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LEARNING AS WE GO: DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE MANAGEMENT – CASE STUDIES AND GUIDANCE

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TERMINOLOGY

Diversity: 'The way we all differ and how those differences enable, enhance or inhibit the ability of individuals, groups and organisations to achieve individual, collective and/or organisational goals and objectives' (Davidson and Fielden, 2003, p60).

D&I benefits (organisational) are the positive outcomes for an organisation provided through having effective diversity. These can range from employee wellbeing, improved lifelong learning and internal productivity, through to improved trust within the community and the delivery of a broader range of more effective services and partnerships.

D&I implementation is the practice of implementing policy, programs, activities or processes designed to provide effective diversity.

D&I practitioners are people with knowledge and experience of D&I whose role involves D&I practice, where part of that role is to monitor D&I progress, collect evidence and reflect that back through an organisation.

D&I practice is the use of knowledge, experience and evidence to implement D&I-related programs and projects, and to engage in day-to-day inclusive conduct and behaviour.

D&I risk is the potential for harm to an organisation or its members, where the origin of the risk is related to D&I.

Effective diversity is the result of interactions between organisations and individuals that leverage, value and build upon characteristics and attributes within and beyond their organisations to increase D&I, resulting in benefits that support joint personal and organisational objectives and goals over a sustained period of time (Young et al., 2018, p19).

Empathetic leaders are able to understand the perspectives and feelings of others and foresee the impact of their actions and events on them.

Human capital: '… the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic wellbeing' (OECD, 2016a, p29).

Human risk: where human behaviour and decision making places human capital at risk of being harmed.

Inclusion: the active development of an environment in which all individuals are valued and respected, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and are able to contribute in a meaningful way to a community or organisation.

Inclusive organisation: 'Values and uses individual and intergroup differences within its workforce, cooperates with and contributes to its surrounding community, alleviates the needs of disadvantaged groups in its wider environment, and collaborates with individuals, groups, and organisations across national and cultural boundaries' (Mor Barak, 2000, p339).

Social capital: '… networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups' (OECD, 2016b, p103).

Social risk: where environmental, economic or social factors place social capital at risk of being harmed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'Commitment is important because sometimes that is all you have.'

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) is now an imperative for all emergency management organisations (EMOs) if they are to mitigate and manage the human and social risk associated with the changing risk landscape communities now occupy. The increasingly unprecedented natural hazards events, systemic nature of the impacts and the intersection with other events (such as COVID-19), are changing what is being experienced, and what is needed to respond and recover from these events. It has brought into focus the need to build robust and resilient social infrastructure in communities and organisations **prior** to events or implementation of activities. The area of social and human risk that is associated with D&I, has for the most part, been seen as secondary to more technical and tangible risks, and its value is not well understood.

Management of D&I happens at all levels of the organisations – from upper level leadership to frontline workers – and is strategic and short-term. It has two aspects:

- The management of the change that increased or decreased diversity creates
- Management and mitigation of the risk associated with implementing inclusion activities associated with increasing or decreasing diversity.

Due to the new needs arising, management of D&I is emergent and inherently risky as there is a high level of innovation involved in many activities. Obtaining an inclusive and diverse workforce is a long-term proposition requiring stamina and flexibility. It requires changing not only social and organisational structures and culture, but how people think and act within them. This not a straightforward task; it requires not only progressing the agenda, but also 'holding the line' and thinking creatively when there are adverse responses, which are a natural part of the change process. It is also an agenda that requires deep collaboration within organisations and all those within the emergency management sector (EMS) for the foreseeable future.

The case studies in this document illustrate that although there may be common principles that underpin practice, there is no one management prototype or model. It is a process of conscious decision making where what is managed and how it is managed is determined by who is being managed, their context, and the specific needs that arise from this. These factors are also influenced across time by changing social, environmental, political and economic circumstances, and ongoing learning and being able to adapt in response to this are central to effective management. What works one year may not work in the next (Young and Parry, 2020), and what works in one context will not necessarily work in another. There is no fixed-point destination to arrive at, rather a series of destinations that organisations and communities transition through as they work towards the desired inclusive outcome.

As a result, management of this area is highly dynamic and more reliant on process to manage the multiple uncertainties associated with achieving outcomes. It also requires leading from behind and guiding, rather than dictating, so that people achieve awareness and feel enabled to act.

The case studies also highlight the importance of having a social mandate to operate. This is particularly important for maintaining longer term activities, as it is built upon trusted relationships and the connections that support this. Trust-based relationships are not something that can be manufactured. They are earned through authentic and respectful interactions that are maintained, and where actions match the words that are spoken. It is critical for leaders at all levels to appreciate that people will not follow, engage with, or take instruction from someone they do not trust or they feel is being tokenistic. It is also important to note that management starts at the top of organisations, but its effectiveness is ultimately determined by how it is grown and maintained at the bottom and middle of organisations.

The other common aspects found to support effective D&I programs include:

- Ensuring there are safe spaces where difference is welcomed and accepted, and where the terms of inclusion can be negotiated and where concerns can be addressed.
- Ensuring that people who are undertaking and leading activities have the appropriate skills and knowledge to manage proactively and effectively.
- Looking beyond the organisation itself, and understanding where the interactions between the community, EMOs and other institutions (such as government), need to be managed and who needs to manage these.
- Upper level advocacy support and commitment to the D&I agenda over the longer term.
- A pragmatic approach where organisational champions and leaders are able to respond to, capitalise and leverage opportunities as they arise.
- The development of collaborative and individual narratives that take the conversation 'beyond the numbers and quotas' to tell stories that connect people to each other and 'humanise' risk so that it is understood and valued.

Inclusion is not about being permissive. It is about understanding the formation of new boundaries and who should decide those boundaries. The diversity conversation is also not one conversation. It is the coming together, and inclusion, of many different voices so a collaborative outcome can be negotiated.

This document presents case studies and examples of best practice and knowledge that have been collated with experts within EMOs who were part of this study. As practice is evolving rapidly, its purpose is to provide reference points for practitioners to support broader development of the D&I agenda. They show that organisations are learning and building as they go, and that some of the best resources the EMS have are their practitioners. It also provides resource materials that have been developed to support D&I practitioners by the EMS and other industries.

This document is a support document for the *Diversity and inclusion framework for emergency management policy and practice* (Young and Jones, 2020), which provides overarching concepts, principles and processes that guide management activities. As a result, it should be read in conjunction with the framework.

BACKGROUND

The 'Diversity and inclusion: building strength and capability' project was undertaken to assist the understanding and practice of D&I in the EMS through the identification of current measurement, strengths, barriers, needs, and opportunities in EMOs and the community.

The key need identified in the scoping phase of this project was to understand what effective D&I is, and what this means for EMOs in terms of practice and measurement. This has become the project's primary focus. We developed a definition of effective diversity to guide the project, which is:

> 'The result of interactions between organisations and individuals that leverage, value and build upon characteristics and attributes within and beyond their organisations to increase D&I, resulting in benefits that support joint personal and organisational objectives and goals over a sustained period of time' (Young et al., 2018, p19).

The project examined D&I systemically through a values, narratives and decision making context across organisational, community and economic themes, using case studies. Aspects of diversity being examined were: culture and ethnicity, gender, demographic status (age and education), and disability (physical). These were considered through the key drivers outlined in the following section on context, which are currently shaping current and future EMOs and their communities.

This project had three phases:
1. Understanding the context in which D&I exists in EMOs and the community
2. Development of a D&I framework suitable for the EMS
3. Testing and utilisation of the framework.

The aim of this research was to develop a practical framework tailored to the EMO context that built upon and leveraged current strengths and expertise within the EMS. Research was developed collaboratively with our end user group as part of our research process. The purpose is to support better management and measurement of D&I by providing a basis for more effective evidence-based decision making.

RESEARCH APPROACH

Our team at Victoria University uses an established, end user-based methodology called 'working from the inside out', which was developed in 2006. This approach uses systemic analysis that integrates research into decision making as part of the research process. This process co-designs and develops the research and its outputs with the end users to ensure that research products are fit-for-purpose, and able to be used in their decision-making context. Key phases of this process are shown in Figure 1.

Integration into end user context

Review and testing

Development of output

Knowledge collection and synthesis

Co-design

End user context

End user need
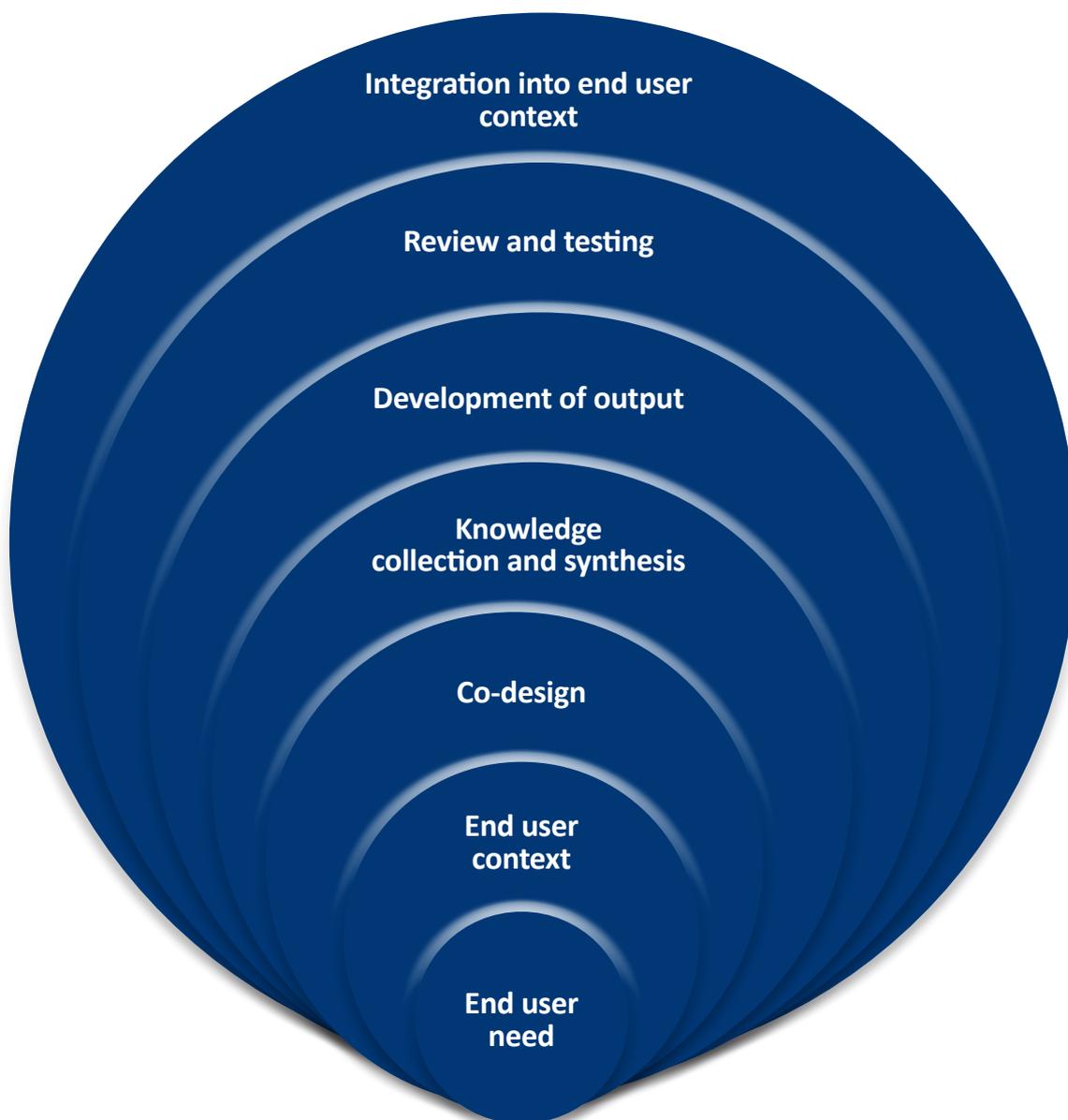
Figure 1: Implementation phases of end user-based research (Young, 2016)

This transdisciplinary approach combines different academic methodologies with end user knowledge. Ongoing communication and feedback are central to this process from the beginning of the research process. Outputs are tailored towards the decision making context of our end users, and the collation and integration of end user knowledge into decision making systems is a key part of our research. The values that underpin this process are trust, acknowledgement and respect for others and their knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Addressing D&I as part of organisational risk management is part of the broader agenda of actively managing the many changes affecting the EMS. This means that the characteristics required for managing D&I risk are compatible with those required for managing systemic change, so investment in D&I at the organisational scale will also build resilience in organisations and support the change process.

Essential aspects of D&I management identified by the project are:

- Upper leadership support and organisational commitment to ensure that activities are supported, reinforced and resourced.
- Appropriate capabilities and skills across the workforce to undertake planning and implementation of activities.
- A risk-literate workforce who are able to assess the human, social and innovation risks associated with D&I, and understand how they relate to their day-to-day tasks and the ongoing management of natural hazard risk.
- Appropriate systems and processes to support effective management, monitoring and evaluation of human, social and innovation risk.
- An authorising environment, physically and culturally, where leaders and managers feel enabled and empowered to act.
- A mandate to operate where there is the social infrastructure, support and trust needed to enable program delivery.
- Understanding people's motivations and the values that support D&I. People need to make the choice to be inclusive, but this cannot be dictated. Suitable management skills are therefore needed to guide people through this process and maintain the change.

D&I management is complex because it goes to the core of personal and group identity, the narratives that shape these, and the values and motivations that inform decisions and actions. This requires specific people and cultural skills, as cultural change within organisations can be an uncomfortable and sometimes painful process. Managers also need to distinguish the different management approaches available (e.g. command and control, inclusive, strategic), and understand how and when they are best applied.

The task of embedding D&I into organisational systems and structures is intrinsically entwined with building organisational capability and skills. The most direct way to do this is to integrate D&I risk into organisational risk management planning systems and processes. This requires four areas of activity – risk ownership, literacy, capability and capacity, and the systems and structures to carry this out (Figure 2) – that are detailed in the overarching *Diversity and inclusion framework for emergency management policy and practice* (Young and Jones, 2020). All levels within an organisation need to understand and accept responsibility, and identifying and addressing capability and skills gaps is also important during this process.

- Understanding
- Acceptance
- Responsibility
- Agency

Ownership

Risk literacy

- Education and training
- Engagement and communication
- Ongoing learning

Systems and structures

Capability and capacity

- Physical structures
- Culture
- Social structures and governance (formal and informal)
- Organisational and community systems and structures

- Workforce skills and capabilities (paid and volunteer)
- Community capability and capacity
- Resources
- Strategic development

Figure 2: Key activities that support embedding D&I risk into existing systems (Young and Jones, 2020)

The following management aims have been identified:

- Develop inclusive relationships that: (a) support effective collaborations and partnerships; and (b) establish trust within and between organisations and communities.
- Support the ongoing development of awareness, new knowledge and ways of thinking that lead to confident decision making, and agency to act across all areas of emergency management.
- Develop organisational structures, systems, capability and skills that integrate inclusive management suitable for diverse cohorts with different needs.
- Value, respect and reward the attributes and skills that lead to the inclusive management of social and human risk.
- Develop and apply strategic and operational programs capable of transforming emergency management systems that can quickly respond to emerging needs across the planning, prevention, response and recovery spectrum.
- Increase community and organisational trust and wellbeing that contributes to the ongoing management and mitigation of human and social risks associated with diverse cohorts.

