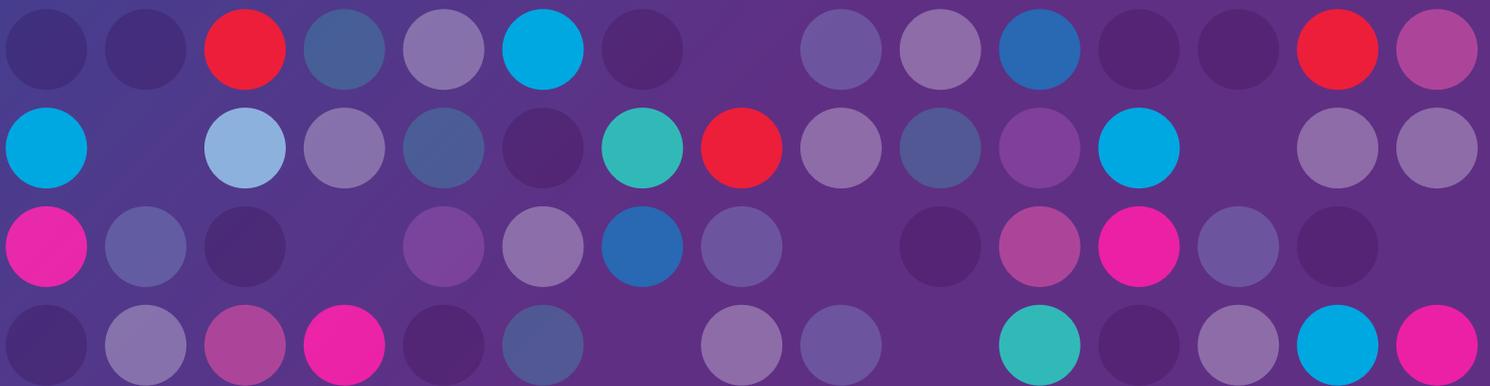


Standards for Workforce Mutuality

Building workforces that reflect
the diversity of the community



HealthWest Partnership acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands that we work on, the Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung, and Wathaurong peoples of the Kulin Nation, and pay our respects to their cultures, their elders past and present and to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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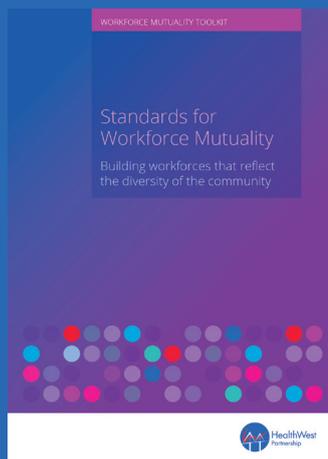
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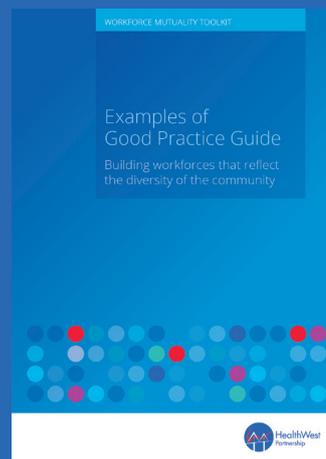
First published in 2018, updated in 2020.

**This document forms part of the
Workforce Mutuality Toolkit.**

These documents are designed to be
used together.



ONE
**Standards for
Workforce Mutuality**



TWO
**Examples of Good
Practice Guide**



THREE
Self-Assessment Tool



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What is Workforce Mutuality?

Workforce mutuality describes the extent to which the diversity of an organisation or a sector's workforce reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

Workforce mutuality is not the same as workforce diversity. The workforce of an organisation can be highly diverse, and yet it may still not reflect the diversity of the community it serves.

What are the benefits of Workforce Mutuality?

Better workforces

Workforce mutuality results in workforces which perform better, thereby supporting businesses to achieve their core business.

Diverse and inclusive workplaces are (Deloitte & VEOHRC 2013, Hunt et al 2015):

- more efficient,
- more creative and innovative,
- better at problem solving and decision making, and
- better at attracting top talent.

They are also 35% more likely to perform better, have greater employee satisfaction and reduced absenteeism (Deloitte & VEOHRC 2013, Hunt et al 2015).

Better services

Workforce mutuality results in services which are better oriented to the diverse needs of community, thereby achieving greater health equity.

