



Australian Government
Australian Institute of
Family Studies



Australian Institute of Family Studies

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

2024–2027



Contents

Diversity and inclusion strategy 2024-27.....	4
Diversity and inclusion strategy principles	5
Principle 1: Striving for equity in our workplace	6
1. Implement the actions of AIFS' Reconciliation Action Plan	6
2. Implement the deliverables of AIFS Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2028.....	6
3. Implement the deliverables of AIFS' Mental Health Strategy	6
4. Implement a Rainbow Pride Network	6
Principle 2: Enhancing staff knowledge and awareness on the issues that people from diverse backgrounds face	8
1. Maintain appropriate governance arrangements for diversity and inclusion initiatives.....	8
2. Commemorate key diversity and inclusion events	8
3. Embed cultural awareness as a fundamental component of compliance training framework	8
4. Scope opportunities to partner with expert bodies to enhance awareness	8
Principle 3: Implementing workforce measures to increase diversity in our staff, celebrate this and support staff to thrive.....	9
1. Affirmative measures recruitment	9
2. Maintain breastfeeding friendly workplace accreditation	9
3. Develop and implement a Gender Affirmation Support Policy.....	9
4. Analyse our workforce and consider ways to improve gender equity at various levels	10
5. Develop and launch a Disability Action Plan	10
Principle 4: Consider opportunities to embed diversity considerations in research processes	11
1. Research inquiry groups	11
2. Ensuring diverse representation on advisory groups	11
Evaluation	12
Supporting legislation	12
Supporting strategies and frameworks	12



The Australian Institute of Family Studies acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands and waters. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past and present.

Our people – 103 employees (as at 30 June 2026)

 **77%**
Identify as **female**

 **22%**
Identify as **male**

 **1%**
Identify as **non-binary**, another form of **gender expression**, or **prefer not to say**

Identify as
Living with disability

13%

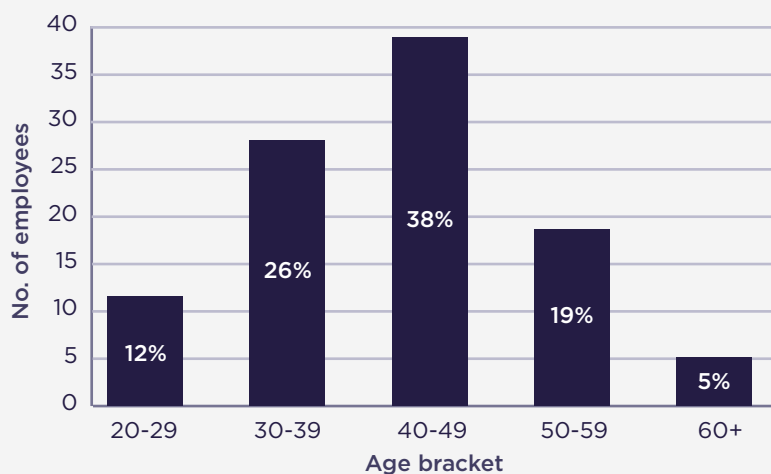


24% 
Identify as **LGBTQIA+**

Identify as
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



1%



Median age

42

Hindi हिन्दी
Japanese 日本語
Polish Polski
Hungarian Magyar
Vietnamese Tiếng Việt
Sinhalese සිංහලයා
Mandarin 简体中文
French Français
Tagalog Tagalog

**Languages spoken
(other than English)**

Countries of birth

Culturally and linguistically diverse employees

25%



Diversity and inclusion strategy 2024-27

Who we are

AIFS' purpose is to create and communicate knowledge that informs government policy and accelerates positive outcomes for children, families and their communities. We undertake research and evaluation to enable governments and service providers to make evidence-informed decisions about policy and service design for the benefit of the families they serve. We are commissioned to conduct research and evaluations by Australian Government departments, as well as state and territory government departments. We also partner with not-for-profit organisations to deliver on projects commissioned by government agencies.

Families and diversity

Through our work, we understand that families are diverse and take many shapes and forms. Diversity refers to the range of individual differences between people including age, gender, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, social background/experience, race, culture, disability, and family responsibilities.

It is important to AIFS that the diversity of Australian families is reflected in our workforce, to support us to apply a wide and informed lens to the research we conduct into matters that affect families. We also recognise that diverse and inclusive workplaces can improve organisational performance through better decisions and higher levels of innovation.