The following sections cover the different components of the framework shown in Figure 3. There is a section each for strategic change and implementing programs, while the inclusive growth component is divided into inclusive relationships, inclusive communication and inclusive practice for safer workplaces and communities.

Each section incorporates key findings from the research and fifteen industry case studies. These case studies provide examples of effective outcomes throughout the EMS. They reflect the variability of D&I practice and the different contexts and approaches that are used. They also illustrate the importance of not only acting at a context level, but working as and being part of the emergency management system.

Figure 3: Diversity and inclusion framework components (Young and Jones, 2020)

This document also draws upon the following reports from the project:

- Young, C., and Jones, R N. (2020). *Diversity and inclusion framework for emergency management policy and practice*. Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC (BNHCRC), Melbourne.
- Young, C., and Jones, R N. (2019). *Risky business: why diversity and inclusion matter*. BNHCRC, Melbourne.
- Rasmussen, B., and Maharaj, N. (2019). *The economic benefits of the Indigenous Fire and Rescue Employment Strategy (IFARES) program: Fire and Rescue New South Wale*s. BNHCRC, Melbourne.
- Cormick, C. (2018). *Survey of community values*. BNHCRC, Melbourne.
- Young, C., Jones, R N., and Kumnick, M. (2018). *The long road: building effective diversity and inclusion in emergency management organisations. Case study synthesis and draft framework*. BNHCRC, Melbourne.
- Young, C., Pyke, J., Maharaj, N., Rasmussen, B., and Jones, R N. (2018). *Diversity and inclusion: building strength and capability literature review*. BNHCRC, Melbourne.

STRATEGIC CHANGE PROCESS

The implementation of effective D&I requires a long-term and strategic approach to implementation to ensure D&I are embedded across organisations and become part of day-to-day tasks. This requires a process of transformation that creates a more diverse and aware workforce culture. Decisions relating to the type of change process that is needed, how it is to be undertaken and who should undertake it, require conscious decision making and proactive management. Managers need to be able to adapt and respond effectively to changing circumstances if they are to achieve effective outcomes.

What has been effective to date

- Ensuring the organisational context and cultural status, what strengths and capabilities can be built on, and where the gaps are.
- Developing an overarching strategic vision that defines the key strategic foci – where D&I goals are embedded in the overarching vision, which is supported by a strategy, a strategic plan and defined measurements.
- Governance structures to ensure accountability and responsibility.
- Engagement of the workforce during the development of the strategic plan and vision, so they take ownership and feel they have the agency to work towards achieving this vision.
- Securing upper level leadership commitment and consistency in supporting longer term action and allocation of resources.
- Upper level leadership leading by example, while actively advocating for inclusive practice and a more diverse workforce.
- Applying a values-based approach that starts by bringing together members of the workforce to build a foundation based upon a shared understanding of what is most important to the people across the organisation.

Top tips for managers

This is a process of building awareness and changing social norms that requires developing new ways of thinking.

- People need time to develop the cognitive skills to think more strategically. This is particularly relevant to the emergency services that have highly developed skills in responding to and addressing short-term issues, command and control decision making, and the communication of those.
- A shared understanding between people throughout the organisation of how strategic plans and policies relate to them and connect to their day-to-day tasks.
- Consistency and endorsement of the narratives surrounding the strategic vision from leaders is critical to building and maintaining trust and confidence in that vision and the actions supporting it. At the same time, feedback about what is/is not working needs to be heeded.
- You need to have appropriate feedback mechanisms during the development and implementation of strategic actions to mitigate and manage fear responses associated with change.
- Narratives that enable and ensure that others see themselves in the future vision are important to reduce fear of change and resistance.
- Proactive management of established narratives, such as the hero narrative, which are deeply personal and are part of how people see themselves and their identity.
- There is no 'one size fits all' strategic vision, and each agency needs to decide and be responsible for its own.
- Leaders at all levels need to be supported so they can make informed decisions, particularly in relation to risk, and to ensure they understand and embody inclusive leadership principles and practice.

Industry examples

D&I embedded in overarching policy – Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) Strategic Action plan
https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/embridge_cache/emshare/original/public/2020/07/a2/0d4efb567/EMV%20Strategic%20Action%20Plan%2019_22.pdf

D&I embedded in overarching policy – Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) strategy and strategic plan
https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/about/Documents/Our%20Strategy/QFES-Strategic-Plan-2019-23.pdf and
https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/about/Documents/Our%20Strategy/QFES-2018-22-Strategic-Plan.pdf

Governance in strategic plan – the Victorian Government's Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) strategy and diversity and inclusion strategy
https://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/444503/Diversity-and-inclusion-strategy.pdf

See case studies 1, 2, 6, 8 and 14

IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS

Due to the hybrid nature of a workforce with volunteer and paid personnel, programs within the EMS fall broadly into the following categories:

- Organisational programs
- Community-led programs
- Sectoral programs
- Collaborative programs undertaken between EMOs and external private or public organisations or stakeholders.

When implementing programs, it is important that their context with respect to D&I is assessed, and that managers have a clear idea of the current cultural, structural, institutional and social opportunities and barriers that may be present or emerge. It is also important to ensure that you build on the strengths that already exist within organisations and communities, and that programs have the social infrastructure in place they need to operate. Internal and external collaborations, leveraging other agendas and organisational and community relationships, and collaboration are also central to program effectiveness.

What has been effective

- Ensuring that you have a mandate to operate (social contracts, trust and understandings), and that the programs support the overarching objectives of the organisation.
- Having the right authorising environment (structures, regulations, processes) that supports D&I activities.
- Building on existing strengths (e.g. identifying and supporting champions and cultural connectors within organisation and communities).
- Governance that clearly outlines and defines responsibility and accountability in relation to D&I.
- Taking time to 'prime' the target group of stakeholders, so that when you implement the program they are receptive and open to participating.
- Leading from behind and guiding – give your workforce and the community ownership, and let them lead.
- Providing a safe space where people can provide honest feedback and ask questions or raise concerns without fear of negative outcomes.
- Authentic and empathetic leadership and actions where people are willing and open to seeing things from other people's perspectives.
- Collaborative partnership projects which display respect and are of value, and benefit all parties involved.
- Training staff in areas such as negotiation, cultural awareness, dealing with conflict and having difficult conversations so they have the skills to achieve a productive outcome when faced with challenging situations and conversations.
- Leveraging community initiatives and developing programs in a way that allows the community to retain ownership and agency.
- Piloting and testing new programs rather than rolling them out wholesale across the organisation, to reduce the risk of perverse outcomes and also allow for them to be safely adjusted.
- Leadership and management from the central agency engaging directly with units or brigades and socialising issues through structured programs (e.g. the QFES Transforms Through Leadership workshops).

Top tips for managers

- There is no one right way to implement programs, and what works for one organisation will not necessarily work for others. To be effective, programs need to be adjusted to be content-specific and suit the particular context.
- Ongoing assessment, review and adjustment need to be part of all program implementation plans, and you need to address issues as they arise.
- It is important to take time to scenario plan and develop proactive management strategies to mitigate risks such as program resistance or perverse outcomes (see Attachment A for scenario examples).
- Ensure that there is a clear and impartial process for assessing and effectively managing destructive behaviours, and clear consequences and ways of assessing and effectively managing destructive behaviours, so they do not undermine core activities (see Attachment B for further details).
- It is more important to implement a program or activity properly and ensure that it is embedded, than to try to do everything at once.
- Socialisation of the concepts and ways of thinking that are new prior to starting this program can help reduce confusion and resistance.

- It is important that people are upskilled and educated prior to implementing programs – particularly at middle management level – so that they have the ability and capability required to manage them.
- Different parts of the organisation will reach different levels of maturity at different times, which needs to be accommodated as part of delivery.
- Change is the only constant – what works one year will not necessarily work the next year. Continuous monitoring, review, feedback and learning mechanisms are needed if organisations are to effectively manage and respond to surprises or unexpected outcomes associated with change.
- Think big but start small, pragmatically building a program over time.
- Where you can consolidate, bring together and work alongside other projects that have complementary aims and agendas.
- Ensure that you establish realistic expectations and a shared understanding in relation to what the program is and aims to achieve, and the time needed to achieve this.
- Avoid simplistic notions of 'good' and 'bad' and categorising people into boxes, as this can be divisive and cause conflict.
- Establish what you need to measure upfront because it is harder to collate data in retrospect than it is to capture data in real time (see Attachment E for further details).

Industry examples

Volunteering Queensland's toolkit to support building local capability, *Making it happen*: https://volunteeringqld.org.au/docs/Making_It_Happen_Toolkit.pdf

See case studies 3–5, 7, 8, 10 and 12

DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING INCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Inclusive growth is the key ingredient to developing the trust and relationships that create the environment for effective diversity to flourish. At the same time, it enhances organisational core functions and outcomes. From a management perspective, inclusion involves the act of including diverse cohorts and individuals. This is determined by diverse groups and individuals, and informed by their lived experiences, and whether they feel they belong, are safe and are valued. It requires a culture that respects and celebrates difference. This provides the social infrastructure and the mandate to operate for those who wish to include others, and the empowerment to act for those who wish to be included.

Starting with an understanding of how inclusive your organisation is can help to determine where you might need targeted activities.

What has been effective

- Starting the conversation with diverse cohorts by listening and connecting, then acting and building relationships based on what is shared rather than what is different.
- Inviting diverse cohorts to consider and articulate how they want to be included and then acting on this, rather than imposing on them how the organisation thinks they should be included.
- Create an environment where respectful curiosity of what is different is encouraged and supported.
- Having clear boundaries about what is expected in terms of conduct and interaction with others, and leadership reinforcing and modelling those behaviours. Also ensuring you have effective responses to managing difficult and damaging behaviours (see Attachment A for more information).
- Exposure to diverse people and cohorts in non-traditional learning and working environments (e.g. cooking classes), which personalises difference and helps break down stereotypical assumptions.
- Being consistent and taking time to build the relationships before you need them.
- Providing safe spaces where people can speak openly about who they are and what is important to them.
- Actively valuing, leveraging and learning from diverse people and communities (e.g. learning Indigenous burning practices, and involving people from the community as translators during events).
- Being aware of the specific needs of individuals from different groups that may pose challenges in the workplace or their communities, and having the appropriate support systems in place to reduce negative impacts, such as a sense of isolation.
- Providing a forum or communication pathway where all employees can communicate with upper level management.
- Rewarding inclusive behaviours and giving feedback to people when their contributions have made a difference and acknowledge the impact(s) they have made.

Top tips for managers

- Understand your inclusion and cultural status prior to starting activities.
- How people are included should be determined by their needs. Support the development of statements of inclusion with diverse groups to provide a basis for inclusion activities.
- Be aware of framing and trigger words or phrases and actions that can result in strong emotional reactions, cause offense or unintentionally exclude people. Developing a list of dos and don'ts, and specific language and words as a reference document to support staff (see Attachment C).
- Starting small and take time to grow one conversation at a time so that programs are developed and shaped within the organisation and not imposed. People understand and accept responsibility for building inclusion.
- Find out what is most important to people (e.g. faith), what they value and how they connect as a result.
- Having the right person communicating. You need to find the connectors trusted by the community and workforce, and work with and through them.
- Understand how people's cultural and lived experience may shape how they may receive and perceive you. For example, some diverse communities have low levels of trust of government or people in uniform, while in some cultures standing too close to someone can be considered rude or makes people feel uncomfortable.
- You need to be consistent to build a genuine relationship, not just contact people when you need something from them.
- Immerse yourself in their environment. Connect through social gatherings (such as local cultural festivals), where you are part of their event.
- You need to be open to not knowing, and to avoid making assumptions about what people have to offer because of who they are.
- You need to be careful how you spotlight a person or cohort who are labelled 'diverse', as it can be unintentionally offensive, patronising or appear tokenistic (e.g. our new manger is a woman).
- It is important to be aware that those from minority cohorts, particularly those who are the first to achieve a particular status, often carry an increased sense of responsibility to be a figurehead, which can result in increased pressure and stress.
- Self-care and support is important for those who are working on these programs because this is marathon not a sprint.
- Ensure you have developed robust monitoring and evaluation upfront to monitor progress and capture benefits, so you can manage any surprises proactively and leverage opportunities that the benefits offer (see Attachment E).

Industry examples

Essex Fire Service UK's *Independent Cultural Review of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service:* https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/_img/pics/pdf_1441197562.pdf

See case studies 1–13 and 15

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Communication in the D&I space is a broad conversation. It differs from more conventional communication in that diversity is not treated as the amalgamation of difference but an accommodation, or even celebration, of this. Each conversation has its own nuance and specific focus, which needs to be understood if implementation is to be effective in that particular context. As a result, '… it is not a single conversation, but multiple conversations that need to come together' (Young et al., 2019, p3), to create an overarching narrative that supports ownership and agency to act.

Inclusive communication is also the starting point for the development of inclusive relationships and often sets the tone of that relationship. It covers the full spectrum of communication and different mediums:

- **Spoken (oral)** – conversation, presentation, meeting
- **Non-verbal (kinetic)** – body language, actions
- **Written** – stories, reports,
- **Visual** – pictures, videos, symbols, art
- **Aural** – radio, podcasts
- **Emotional/experiential** – art, trusted people. (Adapted from Young, 2014, p37.)

One of the most important factors is trust, which needs to be built and maintained over the longer term. People will not use or act on information or build relationships with people they do not trust. Communication needs to be authentic, transparent, and culturally and socially sensitive to be effective.

What has been effective

- Co-development of communication with diverse cohorts and communities.
- Ensuring managers and communicators are trained in awareness of the impact of verbal and non-verbal communication, and how these may differ due to cultural, social or positional power contexts.
- Context-specific, targeted and tailored communication for different levels of the workforce and community.
- Using the right people to communicate different messages with different cohorts, and being aware of who should speak to whom and when.
- Understanding and accommodation of specific needs people may have, such as low literacy, English language and comprehension skills, or reading or hearing difficulties.
- Ensuring that managers have appropriate skills to facilitate difficult conversations to avoid them becoming 'toxic'.
- Having a script (a line or something people can respond with) that is agreed upon by everyone to respond to difficult situations where people may find it hard to speak out. For example, 'I am not ok with that' in response to someone displaying offensive language or behaviours.
- Using diverse cohort skills in volunteer organisations to translate and act as key contact points for diverse cohorts and communities.
- Communicating the benefits and outcomes of programs, such as economic benefits or reduction in risk to organisations and communities.
- Personalised and accessible communication from upper level leadership with those at all levels of the organisation.

Top tips for managers

- Don't assume everyone will have the same understanding of what words and phrases mean. How they are heard or understood can depend upon a number of factors, which are influenced by the values, and the cultural and social context of that person or community.
- Community communicators understand their communities, but may not understand natural hazard risk fully. It is important to ensure that these communicators are supported and understand the information they are conveying.
- People need to retain ownership of their stories and knowledge. You need to ensure you have permission to share their stories and knowledge, and that they approve of how it will be used and communicated.
- You need to be aware of the consequences of highlighting a certain community or diverse person (particularly if it is a deficit story), as this can have unintended consequences, such as reinforcing bias or creating additional attention that may not be welcomed by that community or person. For example, commenting publicly that people from a specific community have caused a fire when it was an accident.
- Don't assume because someone is a communications person that they understand how to communicate with diverse communities or diversity issues. This is a specialised skill.

