Active consideration of diversity plays a key role in all workforce strategies.

The principles of workplace diversity are consistent with the values of the community services sector as outlined in the Tasmanian Community Services Industry Plan 2009-2012. These principles are to respect and value all forms of diversity by creating and sustaining an environment where everyone can achieve their potential.

Community services organisations have a role in promoting principles of equity and productive diversity in the employment practices of the sector and to model what they promote in their own practices and work relationships.

A focus on valuing diversity, where organisations actively recruit and encourage a workforce from a range of cultures and backgrounds, responds to:

- Changing demographics in the workforce and the community.
- The role of sector organisations to model equity and justice in their workforces.
- A need for greater creativity and adaptability to ensure sustainability and relevance of sector organisations.

This toolkit aims to assist your organisation to put in place strategies to capitalise on and celebrate diversity. There are some broad principles to enhance awareness and consideration of diversity but as each organisation is different, the tools and techniques should be tailored to suit your own.

This toolkit is part of ongoing TasCOSS workforce development work focused on organisational culture and its role in the recruitment and retention of staff and volunteers. This work began with a research project in 2009-2010. The project report and literature review, What’s culture got to do with it, can be found under Publications, Industry Development, on the TasCOSS website, www.tascoss.org.au

About this Toolkit

Understanding Diversity
General Legislative Framework ......................... 1
What Is Workplace Diversity? ....................... 1
Benefits Of A Diverse Workforce ..................... 2

Steps Towards A Diverse Workforce
Showing That Your Organisation Values Diversity . . . . 3
Workplace Diversity Plans ................................. 4
Recruiting For Diversity .................................. 5

Good Diversity Practice
General Good Practice .................................... 7
Aboriginal Culture ......................................... 8
Cultural and Linguistic Diversity ......................... 8
Gender Diversity .......................................... 9
Generational Diversity .................................... 10
Mental Health .............................................. 11
Religious Diversity ........................................ 12
Sexual Orientation .......................................... 13
Disability .................................................... 13
Managing A Diverse Volunteer Workforce ........ 14

Useful Contacts and Resources
A key reason for embracing diversity in the workplace is that state and federal laws make it illegal not to. Equal opportunity and a workplace environment free from harassment and discrimination must be ensured.

The Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Tasmania) prohibits discrimination and provides for the investigation and conciliation of, and inquiry into, complaints in relation to discrimination.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Commonwealth) provides for the rights of people with physical or mental disabilities and addresses complaints of discrimination in the workforce.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth) makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a person on the grounds of disability.

The Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth) makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of race, colour, national or ethnic origin.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth) aims to eliminate, so far as is possible, discrimination against persons on the ground of sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy.

Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991 requires that all employers and employees maintain a secure, healthy and safe working environment. An employer must take practical precautions to prevent harassment.

Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009 (Commonwealth) prohibits discrimination in awards and agreements and (subject to some exemptions) in the termination of employment.

The Privacy Act 1988 requires that employers do not divulge confidential information disclosed by an employee, eg of a mental illness. Principle 11 of the Privacy Act 1988 also requires that written consent from the individual must be obtained before information about their illness can be shared with others.

Workplaces cannot take any adverse action against a worker because of their mental illness.

What is Workplace Diversity?

Workplace diversity is about valuing and supporting differences in the workplace and adapting work practices to create an inclusive environment.

A good organisational culture respects and supports diverse skills, perspectives and backgrounds, and is free from discrimination and harassment, enshrining the principles of equal employment opportunity, social justice, access and equity.
What is Workplace Diversity?

Diversity is also shaped by a broader range of characteristics including:

- Educational level
- Life stage
- Job function
- Socio-economic background
- Personality
- Geographic location
- Marital status
- Family or other carer responsibilities

A workplace culture that supports diversity ensures that all people have the opportunity to compete for careers without being disadvantaged by difference.

Organisations with a positive workplace culture ensure a rich workforce mix that better reflects the community and takes advantage of the benefits a diverse workforce can bring.

Organisations with a positive workplace culture create a workplace that accommodates and capitalises on the needs, values and differences within their workforce.

An inclusive work environment allows employees to contribute to their full potential through recognising and supporting their diverse strengths and needs.

Benefits of a Diverse Workforce

Diversity enhances business outcomes as much as it enhances social justice outcomes.

A diverse workforce with a range of different backgrounds and perspectives gives organisations a broader range of ideas and insights to draw on in decision-making and policy development.