Our diversity and inclusion vision

AIFS vision is to have a respectful, safe and inclusive workplace, recognising and celebrating the diversity in our people and the work we do.

This strategy provides a framework to enable AIFS to establish and uphold an inclusive workplace, that celebrates the diversity of both our workforce and of Australian families.

The benefits of a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy are clear: respectful and safe workplace environments lead to employees being engaged, innovative and more productive at work. At AIFS, there is further motivation to promote inclusion and celebrate diversity, as a key goal of the Institute is to contribute to better outcomes for every Australian family.

Striving for equity in the workplace through the activities outlined in this strategy ensures everyone has an opportunity to develop their skills, talent, and make the most of their experience at work. It is about recognising and valuing differences, and providing the tools and support needed to ensure everyone has an opportunity to succeed.

Commonwealth Government diversity and inclusion strategies

AIFS' strategic direction for our diversity and inclusion work is modelled on a number of key whole-of-government strategies and frameworks, including:

- The Commonwealth Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020-2024
- Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020-25
- Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2021-26
- Australian Public Service Mental Health Capability Framework

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy aims to celebrate the diversity of our workforce and offer an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone. It also outlines the emphasis we will place on creating more opportunities for our diversity focus areas, which include:

- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples
- age inclusion
- cultural and linguistic diversity
- people with disability
- people with neurodiversity
- gender equality (non-binary, female and male)
- LGBTQIA+

Diversity and inclusion strategy principles

Our Strategy has been developed based on the following principles:

- Striving for equity in our workplace
- Enhancing staff knowledge and awareness on the issues that people from diverse backgrounds face
- Implementing workforce changes to increase diversity in our staff, celebrating this and supporting staff to thrive
- Considering opportunities to embed diversity considerations in research processes

Principle 1: Striving for equity in our workplace

Creating equity in our workplace is a process of ensuring that we provide fair opportunities to all employees based on their individual needs and aspirations. Achieving equity means ensuring that everyone within AIFS is treated fairly and is provided with the resources and support they need to thrive in their careers.

The actions that will support the application of this principle are:

1. Implement the actions of AIFS' Reconciliation Action Plan

Endorsed by Reconciliation Australia in November 2025, AIFS' Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2025-2027 details our commitment to reconciliation with First Nations peoples. The RAP builds on our understanding, commitment and respect for culture and Country. It also demonstrates what we are learning on our reconciliation journey, and this will guide us going forward.

In 2024, we will commence planning and drafting AIFS' new Reconciliation Action Plan with a view to finalising and seeking endorsement by the end of the year.

Completion timeframe: Current RAP: November 2025; New RAP: July 2027
Responsibility: RAP Working Group, AIFS Executive

2. Implement the deliverables of AIFS Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2028

The AIFS Gender Equality Strategy will be developed with the purpose of understanding and addressing the factors that contribute to gender and inequality and the gender pay gap across our workforce.

Completion timeframe: November 2026
Responsibility: Human Resources Team

3. Implement the deliverables of AIFS' Mental Health Strategy

AIFS is committed to providing a workplace that supports the mental and physical wellbeing of our diverse workforce. We recognise that wellbeing comes from a combination of factors such as employment conditions and organisational culture, and that everyone has a role to play in creating the workplace environment that enables our people to thrive.

Our Mental Health Strategy has been developed with the APSC's Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Unit (MHSPU) to align our work in this space to the APS Mental Health Capability Framework. The Strategy is iterative, and is refreshed on an annual basis in order to capture solutions that align to whole-of-APS initiatives for mental health and suicide prevention, as well as themes identified through regular environmental scanning including the APS Employee Census and the annual People at Work survey.

Completion timeframe: February 2024, 2025 & 2026
Responsibility: Human Resources Team

4. Implement a Rainbow Pride Network

AIFS' Rainbow Working Group was previously established with the purpose of providing a lens for LGBTQIA+ to the Diversity and Inclusion work that is conducted in the Institute. The input of this group is core to our achievements in this space and should be recognised and celebrated by our staff and promoted externally. It is proposed that this group be formalised as an entity that has carriage of initiatives that promote awareness of LGBTQIA+ awareness, and re-framed as a network that LGBTQIA+ staff and allies can participate in. By promoting a Rainbow Pride Network, potential employees will better understand the value that our LGBTQIA+ staff hold for us.