- Take time to learn from and understand who you are communicating with, and find different ways of learning such as sharing stories or food or actively participating in an activity together.
- Physical communication is particularly important, and you need to understand not only how your actions may be interpreted, but also how these can differ in culturally and socially diverse cohorts (e.g. in some cultures it is not respectful to look directly at others). (See Attachments C and D for further information.)
- Don't make assumptions, and be honest about what you don't know. Seek advice from those who you want to communicate with and act on it.
- Be aware of generational and cultural preferences in terms of communication and what is likely to be most effective. For example, younger people tend to preference digital media, while in some regional areas, older people prefer mediums such as radio (noting that potential loss of communication also needs to be managed).
- Your actions speak louder than words. People become confused if you say one thing and then act another way. For example, saying 'I am an inclusive leader', and then using positional power or ignoring diverse cohorts.

Industry examples

Fire and Rescue NSW's *Protect your mob***:** https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=897

Life Saving Victoria's multicultural water safety information: https://lsv.com.au/multicultural/water-safety-information/

Melbourne's Metropolitan Fire Brigade's *Our stories***:** https://www.ourstorymfb.org.au/our-stories

See case studies 2–7, 9–11 and 13–15

EMBEDDING INCLUSIVE PRACTICE TO CREATE A SAFER WORKPLACE AND COMMUNITY

Embedding inclusion across organisations takes a whole-of-system approach, and as proposed by the overarching D&I framework, the best systems to start with are organisational and natural hazard risk management. Organisations need to work systematically to embed practice in their formal organisational, regulatory and institutional structures, and informal social and cultural structures. This takes time to achieve and needs to be maintained for a reasonable period of time before it can be deemed effective. Due to the limited number of programs applied across the sector, and lack of time for them to show sustained outcomes, it is only possible to identify specific programs or groups who have been effective within their area of operation, and how these have progressed the agenda.

What has been effective

- Mapping your organisational system and detailing where the opportunities lie to leverage or embed D&I in current systems. For example, including social and human risk associated with D&I during organisational reviews of risk, when strategies are being formulated, or incorporating inclusive behaviours in codes of conducts.
- Proactive management when there are opportunities. For example, changing a process in relation to early identification of vulnerable employees to support active intervention.
- Ensuring you have the organisational structures in place to support a long-term approach. For example, a strategy, implementation plans and governance structures.
- Working with the workforce to build capability, skills and understanding until it is embedded in organisational behaviours. Ensuring that the workforce understands what inclusion is, how it relates to their core tasks, and the benefits of a more diverse and inclusive workforce.
- Embedding and articulating through other agendas, such as wellbeing, resilience and capability, which have synergies with inclusion.
- Committed leadership support and commitment to change organisational culture and systems over the longer term.
- Being open to trying something different. For example, using lateral entry and external recruitment to increase representation of women in management level positions.
- Facilitating authentic collaboration across the organisation and with external stakeholders to achieve outcomes.

Top tips for managers

- You need to ensure people understand the core purpose is to create a safer workplace, and that they understand how it relates to their day-to-day tasks and community safety.
- As social and human risk has not been a formal aspect of risk training in many organisations, you may have to reinforce new concepts repeatedly. Providing ongoing training is important.

- You need to be ready to capitalise and leverage opportunities when they arise as part of other changes that may happen. For example, COVID-19 has meant that people have had to work from home, and this has advanced flexible work arrangement options.
- You need to encourage other people to identify where and how they can embed inclusive practice in their work, workplace systems and processes, and ensure that they have agency to act.
- Look for different ways to build capability in your current workforce. For example, having a diverse member of your community mentor members of your workforce, and having members of the community and workforce collaborate on appropriate communication materials.
- Acknowledge and address negative behaviours that create risk, and work to positively reinforce good behaviours.
- Develop less formal knowledge sharing opportunities so people can share their experience, expertise and knowledge to support capability building as new knowledge is developed.

Industry examples

NSW Government's *A capability development framework for NSW emergency management sector*, an example of how D&I has been integrated into the policy risk framework: https://www.emergency.nsw.gov.au/Documents/Capability%20 Development%20Framework%202020.pdf

See case studies 1 and 14

RECOMMENDED READING AND RESOURCES

General information

Diversity Council of Australia
Diversity Council Australia (DCA) is the independent not-for-profit peak body leading D&I in the workplace. They provide unique research, inspiring events and programs, curated resources and expert advice across all diversity dimensions to a community of member organisations. https://www.dca.org.au/about-dca

Workplace Gender Equality Agency
The Workplace Gender Equality Agency is an Australian Government statutory agency created by the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*. The agency is charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces. They provide advice, practical tools and education to help them improve their gender performance. Their staff are workplace gender equality specialists and provide industry-specific advice. https://www.wgea.gov.au/

Disability Australia Resource Unit (DARU)
DARU is as a dedicated resource unit funded to work with disability advocacy organisations to promote and protect the rights of people with disability. They also develop and provide training, and informed and up-to-date information about issues affecting people with disability in Victoria.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Welcome to Country app
The app was created by Aboriginal company Weerianna Street Media and provides videos in relation to Traditional Owners' culture and heritage protocols right across the Australia. It uses GPS data from the device to work where the users are in relation to the country they are entering.
https://apps.apple.com/au/app/welcome-to-country-australian/id1005047597

Our language website
This website provides a range of resources which provide information on aboriginal language and culture.
http://ourlanguages.org.au/

Working with Indigenous Australians, First Nations people and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities – practice tips
http://www.workingwithindigenousaustralians.info/content/Practice_Implications_8_Practice_Tips.html

Communication and engagement

International Association of Public Participation (iap²)
https://www.iap2.org.au/resources/diversity-and-inclusion/

Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience's *Community engagement for disaster resilience handbook*
https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/handbook-community-engagement/

The Victorian Government's *LGBTIQ+ inclusive language guide*
https://www.vic.gov.au/inclusive-language-guide

How to be disability inclusive (DARU)
https://www.daru.org.au/how-to-be-disability-inclusive

Monitoring and evaluation

Recommended reading and resources for monitoring and evaluation are listed in Attachment E: Measurement.

Risk and innovation practice

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) *ISO 13000: Risk management process guidance*
https://www.iso.org/iso-31000-risk-management.html

ISO 56002:2019 Innovation management – innovation management system – guidance
https://www.iso.org/standard/68221.html

Change management and strategy implementation

Nauheimer, H. (1997). *The change management toolbook. A collection of tools, methods and strategies*
https://www.change-management-toolbook.com/downloads and at: https://www.change-management-toolbook.com/.

Neale, S. (n.d). *Implementing ambitious strategies – a framework for identifying the appropriate level of engagement and resourcing for your strategy*
https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:773ae2c3-6aae-46cc-a39e-eec20da0b602

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OECD. (2016b). OECD Insights: human capital – the bigger picture, Chapter 6. https://www.oecdilibrary.org/docserver/97892640290957en.pdf?expires=1564550577&id=id&accname=ocid42013661&checksum=250293FA4F7CAF0AC6E83809A49D7A0B (accessed 1 June 2019)

Young, C., and Parry, N. (2020). *Reimagining the workforce: organisational context assessment of inclusion and innovation in the Victorian rolling stock sector*. With contributions from Heenetigala, K. Rail Manufacturing Cooperative Research Centre, Melbourne.

Young, C., and Jones, R N. (2020). *Diversity and inclusion framework for emergency management policy and practice*. Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, Melbourne.

Young, C., Taylor, J., and Cramer, Q. (2019). *Shaping the new norm. WAFA Conference 2018 Evaluation and QFES Workshop Synthesis*. Women and Fire Fighting Australasia, Nowra.

Young, C., Pyke, J., Maharaj, N., Rasmussen, B., and Jones, R. (2018). *Diversity and inclusion: building strength and capability literature review*. Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, Melbourne.

Young, C. (2016, 5–7 July). *Working from the inside out: implementation-based research*. Poster presented at the NCCARF Climate Change Adaptation Conference, Adelaide, South Australia.

Young, C. (2014). *The problem solution framework: process guidance for adaptation practitioners*. Victoria Institute of Strategic Economic Studies (VISES) Climate Change Working Paper No. 19. Victoria University, Melbourne.

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1: DEVELOPING A FUTURE VISION FOR QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

'Strategic thinking is not a skill that many people working in emergency services come to such organisations with – and it can present quite a challenge.' — QFES Manager

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES's) *Strategy 2030* outlines the organisation's preferred future, and seeks to reflect the expectations of QFES and the community they serve. The strategy was released in mid-2019 after an eight-month process of consultation and development, with the outcome of the project to enable more proactive planning and development of their workforce.

Strategic thinking is a skill not everyone possesses, and it can differ from the shorter-term more tactical thinking that is common in emergency services. This meant the process had to be carefully designed to take people outside their comfort zones and challenge their thinking in a constructive way, enabling them to provide more strategic input. As inclusion was central to the process, it was important to deliberately engage with diverse and multiple perspectives from across the organisation, as well as from external stakeholders.

A wide cross-section of personnel were invited to participate from all levels of the organisation. This included new recruits, volunteers, long-term employees and senior staff from operational and corporate services. The team also travelled to many areas of the state to conduct focus groups with community members and small business owners, and interviews with QFES staff and volunteers. The fieldwork gave a better understanding of the different contexts in which some parts of QFES operate, as well as any unique needs they might have. The team also undertook a community insight survey to understand more fully the expectation of fire and emergency services, and the community's contribution to disaster and emergency management. This survey will continue as an annual exercise.

Four different scenarios were then developed through a series of workshops. Initially, a workshop of more than 60 people considered the drivers of change that may impact the future of QFES. The next smaller workshop laid the foundations for a third workshop of more than 120 internal and external stakeholders that fully developed the four plausible futures that QFES may have to adapt to. A survey was sent to all workshop participants and all QFES staff and volunteers to pose a series of questions related to each scenario including 'What would we do if the world was like this?'. These inputs were used in the development of the strategy, which has provided a central organisational framework, and provides primary indicators to measure progress.

Following its development, there was a subsequent extensive socialisation process to support understanding and uptake across the organisation. This included embedding discussion into departmental planning and risk workshops, developing an interactive 'Strategic Decision Lenses' tool, and aligning the department's activity to the guiding principles of *Strategy 2030*.

One of the critical aspects to achieving their outcome successfully was strong support and buy-in from the Executive and the provision of resources to enable the process. Feedback on the strategy has been positive, with managers reporting hearing people quoting lines from it in their work, which is a good indication of impact.

Implementation of the strategy is ongoing, in-line with its long-term roll-out. Key considerations that were noted as important to shaping outcomes were:
- Maintaining momentum and navigating a highly dynamic space
- Managing fatigue with organisational change
- The need for tireless leadership in supporting change programs, prior to achieving a critical mass to solidify more permanent change
- Managing expectations and the need to be prepared for resistance along the way.

Lessons learned to date from the QFES experience are:
- Be resilient and persevere
- You need to have strategies to work around blockers
- This is not a straightforward process – be prepared for the backward steps so you can continue to move forward.

A manager within CFES emphasised, 'You must have support from the top and critical mass of supporters over potential blockers of new ways of thinking.'

Overall, social and organisational change of this magnitude is difficult, and achieving a more diverse and inclusive workforce takes time. To be able to show people what is being worked towards, it is critical to be able to clearly articulate a vision of where you want to be, and to then proactively implement and manage programs and activities to get there.

The QFES 2030 vision can be found at: https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/about/Documents/Our%20Strategy/Strategy-2030-Full.pdf

CASE STUDY 2: THE AFAC CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE PROGRAM

'The program is really strong, fundamentally in its core platforms – that is tapping into powerful leaders to try and make some disruptive change.' — AFAC Manager

Leadership plays a critical role in enabling effective D&I as it shapes organisations and the cultures within them. One of the key sectoral programs for the EMS is the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council's (AFAC) Fire and Emergency Champions of Change strategy.

AFAC established the program in 2017 (then known as the Male Champions of Change), following increasing awareness within their member organisations of the need to address issues of gender inequality and the low representation of women in their workforce. In particular, it was seen as important to increase representation of women in leadership roles and frontline operational roles. The program received a high level of buy-in from the chief officers and commissioners nationally when it was launched, and has continued to provide a focus for diversity discussions at the leadership level, across the emergency services sector. It currently includes 29 members representing some 288,000 employees and volunteers across the sector.

This program focuses on developing leadership engagement at the top of organisations, so they can provide the guidance and disruptive change that will support the transformation of their organisations. As it is recognised that leadership in the sector is dominated by men, it was felt that it was important to start with a program that was specifically designed for organisations with these characteristics. It was also apparent early on that there would be no 'one size fits all' approach to how different agencies within AFAC would adopt the program.

As different organisations progress at different paces, this program works to support leaders to be able to act and progress in their specific contexts. The program methodologies developed by the Male Champions of Change strategy work to create awareness and understanding in leaders of their own leadership style, and how this can be enhanced to create greater D&I. It encourages constant listening and adjustments as a basis for ongoing learning. Further, it considers where the pace of change can be accelerated through leadership action taken at a sector level.

Throughout 2017–18, a series of 'Listen and Learn' forums were held with staff and volunteers across the sector, to better understand barriers to gender equality and opportunities for improvement. This led to seven 'action groups' being formed to lead change on particular issues:

1. Inclusive leadership
2. Flexible workplaces
3. Talent development
4. Communication
5. Community
6. Systems
7. Reporting.

These action groups have helped leaders to better understand particular issues and capture the different ways organisations are working to address them, while identifying opportunities for collective and disruptive action across the membership.

One of the main benefits of the program is that it provides a consistent point of focus and keeps leadership attention on the important issues. Other benefits that had been observed by the conveners of this this program are:

- Improved awareness of appropriate language use and behaviours across the sector
- Increased representation of women as presenters and panellists at major conferences
- An increased level of understanding of the issues, challenges and nuances involved creating more diverse and inclusive organisations
- Increased representation of women in the Champions of Change program.

Another major benefit of the program has been the improvement of data collection and measurement of gender participation in EMS organisations, so that the sectoral progress is able to be tracked more effectively and targeted opportunities for improvement identified. AFAC can now confidently report that in 2019, members achieved gender balance or an increase in women's representation across 77.6% of employment categories. It can also show that 40.1% of new employees were women, which has led to a figure of 24.2% women's representation overall (up from 22% in 2018).

In the future, the program will be seeking to support embedding inclusive practice in organisations, to ensure that the increasing diversity is effectively managed and can be maintained. Another area of interest is diversifying beyond the current focus from women's participation in the workforce to wider D&I issues.

AFAC will continue facilitating D&I conversations, examining what does and doesn't work, and responding to new research and new ideas that are emerging to continue to support the development of leadership and practice across the sector.

CASE STUDY 3: WELLBEING PROGRAM – FIRE AND RESCUE NSW

'What became apparent really quickly was that everyone had a piece of the puzzle.'

Cultural change and transformation underpin effective management of D&I. The growth of awareness in the importance of mental health programs supporting emergency services workers is something that developed over the last decade, and has become a key agenda for policy makers and practitioners. This change has been driven at two levels – through the AFAC workforce management group and within individual organisations.