Your organisation will benefit from valuing workplace diversity by:

- Improved client service through greater understanding of clients’ diversity and needs
- Improved recruitment outcomes through being an employer of choice
- Improved workplace relations and morale
- Reduced workplace stress and improved work attendance
- Increased productivity
- Providing a better framework for decision-making within the organisation
- Access to a broader range of ideas and approaches
- Increased innovation
- Competitive management practices
- Ensuring fair and equitable staff selection
- Breaking down prejudices and avoiding stereotyping
- Modelling the equity we promote as a sector
Workplace diversity principles should be integrated with all aspects of human resource management, such as planning, selection and recruitment, performance appraisal, training and development, occupational health and safety, and workplace relations.

For example, an agency's certified agreement and AWAs should reinforce its commitment to diversity and should incorporate flexible working conditions to allow employees to balance their work and other responsibilities.

### Ways a workplace can demonstrate its commitment to diversity:

- Promote inclusiveness, respect, equity and merit.
- Celebrate diversity as an organisational resource included in the organisation's statement of mission, vision and values.
- Ensure that capitalising on diversity is built into the organisation's strategic planning.
- Allocate resources to ensure no individuals or groups are excluded or alienated.
- Address any identified barriers to diversity.
- Include diversity issues in employee surveys.
- Have champions of diversity – these are essential to change – in the organisation. It may be the HR manager, the OH&S officer or the anti-discrimination officer.
- Develop a Workforce Diversity Plan – sometimes referred to as an Equity and Workplace Diversity Plan or an Equal Opportunity and Workplace Diversity Plan.

### A workplace should ensure that:

- No decisions affecting employees will have discriminatory consequences.
- The actions of all employees are in line with all relevant legislation, the values of the Tasmanian Community Services Industry Plan and the organisation's own values.
- Workplace structures and conditions enable all employees to contribute to their full potential at work while taking into account personal commitments.
- Decisions affecting employees take into account their individual needs.
- All written communication recognises the diverse workforce and uses inclusive language.
- Decisions affecting employees are based on facts, not preconceptions.
- A diversity statement is included in recruitment documents.
- Diversity is addressed in induction processes.
- Diversity awareness training is offered, including for managers.
- Ability to work within, encourage and manage a diverse workforce becomes a factor in performance appraisals.

### Demonstrate a commitment to the principles of equal opportunity

Identifying as an Equal Opportunity Employer, especially in job advertisements, has been the traditional way organisations demonstrate that they value diversity. Workplace diversity does encompass the concept of equal employment opportunity but goes further than the EEO focus on the four major groups of women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from culturally diverse backgrounds and people with a disability. Past or current disadvantage as addressed in EEO statements is still highly relevant but the diversity approach described earlier in this toolkit seeks to address a much broader definition of difference, including a large range of skills, perspectives and talents in the workplace arena.
A Workplace Diversity Plan recognises that all people have different qualities, skills, qualifications, experience and attitudes to work, and that valuing and making the most of these differences can improve the workplace for individuals and enhance the overall performance of the organisation. It promotes inclusiveness, respect, equity and merit.

The objectives of a Workplace Diversity Plan are to:

- **Recognise**
  - Recognise, value and use the diverse skills, cultural values and backgrounds of employees and volunteers.

- **Enhance**
  - Enhance the opportunities for employees to participate and contribute to the work of the organisation.

- **Prevent**
  - Prevent and eliminate harassment and unlawful discrimination in the workplace.

- **Ensure**
  - Ensure that workplace structures, conditions, systems and procedures foster diversity and allow employees to manage work and personal life.

- **Promote**
  - Promote awareness of the value of diversity in the workplace.

A Workforce Development Plan includes:

- Strategies for celebrating diversity.
- Strategies to address racism, sexism, ageism, stereotyping and management of conflict.
- A systemic approach to embedding diversity into the organisation’s vision, goals, policies and strategic plans.
- Data on the extent of workplace diversity to enable targeting of areas for improvement.

A Workforce Development Plan ensures:

- Information on workplace diversity principles is provided to all employees involved in recruitment and selection processes.
- Themes and promotional days related to workplace diversity issues are celebrated.

Once devised, your Workplace Diversity Plan should be launched and promoted.

Examples of workplace diversity plans

Search using these titles to find the following examples of Workplace Diversity Plans online:

- Department of Health and Ageing Workforce Diversity Plan
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship Workplace Diversity Plan 2011-2013
- Australian Federal Police Workforce Diversity Plan
- The Corrective Services NSW Equity and Diversity Plan 2011 – 2014
Recruiting for diversity requires the application of equitable recruitment practices.