As a pride network, the mission of the Rainbow Network will be to:

- assist LGBTQIA+ staff to feel safe, respected, and included in the workplace culture of AIFS
- work with AIFS to establish inclusive workplace and recruitment practices and policies
- work with AIFS researchers to ensure the Institute's methodologies and results are representative of LGBTQIA+ perspectives and experiences.

Completion Timeframe: February 2025

Responsibility: Rainbow Working Group, Diversity Working Group

Principle 2: Enhancing staff knowledge and awareness on the issues that people from diverse backgrounds face

To embed a culture within the Institute that embraces diversity and inclusion, there must be open channels of communication that encourage dialogue on issues that both celebrate and support diversity and inclusion. Our Strategy has been developed with the purposes of educating our staff and championing the issues of diverse groups.

1. Maintain appropriate governance arrangements for diversity and inclusion initiatives

AIFS' Diversity and Inclusion initiatives are critical to ensuring actions under this Principle are meaningful. Appropriate governance and resourcing of these groups demonstrates the commitment of the AIFS' executive to this strategy. Ensuring adequate resourcing for our Diversity Working Group and RAP Working Group as well as the engagement and support from our Diversity and RAP Champions will allow AIFS to maintain a high output of awareness raising activity.

Completion timeframe: Ongoing
Responsibility: AIFS Executive

2. Commemorate key diversity and inclusion events

Identifying and maintaining the Diversity Events Calendar and assigning responsibility for these to specific staff members will facilitate capturing more opportunities to raise awareness of diversity and inclusion matters and that these are appropriately resourced.

Completion timeframe: Ongoing
Responsibility: Diversity Working Group, RAP Working Group, Rainbow Working Group, Peer Support Network

3. Embed cultural awareness as a fundamental component of compliance training framework

Raising awareness of other cultures is critical to ensuring our people operate in a manner that supports diversity and inclusion. Cultural awareness training supports employees to improve communication practices, reduce the incidence of conflict and to minimise bias in decision making process. AIFS will embed cultural awareness training as a core requirement for all staff, to ensure that strong cultural competency is an indicator of effective staff performance. Cultural awareness training will be face-to-face and will comprise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture and multicultural awareness.

Completion timeframe: June 2024 (then recurring biennially)
Responsibility: Human Resources Team

4. Scope opportunities to partner with expert bodies to enhance awareness

Enhance capability by scoping memberships to Australian Network on Disability (AND), Diversity Council of Australia (DCA) and Pride in Diversity. Reach out to other specialist organisations or individuals to create opportunities to build our understanding and knowledge of specific diversity areas.

Completion timeframe: June 2025
Responsibility: Human Resources Team

Principle 3: Implementing workforce measures to increase diversity in our staff, celebrate this and support staff to thrive

A diverse workforce combines many perspectives and experiences and often leads to better outcomes for employees. Recognising how inclusivity can enhance our workplace will help us create a diverse and inclusive environment that's conducive to teamwork, increased productivity and creative thinking. To do this, we will implement workforce measures, including:

1. Affirmative measures recruitment

The affirmative measure allows for particular jobs in the Australian Public Service (APS) to be open only to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander persons or people with disability and is designed to address the under-representation of these people within the APS.

The affirmative measure is set out in regulations to the Public Service Act 1999 (Section 31 of the Australian Public Service Commissioner's Directions 2022) and has been revised to allow agencies to use it for jobs that are short-term, irregular, or intermittent, as well as those that are ongoing or non-ongoing for more than 18 months.

HR will introduce questions of suitability of a role for affirmative measures advertising as part of the approval process for recruiting new staff, in addition to assessment of suitability against the specifications of the Commissioner's Directions. Measures will also be strengthened (and new measures implemented) to ensure that employees recruited through this process are able to thrive in their careers at AIFS.

Completion timeframe: June 2027

Responsibility: Human Resources Team

2. Maintain breastfeeding friendly workplace accreditation

Australian Institute of Family Studies has successfully gained accreditation as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace (BFW) with the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA). We are excited to formalise our commitment in creating a supportive environment for our employees as they return to work, balancing breastfeeding with their work responsibilities.