The sector has seen cultural shifts over the past decade, from a predominantly 'blokey' and para-military type culture – to one that is becoming more diverse with an awareness of the need to address wellbeing issues. This has driven more and varied support to be put in place and, with reduced stigma, generated open conversation across the sector. One of the drivers in the need to address wellbeing issues for FRNSW was the exposure to complex incidents, for example, the 1977 Granville train disaster and the 1989 Grafton bus crash.

'There were a couple of significant incidents – the Granville train disaster and north coast bus crash – that exposed a large number of emergency services to trauma.' — Emergency Management Board Member

One of the earliest support programs undertaken was peer-to-peer, based on the idea that if you talk about things it will lessen the impact. This has been running informally in many EMOs for quite some time, but it has evolved over time and, for FRNSW, is now run by volunteers from within the organisation, supported by professionals, which has generated greater trust in the service.

These volunteers undertake yearly training, which provides an opportunity for them to get together and share stories, ideas and be updated on the latest developments in the field. The training sessions also include presentations from a range of experts on stress or trauma, such as the Black Dog Institute, sharing the latest research and practice in the field, as it has been recognised that you need to develop specific skills to support staff effectively.

Significant lessons were also learned regarding 'non-operational' impacts to people, such as changes to the workforce. It was learned from the efforts to increase the participation rates of women working in fire and rescue, requiring effort to both providing support to the women entering the organisation and to reduce hostility from a small group of existing employees. Early initiatives concentrated on closing down anti-women sentiments – but this was shown not to be fully effective. Assessment and review of the program indicated it was driven by the program being perceived as a threat rather than a benefit. This has become part of the ongoing discussion of the changing identity of firefighting agencies, and the need to ensure that those in the workforce understand what is being done and why.

'You need to listen to your workforce and listen to their fears, and try and understand what drives what they are saying.' — FRNSW Manager

The focus since the introduction of the wellbeing program has moved from understanding the impact on the workforce to developing programs to make the workforce more resilient and aware of how to manage negative impacts. The AFAC workforce management group now has wellbeing as a key part of its agenda, and has a dedicated group focusing on mental health and wellbeing.

'Funding is better spent on prevention rather than cures.' — Emergency Management Board Member

There is also now a general acceptance of the importance of wellbeing and programs that have been established across the sector supporting this priority. This continues to evolve, and there is a need for ongoing measurement, assessment and improvement.

Senior executives within EMOs have said, 'Ten years ago there was no way you could have the conversations we are having now, and it has been important to have AFAC as a peak body supporting this agenda with the agencies'.

Key factors that that have been important for the programs:

- Face-to-face support from others who understand your context is vital for building trust
- It is important to listen and understand people from their perspective
- Complex change can take a generation – you need to plan for the long-term
- Don't start with what you can't do – rather start with what you can do
- Understand the environment and workforce you are working with and open up conversations, don't shut them down
- Change is difficult, and it is important to understand how wellbeing needs are evolving, and ensure that you adapt and develop programs over time to address emerging issues
- It is important to have other institutions stakeholders such as unions, government and mental health practitioners involved, and to work with them closely.

Male Champions of Change impact report 2019/2020: https://malechampionsofchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Fire-Emergency-Impact-Report-2019.pdf

CASE STUDY 4: ALLIES OF INCLUSION PROGRAM – QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (QFES)

Allies of Inclusion: Angela Carss, Deputy Commissioner Mike Wassing and Matthew Law; and (inset) the Allies of Inclusion tag. Images courtesy QFES.

'It is important to be proactive within the QFES to ensure we are an inclusive, diverse and safe organisation.'
— QFES Inspector

Effective organisational change can take time, and the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) are playing the long game in becoming a more diverse and inclusive organisation, through initiatives such as their QFES Allies of Inclusion program. The program is a targeted approach to increase the critical mass of leaders within the organisation who understand inclusion, and are willing to advocate for change.

All those who sign up to the Allies of Inclusion program commit to supporting a safe and inclusive workplace for all staff and volunteers. They also support being willing to challenge language, attitudes and behaviours that are not conducive to an inclusive workplace culture.

The program recognises the importance of providing a workplace culture that respects the diverse perspectives of QFES people, where everyone feels safe to bring 'their voice', and where leaders work with their people to generate creative solutions to complex problems.

The program was not released with a big launch, rather, it has been rolled out quite slowly, building networks and gaining supporters. This often means simply starting conversations with colleagues about inclusion and diversity in the workplace. And as the number of Allies of Inclusion grows across the organisation, conversations across the organisation change, as does the language used and ultimately behaviours. An important outcome is that people have more ownership of their behaviours and take personal responsibility for their actions. This is based around a bottom-up approach to growing a strong network and creating successful organisational change, which is supported by research.

A fundamental theme of the program is the importance of defining what diversity means – valuing everybody and the different perspectives they bring to the workplace. How we manage those differences is also important.

The core activities that define the benefits of the program are:
- Being research-based
- Undertaking a pilot to prime staff
- Having a staged roll-out over several years
- Recruiting Allies as champions of change
- Targeting leaders at all levels of the organisation
- Building D&I principles into the core capabilities of leaders
- Getting senior leaders on board.

To date, most new Allies have come to the program from information sessions conducted across the organisation, rather than from conversations and referrals from existing Allies, as was initially supposed; though this has helped shape the way the program is being rolled out.

When registering as an Ally for Inclusion, people can also nominate if they want to be involved in any of the Workforce Resource Groups (WRGs). Such groups include First Peoples, Women, Pride, All Cultures, and Male Champions of Change. Membership of these groups is not mandatory, and while some people choose to participate in multiple groups, others choose none.

The program also recognises that while some changes may occur quickly – particularly those that are already a part of wider social norms – others may be much slower and need a longer term approach.

The impacts of COVID-19 have been seen as having helped the roll-out of the program, as it forced many rapid and widespread adaptions and changes across the organisation – as it did across society – which has made accepting change easier.

The benefits of the program, like its roll-out, will be measured over the long-term. Small steps are helping QFES better understand the diversity of the community, and how to connect with that community better.

CASE STUDY 5: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT – VICTORIA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

'If you create a place that people feel safe and that they belong, they will want to come and they will want to stay.' – Unit Manager

Volunteering is a critical aspect of the emergency management workforce, and management in this area provides opportunity and challenges. Traditional leadership skills for the EMS tend to focus on team building and task-orientated activities. To enable a more diverse and inclusive workforce, however leaders need to broaden those skills to include attracting and recruiting for more diversity.

The benefits of doing this can be seen in organisations such as the Essendon SES, who while only having 25 to 30 active operational members, represent a range of ages, professional backgrounds, gender and cultural backgrounds. This includes a 40% representation of women.

The unit has a specific focus on building and developing people, and has found that a more diverse workforce is better able to challenge each other and also able to respond better to changing community needs. The Essendon SES unit actively recruits to have a diversity of views, but is also open about needing new recruits to be able to fill different roles, and to be able to work together in strenuous and stressful conditions.

About 120 to 130 people a year apply for positions in the unit, but as positions are limited, they need to be carefully assessed to ensure that they have the right attributes for the job and will be able to work well with the current team, and their local community. It is also important that they are willing to stay (allowing always for changes in life circumstances), and that the environment within the unit is right so that they choose to stay.

Some of the strategies that the unit has undertaken to support diversity and inclusiveness in the unit, is a more formalised recruitment process, whereby applicants fully understand the demands of the job, and are assessed as to how well they will fit into the team. For this reason, the unit has developed information sessions to provide more accessible information for people, better describing what the unit is trying to achieve, and the workplace culture the unit aspires to so that they can make an informed choice about whether they want to commit to being part of the unit.

'People don't feel good about themselves if they are working in a rundown facility, they don't have uniforms that fit them, or don't have equipment that works when they need it.' – Unit Manager

One of the key components of creating a positive working environment has been the SES's focus to improve the physical work environment, tools and equipment that team members work with. The unit also provides a positive work culture where its diverse workforce are actively encouraged to be creative and innovative in their approaches to the work. Things that don't work are openly discussed, and they work together as a group to problem solve.

They have developed a number of different ways to engage the community to increase their preparedness. One of their initiatives is a program called 'Your Life in a Bag', which is a carry bag that includes all the necessities that people often forget to take when they need to evacuate their house in a hurry. This includes items such as medicines and a USB with valuable documents. They have also used Lego as a tool for working with younger children.

Key understandings that support the program's effectiveness:
- Proactive leadership is important – you can't wait for things you need; you have to plan and work pragmatically towards obtaining what you need to support your unit
- You need to understand and manage expectations of what the community expects from you and what potential recruits expect from the organisation
- You have to trust people and let them take responsibility for their actions
- You have to provide a safe environment that supports diverse ways of thinking and creative solutions.

CASE STUDY 6: RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE DIVERSITY – FIRE AND RESCUE NSW

Senior Firefighter Erin Pogmore, Leading Firefighter Joseph Zaouk and Senior Firefighter Tara Burton. Courtesy Fire and Rescue NSW.

'Long-term firefighters have said that having females there changes the dynamic for the better. Improved behaviours, better attitudes, greater respect towards colleagues, as well as a more positive and inclusive culture is becoming apparent.'

A diversity of recruitment strategies can effectively increase the diversity of skills, capability, gender, and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds amongst new recruits in emergency services. This has been demonstrated by Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) through a refined and strategic approach to recruitment. Applicants are put through four levels of testing, rather than the traditional two levels that only tested cognitive ability and work safety, which tended to favour male applicants. The four categories that are now tested are:

1. Cognitive ability
2. Work safety
3. Emotional intelligence
4. Work reliability.

The emotional intelligence and work reliability tests have expanded the opportunity to recognise previous experience, skills and capabilities that candidates can bring to the job. The broadened selection criteria has also meant that more women, and candidates from cultural and diverse backgrounds, have passed the recruitment tests, bringing skills that are more needed in a modern emergency service, which services the community.

Research has shown that women and men join for different reasons, with female candidates often having a stronger sense of wanting to serve the community. The new recruitment strategy has also assisted in removing built-in biases, and allowing applicants to complete online psychometric tests has improved results for diverse candidates.

Feedback from long-term fire fighters is that increased numbers of females improve behaviours, with greater respect towards colleagues, and a more positive and inclusive culture.

The changes to the recruitment testing take into account the fact that emergency services work has changed considerably, with the need for traditional and technical and physical skills being replaced with more people-based capabilities. Roles often entail working with the community more than fighting fires. It is estimated that a metropolitan firefighter in New South Wales spends only 4% of their working time engaged in firefighting.

Another change to the recruitment process is that recruits are interviewed individually across five panels of two people – a process akin to speed dating – with each panel having a recruiter and a firefighter, being diverse by gender, and having panelists from Indigenous and CALD backgrounds.

Applicants are then divided into small teams to complete a team task, so recruiters can observe how well they work together and respect other points of view.

It is important to have a diversity of skill and capabilities amongst recruits to address the more diverse work challenges that confront emergency services. These include all the capabilities needed of a first responder to emergencies, such as medical, cognitive and emotional intelligence, problem-solving and an ability to work effectively with the diversity of communities.

As a result of the changes to the recruitment practices, women now represent about 40% of the 160 annual new recruits to Fire and Rescue NSW. In addition, about 23% have a CALD background, and about 3% are from Indigenous backgrounds.

Recruitment strategies need to take into consideration many local issues, but by using solid research and consultation, FRNSW has demonstrated that it is possible to improve the diversity of emergency services staff by implementing more diverse recruitment strategies.

CASE STUDY 7: MULTICULTURAL WATER SAFETY PROGRAMS – LIFE SAVING VICTORIA

'You're helping people and you're helping the community out too.' – Program participant

Life Saving Victoria's (LSV) Multicultural Projects department provides an array of water safety education programs to the state's varied CALD population. These includes newly arrived refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, and international students. These programs not only create greater awareness of water safety, but due to their inclusive bottom-up nature, have assisted community cohesion, particularly in newly arrived CALD cohorts.

CALD community members are five times more likely to drown while swimming than others. This highlighted the need to work more closely with multicultural communities to increase awareness of water safety. This program was initiated in 2007 in response to the increasing number of drownings involving multicultural Victorians.

Using qualified instructors who are skilled in CALD education, the programs seek to ensure that all Victorians are water safety literate, through courses that are tailored for participants with low levels of English and/or limited swimming ability. The lessons comprise of a structured mix of theoretical and practical activities to meet participants' abilities and needs.

Other programs focus on educating participants in how to provide basic emergency responses to others. For example, the 'Multicultural Resuscitate a Mate' program teaches participants the steps to follow in an emergency situation, and the knowledge to potentially save a life.

They also provide programs to support people seeking a career in the aquatic industry, and provide training in beach lifesaving, pool lifeguarding and swimming lessons. LSV supports candidates to gain the necessary qualifications, as well as helping them to obtain employment in the aquatic sector, and they have also become a point of referral for potential employees from other organisations seeking to diversify their workforce in the EMS.

As community cohesion is also an aim of the program, they run programs focused on beach soccer and beach cricket, which support inclusion and settlement of new arrivals, and help them actively enjoy the beach environment.

This has been a process of ongoing learning for LSV since they started. The program started as a pilot, which was adapted and evolved into a substantial program with multiple initiatives that engages with 22,000 people a year. During this time, LSV have trialed a number of approaches to creating engagement. One of the most effective methods for connecting with multicultural communities was supporting the development of local CALD role models and spokespeople.

LSV regularly calls on graduates from its 13-year training and employment program to promote water safety and settlement benefits of the initiative, with a pool of over 450 youth and adults who have been trained for roles in the aquatics industry and emergency services over this period. In 2013 and 2014, six teens and five adult high achievers from Chinese, Afghan, Thai, Burmese, and Bosnian communities were selected as CALD Ambassadors for LSV. They were then provided with two days of communications, presentation skills and media training, to learn how to share their stories with media, and inspire CALD and non-CALD communities. In 2020, it created an online 'Where are they now?' webinar series to showcase inspiring settlement stories from some of the many multicultural youth who have graduated from its employment and settlement pathway over the past decade.

Key to its engagement strategy is the partnering with numerous CALD agencies, schools and community groups who represent and in turn introduce CALD participants into the LSV activity suite. Over 400 CALD organisations now contribute to LSV's initiative.

There have been a number of benefits that have resulted from these programs including:
- Participants from the role model program helping to keep people in the community safe
- Increased participation of CALD community members with the program
- Increased community cohesion and participation of CALD communities with LSV
- Employment of those who have participated in programs in the aquatic industry
- Employment pipeline to other sectors such as ambulance and fire protection
- Development of specific expertise.

CASE STUDY 8: WOMEN AND FIREFIGHTING AUSTRALASIA INC. (WAFA)

"If there was no WAFA there would still be women in the job, but probably less and probably not as happy."— WAFA Leader

Australia had one of the first all-women firefighting crews in the world, the Armidale Amazons that operated from 1901 to about 1905, and there were auxiliary firefighting units during World War 2. However, post-war, women were specifically excluded from working in firefighting roles until the introduction of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*. This means that women's inclusion in the firefighting workforce is relatively new, and there is a need to grow specific knowledge and structures that support this.

The WAFA network is an organisation that works with individual members and organisations across the Australasia region to build and promote women's inclusion and representation in firefighting. It is run by volunteers from the emergency services organisations. Since the first forum Women in Firefighting, held in Sydney in 2005, WAFA Inc. has grown to encompass over 130 members.

