

Diversity and Inclusion Statement 2026 – 2029

Embracing our Differences

Introduction from our CEO

Since commencing with Aboriginal Community Services (ACS), I have spoken about the importance of Listening, Learning and Understanding. Through conversations with staff, Elders, families, and our community, one message has been clear: every person brings unique experiences, perspectives and strengths that help shape who we are and who we aspire to be.

Those voices are central to building a stronger, more inclusive future for ACS.

ACS recognises that every person holds unique qualities and perspectives that enrich their own lives, the lives of those around them, and the relationships they build within our communities.

We are committed to building a culture of inclusion that aligns with our values of self-determination, respect, and connection to community.

By fostering diversity and inclusion within our workforce and the services we provide, we promote independence, dignity, happiness, and connection, enabling everyone to be their true selves and fully engage in the way they wish.

The ACS Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is a working document that supports the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care's Aged Care Diversity Framework. It provides staff with a guide on how to improve diversity and inclusion practices to enhance services to individuals receiving funded aged care services and to promote an inclusive and equitable workforce. Regular reporting to the Leadership team ensures transparency and provides a foundation for ongoing improvements. The ACS Diversity and Inclusion Working Party, established in 2025, is the operational driver of the action plan, with oversight from the leadership team.

Our key diversity and inclusion focus areas are:

- Understanding, partnering with, and empowering individuals to deliver inclusive services,
- Building and equipping our workforce,
- Communicating for understanding and collaboration, and
- Creating systems that support inclusion.

As we continue this journey together, we remain committed to creating an organisation where every person feels welcomed, respected, safe and valued. By embracing diversity, listening to every voice, and keeping our Elders at the centre of everything we do, we strengthen not only our services, but also our culture, our relationships, and our shared future.



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Why

Diversity and inclusion are important in creating a culture where people feel accepted and understood for who they are and can thrive in their personal or work life because of this.

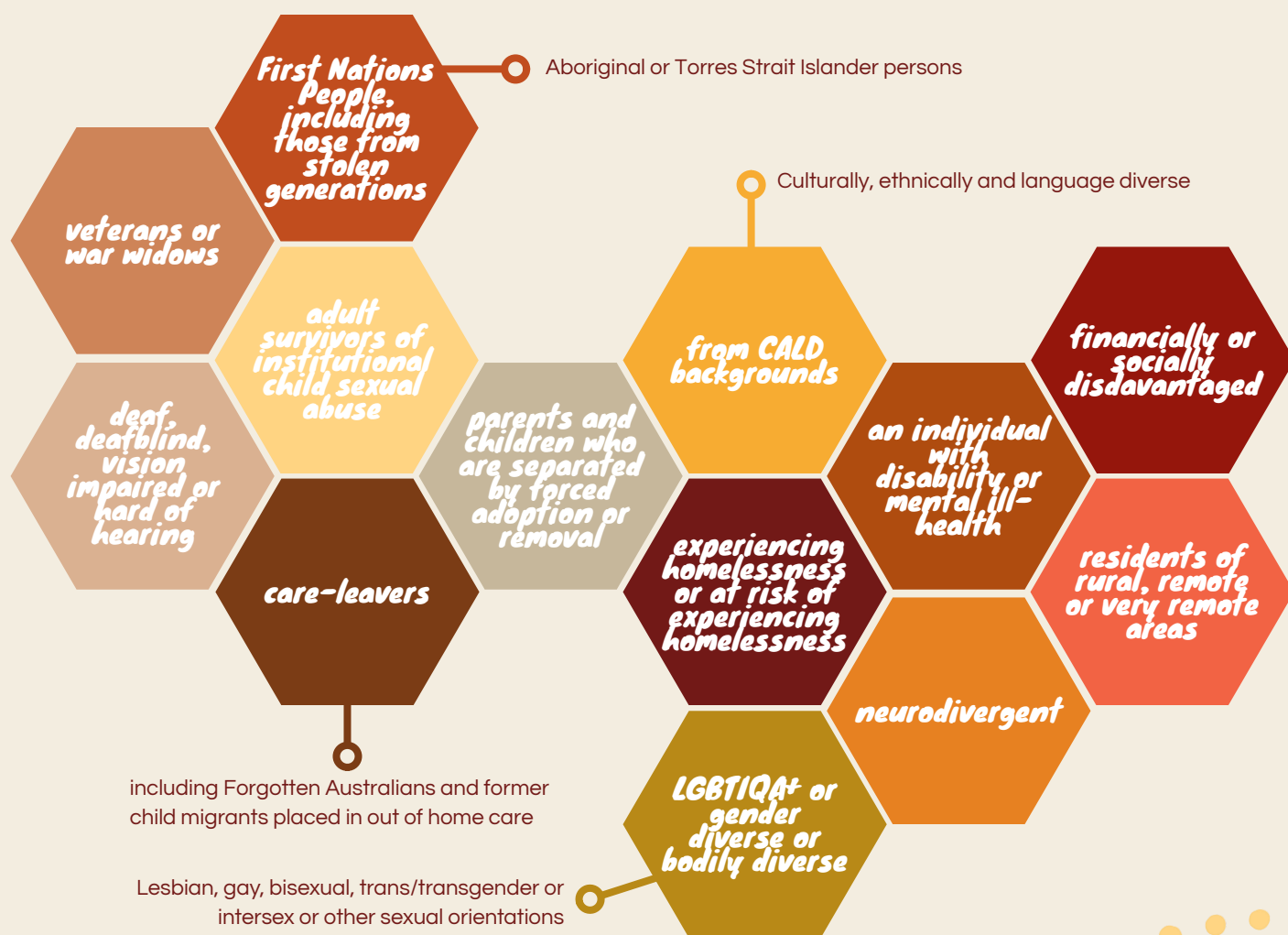
In providing services to individuals, it is important that the ACS workforce understand the principles of what diversity and inclusion is and that there are systems and processes in place that support the goals of diversity and inclusion.

