

Uniting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2026

Always welcoming you, exactly as you are.

Uniting

Please note that references to past awards and activities in this document reflect the naming conventions used and accepted at the time.

As language in the DEI space continues to evolve, our naming conventions will be updated – with the goal of always being inclusive and respectful.



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Uniting NSW.ACT acknowledges Australia's First Peoples as the original and ongoing custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work.

We recognise the continuing sovereignty of First Peoples in NSW and the ACT, and their absolute right to self-determination.

We act on our responsibility to co-create a national dialogue of truth that proudly embraces First Peoples' history, culture, and rights, for present and future generations.

We pay our respects to all Elders – past, present, and emerging – and to all First Peoples and communities.

This is an **interactive PDF** designed to enhance your experience. The best way to view this report is with Adobe Reader and clicking on the links in the sidebar.



Uniting 'Innovate' RAP Artwork by Charmaine Mumbulla

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A message from our Executive Director and Chairperson

Diversity, equity and inclusion are at the heart of our purpose and values at Uniting. As part of the Uniting Church's Synod of NSW and the ACT, our purpose is to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice. We know that this can't be achieved without taking meaningful steps forward in our diversity, equity and inclusion journey.

We are already a diverse organisation and are proud to have delivered many initiatives that lay a strong foundation for being an inclusive workplace and service provider. With our refreshed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy, we are ready to challenge ourselves further.

We understand that we need to be more intentional and visibly weave diversity, equity and inclusion into everything we do. This ambitious strategy establishes our roadmap for tackling this challenge.

It will guide us with clear approaches and targets as we address the structural, cultural and systemic barriers that prevent those with diverse backgrounds from feeling safe, from feeling like they belong, and from contributing fully to our communities.

Our DEI Strategy will equip Uniting with inclusive leadership, a commitment to continuous learning, and to seeking out and listening to diverse lived experience voices with open hearts, even when it comes to uncomfortable and hard truths. And we approach the journey ahead of us with hope.

As the leaders of this organisation, we feel confident and proud to lead the way in this important area. We look forward to sharing this journey with our people, our clients and our communities as, together, we create a better world, where everyone feels safe and confident to be themselves, where diversity is valued, and inclusion is truly experienced by all people. Our confidence comes from the Uniting Church's focus on inclusion, inspired by Christ's teaching and captured in Saint Paul's encouragement to the early church:

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus". – Galatians 3:28



Thank you for joining us as we take these important steps towards a better future for all people.

A handwritten signature in black ink.

Heather Watson
Chairperson, Uniting NSW.ACT

A handwritten signature in black ink.