WAFA's mission is to build confidence and empower women to achieve their full potential and be supported, as women, in their various roles within firefighting. They have achieved this through providing a platform for women and those who want to support this agenda across the sector to come together, support and advocate on issues.

One of the challenges for women in firefighting is that whilst representation of women is increasing, according to various reports, they still represent only about 5% of the paid workforce. As a result, it is not uncommon for women to feel isolated or be the only woman in their brigade, particularly in regional areas. WAFA has provided a supportive network that connects these women so their specific needs and issues can be openly discussed. WAFA has also played an important role in being able to present the specific needs of women in firefighting from their members' perspective more broadly across the sector so that it can be included in larger agendas.

'If you can get a different type of bloke coming in and they are accepted, then it is easier for women who are accepted too.' – WAFA Leader

WAFA's key activity has been a biennial conference since 2005. The conference has continued to grow, and in 2019 it was attended by over 230 participants from across the region. One of the key outcomes for many women who attend the conferences is the coming together as a group to discuss, workshop and share knowledge. It has also provided a unique opportunity to focus on women-specific issues in a space where women are the predominant voice in the room. For any minority group in the workplace, this can be greatly empowering.

WAFA also produced two reports 'Shaping the New Norm' and the '2018 Conference Outcomes Statement' following the 2019 conference, which have provided important data and insights into the status of women in the workforce and emerging needs. These documents have been important in being able to show and share the knowledge WAFA has built.

Key lessons learned include:
- It is important to document progress and the agendas clearly so they can be shared with others.
- Building understanding through sharing experiences and knowledge is powerful and empowering.
- People who are a minority need a space where they feel accepted and safe enough to be able to talk openly about issues.
- Small things can make a big difference, for example personal protection gear that is designed for specifically for women.
- You have to stick at it because this type of change takes time.

Since its inception, WAFA has focused on addressing issues that are important for women in firefighting such as childcare and an inclusive working environment where women's needs are considered (e.g. the provision appropriate facilities/PPE). While there has been substantial progress in supporting the needs of women in firefighting, there is still a considerable amount of work to do to ensure that women not only to enter the workforce, but are also retained.

CASE STUDY 9: PRE-RELEASE PRISONER SCHEME – NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE SOUTH AUSTRALIA

'Very few people know about the history of these people. We don't divulge that information.' – NPWSSA Manager

A National Parks and Wildlife Service South Australia (NPWSSA) program is challenging the ideas of a diverse and inclusive workforce by recruiting prisoners to work in fire brigades as a part of a pre-release initiative. The program was instigated by the State Department of Correctional Services, who was seeking to find suitable workplaces where prisoners could be employed to help them re-enter society upon their release.

A program had already been established that offered the opportunity for day-release prisoners to undertake maintenance and general up-keep duties in South Australian National Parks. However, when the early release program was first proposed, there was some nervousness amongst staff due to more direct exposure to the participants on a day-to-day basis, and the need for more direct supervision.

The program is designed to acclimatise prisoners by bringing them into the workplace as employees with the same rights and responsibilities as other employees. The staff and managers discussed concerns prior to the program starting, such as what would happen if an offender and their victim were inadvertently brought together. These issues were all worked through and applicants were carefully selected. The Victim Services Unit is consulted for advice and comment where the offender has a registered victim.

Applicants with convictions such as arson or other particular crimes were excluded. It was also challenging for some supervisors as they were unsure as to how to manage this cohort when the program started. There have also been a couple of minor challenges along the way, such as breaching certain parole conditions, but this was seen as part of the process and was carefully managed.

NPWSSA receives hundreds of applications a year for approximately 12 seasonal firefighting positions, and the participants in the scheme have to meet high standards of fitness and reliability. However, those taking part in the program have proven themselves to be as capable as those from the wider community who make the general shortlist for employment. Over time, some of the participants have gone on to be employed elsewhere, and their time in the National Parks and Wildlife Service fire brigade has provided them with a work history and confidence to participate effectively in the community.

The program has also demonstrated that there is a lot of self-worth in the work – firefighting to protect a community – and the program creates quite a strong feeling of value. Participating in the program has also changed attitudes of employees within the organisation, some of whom admitted to having preconceived ideas about what working with a prisoner would be like.

Managers have said that if you didn't know their individual backgrounds, there is no easy way to pick those on the program from the other fire crew, and you would consider them as equals with any other workers. Key factors that have made the program successful include:
- Careful selection of the applicants
- The ability of the applicant to conform to, and work within, the code of ethics for the South Australian Public Sector and culture of the team
- Open dialogue with managers and staff prior and during the program, and working through concerns and issues as they arise between both parties
- Working around barriers, such as the lack of a driver's licence or strict curfews and fire ground commitments.

CASE STUDY 10: THE INCLUSION BENEFITS OF ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS – SOUTH AUSTRALIA STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

'Families are connecting this way. Workplaces are connecting this way.' — SES Manager

Last year, the South Australian State Emergency Service's Southern Region decided to focus on developing their digital capacity for communications. The onset of COVID-19 had a profound effect on this program, as it was fast-tracked due to the need to lockdown the organisation. This resulted in a rapid roll-out of Microsoft Teams and SharePoint, across the 65 units and all business areas in their organisation, to support service delivery, whilst complying with the COVID-19 restrictions. The aim was to enable the organisation to continue to function through online meetings and training.

The team was surprised by how quickly and well those in their workforce adapted to these technologies. One aspect that supported this was the prior work the team had undertaken in relation to testing how digital platforms would work. This meant they had already selected the most suitable system for their work, and they have been able to more effectively trouble shoot challenges as they arose during the roll-out as the program was work-ready.

This program has some unexpectedly positive outcomes for inclusion. These include reinforcing positive cultural behaviours expected across a diverse network of units. This was attributed to the meetings being recorded and people being able to see and hear themselves and be more mindful of their behaviours and language as a result. They also found moderating the comments sections of meetings was another way of prompting positive and respectful behaviours.

Another key benefit is that volunteers from geographically remote units and regional areas have been able to connect with others from their Unit and District on a regular basis, and the ability to be briefed by the SES Chief Officer on key issues, such as COVID-19 changes. Being able to talk to and share their knowledge more regularly has been important because it meant they were able to see the organisation beyond their individual unit, and this reduced a sense of isolation. It has also given others the opportunity for people to connect on a different level and see beyond the role to the person. This was attributed by the team to a less formal meeting environment – where you are seeing people's homes and how they live and who they live with. The less-controlled meeting environment has shown the adaptive capacity of the workforce, as people have to adjust to random elements in meetings such as children, pets and poor internet connections. It also created a higher level of support and teamwork, as more technologically savvy individuals assisted others to navigate the new working environment. The SES team have also observed that families of volunteers have become more aware of the work that their family members do for the SES because 'it is there in their lounge rooms'.

'Sharing a part of their home environment changes the connection you have with people, and how deeply you know them.'— SES Manager

There have also been a number of unexpected wellbeing benefits observed by the team for their workforce that relate to individual health and home life. These include tangible benefits such as a reduction of travel time and travel costs. It has also provided flexible work arrangements that support particularly new parents, carers and elderly people to participate.

Contrary to concerns that these arrangements would detract from functionality, what this has shown is that not only are they effective, but they offer an opportunity to increase participation of volunteers. Education sessions were delivered on a weekly basis during this time, and it has been found to be very effective for building specific capabilities. Online sessions delivered included command and control management, swift water rescue, leadership, vertical rescue and technical capabilities.

Delivery of training courses was also significantly adjusted to enable components of courses, which were previously delivered face-to-face, to be delivered in facilitated online sessions. This provided a more spread-out delivery of the courses and reduced travel time for volunteers. This has been so well-received that many of these new arrangements will remain in place.

The original strategy for the digital program was to introduce it incrementally, to reduce negative impacts. However, the speedy implementation proved to be less problematic due to the COVID-19 requirements as it was not optional, so people had to adjust. It has been a steep learning curve for everyone involved, and 'no-blame' problem solving has been critical to this. The size of the task the implementation also required support beyond the team, and people from across the organisation have been active contributors. As a result, people have felt greater ownership of this program. In terms of the future, although the organisation will continue face-to-face meetings, digital communication is now well-embedded and will used to support greater inclusion of those across the organisation.

Lessons learned from the South Australian development and implementation of online communications include:

- Ensure you have support from the top of the organisation, and a clear mandate in terms of the systems and the program to be used.
- Expect the unexpected and don't expect everything to be perfect – you need to be prepared to learn as you go.
- Do your background work – make sure you have the right system for your organisation and you know the limitations and risks involved in its use (e.g. where data is stored and who will have access to it).
- Understand how different applications can be used, for example, closed groups are more appropriate for matters that require the group to feel safe, and open groups are more appropriate for sharing general information and knowledge.
- Don't underestimate the capabilities people have and their ability to adapt. Support and encourage your workforce to actively participate in solutions.
- Use the technology to enable personal links and inclusion, and be aware of where it can be exclusionary (e.g. shy people may find it more difficult to speak in this forum). There may be cultural, environmental or social aspects that make it harder for some people to participate.
- Establish online meeting protocols early (e.g. not eating or doing other things while you're in a session), but don't be afraid to be creative and have a bit of fun.

CASE STUDY 11: 'WE SPEAK YOUR LANGUAGE' SHORT FILMS – COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY (CFA)

Making the 'We speak your language' short films. Images courtesy CFA.

'How well we are connected with our multicultural communities determines how well you can get the job done.' — CFA Member

The need to develop deeper connections with local multicultural communities has led to the CFA developing the 'We speak your language' series of short films. The CFA used a community development approach, with the first film being made in collaboration with the Women's Cultural Friendship Group in Springvale. Members of the Thai community acted and co-scripted the film. The team felt it was important that the community had ownership of the film, and it was articulated through their voices and in their own language. The aim of the video was to educate the local community about kitchen fires, the importance of fire alarms and being prepared. They also wanted to educate the community as to the role of their organisation.

The starting point of the process was to develop a relationship with key community members. A key factor in achieving this was having a liaison officer from a multicultural background. This made it easier for those in the community to feel they could connect through common ground. Such connections can be based on faith or lived experiences of coming from another country.

Making the film was a learning experience for all those involved. The members of the community learned about the organisation and what they do, and the CFA learned more about the different cultures in their diverse communities and what was important to them. The release of the film has resulted in an active response from the community, with an increase in requests for smoke alarms, fire blankets and reading materials. Having public representation of diverse local community members in these films has also helped address concerns or misconceptions some multicultural communities have about people in uniforms.

Subsequent films focusing on Chinese and Indian communities took a different approach. These films featured Chinese and Indian members of the CFA, and told the story of why they had joined the CFA and how their specific culture is expressed through their work.

The films are publicly available and have gained good coverage in the multicultural media. There are future plans for films featuring Indonesian, Cantonese and Portuguese representatives. There are also plans to produce a short film for young people, which was initiated by the Junior CFA members who wanted to make something that spoke from their perspective.

'I think the FRV has been working very hard to increase our diversity, to make us more a great place to volunteer – because it is such as multicultural community.' — CFA Cultural Diversity Engagement Officer

There have been several benefits as a result of this process, which include:

- Breaking down barriers and making the multicultural community feel welcome in the brigade
- Increased cultural awareness of the local diverse communities within the organisation
- Building communication pathways and relationships that support better communication and partnerships with the community
- An increase in applications from cultural groups featured in the films
- Increased profile of the CFA.

One of the key learnings from the Springvale CFA's engagement with multicultural communities has been the importance of food and faith to these communities, and how these two aspects can bring different groups together.

'We should be privileged that the cultural communities have invited us into their community rather than the mindset of "they should be privileged to have us there". Sometimes, most times you need to step away from your role, your uniform and authority and enjoy the time to absorb everything about the cultural communities, it starts with listening to their survival stories.' — CFA Cultural Diversity Engagement Officer

Other learnings have been:

- Having a coordinator who is from a multicultural background has made it easier for diverse community members to find common ground, as there is a sense of a shared experience.
- To build trust with the communities you need to maintain contact over the longer term.
- Meet with communities on their terms, at their events, and listen and learn. Find out who they are, what matters to them and what their needs are.
- See if there are opportunities to help with their day-to-day problems.
- Take time to build the relationship with the community properly – often you only get one chance. If you treat it as a 'tick the box' exercise, they won't trust you and will disengage.
- Have an open mind and avoid making assumptions.

CASE STUDY 12: BENEFITS OF THE INDIGENOUS FIRE AND RESCUE EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY (IFARES) – FIRE AND RESCUE NSW

'They develop skills in teamwork, collaboration, resilience and develop supportive networks that will carry them through life.' — TAFE NSW General Manager

Fire and Rescue NSW's (FRNSW) Indigenous Fire and Rescue Employment Strategy (IFARES) is directly targeting Indigenous disadvantage through providing employment pathways, training and health outcomes. It provides an equal opportunity for Indigenous Australians to participate in the FRNSW workforce, through helping them meet the required entry standards.

IFARES is run through a partnership between FRNSW and TAFE NSW, with the collaboration of local Indigenous community members. It was launched in 2014, initially as a six-month program to help breakdown identified longstanding barriers to Indigenous recruitment into FRNSW. The pilot program consisted of 18 people, two of whom were women.

Permanent Firefighter, Peter Jensen, successful IFARES participant. Courtesy FRNSW.

With the early success of the program, it has grown annually with registrations increasing from the initial 18 to 235 in 2016. Overall, 60 Aboriginal people have been employed from the program across two fire services – FRNSW and the ACT Rural Fire Service (ACTRFS) – with one graduate winning an administration role within FRNSW. Others who have not become firefighters have gone into jobs in other areas, such as the fitness industry, and attribute their experience in FRNSW to gaining other employment opportunities.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people make up just under 3% of the population in NSW, with about 49% in employment (compared to about 62% for the overall population).

Research into barriers to Indigenous employment, that underpins the program, found that key elements to improve employment prospects included:

- Formal education and customised training
- Non-standard recruitment strategies
- Ongoing mentoring and support
- Flexible work arrangements
- Support for the families of Indigenous employees
- Dealing with racism in the workplace.

Candidates must complete Certificate III in Fitness as a minimum, which ensures that all participants meet the minimal educational requirements for recruitment. This is a key first step in passing the physical aptitude test (PAT). Once participants pass the PAT, they have to complete online psychometric testing. Candidates then face four separate FRNSW interviews, as well as completing a supervised online cognitive ability test. All participants must complete and pass all the recruitment processes, as there is no lowering the standards of recruitment procedures.

'Completing the course doesn't guarantee a position, but it has given graduates a unique insight into the job and the process.' — FRNSW Manager

In the 2019 study *The economic benefits of the Indigenous Fire and Rescue Employment Strategy (IFARES) program: Fire and Rescue New South Wales,* Rasmussen and Maharaj found that the total benefits of the program were around $8 million, with a benefit-cost ratio of $20 for every dollar invested.

The study found four key types of benefits:

- Reduced unemployment benefit payments
- Working life returns to the training course after leaving FRNSW
- Health benefits to recruited firefighters while employed by FRNSW
- Community health benefits arising from firefighters in Indigenous communities.

Some of the intangible benefits of the program that were identified included improving the self-confidence of participants and increasing the diversity of the fire services. This has meant it better reflects the communities they serve. It has also resulted in greater engagement with Indigenous communities and improved fire safety within these communities.