By doing this we provide services to individuals that are person centred, individualised, made in partnership and culturally safe. This leads to better health outcomes for those in our care and prevention of trauma and isolation for those individuals.

The workforce is welcoming and supportive, leading to better staff retention and a happier and motivated work environment where innovation and problem solving is enhanced due to people's differences.

Diversity Characteristics

The Aged Care Act 2024 identifies the importance of care services that are accessible, culturally safe, culturally appropriate, trauma aware and healing informed based on the needs of the individual including individuals who are:



For more information, please see the Aged Care Act 2024, section 25 - Statement of Principles.

Key Focus Areas

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1. Understanding, partnering with and empowering individuals to deliver inclusive services

- 1.1 ACS builds a culture of respect for diversity and understanding of differences across the organisation.
- 1.2 ACS collects diversity information from individuals receiving funded aged care services to support individuals' choices and decisions making.
- 1.3 ACS collaborates with individuals to ensure their needs are met and the services and supports provided are tailored to their diverse needs.

2. Building and equipping our workforce

- 2.1 ACS is committed to creating a workplace environment where there is cultural understanding, acceptance of differences and inclusive practices.
- 2.2 Training is provided to all staff in diversity and inclusion.
- 2.3 Workplace bullying and discrimination is not tolerated.
- 2.4 The work environment facilitates workers to be the best they can be.

3. Communicating for understanding and collaboration

- 3.1 ACS is committed to providing information to individuals in a format that allows them to understand and make informed choices.
- 3.2 ACS welcomes feedback from individuals and workers to improve diversity and inclusion practices.
- 3.3 ACS recognises and supports that workers may thrive by using different communication styles.

4. Creating systems that support inclusion

- 4.1 Systems and processes are created to empower workers to be their best and provide services to individuals that are person centred, respectful and responsive.
- 4.2 There are systems in place to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.
- 4.3 ACS assesses themselves on their diversity and inclusion practices and the outcomes for individuals and workers and this drives continuous improvement.

