http://www.afdo.org.au/>

Organisation	Description	Website
National Disability Services (NDS)	<p>NDS is the industry association for disability services. It represents 750 non-governmental organisations working to improve the lives of people with disability. These include Autism Spectrum Australia, Calvary Home Care Services Ltd. and Melbourne Citymission Inc..</p> <p>It aims to increase its members' capacity to provide quality services and to ensure they have a voice in government policy-making. It also provides information and advice to its subscribers from the for-profit and government sector.</p>	http://www.nds.org.au/

Appendix 5: What we mean by disability

Disability is by no means homogeneous – it means different things to different people and there are many types of disabilities, each affecting individuals in different ways.

This strategy recognises two definitions:

1 The Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary of Findings 2003* definition, according to which "... a person has a disability if they report that they have a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least 6 months and restricts everyday activities". This includes:

- loss of sight (not corrected by glasses or contact lenses)
- loss of hearing where communication is restricted, or an aid to assist with, or substitute for, hearing is used
- incomplete use of feet or legs
- nervous or emotional condition causing restriction
- restriction in physical activities or in doing physical work
- speech difficulties
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties causing restriction
- disfigurement or deformity
- mental illness or condition requiring help or supervision

- chronic or recurrent pain or discomfort causing restriction
- blackouts, fits, or loss of consciousness
- long-term effects of head injury, stroke or other brain damage causing restriction
- difficulty learning or understanding
- incomplete use of arms or fingers
- difficulty gripping or holding things
- receiving treatment or medication for any other long-term conditions or ailments and still restricted
- any other long-term conditions resulting in a restriction.

2 The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, section 4, which states that "**disability**", in relation to a person, means:

- a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or

- e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

- h) presently exists; or
- i) previously existed but no longer exists; or
- j) may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
- k) is imputed to a person.

To avoid doubt, a disability that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability.'