One of the most important benefits is that it has provided Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander role models for young people, particularly young women, who want to work in emergency service organisations. Participants in the program have stated that it has helped them acquire skills in teamwork, collaboration, resilience, self-confidence and the development of networks that will support them through life.

Lessons learnt from this process include:

- Make sure Indigenous community members are a part of the process from the beginning and that they are see value in the program.
- Do your research so you understand what your organisational issues are and how these might need to be addressed.
- Seek out and support community and organisational champions for the project.
- Create relationships and environments to support respectful knowledge exchange and learning.
- Ensure authentic collaboration and allocate resources to this to support this.

CASE STUDY 13: WORKING CLOSELY WITH MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES – NSW SES

'Over the years we have adapted to how the community changes.' — NSW SES Unit Commander

Diverse communities can be at greater risk from natural hazards, particularly if they are new arrivals who may not be familiar with the local environment. This means that engagement with diverse community members is critical if this risk is to be managed effectively. It is important to build awareness among these diverse communities of what the NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES) does and how it can help them during emergency situations.

Auburn is one of the most diverse communities in Sydney and has a large multicultural cohort with over 175 dialects spoken across the local government area. Their local NSW SES Unit has created an inclusive culture that allows them to recruit and retain members that reflect the local community. The Unit has about 100 members, who range in age, cultural background and gender, and recruits often join to help their own community, or as a way of giving back to the Australian community. The Unit has created an environment that accommodates and welcomes difference, and they have established clear boundaries in relation to conduct and respectful behaviour to support this. They also make it clear about what they expect of recruits when they join. New recruits are buddied up with someone from their community to make them feel comfortable, and to help them learn about the Unit and the work NSW SES does.

There are many community members from refugee backgrounds in the area who have experienced conflict and oppression in their home countries. Some community members have negative perceptions of authority figures, while others may have limited English language skills, which can increase confusion or fear in an emergency situation. One of the strategies the Unit has employed to overcome this is using volunteers who are bi-lingual to act as interpreters during an incident. These volunteers may ring community members before the NSW SES attend a job to explain what will be happening. The Unit also leverages the cultural knowledge of its diverse volunteers. Where possible, Team Leaders ensure that male and female team members are available to approach a household or families in culturally sensitive ways (e.g. recognising that in some cultures, it may not be appropriate for female community members to interact with males who are not members of their family).

'Australia has taken them in. Their way of giving back is volunteering with us.' — NSW SES Unit Commander

In addition to utilising the skills of diverse members, the Unit reaches out to community groups at cultural events, making signs in community language, and having presenters who can speak in different community languages. They also accommodate different cultural needs such as ensuring they have halal catering for all events. Another strategy is collaborating with other agencies, such as the NSW Police Force and St John Ambulance, as their volunteers sometimes are members of more than one agency. This helps consistent messaging to the community.

The inclusive environment and diverse nature of this Unit has led to some very positive outcomes, such as high retention of members, and good local knowledge of their local community. It has also encouraged otherwise hesitant community members to come forward and engage with the NSW SES at public events, opening the door to build a deeper relationship with the community.

For the future, the Unit aims to continue to grow the cultural diversity of its members, and increase its capabilities and representation in the community.

The Auburn NSW SES Unit has a distinct demographic, with many migrants and former refugees in the area that has been developed over many years. The key characteristics that underpin their workplace culture are inclusion, respect and care.

Lessons learned which can be applied in other areas include:
- Be open and honest with your Unit members and be open to new ideas.
- Create opportunities for diverse members in your organisation to be the communicators and connectors in the community for your organisation.
- Actively network at community events, and develop materials in community languages.
- Be prepared to learn from local communities and their knowledge, and engage with them to see how they think it can be used to enhance activities and community safety.
- Be clear about boundaries relating to member conduct and reinforce the values of the Unit.

CASE STUDY 14: DEVELOPING A DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN – NSW SES

'Sharing practical case studies is important – how NSW SES members are 'doing D&I' as part of their core work. We have a geographically dispersed workforce, and we know that actions to support diversity and inclusion are happening in Units and Teams across the State. It's important to recognise inclusion efforts and share examples as a way of encouraging others to take it up.' — NSW SES Diversity and Inclusion Officer

The NSW State Emergency Service's (NSW SES) path towards developing a Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Framework provides a model for how D&I can move from informal to formalised engagement across an agency. D&I in the organisation was initially driven by legislative compliance and bottom-up initiatives such as voluntary diversity networks. Four diversity networks established in 2017 focused on raising awareness of specific aspects of diversity, and advocating for inclusive policies and practices. The four networks were:

- Women
- LGBTIQ+ and Allies
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- People with special needs and their carers.

In addition, many NSW SES members had been taking steps to promote diversity, while others wanted to understand *why* D&I is part of the work of an emergency service, and *how* to integrate inclusion into operational and support roles. The agency needed to pursue a systematic, leader-led approach to D&I informed by leading practice and tailored to the NSW SES context.

NSW SES recognised the need for a coordinated, whole-of-agency strategy for making inclusion part of:

- Workplace culture
- Community engagement and resilience-building
- Operational readiness and response.

This led to the development of an agency-wide *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Framework 2020–2025*, which will be supported by a detailed action plan covering key diversity dimensions. The framework establishes an overarching governance structure to support inclusion visibility, capability and accountability across the organisation. The framework also promotes progression from a compliance approach, towards programmatic engagement and cultural integration where D&I is understood and applied as a business imperative.

Building an evidence base for D&I is a key commitment under the framework, including better measurement of inclusion metrics alongside diversity numbers.

The framework was launched by the NSW SES Commissioner in 2020, and sets out strategic objectives and strategic actions under four areas:

- **Governance:** leadership, accountability and reporting
- **Awareness:** communications and advocacy
- **Capacity-building:** learning and development
- **Culture:** member and community engagement and practice.

'We're building understanding of what D&I means to the agency, and how we can harness diverse thinking, backgrounds and experiences to help us better understand and support the communities we serve.'
— NSW SES Diversity and Inclusion Officer

Examples of innovative diversity initiatives include establishing the NSW SES Auslan Liaison Team, and the NSW SES Multicultural Community Liaison Unit. Both initiatives have been led by volunteers following engagement in research projects such as The Deaf Society's 'Deaf Get Ready – Emergency Preparedness' project and the University of Wollongong-led project 'Engaging the Knowledge and Capacities of Refugees for a Disaster Resilient Illawarra'. Volunteer members of these teams have brought specialist skills that have helped build trust between NSW SES and these target communities. This enables the organisation to engage more effectively with these target groups to increase flood, storm and tsunami preparedness amongst these communities. This, in turn, supports more effective responses during an emergency event. Volunteers from these inclusion capability teams have also been integral in building NSW SES awareness of the lived experiences, and specific needs of these diverse communities before, during and after an emergency.

Some of the benefits to date have included:
- Increased connection and capability to engage with community members at risk of marginalisation
- Increased recruitment and participation of people from under-represented groups as NSW SES members
- Increased awareness within the organisation of diverse community needs.

Lessons learned have included:
- Building inclusion capability is about meaningful relationship building with the diversity of members at the local community level. Community-based protection should be community led.
- A safe learning and safe leadership environment is needed for volunteers and staff to feel confident to try new things.
- Building capability focused on key aspects of diversity (e.g. Auslan Liaison Team, Multicultural Community Liaison Unit) takes significant time and effort. Adequate resources are needed to support and sustain these initiatives.
- It is important to ensure that you don't make any one individual a representative of everyone from a particular target group.
- Think beyond your organisation and look at how you can work together with other agencies to share inclusion capability, maximise community connection, build community confidence, and reduce community confusion and fatigue.
- The community is better served by cross-functional collaboration across different agencies, such as multi-hazard community capability teams that can work across multiple issues with wider communities.

CASE STUDY 15: OUR STORIES – FIRE AND RESCUE VICTORIA (FORMERLY MFB)

'We didn't want to be responsible for the change we wanted to be part of it.' — FRV Manager

The Culture and Transformation team at Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) have focused over the last few years on how to influence and drive cultural change through a number of initiatives, and one of these has been the 'our stories' program.

The purpose of the program was to capture experiences of people within the FRV, (formerly the Metropolitan Fire Brigade [Melbourne] [MFB]), and in this way, communicate aspects of the organisation's history. The aim was to create a platform to showcase the diversity of thought and career opportunities within the organisation, and to celebrate the services and elements of organisational culture that contribute to community safety and workplace safety for all. In this way, FRV hoped to counter the negative stereotypes that have created a skewed narrative of the past and present of fire services in Victoria. They want to provide an alternate set of experiences that challenge the dominant, hyper-masculine hero narrative, as it was felt it wasn't reflective of who they were as a fire service. It also aimed to provide a way to reduce harm in the workplace and in the community that can be caused by gender-based narrative.

Reflecting on these stories provided a point of reference for increasing awareness and for provoking constructive conversations about what the organisation had been in the past, and what it has become and can become. As a resource, such stories have allowed people to really think about the organisation, and how they feel and think about themselves and the work they do. The program also aimed to help those external to the organisation to understand more fully the breath of the roles and the type of diversity within its workforce.

'It has been amazing to be part of this and to be so valued by our leaders.' — FRV Manager

One of the first actions in developing the program was to ensure that the team had buy-in from leaders across the organisation. This also provided an opportunity to have a dialogue with upper management about the role of storytelling, and how it can create value in organisations and inspire healthy cultural change.

'We are taking the organisation on a journey with us and we are all learning together.' — FRV Manager

The team wanted to provide an open and inclusive process where people were able to be an active part of creating the stories, and how they were told. This involved considerable consultation with members of the organisation, challenging current expressions, assumptions and language use, and learning from this. It also involved multiple collaborative conversations with members of the organisation, so the team could write up their stories. These were then given back to the story owners so they could shape their stories to best reflect how they wanted it told. When the story owner was comfortable with the way the story was told, they were published on a separate website so that it could be used as an engagement tool for internal staff, and to act as an 'attraction piece' for the general public.

Some of the topics covered in the stories collected include the changing roles of women, building an inclusive workforce, and major events such as the Black Saturday fires.

Some of the benefits from the program have been:

- Improved connectivity between those who participated.
- Increased awareness of what language needs to be used, particularly in relation to diverse or minority cohorts.
- It provided a mechanism for people in the organisations to have conversations that addressed complex and sometimes contentious issues such as privilege in a way that resulted in greater understanding.
- It helped people to see who they were as an organisation and the current culture, and provided a basis for the conversation of what they can become in the future.

Key lessons learnt include:

- It is vital have upper leadership buy-in.
- Be prepared to take risks and to not get it right first time.
- Don't assume meaning – words can have specific meanings to different people.
- Check for trigger words and inadvertently offensive terms with others from diverse cohorts.
- Always consult with the person or cohort you are writing about, and ensure they are happy with the way the story is told.
- Create a safe space where people can share stories and provide feedback honestly and openly.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: EXAMPLE SCENARIOS FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Except from: Young, C., and Jones, R N. (2019). *Risky business: why diversity and inclusion matter. Into the future: building skills and capabilities for a diverse and inclusive workforce, workshop synthesis and key research findings*. Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, Melbourne.

Scenario 1

It is approaching 2030 and Australia has adopted the Orderly Settlement Policy. Climate change and environmental pressures are leading to humanitarian disasters in vulnerable parts of the world. The UN has brokered an agreement from Annex 1 (developed countries) that as part of the Bogota Protocol, they will resettle communities who have been identified as being environmental refugees. The recognition that the uncontrolled movements of millions of refuges would harm developing and developed countries has led to efforts to resettle people in a more organised way.

Australia is resettling environmental refugees in regional areas where accommodation is cheaper and there is demand for unskilled labour for food production. The global demand for food is resulting in small-holder agriculture becoming more profitable, so emergency immigrants resettled in rural areas are provided with rudimentary accommodation and building materials. Land is made available for Resettlers to grow their own food and some seasonal work is available.

Cultural groups who have been brought in under the scheme include Uighurs from China (who have Islamic beliefs) and Congolese people from central Africa. The region they are moving into has catastrophic fire risk, heatwaves (which have recently become worse), and flash flooding risk due to intense rainfall. For cost-related reasons, the Resettlers are placed on the most marginal land, and they face higher risk than the locals. While the extra labour is welcome, there is community concern about the sudden influx of people.

This scenario sets up problems at two scales:

1. The emergency services have to manage these changes from a strategic point of view. Funds are tight and with the Resettlers, the government has given them a new problem, but not new funds. Areas that they might have sanctioned off with new planning laws to manage fire risk are now being occupied by Resettlers. For the past decades, agencies have been running D&I programs and strategies, but the Resettler issues make D&I much more urgent. Some actions have been successful, others not so.
2. Emergency services at the local level now have an issue with two cohorts of people who do not speak English well, have little knowledge of the country, and have been put in harm's way. On the other hand, they are mostly able and keen, so would make good volunteers.

Scenario 2

Ashborough is a regional community made up of farming and local businesses that rely on domestic and international tourism. The local town is expanding rapidly and has an established Chinese community, as well as a growing Filipino community. There has also been a recent influx of Somalian refugees.

The Upper West Ashborough Fire Brigade is one of the best in Australia. They win pretty much every hose reel race they enter, and have won the Golden Hose award three years in a row. Their captain is an ex-SAS captain who runs a tight ship, and keeps his paid and volunteer crew at peak fitness. The volunteers all come from the same social group within the local community, and are all from established farming families who have been in the region for generations.

In comparison, the Lower South Ashborough Special Emergency Services are a diverse crew. They have managed to recruit a range of young people from the Somalian and Filipino community, and their captain is a Chinese woman who is also on the local council. They are an effective crew who have a high level of digital capability and have developed a special taskforce who develop apps. They also come together during natural hazard events to support other emergency services in the region to manage social media and volunteering activities.

The annual Ashborough ball had a fancy-dress theme of come as your favourite sporting star. Three of the Upper West crew came dressed as Serena Williams, including donning black face. With iPhone snaps in the local paper going nationwide, the brigades captain was quoted as saying, 'We came as Serena because we admire her tenacity and drive and willingness to stand up for herself as a woman'. The SES captain has commented in her role as a council member that the brigade should apologise. A secret source has also given a journalist a number of Facebook posts from private accounts of the brigade. These posts reveal humorous, but racist comments relating to Asians and Africans.

This has divided the community. Some find it highly offensive, while others think people should be able to take a joke and they should just get over it. A cartoon is circulated from an anonymous source, which depicts the local fire crew as Neanderthals and this goes viral. Although nothing can be proved, there is speculation that someone from the local SES

crew was responsible. Relations between the SES and the brigade have become increasingly strained which is impacting SES and Fire Brigade crews across the region. The region has experienced a number of heatwaves, and an increase in fire danger and extreme weather events. This year is projected to be worse than the last few years (which were no picnic), and the tourist season is about to start.

Scenario 3

A new state government has been elected on a platform of a muscular response to disasters. The party that won ran a scare campaign in papers such as The Daily Terrorgraph, claiming that worsening disasters cannot be stemmed by the focus on diversity. The party accused the emergency services of kowtowing to identity politics and costing lives, although there is no evidence to support this. They oppose appointing people of lesser strength and those whose first language is not English who 'may be misunderstood in an emergency'. They want to return the emergency services back to the traditional heroic service-client model. There is talk about bringing in a suitability test that dictates strict height and weight limits, and a test for those whose first language is not English. This would disqualify many women, people of smaller stature and those who speak in accented English (though not those whose first language is English such as Irish and Scottish immigrants). However, diversity reporting obligations are still required under the *Public Service Act*.