Job Advertisements

A 2009 Australian study conducted by Booth, Leigh and Vaganova sent more than 5000 résumés to respond to job advertisements. The jobs applied for were entry-level positions and the result showed discrimination against all applicants who did not have Anglo-Celtic names.¹ Challenge your own prejudices.

Ensure that job specifications and descriptions are objective and based solely on skills, relevant experience and capacity to do the job.

Focus on output required, not the process. Avoid saying that a driving licence is essential when an ability to travel is actually what is meant.

Make sure age limits are not applied in relation to recruitment or promotion without objective justification.

If you use or are open to flexible work patterns, make this clear.

Job advertisements must as far as possible have age-neutral language. For example, advertisements that state how many years’ experience are needed would be indirectly discriminatory, as an older applicant may be more likely to fill that requirement than a younger one. Advertisements that use language associated with being young, such as “dynamic” or “energetic”, could also be indirectly discriminatory.

Include a diversity statement on the job advertisement. It used to be common to see something along the lines of “we are an equal opportunity employer” on a job advertisement. You can use this or a something like “we value diversity”.

It is also helpful to state that forms and materials are available in different formats on request. Providing alternative formats is usually very simple and inexpensive. Often, all that is required is an electronic or large-text version.

Suggested places to promote or advertise a vacancy

- In addition to national and local press, industry websites such as the TasCROSS e-news.
- Your own website.
- Networking groups and other organisations, such the Multicultural Council of Tasmania, which has its own e-news.
- Disability newsletters and websites.

**Recruiting for diversity**

**Job interviews**

Be aware that socio-cultural assumptions and communication styles of both interviewers and candidates underlie perceptions of candidates and that the selection interview is a highly culturally specific event, reflecting the normative values and styles of the mainstream culture.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds can be disadvantaged by the apparently neutral workplace cultures, relations and practices that tend to exclude them. The job/promotion interview relies upon subjective, culturally influenced judgements of candidates’ ways of presenting themselves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beware of imposing criteria that unfairly limit promotional opportunities to some people, or restrict entry to a class of work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generalisations about generational, racial, cultural and other differences are only guidelines to help you understand what might be preventing understanding. Move away from stereotypes around categories like gay/lesbian, Sudanese or baby-boomer to the people themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote diversity principles to selection committees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you have an employee already who is from the same cultural group as the candidate, consider including them in the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to be as flexible as possible about interview times to make it easier for people with family or other responsibilities to attend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask all applicants invited for interviews if they have any requirements. You are legally required to ensure your interview venue is accessible (see the Contacts section of this toolkit for where to receive guidance and financial support).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Relay Service can help you speak to people with hearing difficulties. Hearing users do not need any equipment and callers are charged as a standard telephone call (<a href="http://www.relayservice.com.au/">www.relayservice.com.au/</a>). However, do not insist on telephone interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask all candidates you are inviting for an interview if they have any particular requirements. Ask at the start of an interview if they require adjustments to a room, e.g. lighting levels for people with sight impairment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As far as possible, ask the same questions of each candidate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only ask questions related to the job, not personal questions such as if someone is married or what religion they are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never assume that a person with a disability cannot carry out a task, but it is perfectly reasonable to describe what a job entails and ask how they will perform the tasks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When it comes to workplace practice, “one size fits all” simply doesn’t apply. Effective teams should value different views, encourage active listening, support the sharing of expertise, share recognition and appreciation, value good work and manage their communications with positivity and humour.

**General Good Practice**

- Create a Workforce Diversity Plan to inform working practices and organisational policy and ensure it is incorporated into the induction process and is adhered to at all levels.
- Recruit fairly and from as wide a base as possible, so that your workforce better reflects the community.
- Promote workplace diversity principles in all staffing policies and practice, including performance appraisal.
- Include the possibility of giving work placement, traineeships, mentoring opportunities and work experience to people from diverse backgrounds.
- Ensure workplace diversity principles are included in appropriate training procedures.
- Give relevant and useful diversity awareness training to staff at all levels to encourage them to understand, celebrate and champion diversity.
- Make your board and senior management more representative. Look at appointing more people from under-represented groups at decision-making/board level and look at training for these roles.
- Take part in or run events that promote diversity.
- Encourage and support mentoring through informal and formal systems.
- Continue to encourage member and staff participation and involvement on working parties and committees such as best practice, anti-discrimination and OH&S committees.
- Promote effective communication throughout the organisation by the dissemination of items of interest on diversity to staff and members.
- Report on significant diversity actions and activities annually.

As far as is possible, allow for a range of flexible work arrangements to suit all staff including phased retirement, part-time work, job-sharing, working from home, flexible working hours, flexible leave options, contracting and mentoring.