A person or a group of people can be said to have equity in health when there are no avoidable barriers or disadvantages stopping them from enjoying the same level of health compared to other people (WHO 2018; Braveman & Gruskin 2003).

Workforce mutuality helps to reduce the barriers community may experience accessing and using health and social services. Services are more adaptable and universally responsive to all members of the community (Spevick 2003; ECCV 2014; Cohen et al. 2002; Williams et al 2014; Lewis et al 2014).

This also provides organisations with a strategic and operational advantage, as people will be more likely to choose services that are easy to find and use, and that meet their specific needs.

Better employment outcomes

Workforce mutuality results in more jobs and career opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds, thereby achieving more equitable employment outcomes for all.

The health and social services sectors are major employers and contributors to the economy. A recent report from the World Health Organisation highlights how the health system can contribute to local economic and social outcomes through approaches to employment and procurement (Boyce & Brown 2019).

The health and community sectors offer quality employment opportunities which can have a positive impact on equity.

Are the Standards inclusive of all forms of diversity?

The Standards acknowledge and promote all forms of diversity, including:

- cultural and linguistic diversity,
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity,
- gender identity,
- sexual identity,
- age,
- ability, and
- religion.

How diversity is defined will continue to evolve and change as our community and society changes. To better reflect a contemporary Australian society that is more diverse than ever (ABS 2017), these Standards recognise that a person may identify with more than one aspect of diversity. This is called intersectionality (van Mens-Verhulst 2015).

Why are the Standards inclusive of all forms of diversity?

The health and social services sectors have experienced unprecedented change in recent years. Organisations have many competing priorities and increasingly limited resources. The Standards offer organisations the opportunity to examine diversity in all its forms so that they can prioritise their efforts and use their limited resources most effectively. When organisations focus all their resources on one form of diversity they fail to recognise the importance of intersectionality in contemporary Australian society and risk contributing to greater inequities for those people who identify with other forms of diversity.

It's important to note that the Standards support, but do not replace other diversity and inclusion frameworks. It is likely that during the course of implementing the Standards you will identify specific workforce needs that are beyond the scope of the Standards. We encourage you to address these. Please refer to Part III of the Examples of Good Practice Guide for a list of recommended diversity and inclusion frameworks which can be used in conjunction with the Standards. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

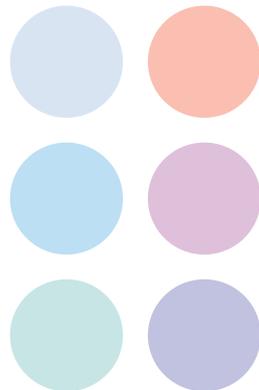
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The Standards acknowledge the unique experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian context.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to experience structural and institutionalised discrimination, socio-economic disadvantage and ill-health as a consequence of colonisation, genocide, racism, the dispossession of land and children and intergenerational trauma.

It is important that organisations implementing these Standards seek out resources and frameworks which are designed to promote reconciliation, self-determination and cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Please refer to Part III of the Examples of Good Practice Guide for a list of recommended frameworks and resources which can be used in conjunction with these Standards.



Why did we develop the Standards?

Our member organisations identified a 'diversity gap' in the health and social service sector's workforce in Melbourne's west.

Their workforces did not reflect the diversity of the community and this was seen as a barrier to responsive and equitable service delivery. Our members identified the need to increase the diversity of the sector's workforce as a priority. The Standards for Workforce Mutuality were developed to provide guidance on how to do so.

How did we develop the Standards?

HealthWest Partnership worked with an expert advisory panel with representation from peak bodies, local health and employment services, universities and community partners.

These Standards were designed using three main principles:

ONE Equity in employment is a right	TWO Diversity is an organisational strength	THREE Partnering with community improves consumer outcomes
All people in the community have the right to access fair and equitable pathways to employment and professional growth.	An organisation that is more inclusive and reflective of the diversity of the community is more in touch with community needs, provides better services and will have a more highly-skilled, healthier and innovative workforce.	Organisations can meet the specific needs of diverse communities and improve overall consumer experience and outcomes by partnering with consumers and organisations from diverse communities.

Who can use the Standards?

The Standards were initially developed for the health and social services sector.

However, an external evaluation of the Standards determined that the Standards are relevant to other sectors, including business, education and government sectors (Read & Planigale, 2019).