The new Minister of Emergency Services has just been appointed but is yet to bring in these regulations. This has caused great concern within the sector, who are convinced that the opposite of the scare campaign is true. There may be a small window to reverse or modify these new policies. D&I is becoming established in EMOs, who have invested considerable money and time in developing programs to train staff and increase inclusive practice. Trusted partnerships are being developed with many diverse communities and some benefits are starting to be realised.

However, there are still pockets where D&I is not fully accepted and it is seen to be a waste of time. Some do not like the changing narrative of what an emergency worker is, as they feel it undermines their traditions. Emboldened by the current political narrative, these factions are agitating within organisations and communities 'to make the emergency services great again'. There is considerable concern at leadership level in all EMOs who have come together to address this as a sector.

ATTACHMENT B: UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOURS

Source: Young, C., and Jones, R N. (2019). *Risky business: why diversity and inclusion matter. Into the future: building skills and capabilities for a diverse and inclusive workforce, workshop synthesis and key research findings*. BNHCRC, Melbourne.

Implementing D&I requires substantial change, and challenging behaviours from individuals and cohorts are a well-known part of the process. These behaviours pose a risk, and can have impacts within organisations and communities. Anecdotal evidence strongly indicates that management of these behaviours is not well understood and can be poorly enacted in areas in EMOs. Processes for addressing these issues are also seen as 'time consuming' and 'not very effective' – particularly in relation to addressing organisational impacts. How well negative behaviours that arise during implementation are managed can determine whether a program does or doesn't work.

Proactive and informed management of these behaviours is also an important part of reducing the potential risks that may manifest if such behaviours are left unattended and become normalised in the work culture. Figure B1 outlines key behavioural determinants identified in Young et al., (2018). These can help managers identify key types of behaviours and combinations of behaviours, which can support the development of appropriate management strategies.
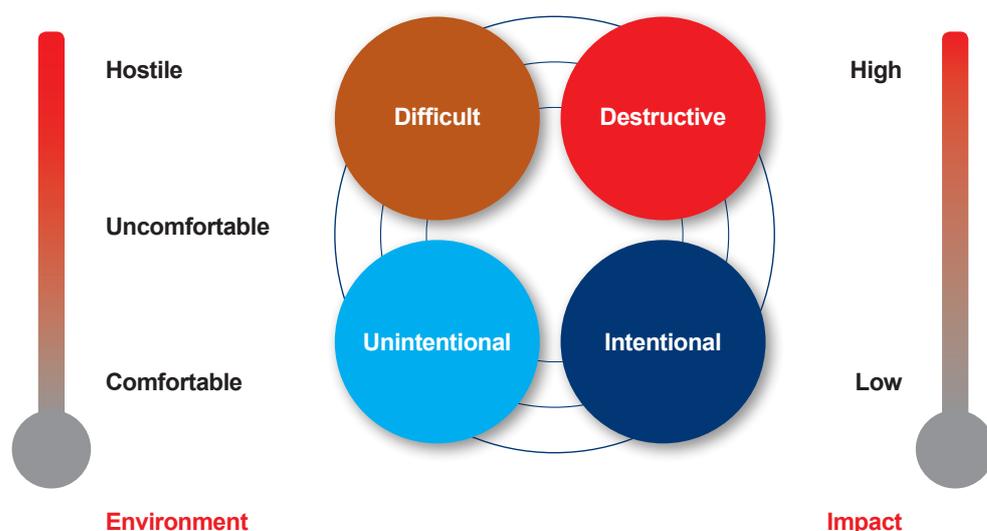

Figure B1: Different behaviours related to impact and environment

Behaviours can be entrenched, and arise in response to change or as reactions to specific programs within D&I implementation processes. They can manifest in a number of ways, and it is important to differentiate between the following (Young et al., 2018):

- **Difficult behaviours** cover inappropriate behaviour that can lead to discomfort, where there is potential for harm to others or D&I-related activities.
- **Destructive behaviours** cover inappropriate behaviour that directly harm others or negatively impact D&I-related activities.

The other important factor is whether the actions are directed or reactive, as this determines how this should best managed. For example:

- **Reactive behaviours** are uncontrolled responses to a situation, where a person may not be fully aware of their behaviour or the outcome.
- **Directed behaviours** are deliberate and intentional actions, where a person is fully aware of their behaviour and the outcome.

Different combinations of these types of behaviours are likely to be experienced by most D&I practitioners and managers. Some of these combinations are shown in Table B1 (overleaf).

Table B1: Summary of behaviours concerning diversity and inclusion with examples and outcomes

Type of behaviour	Example behaviour	Potential outcome
Reactive difficult	Becoming upset or angry in response to being challenged	Uncomfortable
Directed difficult	Inappropriate comments or jokes to a specific cohort or person due to discomfort	Very uncomfortable
Reactive destructive	Malicious gossip about a cohort or individual	Becoming hostile
Directed destructive	Bullying or discriminatory actions against an individual or cohort	Openly hostile

Behaviours are also interactive, potentially creating feedback loops that reinforce and can create environments that are hostile and harmful to others. For example, behaviours such as ongoing micro-aggressions (e.g. snide comments and withdrawal of support), can lead to high-impact outcomes that reduce welfare and cause psychosocial damage to people. This may in turn lead to litigation for organisations and other costs to the community, government and immediate family. Whether a behaviour is reactive or directed can help determine the most appropriate intervention. For example, inappropriate language use around someone from a different culture may be addressed through education, whereas direct discrimination may require legal action. Whether an action is reactive or directed does not determine the level of impact on others, as both types of actions can have equally damaging effects. Managers will need to consider carefully how they fulfil their duty of care to those exposed to the behaviours, and ensure appropriate support is provided as part of the intervention process.

Reference

Young, C., Jones, R N., and Kumnick, M. (2018). *The long road: building effective diversity and inclusion in emergency management organisations. Case study synthesis and draft framework*. BNHCRC, Melbourne.

ATTACHMENT C: EXAMPLE OF INCLUSIVE PRACTICE DO'S AND DON'TS

Source: *UQ Guide to using inclusive language*. The University of Queensland. https://staff.uq.edu.au/files/242/using-inclusive-language-guide.pdf (accessed 31 October 2020)

GOOD PRACTICE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE	LANGUAGE AND PRACTICES TO AVOID
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE	
Be conscious of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Acknowledge the historical context and present systemic barriers faced by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Always use capitals when referring to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (e.g. 'First Peoples', 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' peoples or 'Indigenous Australian' peoples or 'Aboriginal' person). Where possible, consult with the local Traditional Owner groups to ensure that the language and practices are reflective of the community. Refer to an Aboriginal person by their clan if it is known, for example 'Turrbul woman' rather than 'an Aboriginal woman'.	Always use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in full and don't abbreviate to 'ATSI'. Aboriginal shouldn't be used as a noun (e.g. the Aboriginal). The word 'Aborigine' should be avoided when referring to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as it is a generic term for the original inhabitant of any country. Don't isolate or exclude Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, for example stating that 'all Australians have access to quality medical care' excludes the lived experience of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Don't trivialise or misrepresent important cultural beliefs and practices such as referring to the Dreamtime as myths or legends. Don't make assumptions about someone's ancestry based on their physical features. Terms such as 'half-caste', 'full-blood' and 'part Aboriginal' should not be used.
GENDER	
Only use gendered language when it is appropriate for the context (e.g. use the Chair rather than Chairman). Ask someone what their preferred pronouns (e.g. he, she, they, them), and respectfully use them correctly. Use gender neutral pronouns where possible (e.g. avoid 'the new employer may exercise his right'. Use 'the new employer may exercise their right' instead.	Avoid using unnecessary gender references (e.g. the male nurse or the woman doctor), unless it is appropriate for the context. Don't make an assumption about someone's gender based on their name or physical features. Don't use gender references in a demeaning or trivialising way (e.g. 'throw like a girl'). Don't infantilise particular groups (referring to groups or individuals as a child or in a way which denies their maturity in age or experience), for example, the 'girls in the office'.
CULTURE	
Only reference someone's cultural background when it is appropriate for the context. Generally, it is unnecessary to refer to someone's cultural background, but if you do need to use people-centric language (e.g. person of Sudanese descent). Educate yourself on someone's culture and respect cultural differences that may be present. In cross-cultural communication, you should ensure that your language is simple and accessible, and body language isn't offensive.	Avoid undue emphasis on differences (e.g. introducing all your colleagues, but describing one as 'Chinese'). Avoid making someone's culture invisible. For example, the use of umbrella terms such as 'Asians' ignores the multiple ethnicities within Asia. Instead refer to the persons ethnicity where appropriate (e.g. Indonesian, Chinese, etc.).

GOOD PRACTICE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE	LANGUAGE AND PRACTICES TO AVOID
DISABILITY	
Use people centric language: the disability doesn't define the person (e.g. person with disability or people with disability). Use a strength based approach, such as 'person experiencing poor mental health', rather than 'they are schizophrenic' or 'crazy person'. Ensure that the language and delivery of your message is accessible to all audiences. Utilise the accessibility check in programs (such as Microsoft Word), and ensure that you practice website accessibility.	Avoid inappropriate language such as cripple, handicapped, mental patient, 'wheelchair bound', 'disabled person'. Avoid using language like 'retard' or 'spaz' in any way or context (e.g. 'the computer is having a spaz' or 'you are such a retard'). Avoid using 'inspiration porn' language (e.g. saying someone with a disability is 'an inspiration' or 'brave' or 'amazing' for doing everyday things such as going to work). Never make assumptions about disability. Some disabilities may be invisible.
SEXUALITY	
If you don't know, use inclusive language such as 'partner' (rather than 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend'), to refer to someone's significant other, unless the preferred term is specified by the person. Considering referring to 'sexuality, gender and sex diversity' rather than the LGBTI acronym to be more inclusive.	Avoid using 'gay' in a derogatory way (e.g. 'that's so gay'). Avoid using the word 'queer' as this can be offensive to some people. Generally, 'queer' is used by some of the community. Avoid making assumptions about someone's sexuality, or building stereotypes (e.g. he must be gay he's so flamboyant).
AGE	
Only refer to age when relevant to the context, and when it is necessary use people-centric language (e.g. older adults or younger people).	Avoid stereotypes (e.g. old men are grumpy, old people won't adapt to new technologies, or 'Millennials' are compulsive job-hoppers).

ATTACHMENT D: KEY TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Sourced and adapted from *FEMA Effective Communication Instructor Guide*, 2014

Understanding the needs of your community

To better understand the communication needs of your community, you should understand community complexity so you will know who your audience is. For example, learn about your community's demographics, and educate your emergency management staff. Potential sources of information include:

- Census information
- Jurisdiction profiles compiled by emergency planning teams
- Social service agencies and organisations
- Faith-based organisations and houses of worship
- Advocacy groups
- Chambers of Commerce and business leaders
- English-as-a-second-language (ESL) programs.

Know the languages and communication methods/traditions in the community. Consider not only what languages people speak and understand, but how they actually exchange new information and which information sources they trust. Be aware of myths and stereotypes.

Find out where the real conversations happen and decisions are made. Decisions are not always made at the council level, but often at venues such as the community center, neighborhood events, social clubs, or places of worship. Tap into these opportunities to listen and learn more about the community. Develop strategies to reach community members and engage them in issues that are important to them.

Implement outreach interventions, such as establishing relationships with multi-lingual volunteers to help interact with the various groups, and forming alliances with disability advocacy groups. Formal and informal community leaders such as community organisers, local council members and other government leaders, non-profit or business leaders, volunteer or faith leaders, and long-term residents have valuable knowledge, and can provide a comprehensive understanding of the communities in which they live.

Learn the basic customs of the ethnic groups in your community

Tune in. Making yourself aware of key cultural and other differences that you will need to address during an emergency will help you learn what to expect of the groups and whether your message is being communicated.

Research. Read about the groups represented in your community. Frequently, research can provide good insight into the people and the behaviours that are part of their cultures. (This strategy is especially helpful when you are new to a community or are from a different part of the country.)

Network. Talk to the leaders of the cultural groups in your community. You will find that most will be pleased that you care enough to make the effort and will be very willing to share key attributes of their culture with you.

Participate. Many communities sponsor special days on which the various cultures represented in the community can share their food, artwork, and other entertainment with their neighbors. Take the time to attend these events. Pay careful attention to what you see and hear.

Cross-cultural meanings of non-verbal cues

Often, when misunderstandings occur between people from different cultures, it has little to do with what they said – it's how they said it, what they did when they said it, or even whom they said it to. Non-verbal language can have meaning that is culture-specific. Some examples include:

- **Eye contact** has different meanings among different cultures. In the United States, maintaining strong eye contact indicates that the listener is attentive and interested in the message. In some Asian cultures, looking directly into a speaker's eyes indicates disrespect, while lowering the eyes is considered polite manners.
- **Gestures** considered as good gestures in one country may be seen as offensive in others. Examples include 'thumbs up', pointing, open-palm 'stop' gesture, curling the index finger in a 'come here' motion, a-OK (index finger and thumb forming a circle), finger snapping, and looking at one's watch or wrist.
- **Touching**. When, where, and how often we touch each other has cultural significance. Americans tend to touch each other less than members of many other cultures. We need to be especially sensitive to cultural differences regarding contact.

- **Timing.** The timing of verbal exchanges – the pause between the conclusion of one person speaking and the other replying – is also culturally influenced. Some people interpret a long wait before a reply as lack of attention. However, in some cultures, a pause before replying indicates a polite and considered response.
- **Personal space.** Within each culture, there are expected personal distances for different types of relationships. In other cultures, the physical distances may be different. Non-verbal communication can be confusing when comfort zones are violated.

Communication strategies that can assist building powerful relationships as a result are:
- Approach others with interest and openness.
- Approach generational and cultural differences with interest, not fear or negativity.
- Take interest in the interests of others.
- You can learn fascinating things about other people if you choose to do so. Speak slowly and clearly.
- Focus on slowing down your speech.
- Try not to rush your communication. Remember, it takes more time to correct miscommunication and misunderstanding.

Ask for clarification. If you are not sure you understand the meaning being communicated, politely ask for clarification. Avoid assuming you've understood what's been said. Check your understanding frequently. Check both that you've understood what's been said and that others have fully understood you. Use active listening to check your own understanding and use open-ended questions to check other people's understanding.

Avoid generational or cultural idioms. Language is contextual and has cultural implications. Examples of idioms include sports or other expressions, such as 'ace in the hole' and 'a long row to hoe'. As a good general rule, if the phrase requires knowledge of other information – be it a game, generational event, a metaphor, or current social media – recognise that this reference may make your communication more difficult to understand, or even worse, offensive. Be careful of jargon. Watch the use of TLAs (three-letter abbreviations) and other language or jargon that may not be understood by others.

ATTACHMENT E: MEASUREMENT

Measurement of diversity and inclusion

Although D&I are separate and different in nature, in terms of practice they are related and serve two distinct purposes:

- The key purpose of **diversity measurement** is to determine the level and status of change that is occurring in an organisation or community due to representation of diversity.
- The key purpose for **inclusion measurement** is to determine how effective the changes relating to representation of diversity are and whether the impact is positive or negative.