Completion timeframe: Ongoing

Responsibility: Human Resources Team

3. Develop and implement a Gender Affirmation Support Policy

Gender transition involves the processes through which a person affirms a gender identity that is different from the sex and gender assigned to them at birth. This may involve changing their name, registered sex, pronouns, clothing, and other characteristics related to gender expression. Transition may also involve medical procedures such as hormonal treatment and surgeries. It is important to emphasise that transition is a deeply personal process and employees who undertake any type of transition should be able to feel completely supported by their employer in doing so. Support is critical in this process, and employees who have family members or friends who are undertaking gender transition should also be covered by this measure.

By developing and implementing a Gender Affirmation Support policy, AIFS will promote a safe, secure and respectful environment to support current and future staff who undertake gender transition. The relevant policy will contain best practice information to assist staff, managers and colleagues to support employees who transition.

Completion timeframe: December 2026

Responsibility: Rainbow Working Group

4. Analyse our workforce and consider ways to improve gender equity at various levels

Developing a Workforce Plan will also support AIFS to better understand the make-up of our workforce and implement measures to ensure that we have a diverse range of talent to achieve our operational goals.

Completion timeframe: June 2025

Responsibility: Human Resources Team

5. Develop and launch a Disability Action Plan

A Disability Action Plan is a document that organisations use to identify actions to reduce and remove barriers experienced by people with a disability. AIFS' DAP will feature actions that will address barriers experienced by employees and members of the community with disability, including:

- Delivering Disability Confidence training for managers
- Identifying and appointing Disability Liaison Officers
- Conducting an audit of our premises for current levels of accessibility
- Developing a strategy to improve recruitment processes for people with disability.

Completion timeframe: June 2025

Responsibility: Diversity Working Group

Principle 4: Consider opportunities to embed diversity considerations in research processes

AIFS recognises the importance of embedding diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our research work, both as a means of ensuring ethical and inclusive practices and as a source of innovation. By embracing diversity and inclusion, we aim to produce research that reflects and responds to the diverse needs and perspectives of our stakeholders, partners, and Australian families.

1. Research inquiry groups

AIFS' Inquiry Groups are intended to function as communities of practice in specific methodology and subject matter areas. The Inquiry Groups have the following characteristics:

- A purpose that involves developing members' capabilities to build and exchange knowledge
- Members who self-select based on passion, commitment and identification with subject matter.

Inquiry Groups will promote:

- Development in skills and knowledge (professional development)
- Opportunities for engagement between researchers across teams and hierarchies
- Innovation

Inquiry Groups will build on themes from subject matter previously reviewed, including:

- How to measure inequality
- Research with LGBTQIA+ groups
- Administrative data and minority groups
- Method issues in research with people with disability
- Intersectionality in research
- Family and domestic violence
- Best practice research with First Nations groups

Completion timeframe: Ongoing

Responsibility: Group Heads

2. Ensuring diverse representation on advisory groups

AIFS maintains a number of advisory groups comprising participants external to the Institute, who provide expertise and knowledge to ensure that our processes and practices are ethical and robust.

We endeavour to ensure that the membership on these groups represents the multitudes of diverse communities within Australia. This will ensure that the perspectives and experiences of different segments of the population are represented and considered in the Institute's research projects. This will also enhance the credibility and relevance of the Institute's work by reflecting the diversity of its stakeholders and audiences and extend our culture of inclusion and respect beyond the Institute.

Completion timeframe: Ongoing

Responsibility: Group Heads

Evaluation

Indicators for evaluating the success of this Strategy include:

- an increase in representation of employees from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage over the duration of the Strategy
- an increase in staff awareness and understanding of issues affecting vulnerable groups
- an increase in representation of employees with disability over the duration of the Strategy
- maintained or increased results in the Australian Public Service (APS) Employee Census for all questions relating to Diversity and Inclusion
- feedback received from employees which reflects a high level of satisfaction with the implementation of deliverables identified in this Strategy
- feedback received from employees which reflects a high level of satisfaction with the support and reasonable adjustments made to enable them to perform their roles.

Supporting legislation

The following federal and state legislation covers workplace diversity and equal opportunity in Australia, and underpin the actions identified in this Strategy:

- *Public Service Act 1999*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- Fair Work Act 2009 and National Employment Standards (NES).
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Racial Hatred Act 1995*
- *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*

Supporting strategies and frameworks

The following frameworks, policies and procedures support the delivery of this Strategy:

- The Commonwealth Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–2024
- Australian Public Service Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25
- Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26
- Australian Public Service Mental Health Capability Framework
- Australian Public Service (APS) Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct
- AIFS Reconciliation Action Plan 2025–27
- AIFS Mental Health Strategy