For some organisations, especially smaller ones, realising workforce mutuality may not be achievable or appropriate. However, the practices and principles benefit everyone.

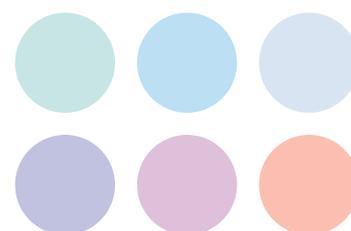
How are the Standards used?

We strongly recommend that organisations begin this work by focusing on Foundational Standards: 1 and 2.

These Standards lay the foundations for the other standards, meeting these will make it easier to work on the others.

When these Standards are met, everyone working within an organisation will understand the benefits of workforce mutuality, and will be actively supporting, promoting and celebrating it.

The Standards are complimented by a Self-Assessment Tool and Examples of Good Practice Guide, together these three documents form the Workforce Mutuality Toolkit. Organisations are encouraged to use these tools to guide them through the process of improving their workforce mutuality.



Standards for Workforce Mutuality



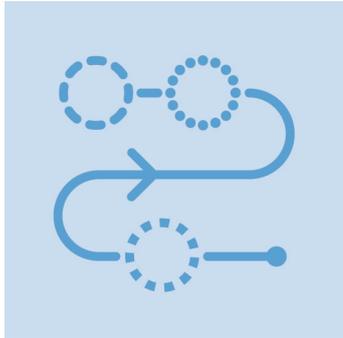
Foundational Standard 1

Making workforce mutuality a priority



Foundational Standard 2

Creating an organisational culture that values diversity



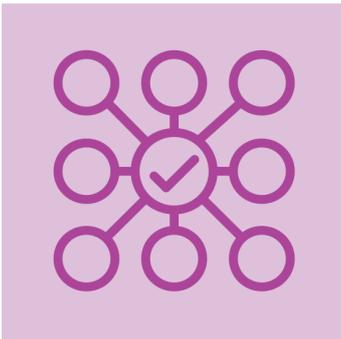
Standard 3

Building job pathways for a diverse community



Standard 4

Employing a diverse workforce



Standard 5

Supporting a diverse workforce



Standard 6

Improving consumer experience for people from diverse backgrounds



Foundational Standard 1 Making workforce mutuality a priority

Statement of Intent

All levels of leadership including executive and management understand and promote the principles and practices of workforce mutuality and actively seek opportunities to improve the mutuality of the organisation.

Indicators

- 1.1** Our leadership reflects the diversity of the community
- 1.2** Leaders in the organisation understand the benefits of workforce mutuality
- 1.3** Leaders promote diversity and workforce mutuality
- 1.4** Leaders demonstrate a commitment to workforce mutuality through strategic workforce planning
- 1.5** Leaders foster and promote the involvement of staff from diverse backgrounds in organisational development
- 1.6** Leaders foster and promote the professional development of staff from diverse backgrounds in the organisation

Why this standard is important

Leaders drive change

Leaders are key to driving organisational cultural change and building more diverse and inclusive workforces (Nair & Vohra 2015; Forbes Insights 2011; Kennedy 2016). Their commitment to workforce mutuality sends a powerful message to staff and consumers about their values and world views.

They have the power to create authorising environments and allocate necessary human and financial resources. They can demonstrate the accountability, engagement and oversight needed to ensure that workforce mutuality plans are implemented successfully.

It's smart business

It's smart business to draw leadership from a diverse talent pool that reflects the gender, racial and ethnic mix of the community (Cohen et al. 2002).

This kind of leadership group is better equipped to understand the needs of a diverse community. This can provide organisations with strategic and operational advantage when meeting these needs.

There is work to be done

Currently, the diversity of senior leadership across the private and public sectors in Australia does not reflect that of the community.

A 2013 study of board members and senior executives from two hundred of Australia's top publicly listed companies found that only 21.9 per cent of CEOs, 19.9 per cent of senior executives and 13.5 per cent of chairs identified as 'culturally diverse.' In contrast, 32.2 per cent of people in the Australian community identified as being culturally diverse (Diversity Council of Australia 2013).

The figures for women in positions of leadership in Australia were even lower. A survey conducted in 2018 found that women only represented 13.7 per cent of chair positions, 24.9 per cent of directorships and 16.5 per cent of CEOs (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2020).