Tracey Burton
Executive Director, Uniting NSW.ACT

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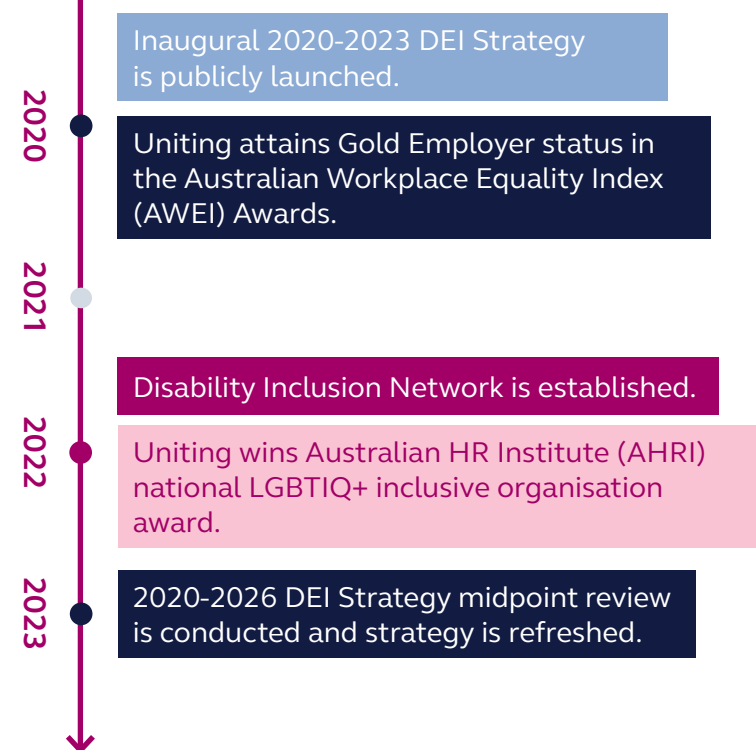
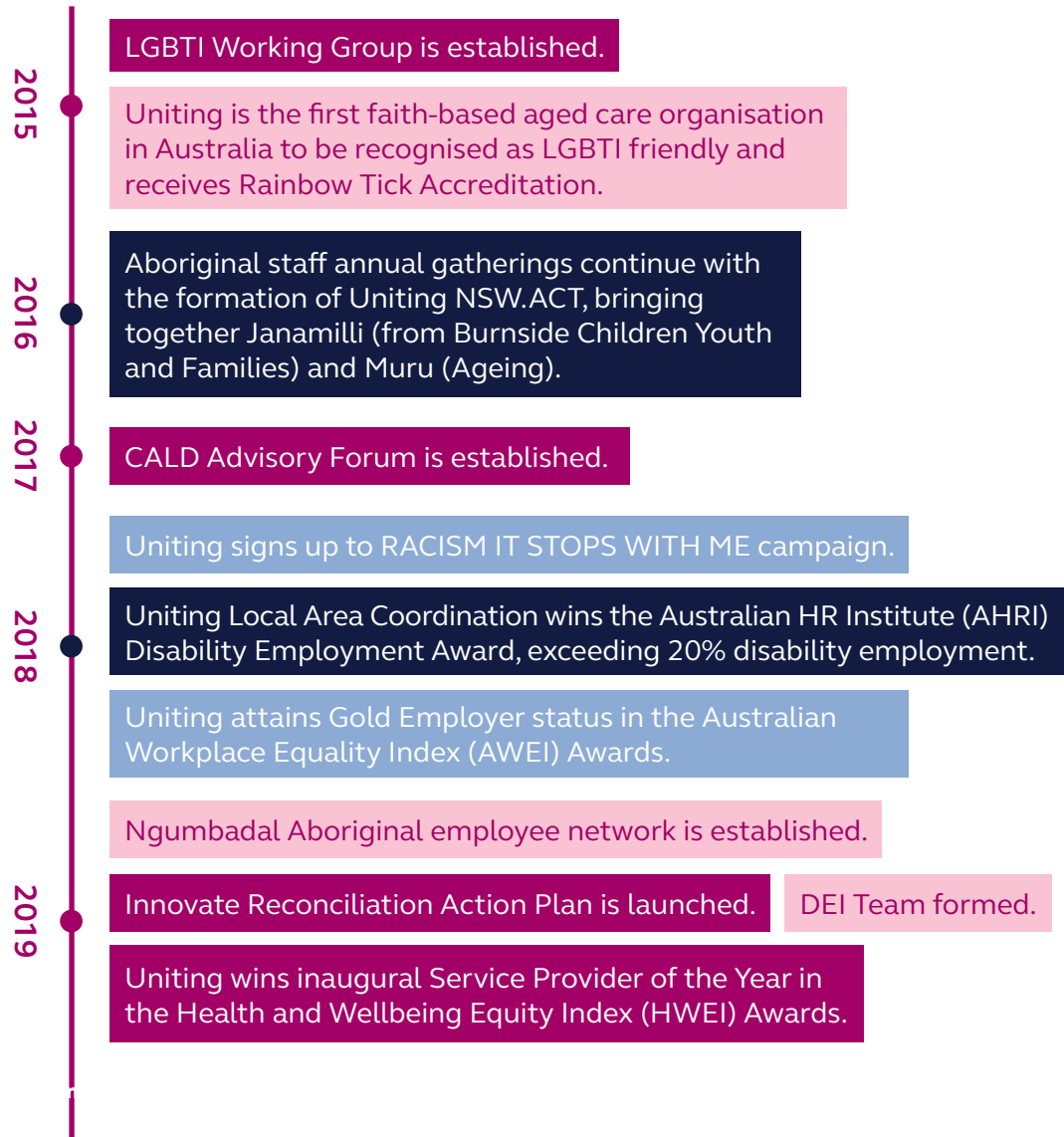
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Our diversity, equity and inclusion journey