A flexible workplace can assist employees with fluctuating periods of health; attending medical appointments; fitting in with their carer’s timetable; responsibilities for care of children or other relatives.
Aboriginal Culture

Organisations that receive appropriate Aboriginal cultural awareness training will be more aware of the issues affecting Aboriginal people and be more aware of the impact these issues can have on Aboriginal people in the workplace. Contact the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre for advice on who to engage to deliver Aboriginal cross-cultural awareness programs across the state.

The right cultural awareness program can also greatly assist organisations who are seeking to employ and retain Aboriginal staff. This awareness will assist employers to develop practical strategies, to improve the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff and to develop strategies that will capitalise on the strengths of Aboriginal staff.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD)

Employer attitudes to migrants and refugees can present a barrier to employment. Some employers hold stereotypical and prejudiced views about ‘visibly different’ migrants and refugees, and engage in discriminatory practices. For African and Middle Eastern refugees, their religious customs, appearance, name and accent are perceived to be the main bases for discrimination.

- Be willing to hire new migrants and beware of stereotyping and racial discrimination in hiring and firing practices.
- Do not assume that overseas qualifications are inferior to Australian qualifications and take the opportunity to mentor a new entrant to undertake training that will lead to an Australian qualification.
- Do not assume a lack of perceived cultural or organisational fit because the migrant or refugee comes from a different cultural background.
- Provide cultural awareness training to staff at all levels.
- If appropriate, hang posters celebrating other cultures and other elements of diversity.
- Where appropriate, have signs in other languages, for example welcome signs.

Diversity is big around here!

We’ve got a French Poodle, a Rhodesian Ridgeback, a Pekinese and . . .
Gender

Often in workplaces women receive less pay for equal work and are less willing than men to ask for a pay rise or better conditions.

Women may be treated differently after becoming mothers. Mothers can be perceived as a flight risk or not dedicated enough to the job. This positions them as unworthy of any further investment and they can be denied plum travel and assignments, under the guise of benevolent protectionism, because “they won’t want to leave home so much”.

Women are often perceived as not taking charge, but as taking care and they may not rewarded for their outspokenness, where men are.

The Australian Government recognises the inequalities for working women and its Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency runs a program of Employer of Choice for Women. This recognises non-government organisations that are female-friendly, with Equal Opportunity programs that recognise and advance their female workforce. These organisations can brand and position themselves in the marketplace as an EOWA Employer of Choice for Women. To learn more about this program go the website www.eowa.gov.au

How to handle gender-based misunderstandings in the workplace

Most people have a tendency to assume that all people are just like themselves. Learning more about gender issues can trigger a series of surprising observations and new understandings. Organise a talk from the office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner or the Hobart Women’s Health Centre.

Assess the ways in which the structure, norms, expectations, standards, evaluation methods and other attributes of the workplace may carry a bias. Managers can privately question staff members on an individual basis, perhaps during their performance appraisals, to ascertain any frustrations they may have in working with members of the opposite gender and behaviours that would show respect for the style differences between them.

At a staff or team meeting any concerns that arise around gender issues should be discussed. Staff members can be encouraged to articulate explicit agreements about ways they can show respect for and benefit from gender-based styles. Managers must be open to hearing the ways in which their own actions and treatment of staff members, and the staff’s interaction with each other, perpetuate negative and thus unproductive gender biases.

Some managers may find that by changing their own behaviours, the entire department or unit will change, having learned by experience and example. Others may wish to bring the issues up explicitly with staff by holding meetings, announcing new policies, or inviting special consultants from the outside to work with staff.

Sexual harassment

A workplace issue particularly related to gender is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment in the workplace is one of the commonest types of complaint received by the Human Rights Commission under the Sex Discrimination Act. Mobile phones, email and social networking websites creates new spaces where sexual harassment may occur.
**Gender**

Sexual harassment disproportionately affects women, with one woman in five experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace at some time. However, one in 20 men also report experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace.

It is important for employers to know how to increase awareness of and prevent sexual harassment and also for employees and co-workers to know how to identify sexual harassment and the avenues available to them to make a complaint.

For more information go to the Human Rights Commission website [www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au) and click on the sexual harassment link under the sex discrimination tab.

---

**Generational Diversity**

The work environment is changing in response to the needs of a multi-generational workforce. Diversity of age in the workplace can add value in terms of ideas, creativity and innovation.