Foundational Standard 2

Creating an organisational culture that values diversity

Statement of Intent

Diversity is recognised and supported as a core strength of the organisation.

Indicators

- 2.1** We promote diversity and inclusion as core values of our organisation
- 2.2** Workforce mutuality is included in strategic plans and policies
- 2.3** Adequate budget and resources are allocated for improving workforce mutuality
- 2.4** Staff are provided with diversity training and resources that are appropriate for the diversity of the community
- 2.5** Staff from diverse backgrounds contribute to building an organisational culture that values diversity
- 2.6** Diversity is valued in the workplace through celebrations and events
- 2.7** Mutuality with the community is reflected in internal and external publications, communications and other promotional resources
- 2.8** Staff data is collected in a safe and confidential way, compared to community data and used to set workforce mutuality targets

Why this standard is important

Embracing diversity

Standard 2 prioritises creating a whole-of-organisation culture that values the diversity of its staff and the community it serves. Valuing diversity is to see and respect its worth. It's the starting point for achieving workforce mutuality.

It's also a way of acknowledging that groups of individuals have historically been excluded from the workplace through unequal selection and bias.

It makes a statement about the organisation's commitment to examining the policies and cultures that promote this exclusion and its commitment to changing them.

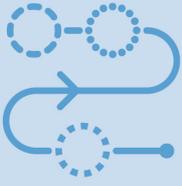
Beware of tokenism

It's important to understand that simply promoting diversity does not guarantee a more equitable workplace.

If diversity is restricted to a superficial representation of difference rather than being part of a long-term process of working towards closer mutuality with the community, it can easily become tokenistic (Canas 2017).

Diversity needs to be embedded into the core practices of an organisation for real change to occur.





Standard 3

Building job pathways for a diverse community

Statement of Intent

The organisation seeks out opportunities to build equitable employment pathways and networks with community and other organisations.

Indicators

- 3.1** The organisation seeks out opportunities to work together with community, other organisations and sectors to build accessible and sustainable job pathways for people from diverse backgrounds
- 3.2** We share relevant diversity data with other organisations relating to both our staff and our community to foster a collaborative approach to building job pathways appropriate for our catchment area(s)
- 3.3** We provide and seek out peer review and feedback from other organisations to strengthen workforce mutuality practice in our catchment area(s)
- 3.4** We seek out opportunities to work with and learn from peak organisations and recognised leaders in workforce mutuality
- 3.5** We share outcome data among our networks and across sectors to promote the benefits of workforce mutuality

Why this standard is important

It's still more difficult for people from diverse backgrounds to get a job, even when they have the right tertiary qualifications and work experience.

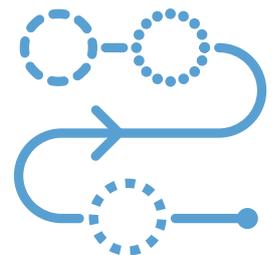
For example, in 2011 recently arrived migrants were twice as likely to be unemployed than non-migrants (ABS 2011; Brotherhood of St Laurence 2014).

Factors that have contributed to the employment gap include a lack of (ABS 2011; ECCV 2014):

- information about employment options,
- local work experience,
- English proficiency,
- recognition of skills and qualifications obtained overseas,
- local contacts,
- access to apprenticeships and traineeships, and
- cross-cultural skills.

Standard 3 focuses on exploring how we can overcome these issues by tapping into existing job pathways designed to support people from diverse backgrounds to access meaningful employment.

It also encourages organisations to actively contribute towards improving these pathways and creating new ones when they're needed.





Standard 4 Employing a diverse workforce

Statement of Intent

Recruitment processes are fair, accessible and equitable to all people from the community.

Indicators

- 4.1** Workforce planning processes result in the development of position descriptions, role scope and selection criteria that facilitate diversity and inclusion
- 4.2** Diversity-related skills that will add value to the organisation's business practices are identified and included in key selection criteria
- 4.3** Inclusive job advertisements and position descriptions are designed to eliminate barriers to people from diverse backgrounds applying for the role
- 4.4** Jobs are promoted in formats and platforms that will reach diverse communities
- 4.5** Recruitment processes are transparent and unbiased

Why this standard is important

Focusing on competencies

Standard 4 focuses on job recruitment processes: how to make them fair for everyone, and how to ensure that discrimination doesn't occur.