As this is systemic and strategic in its implementation, monitoring and evaluation requires a range of assessment tools that measure the whole of organisation at a strategic and programmatic level.

Measurements and structures that support comprehensive evaluation are still developing across the sector. As a result, the following is important to consider across strategic, programmatic and organisational areas:

- Determining what needs to be measured and why it needs to be measured, to ensure the salience of measurements.
- Understanding the purpose and use of this measurement and who will use it, to ensure that measurements are relevant and useful.
- Determining what data is needed, how it needs to be collected and who will responsible for this, to ensure robustness and reliability of date.
- Determining how data needs to be communicated and presented to ensure that organisations are able to use measurements to make effective decisions.

The four broad research models that evaluation approaches use are:

- **Scientific-experimental** models emphasise impartiality, accuracy, objectivity and validity of the information collected.
- **Management-oriented** models are designed to serve the needs of decision makers. They emphasise comprehensiveness, placing evaluation in the context of the organisation's objectives and activities.
- **Qualitative/anthropological** models use observation and subjective information. Approaches often place fewer constraints on evaluators and use multiple techniques including participant observation, interviews, focus groups, and textual analysis to get a description of the issue being studied.
- **Participant-oriented** models use many different sources, don't follow a standard plan, and include approaches such as inductive reasoning (reasoning from experience, sense perceptions, and observations to form conclusions), involvement and/or training of intended users.

Overarching diversity measurements

Diversity is the most frequently measured and mature aspect of D&I in organisational reporting. Measurement of diversity is determined by what is being measured. Common diversity groups are:

- gender
- culture
- disability
- demographic characteristics
- age.

Measurement can also include aspects such as diversity of thought, skills and capability. Many measurement tools also consider the enabling factors for supporting the change such as organisational structures and processes and physical environments.

In terms of collection of data, there are privacy regulations that need to be considered when collecting, storing and using data that pertains to this area. As a result, this data is indicative as there areas which cannot be mandated. Information collected can include aspects such as place of birth, languages spoken, sexuality, religion, and more personal information related to identity, disability and spirituality.

Examples of established data sources that are applicable are:

- Recruitment and employment data (workforce)
- ABS Census data (community).

Overarching measurements for inclusion

Measurements for inclusion relate to an individual's lived experience within an organisation and the enabling environment that supports inclusion, and where diversity is welcomed, valued and rewarded. Measurements can include aspects such as engagement, workplace safety (physical and psychological), workplace culture, connection to others, belonging, trust and collaboration. In terms of enabling environments, there are a number of areas where this can be measured, for example, accessibility, workplace policy and processes, and accommodation of specific cultural needs (e.g. prayer rooms). Some of these measurements are also contained in some diversity assessments.

Examples of established data sources that contain inclusion data are:

- HR workforce recruitment, performance data – including presenteeism (where people work when unwell), absenteeism, incidents of bullying, health and safety records.
- Activities and participation in events such as celebration of religious events, and cultural events such as National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, and International Women's Day.
- Workforce surveys such as the People Matters Surveys and the QFES volunteer survey.
- Exit interview data.
- Pilot programs.

Measuring service delivery and risk reduction

The complex nature of emergencies means that the benefits of D&I risk mitigation are difficult to assess and harder to quantify, as it is the absence of risk that defines a successful outcome. Because most events are multi-causal and changing societies and environments are a factor, consistent longitudinal data is needed. For example, FRNSW reported that due to the increase of Indigenous firefighters in their brigades, there has been improved trust that has enabled them to install more smoke alarms in houses in Indigenous communities. Measurement of this over time is likely to show a reduction in risk.

Many of the general statistics for organisational performance relate to call-out numbers and type, response times, safety education, house inspections, etc. Some organisations keep much finer data, including location, that can be used to link to specific populations and communities. Ethical considerations means that such data needs to be used with care, but there are cases where such data can be aggregated in meaningful ways, while preserving the anonymity of individuals and groups.

Assessing the benefits of diversity and inclusion

Measurements of benefits is relatively limited in the emergency services as there have been few formal structures or processes developed to support this type of data. It is also complex because organisations and communities both benefit from effective programs (Table E1), and many of these benefits take time to manifest. As a result, it is important to determine likely benefits upfront and ensure that the correct data is being collected, and that there are systems and processes in place to support and allow verification of this data over time.

Table E1: Identified benefits from specific activities proposed as a result of the scenario exercise

Organisations	Community	Mutual benefits
1. Better targeting of resources to risks 2. Expanded capabilities across sector 3. Continuous improvement through assessment 4. Engaged workforce 5. Trusted economic benefits 6. Identified gaps 7. Better engagement and understanding of community values to steer activities 8. Effective relationships 9. Social licence 10. Increased trust in government agencies	11. Ability for individuals to manage their own risks better 12. Better engagement 13. Inclusive communities 14. Increased resilience 15. Community cohesion, capital, connectedness, engagement 16. Increase business 17. More integrated economy 18. Sustainability 19. Social cohesion 20. Harmony 21. Increased investment 22. Greater capacity to recover 23. Healthier economy 24. Attractive place to live 25. Community agency 26. Increased community resilience and connectedness 27. Confidence in public safety	28. Clearer mutual understanding and increased trust 29. Shared responsibilities 30. Empowerment 31. Non-political 32. Self-sustaining 33. Threat proof 34. EMS part of the social fabric of the community 35. Safe by design

In order to assess the benefits of D&I to an organisation, it can help to ask the question whether the addition of elements of D&I provides a benefit that otherwise would not be there. An example of this is collaborations between Indigenous communities through traditional burning programs and the emergency services. These result in benefits such as increased cultural awareness, community healing, risk reduction and protection of wildlife, and providing new insights and benefits back to the community.

Two broad areas that provide benefits at the systemic scale identified by the project are:

1. Improved management of human and social risk within organisations and communities.
2. Improved service delivery through strategic planning and implementation of D&I across the PPRR spectrum.

Managed appropriately, both should provide net benefits, however quantifying these benefits can be challenging due lack of time, resources, appropriate systems and knowledge.

Economic benefits can be particularly challenging as they are highly dependent on the models available, what they are developed to analyse, and having the right data available for analysis. Economic benefits can include:

- Increased employment in cohorts with structural disadvantage due to poverty, racism, gender or physical disability
- Monetary benefits due to additional wage-earners in the economy
- Increase of likelihood of employment in other areas beyond the emergency services
- Additional health benefit and other social benefits if this is replacing underemployment or unemployment.

Designing tests for effectiveness in both types of strategies and plans, and keeping a record of D&I actions should be able to show whether benefits are accruing. This is a multi-year project and is likely to only show benefits over the long-term. For example, the studies that look at effectiveness of fire and flood management on fatalities are using over 100 years of data (Haynes et al., 2010, 2017). Like emergency management itself, investing in D&I is a long-term proposition.

Monitoring and evaluation guidance and examples

Markiewicz, A., and Patrick, I. (n.d). *Developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks* – provides template and a process that can be used to set up robust evaluation frameworks.
https://study.sagepub.com/node/23069/student-resources/monitoring-and-evaluation-framework-documents

The IRC Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) inclusion assessment tool – provides a sample action plan/monitoring tool for improving inclusiveness within organisation (Excel spreadsheet)
https://www.ircwash.org/resources/organisation-inclusion-assessment-tool

The *Guide to reporting under the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*
https://www.wgea.gov.au/guide-to-reporting

NSW's Local Government capability framework
https://capability.lgnsw.org.au

Culture of inclusion assessment overview – Gallup
https://www.gallup.com/education/228572/culture-inclusion-assessment-overview.aspx#:~:text=Culture%20of%20Inclusion%20Assessment%20Overview&text=Culture%20Transformation%20Understand%20the%20culture,people%20and%20organization%20can%20thrive

Measuring inclusion, the Australian social inclusion index, Inclusion Australia
https://inclusive-australia.s3.amazonaws.com/files/Inclusive-Australia-Social-Inclusion-Index-WEB.pdf

Male Champions of Change impact report emergency services 2019/2020
https://malechampionsofchange.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Fire-Emergency-Impact-Report-2019.pdf

Measuring progress and maturity – bringing it all together

Maturity matrices are a key aspect of longer term monitoring and evaluation that support organisations to chart their progress and strategically plan for the future. The project has developed the following maturity matrix based on research findings (Table E2) and a review of current D&I maturity matrices. It outlines four key stages: unaware, emerging awareness, integrating and applying, and sustainable. Although presented in a linear fashion as described in *Diversity and inclusion framework for emergency management policy and practice*, this type of transformation is not a linear process and organisations may revert to previous stages if there is a shock to the system or a change in their context. This matrix can be adapted to suit different organisational requirements or integrated into larger business improvement frameworks.

Table E2: Diversity and inclusion organisational maturity matrix

	Unaware	Emerging awareness	Integrating and applying	Sustainable
Organisational planning	Reactive short-term planning with no organisation-wide D&I strategy or plans.	Development of longer-term vision and planning includes D&I and establishment of strategic measures.	Longer term vision and strategy in place and with supporting plans, developed with workforce. D&I measures included in all plans.	Ongoing adjustment of strategic and implementation plans. Periodic updating of D&I component of strategies and plans part of business as usual.
Organisational systems and governance	Inflexible and siloed structures where D&I is siloed in human resources. No determination of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities beyond regulated workplace requirements.	Development of D&I policy and governance, clear accountabilities, responsibilities established. Development of more flexible and collaborative systems and arrangements. Recognition of exposure to social, human and innovation risks that are associated with D&I.	D&I governance is established with flexible workplace systems that enable organisation-wide collaboration. Governance and networks based on inclusion are developing. Social and human risk being established as part of risk governance. Innovation management is embedded in D&I project plans.	Organisational governance is flexible and responsive to D&I needs. D&I is integrated into all policy and processes and there is active use and shared understanding of these. Feedback mechanisms within the organisation support open and transparent communication between different areas of the organisation. Risks associated with D&I integrated fully into risk and organisational systems and processes.
Workforce capability	D&I capabilities are not identified, considered, valued or curated.	D&I skills and workforce gaps identified. Recruitment, training and career pathways identified.	Workforce profiles that include D&I capabilities are developed. D&I attributes and skills are considered valuable, actively sought and curated.	D&I capabilities and skills are part of the organisational identity. They are as well understood, valued and rewarded at the same level of more traditional skills. Career pathways are established with ongoing professional development in place.
Workforce behaviours	Workforce culture has entrenched behaviours that are not inclusive, inward looking, resistant to change and hostile to difference. Lack of collaboration internally and externally. Bullying is accepted or tolerated and there are covering behaviours in teams.	Entrenched behaviours are being questioned and new expectations established by organisational management and leadership. Resistance in areas of the workforce. Willingness to accept D&I tempered by uncertainty about appropriate behaviours and fear of changing identities.	Workforce shares the overall vision and has adopted the new expectations in principle. Proactive management and leadership mechanisms are being established, as is inclusive communication and engagement. Resistance is diminishing and diversity is being celebrated.	Employees feel empowered to model positive behaviours and supported to proactively manage negative behaviours. Inclusive language and communication are expected and displayed. Reflection and learning are part of the business culture. Frank and open communication is the norm.
Leadership	There are no clear leadership directives or modelling of inclusive behaviours. The is little if any representation of diversity. Little trust in leaders.	Leaders provide support, advocate for change and some model inclusive behaviours. Specific leaders trusted but not leadership as a whole. Leadership tends to have limited representation of diversity and may be seen as tokenistic.	The majority of leaders are modelling inclusive behaviours, are accountable and trusted. Diverse representation in leadership is growing. Leadership is spreading throughout the organisation.	Leadership is distributed throughout the organisation with diversity evenly represented. Inclusive and accountable leadership is part of business as usual. Leaders are trusted by their workforce and are seen as actively accountable for their actions.

	Unaware	Emerging awareness	Integrating and applying	Sustainable
Workplace safety and wellbeing	People do not feel psychologically safe in their workplace, diverse cohorts have poor morale and feel isolated. Vulnerability seen as a deficit and is not discussed. Diverse individuals are not engaged and their turnover is high.	Awareness of the importance of psychological safety and wellbeing is increasing and being talked about, leading to new conversations. Some resistance continues as old cultural tropes are hard to change. Diverse individuals increasingly invited to participate but sometimes seen as tokenistic.	Psychological safety and the importance of wellbeing is being embedded and endorsed by the organisation. There is a respect for vulnerability. Diverse individuals feel valued as they are routinely part of workplace conversations and becoming actively engaged.	The majority of the workforce feel welcomed, valued and safe in their workplace. Difference is embraced and bullying is proactively and effectively dealt with. The organisation has developed a reputation for being a welcoming and inclusive organisation. The benefits of D&I are documented and validated.
Community safety and wellbeing	The community is seen as separate to the organisation and of little or no value. Poor understanding of community values or capabilities. Diverse groups are not engaged or part of planning activities.	Awareness of the need to partner with the community. Identification of capabilities and skills in communities. Active engagement with diverse members of the community and invitations to participate.	Different community needs are understood and starting to be accommodated. Diverse community members participate in planning activities. Trusted relationships being developed. D&I benefits are documented and validated.	Diverse needs are accommodated and integrated into all activities. Diverse communities feel welcomed by the emergency services and empowered to interact with and participate in activities. Established long-term trusted relationship. Benefits from D&I are recognized and accepted.
Resources	No specific budget allocation or resources. Initiatives are undertaken on an individual and voluntary basis.	Resources provided for small and haphazard activities. The need to develop sustained funding recognised. Each D&I activity needs its funding justified and is seen as a cost.	Dedicated resources are being allocated to D&I and shared across multiple departments. D&I benefits are identified, being quantified and business cases established.	D&I has dedicated and ongoing resources, is an established budgetary item and is seen as an investment. Benefits are well understood and trusted. Organisational and community resources are leveraged to support D&I activities.
Service delivery	No connection between the role of D&I in improving service delivery or in benefitting day-to-day tasks	Awareness of the potential of D&I to enhance service delivery. Development of risk culture that supports better management of human and social risk associated with D&I.	D&I has been connected to and embedded in all day-to-day roles and tasks within the organisation. The workforce is becoming more accepting, understanding how it enhances service delivery	High levels of service delivery rely on effectively leveraging D&I. The organisation is seen as a diverse and inclusive by members of the community. The organisation is able to actively demonstrate how it has improved its service delivery.
Monitoring and evaluation	No specific monitoring or evaluation – evidence tends to be anecdotal. Poor data management with data hoarding in different areas of the organisation.	Diversity measurements and indicators established. Key organisational measurements and data gaps identified, along with existing data that can be leveraged and used.	Active leveraging and collation of existing data to build robust data sets. Data sharing between different areas of the organisation	All areas of the organisation report in relation to D&I. There is ongoing assessment and review of established D&I measurement and indicators and collaborative, holistic analysis of established data sets.

D&I maturity matrices have also been developed for the commercial sector and two examples are:

- **Kon-Ferry diversity and inclusion maturity model:** https://globewomen.org/globaldiversity/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Korn-Ferry-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Maturity-Model-2020-Andres-Tapia.pdf
- **AHRI diversity and inclusion maturity model:** https://www.ahri.com.au/media/4908/ahri_dimaturityguide.pdf

References

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