- Implement measures to put in place an environment created from the values and best practices of each generation.
- Remember that mature-age workers are just as interested in training as their younger colleagues.
- Do not expect experience from young people. Expect enthusiasm and give them the opportunity to gain experience.
- Provide computer training for older workers if they have difficulties working with software.
- Include mentoring and knowledge transfer as part of succession planning to allow your organisation to train less experienced staff to step up into vacancies caused by workers retiring.
- Treat each employee as an individual with a valuable contribution to make and take the time to understand each staff member’s perspective.
- Do not assume that everyone of a certain age is the same – this can lead to stereotyping. There may be a large number of people in a particular generational group, Baby Boomers or Gen Y, for example, who exhibit a particular trait or characteristic but these encapsulations can never predict whether or not that will be true for an individual.
Effective management systems provide excellent support for people who have any sort of health issue, including mental illness.

Many people will choose not to tell their employer or co-workers about their mental illness. The reason may be that they fear being stigmatised, or they may not see a need to tell others. If an employee does disclose that they have a mental illness, discuss whether it is likely to affect their work performance and if support can help.

It is good practice for line managers to spend one-on-one time with all staff on a regular basis. This time can be used to discuss work performance and to inquire about staff members’ wellbeing. People who are unwell will feel more supported to be open about their illness.

- Build a safe work environment that will not create or exacerbate mental health problems and where workers with mental illness are properly supported.
- Strategies to address mental health should be integrated with broader OHS management processes.
- Risk factors that could cause physical or mental illness or injury should be systematically identified, assessed and controlled by eliminating or minimising such risks.

Positive and open communication is vital when managing an employee experiencing mental health issues. Listen without judgement and ask open-ended questions to help the employee to open up about what workplace adjustments would help them to work more effectively.

Implement workplace wellbeing strategies, get involved in promotions such as Mental Health Week and make mental health a topic for internal training.

Provide general information in the workplace about the incidence and nature of mental illness, and encourage a supportive and aware environment for everyone.

If the employee needs help managing their daily activities and building long-term relationships, it may be helpful to provide information about community programs such as the Personal Helpers and Mentors service.

Maintain confidentiality, and only disclose information to other staff with permission from the employee himself/herself.

Encourage an employee with a mental illness to seek professional assistance.

Discuss ways to explain to other staff why they are working in a different way (accommodations) in a manner that doesn’t betray the person’s privacy and confidence.

Effective accommodations include changes in schedules, job tasks or certain activities that could increase stress. Another accommodation may be working from home, if this is an option.

Encourage appropriate use of sick leave entitlements.

Develop a return-to-work plan, maintaining contact with the employee during absence, collaborating with employee, GP, counsellor or other treating professional. Prepare manager and team for employee’s return and apply a staged return to work if required.

Ensure that the workplace offers supportive avenues for people who have a mental illness or any other disability, through links to employment support agencies.
Christianity remains the dominant religion in Australia but with more and more religious groups represented in Australia, it makes it even more important that the different religions are recognised in the workplace.

_It is also important that many people identify as having no religious beliefs and they too must be treated fairly and with respect._

Employers should reasonably accommodate the religious beliefs and practices of their employees unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the employer. For example, relaxing a dress code in order to allow someone to cover their heads in accordance with their religious beliefs would be considered a reasonable accommodation, unless the head covering posed a safety hazard to the employee or others in the workplace.

_Educate the workforce to be sensitive to the beliefs of others and to avoid stereotyping._

_Accommodate religious diversity in observing holidays, allowing prayer breaks, accommodating dietary requirements or dress and grooming habits and religiously motivated objections to training programs._

_Offer holiday swapping. With holiday swapping, for example, an employee would be able to work on Christmas Day, a Christian holiday, in exchange for not working on the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah._

_Allow an employee to take paid or unpaid leave for religious observances._

_Allow employees who observe special religious practice to work flexible schedules so that they can work around those beliefs._

_Allow employees to wear certain clothing or religious symbols._

_Be considerate of an employee’s religion to reserve the right not to participate in office holiday parties and celebrations._

_Set up a quiet space or a prayer room if possible to allow employees to pray during their breaks._

_Offer personal time off that can be used by employees for any reason, typically two or four days a year, and the time off can be used for any reason, for example, to observe Yom Kippur._

_Be aware of dietary practices associated with religions, for example vegetarianism, meat and dairy not eaten together, non-consumption of alcohol, and make sure any social or celebratory occasions provide appropriate catering for all employees._

12 _Good diversity practice_
Sexual orientation

Organisations launching diversity initiatives often struggle with the issue of sexual orientation in the workplace. Employers must recognise that they need to create a work environment where gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) employees are safe, respected and able to share in the full responsibilities and benefits of employment.