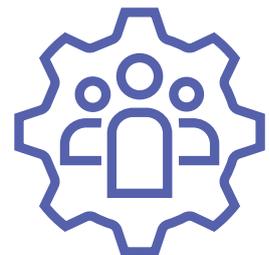
This standard acknowledges that our current recruitment practices often focus on a candidate's ability to find and complete a job application and perform well in an interview, rather than on the actual competencies they need to do the job well.

It encourages organisations to analyse their current recruitment practices, and work on making them fairer and more inclusive.

What we can do, not where we're from

It also acknowledges the existence of 'labour market discrimination' in Australia. This is based on research which shows that job applicants find it easier to get an interview if they have an Anglo-Saxon name (Booth et al 2011).

Research also shows that to get the same number of interviews as an applicant with an Anglo-Saxon name, a Chinese applicant must submit 68% more applications, a Middle Eastern applicant 64% more applications, an Indigenous applicant 35% more applications, and an Italian applicant 12% more applications (Booth et al 2011).





Standard 5

Supporting a diverse workforce

Statement of Intent

Staff from diverse backgrounds are provided with equitable support relevant to their individual needs and the requirements of their role.

Indicators

- 5.1** Managers actively support staff to understand and engage safely with the workplace culture
- 5.2** The safety and wellbeing of a diverse workforce is ensured through identifying and managing potential risks and harms
- 5.3** Retention and support strategies for staff from diverse backgrounds are developed and implemented
- 5.4** Leave entitlements reflect the needs of a diverse workforce
- 5.5** Internal pathways for promotion and career progression are inclusive and supportive of all staff
- 5.6** Staff are given the opportunity to use their personal cultural capital and expertise in their role
- 5.7** Staff are supported to work with consumers from communities different to their own
- 5.8** Assistive technology and other relevant supports are provided to meet the needs of our workforce

Why this standard is important

Happier, more productive organisations

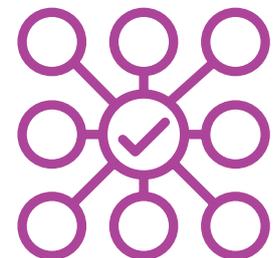
Standard 5 is about working towards creating an inclusive workplace environment, where everyone feels respected, welcomed, included, supported, valued and empowered.

Inclusive workplaces work to remove barriers, so that everyone can participate in workplace activities and have equal access to opportunities. It is about enabling and supporting all staff to contribute their skills and perspectives and achieve their full potential.

Inclusive workplaces benefit individuals and organisations. They improve employee health, wellbeing, productivity and cooperation between co-workers. They also help to attract and retain a diverse workforce.

Nothing about us without us

The best way of creating an inclusive workplace environment is to include staff from diverse backgrounds in developing inclusion strategies (Cañas 2017, Weisinger et al. 2016). Nothing about us, without us!





Standard 6

Improving consumer experience for people from diverse backgrounds

Statement of Intent

Consumers from diverse backgrounds experience improved outcomes and satisfaction when engaging with the organisation.

Indicators

- 6.1** We consult and collaborate with consumers to identify what we can do to make our organisation more responsive to the needs of a diverse community
- 6.2** Consumer feedback demonstrates that services and programs are accessible to all members of the community
- 6.3** Consumer feedback demonstrates that services are delivered in ways that meet the needs of a diverse community
- 6.4** Consumer feedback demonstrates that consumers from diverse backgrounds feel they are treated with respect and equality
- 6.5** Consumer feedback demonstrates that consumers from diverse backgrounds are likely to recommend the organisation to others in their community
- 6.6** Consumer experience surveys use platforms and formats that are relevant and accessible for diverse communities
- 6.7** We report back to our diverse consumers about consumer experience findings and the resulting planned improvements, using platforms and formats that are relevant and accessible for diverse communities

Why this standard is important

Measuring change

It's important that organisations try to measure service delivery changes that may occur as a result of working towards improving workforce mutuality.

This will help to drive further improvements. Consumer feedback can also help to inform future workforce mutuality activities, by identifying areas that need improvement.

Positive feedback can be communicated and celebrated within the organisation, to motivate staff and support organisational change.