Our organisation has a proud history and deep commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Steeped in the Uniting Church's mission for social justice, Uniting has always valued diversity and pursued equity and inclusion in the way we engage our teams and deliver services. Since the formation of Uniting NSW.ACT in 2015, we have actively sought to deliver greater diversity, equity and inclusion through a series of initiatives and commitments. They provide us with a strong foundation for this strategy and include these highlights.

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How our DEI Strategy was developed

In late 2019, Uniting established a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team, with responsibility for an enterprise-wide DEI Strategy.

The development of this strategy was led by a Working Group of diverse voices and experiences from across the organisation, and began with a dedicated phase of exploration. Through extensive research and consultation, the team identified challenges and opportunities for maturing our DEI approach and for achieving greater consistency and authenticity of our aspirations.

Formal and informal networks of employees shaped the strategy through focus groups, surveys and interviews. External experts were consulted, contemporary DEI research was reviewed, and internal DEI data was analysed against external data sets to identify a pathway forward.

In 2022, a midpoint DEI Strategy review was conducted and the strategy refreshed. The DEI Strategy is also designed to enable and build on existing strategies, including Uniting's 10-year Strategy and our First Nations People and Place Strategy.

The Uniting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy sets out our diversity, equity and inclusion aspirations, our strategic goals, and the steps we will take to bring this strategy to life. The DEI Strategy was endorsed by Uniting's Executive in July 2020 and approved by the Board in August 2020. The midpoint review findings and refreshed strategy recommendations were endorsed by the Executive in February 2023 and by the Board in March 2023.



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Why Diversity, Equity and inclusion matters to Uniting

At Uniting, we don't just care about DEI because it's 'the right thing to do'. DEI is part of our identity and the **future we see for ourselves.**

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The 10-year Strategy and our DEI Strategy are intrinsically linked.

The vision for Uniting's 10-year Strategy (2022-2032) is to create a better future for more people and communities by disrupting entrenched disadvantage. It was developed to establish how we will pioneer a more progressive and caring future, and focuses on those who are socially and economically excluded.

Our 10-year Strategy and our DEI Strategy are intrinsically linked. Both seek to drive solutions to systemic issues that prevent people, clients and communities from reaching their full potential.

Diversity, equity and inclusion reflects the Uniting Church's commitment to live out the message of Christ. In this, the Church follows the example of Jesus of Nazareth, who welcomed into his circle the excluded people of his time (women, gentiles, tax collectors, those with skin diseases) and builds on the radical inclusion gospel of Paul, who argued that social divisions were obsolete and that the Christian faith was about one renewed humanity.

These commitments inspire the Church and Uniting to work for change, as equity and justice in Australia can only be achieved when the exclusion and disadvantage faced by minority groups is addressed.

We recognise that as Australia becomes more diverse, achieving equity and inclusion for the community is critical to us driving systemic change and disrupting entrenched disadvantage.



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10-year strategy on a page 2022-2032

Create a better future for more people and communities by disrupting entrenched disadvantage

We live our values of compassionate, respectful, imaginative, and bold and have an unwavering commitment to quality, safety and service excellence.



We will partner with First Nations people and communities to facilitate self-determination and reconciliation through sharing of our knowledge, resources and capability.



Uniting NSW.ACT contributes to the work and mission of the Uniting Church through social justice advocacy, community services and spiritual care to serve humanity and create an **inclusive, connected and just world**.