Conversations about spouses, friends and family are a normal part of the working day and help form bonds of mutual respect and trust that support a productive workplace. Many GLBTI employees do not discuss their personal life at work for fear that they will be rejected, harassed or threatened by other employees. It is just as important for GLBTI individuals to be comfortable to speak about personal issues and matters as their co-workers.

- An individual's sexual orientation should not be a factor in hiring, promotion, evaluation and work assignment decisions.
- Do not tolerate GLBTI jokes, gestures and rumours at work. This can also be offensive to heterosexuals who are not biased in this way and many workers who have friends and relatives who are other than heterosexual.
- GLBTI employees should be welcomed and valued members of your work unit. Acts of harassment or threats against GLBTI employees should be dealt with immediately.
- GLBTI employees should be able to access all benefits available to other staff, including carer leave if their partner is ill.
- Discrimination on the basis of religion is prohibited and this means that no one can or should ask an employee to change their religious beliefs on homosexuality. But religious objections to homosexuality cannot be imposed on co-workers or be used to obstruct anti-discrimination laws, policies and diversity activities.

Disability

People with disabilities face barriers to employment, including often inadvertent barriers raised by employers. Many employers admit they are reluctant to take on a person with a disability because they lack confidence in their own ability to facilitate the employee in the workplace.

The Employment Assistance Fund helps people with disability and mental health conditions by providing financial assistance to purchase work-related modifications and services for those about to start a job or currently working, as well as those who require assistance to find and prepare for work.

Recruit and train more people with disabilities

- Undertake reasonable adjustment to the workplace or work practices to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities
- Provide information in accessible formats
- Provide accessible services
- Recognise people with disabilities as consumers of services
- Consult with people with disabilities to find out what they need
Managing a diverse volunteer workforce

Can your organisation support diverse volunteers? Managing a diverse volunteer workforce requires similar approaches, policies, procedures and adjustments as managing a paid workforce.

Establish clear and accessible volunteering policies and procedures incorporating diversity principles to underscore that diverse volunteers are welcome in your workplace.

Ensure that physical and other barriers are addressed.

Ensure that misconceptions about diversity are addressed.

Consider providing cross-cultural and other awareness programs training through organisations like the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, the Migrant Resource Centre and Working it Out to staff.

Partner with local community groups to advertise and promote volunteering opportunities – for example, migrant resource centres, youth groups, disability groups. Go out and talk to people in senior citizens centres and other meeting places.

Actively strive for a diverse board.

Recruitment

Ensure recruitment and selection procedures are clear and transparent to ensure that volunteers from diverse backgrounds feel the process is fair and non-discriminatory.

If you have existing volunteers from diverse backgrounds in your organisation, ask them to help you with a recruitment strategy. As part of ongoing continuous improvement practices, obtain feedback from current volunteers to identify successful recruitment strategies that have worked in the past and possible improvements/amendments to strategies that have not.

Where necessary or appropriate, use specific resources to assist you during the volunteer interview such as translators, holding the interview in an accessible location, providing resources for people with hearing or visual difficulties or increasing the interview duration.

- Reduce the amount of forms and paperwork where appropriate or include this in the interview process where you can assist the volunteer to fill them out.
- Tailor your induction and training to your volunteers’ circumstances so that every new volunteer feels welcome, comfortable, accepted and able to contribute.

At work

Each volunteer, no matter what their background, may have different needs when it comes to support and supervision. Allow opportunities for feedback so that you can make the volunteering experience as enjoyable for your organisation as it is for your volunteers.

- Consider a mentoring or buddy scheme so that your volunteers from diverse backgrounds can be paired up with an existing volunteer or staff member to assist them when required.
- Any volunteer, whether they are young, old, disabled, or from a culturally or linguistically diverse background, will have strengths that will benefit your organisation – recognise their skills.

Take advantage of new, unique and sought-after skills that volunteers from diverse backgrounds might offer, such as an understanding of new technologies, communication skills in different languages, networks and contacts within the community, physical strength, cultural awareness and more.
Useful Contacts and Resources
Useful Contacts & Resources

General

Business Victoria website Managing a High Performance Workplace webpage
The High-Performance Toolkit, subtitled Your Guide to Managing a High-Performance Organisation, is a set of fact sheets developed by Industrial Relations Victoria in 2003. They focus on practical ideas and strategies to improve industrial relations in the workplace as enterprises strive to become high-performance organisations.

To access this document search

Celebrating diversity in the workplace - Business Victoria

Organisational Diversity
The two fact sheets in Organisational Diversity both celebrate diversity and deal with the inherent advantages of building diversity into your workplace.