Workforce Mutuality Standards

Standard	Statement of Intent	Indicators
 <p>Foundational Standard 1 Making workforce mutuality a priority</p>	<p>All levels of leadership including board, executive, management and other decision-makers and influencers in the organisation promote the principles and practices of workforce mutuality and actively seek opportunities to improve the mutuality of the organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Our leadership reflects the diversity of the community 1.2 Leaders in the organisation understand the benefits of workforce mutuality 1.3 Leaders promote diversity and workforce mutuality 1.4 Leaders demonstrate a commitment to workforce mutuality through strategic workforce planning 1.5 Leaders foster and promote the involvement of staff from diverse backgrounds in organisational development 1.6 Leaders foster and promote the professional development of staff from diverse backgrounds in the organisation
 <p>Foundational Standard 2 Creating an organisational culture that values diversity</p>	<p>Diversity is recognised and supported as a core strength of the organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 We promote diversity and inclusion as core values of our organisation 2.2 Workforce mutuality is included in strategic plans and policies 2.3 Adequate budget and resources are allocated for improving workforce mutuality 2.1 Staff are provided with diversity training and resources that are appropriate for the diversity of the community 2.2 Staff from diverse backgrounds contribute to building an organisational culture that values diversity 2.3 Diversity is valued in the workplace through celebrations and events 2.4 Mutuality with the community is reflected in internal and external publications, communications and other promotional resources 2.5 Staff data is collected in a safe and confidential way, compared to community data and used to set workforce mutuality targets.
 <p>Standard 3 Building job pathways for a diverse community</p>	<p>The organisation seeks out opportunities to build equitable employment pathways and networks with community and other organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 The organisation seeks out opportunities to work together with community, other organisations and sectors to build accessible and sustainable job pathways for people from diverse backgrounds 3.2 We share relevant diversity data with other organisations relating to both our staff and our community to foster a collaborative approach to building job pathways appropriate for our catchment area(s) 3.3 We provide and seek out peer review and feedback from other organisations to strengthen workforce mutuality practice in our catchment area(s) 3.4 We seek out opportunities to work with and learn from peak organisations and recognised leaders in workforce mutuality 3.5 We share outcome data among our networks and across sectors to promote the benefits of workforce mutuality



Standard 4
Employing a diverse workforce

Recruitment processes are fair, accessible and equitable to all people from the community.

- 4.1 Workforce planning processes result in the development of position descriptions, role scope and selection criteria that facilitate diversity and inclusion
- 4.2 Diversity-related skills that will add value to the organisation's programs, services, processes and other practices are identified and included in key selection criteria
- 4.3 Inclusive job advertisements and position descriptions are designed to eliminate barriers to people from diverse backgrounds applying for the role
- 4.4 Jobs are promoted in formats and platforms that will reach diverse communities
- 4.5 Recruitment processes are transparent and unbiased.



Standard 5
Supporting a diverse workforce

Staff from diverse backgrounds are provided with equitable support relevant to their individual needs and the requirements of their role.

- 5.1 Managers actively support staff to understand and engage safely with the workplace culture
- 5.2 The safety and wellbeing of a diverse workforce is ensured through identifying and managing potential risks and harms
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- 5.4 Leave entitlements reflect the needs of a diverse workforce
- 5.5 Internal pathways for promotion and career progression are inclusive and supportive of all staff
- 5.6 Staff are given the opportunity to use their personal cultural capital and expertise in their role
- 5.7 Staff are supported to work with consumers from communities different to their own
- 5.8 Assistive technology and other relevant supports are provided to meet the needs of our workforce

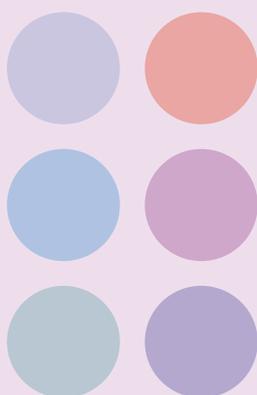


Standard 6
Improving consumer experience for people from diverse backgrounds

Consumers from diverse backgrounds experience improved outcomes and satisfaction when engaging with the organisation.

- 6.1 We consult and collaborate with consumers to identify what we can do to make our organisation more responsive to the needs of a diverse community
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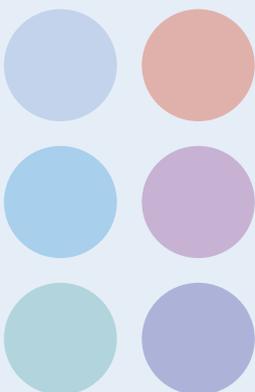
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