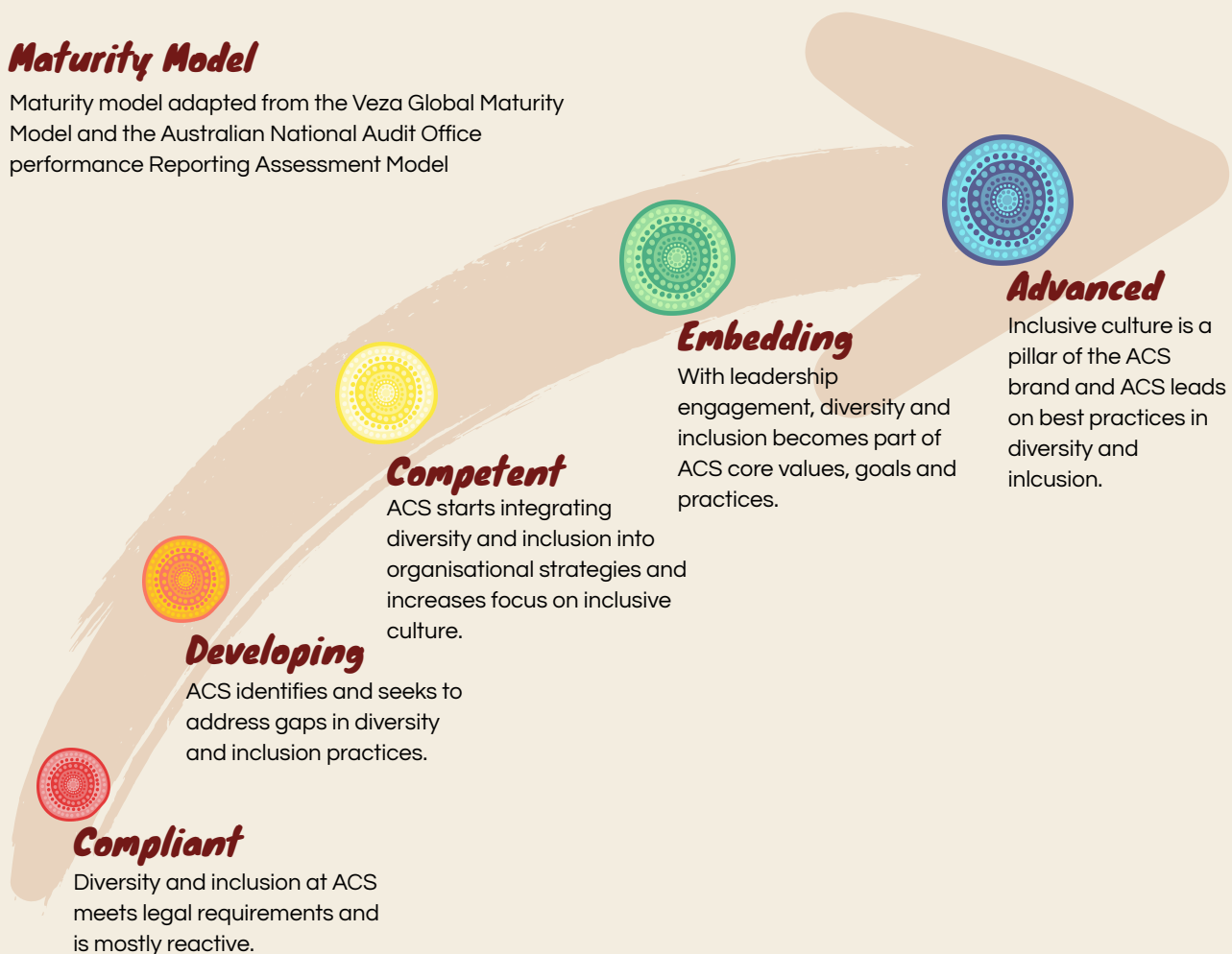
Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

The Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (provided as a separate document) allows ACS the opportunity to create actions that fit within the four key focus areas, setting direction for staff to continuously improve on diversity and inclusion practices.

ACS uses a maturity model to provide a framework for individuals, teams and the organisation to assess its diversity and inclusion journey against each of the actions listed in the action plan. This allows for strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement to be identified during periodic self-evaluation.

Maturity Model

Maturity model adapted from the Veza Global Maturity Model and the Australian National Audit Office performance Reporting Assessment Model



Achievements So Far...

- Acknowledgement of Country at key meetings
- Creation of the Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Process
- Establishment of the Diversity and Inclusion Working Party and quarterly meetings
- NAIDOC celebrations
- Staff cultural lunches
- Adapting work practices to accommodate staff sensory requirements
- Redesign of ACS website to enhance accessibility
- Increased stakeholder engagement via operational committees
- Acknowledgement of cultural and religious celebration dates communicated via email/staff internal memo