To access this document search

Business Victoria - Workforce - Organisational Diversity

Aboriginal Culture

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre www.tacinc.com.au/

South Australia's Department of Premier and Cabinet
Commitment Statement recognising the “value of Aboriginal cultural diversity in the workplace”.

To access this document search

value of Aboriginal cultural diversity in the workplace

Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD)

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007)
Refugees and Employment - The effects of visible difference on discrimination

Available from

www.cscr.murdoch.edu.au/

West Australian Department of Education and Training (2005)
Pathways to Apprenticeships and Traineeships for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Background

Available from

www.cscr.murdoch.edu.au/

Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia
Some are more equal than others: experiences of racism in new and emerging communities, Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2005); Tan-Quigley A and Sankaran R (2005)

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia (2007)
Recognition of Experience and Upgrading of Overseas Qualifications: Final Report, p.14

Available from

www.cciwa.com/Past_Projects.aspx#15138
If you specifically want to recruit people with disabilities for your workforce, your best bet is Disability Employment Services. This organisation is government-funded to help job seekers with disability access individually tailored employment services. It provides ongoing support in the workplace for as long as required and offers a range of free services to employers.

Disability Employment Services can also help employers access a range of other financial support and incentives, such as workplace modifications, assistive technology, mental health first-aid training, disability and deafness awareness training, Auslan interpreting and wage subsidies.

For details about Disability Employment Services, see the federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations website.

To access this document search [About Disability Employment Services](#)

**JobAccess**

Free expert help and workplace solutions for the employment of people with disability


**Workplace Adjustment Tool**

The Workplace Adjustment Tool can be used to source practical ideas and solutions aimed at supporting people with disability to undertake the vast range of activities and tasks in the workplace. The tool links you to suppliers of products and solutions in your state or territory.

To access this resource [jobaccess.gov.au/Advice/Search](http://jobaccess.gov.au/Advice/Search)

**The Employment Assistance Fund**

The Employment Assistance Fund helps people with disability and mental health conditions by providing financial assistance to purchase a range of work-related modifications and services. Assistance is available for people who are about to start a job or who are currently working, as well as those who require assistance to find and prepare for work.

To access this resource [jobaccess.gov.au/Services/A-Z_list/Pages/](http://jobaccess.gov.au/Services/A-Z_list/Pages/)

The Fund may reimburse the cost of work-related modifications and services including:

- the cost of modifications to the physical work environment
- modifications to work vehicles
- adaptive equipment for the workplace
- information and communication devices
- Auslan interpreting
- specialist services for employees with specific learning disorders and mental health conditions
- disability awareness training
- deafness awareness training
- mental health awareness training.

Recruitment agencies may also apply for reimbursement for Auslan interpreting they provide for a job interview.
Gender

Employers are reaping the benefits of their equal opportunity for women in the workplace programs through increased employee effectiveness, attracting and retaining the best talent, improved morale and increased consumer and market responsiveness.

To find out if your organisation is covered by the EOWW Act 1999, or to learn about preparing and submitting a report, visit the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency’s Reporting and Compliance page, www.eowa.gov.au, or contact EOWA on (02) 9432 7000.

The Commonwealth Government recognises the inequalities for working women and the EOWA oversees a program of Employer of Choice for Women. This recognises non-government organisations that are women-friendly, with Equal Opportunity programs that recognise and advance their female workforce. These organisations can brand and position themselves in the marketplace as an EOWA Employer of Choice for Women.

To learn more about this program go the website www.eowa.gov.au

To access sexual harassment information, either as an employer or an employee, search Sexual Harassment - Australian Human Rights Commission

Mental Health

Mental Health Works
Contains practical evidence-based workplace strategies and rights and responsibilities for people who have experienced mental illness and their employers. This DVD and online resource was produced by Queensland Alliance and Worklink, and was particularly developed for employers and Disability Employment Network providers.

To access this document search Mental Health Works qldalliance

Mental Health and Work
The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations brochure Work and your mental health has been developed as part of the Department’s contributions to the Council of Australian Governments National Action Plan on Mental Health.

To access this resource jobaccess.gov.au/News/Pages/Mental_health_and_work.aspx

The Employment Assistance Fund
helps people with mental health conditions by providing financial assistance to purchase a range of work-related services. Assistance is available for people who are about to start a job or who are currently working, as well as those who require assistance to find and prepare for work.

The Fund may reimburse the cost of work-related services including:
- specialist services for employees with specific learning disorders and mental health conditions
- mental health awareness training.

To access this resource jobaccess.gov.au/Services/A-Z_list/Pages/EmploymentAssistanceFund

2010 Workers with Mental Illness: a Practical Guide for Managers

Australian Human Rights Commission website
1. Mental health in the workplace

Contents
1.1 Creating a safe and healthy workplace
1.2 Reasons for developing mental health strategies for the workplace
1.3 This Guide

Available from

Beyondblue
Beyond blue - mental Health First Aid Kit

Available from

Work Outcomes Research Cost Benefit Project, preliminary data
Mental Health Fact Sheet: Mental Health and Employment, MHCA

To access this document search
Mental Health Fact Sheet: Mental Health and Employment, MHCA

Beyondblue Depression Monitor, Highet N (2005)
beyondblue: the national depression initiative

To access this document search
beyondblue: the national depression initiative

Best Practice in Managing Mental Health in the Workplace, Cowan G,

To access this document search
Best Practice in Managing Mental Health in the Workplace

Religious Diversity

Strengthening Religious Diversity and Harmony in South Australia
Report by the Taskforce on Religious Diversity South Australia 2010

Available from
www.multicultural.sa.gov.au

Human Rights Commission New Zealand
Religion in the workplace page raises awareness of issues that may arise and offers guidance in understanding and accommodating religious diversity in the workplace.

Available from
www.hrc.co.nz/2012/religious-diversity-in-the-workplace

My Career website
religion in the workplace page

Available from
content.mycareer.com.au/advice
Sexual Orientation

Working it Out Inc gender and sexuality support and education service

Visit www.workingitout.org.au/

Working It Out South
39 Burnett Street
North Hobart 7000
6231 1200 - 0438 346 122
south@workingitout.org.au

Working It Out North
45 Canning Street
Launceston 7250
6334 4013 - 0419 361 128
north@workingitout.org.au

Working It Out NW
11 Jones Street
Burnie 7320
6432 3643 - 0419 361 128
northwest@workingitout.org.au

Do you support the sexual orientation of your employees?


Protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and ... 
Australian Human Rights Commission Sexual orientation and sex and/or gender identity discussion paper.


Building LGBT Inclusive Workplaces (2009)
Engaging organisations and individuals in change, summary of qualitative research into the experiences of LGBT people in Canadian workplaces

Available from www.catalyst.org/

Sexual Harassment in Australia website
Developed by the Sexual Harassment in Australia Causes, Outcomes & Prevention Project (2010-2012), Queensland University of Technology and the University of South Australia, this website contains links to a range of information, resources and publications that may be of interest. The website also provides opportunities to participate in the research.

Visit www.sexualharassmentinaustralia.org/
Volunteers

Volunteering Australia
Involving Volunteers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds: A guide that includes benefits to organisations in involving volunteers with diverse backgrounds, recruiting hints and addressing common concerns for organisations.

Available from www.volunteeringaustralia.org/

Volunteering Australia
Training Manual – Recruiting and Supporting Volunteers from Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Backgrounds. A training program and manual to help not-for-profits recruit and support volunteers from diverse backgrounds. The program is broken up into separate modules including planning, recruitment, welcoming and orienting volunteers, and supporting volunteers.

Available from www.volunteeringaustralia.org/

FaHCSIA – Passions, People and Appreciation – Making Volunteering Work for Young People
A report that investigates the kind of volunteering that young people participate in and the reason they do (or don’t) do it, and the costs, benefits and outcomes for young people and for volunteer involving organisations.


Volunteering Western Australia – Enhancing Access
Online training resource for incorporating volunteers with a disability or mental illness into your organisation or program.

Visit ea.volunteeringwa.org.au/

Office of Volunteering – South Australia – Engaging People with Disabilities in Volunteering
A fact sheet explaining steps your organisation can take to recruit and interview potential volunteers with disabilities.


Indigenous Community Volunteers
A program that supports indigenous people to develop and participate in volunteer programs.


Centre for Multicultural Youth - Learning Beyond the Bell
Free training in supporting students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

To access this resource search Centre for Multicultural Youth - Learning Beyond the Bell
For a fair, just and inclusive Tasmania
© Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc. 2012

This publication is copyright.

Non-profit groups have permission to reproduce parts of this document as long as the original meaning is retained and proper credit is given to the Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS).

All other persons and organisations wanting to reproduce material from this book should obtain permission from the publishers.

ISBN: 978-0-9805301-4-8

TasCOSS thanks presenters at the Diversity in the Workplace workshops (April 2011) for their input into this resource.

The work of Tasmanian Council of Social Service is supported by funding from the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services.

Cartoons by Elida Maedows, Graphic Design by Inkpot Studios.