Uniting's Diversity Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2020 - 2026

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Our ambition

A place where everyone feels safe and confident to be themselves, where diversity is valued to co-create a better world.

We will focus on 3 goals as we work towards this aspiration. As a purpose-led organisation, our goals go beyond our employees and acknowledge that we must pursue greater inclusion for the people and communities we serve too.

Our goals

Know and empower our clients

We will innovate to deliver imaginative, culturally mindful and inclusive experiences for all clients.

Nurture and value our people

We will actively grow our employee and volunteer diversity to enhance capability, outcomes and sustainability.

Transform our communities

We will be bold leaders and catalysts for societal change, through active partnerships and shifting mindsets.



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Diversity, equity and inclusion is a journey, not a destination.

We are proud of our diversity, equity and inclusion history, yet we also know that we have a journey ahead of us. We look forward to confronting the hard truths of inclusion as we deliver on our aspirations.

2020 goals

From current state

To 2026 future state

Know and empower our clients

A respectful and values-driven workforce:

- Doing our best with limited time and resources
- With strong DEI mandates in some places where inspiring leaders drive change, while others are led by compliance
- With pockets of excellence in inclusion innovation.

A highly skilled and compassionate workforce where DEI is hard-wired to achieve person-centred practices with:

- Equitable access and an inclusive service experience for all
- Enhanced client satisfaction and sense of belonging
- Uniting positioned as a service provider of choice, especially for traditionally excluded groups.

Nurture and value our people

Well-intentioned, respectful and compassionate workforce with:

- Great diversity but not always by design
- Varying levels of DEI knowledge, skills and courage
- Some areas of inclusion excellence
- DEI working groups and champions scattered throughout the organisation.

A workforce proud of its diversity, that is innovative because we are:

- Equipped with leaders who are confidently inclusive
- Committed to learning and identity awareness
- Boldly standing beside diverse colleagues, challenging convention and consciously including
- Led by those that value the voices of diverse employees and active employee networks.

Transform our communities

Community partnerships that are:

- Reliant on a motivated leader or a funding mandate
- Visible and widely recognised in some areas of inclusion (e.g. LGBTQIA+), but not all.

Uniting establishes strategic partnerships with diverse communities and advocates to:

- Enable our priorities and opportunities for shifting DEI
- Promote more inclusive services
- Confront injustice and systemic change for diverse people and communities.

Diversity has many dimensions.

Uniting recognises that every individual brings overlapping social, spiritual, professional and political identities, or intersectionality, to their life at Uniting. We want to know, celebrate and value all lived experiences, and will achieve this through a greater focus on intersectionality. We will actively seek to understand the complexity and unique models of prejudice and privilege that people face.

Led by the Uniting 10-year Strategy, we will also focus on a few specific dimensions of identity where we see both a responsibility and an opportunity to affect change. Our DEI Strategy is therefore layered to address the unique discrimination and exclusion challenges of these 4 identity groups:

- First Nations
- Cultural Diversity
- LGBTQIA+
- Disability Inclusion



First Nations

Our First Nations People and Place Strategy pillars guide our ambition for First Nations people and communities to be strong, thriving and self-determining.

- **Our people** - We will consciously grow our First Nations workforce and ensure our First Nations people are empowered to enrich their career experiences and capabilities.
- **Our partners** - We will purposefully invest in genuine and respectful partnerships with Aboriginal communities to promote and grow place-based and First-Nations-led responses.
- **Our capability** - We will invest in enhancing our cultural capabilities to be a culturally safe, responsive and empowering employer, partner and service provider.
- **Our leadership** - We are committed to strong governance including leadership practices to uphold our integrity and accountability to First Nations people and communities.
- **Our impact** - We will elevate the First Nations agenda and impact systems empowering First Nations people and communities through innovation, advocacy and research.

(Source: First Nations Strategy & Outcomes Unit)



Cultural Diversity

- Our teams confidently work across cultures and faiths.
- Culturally diverse voices are empowered and leveraged for culturally inclusive leadership and practice.
- The needs of our culturally diverse communities are met by thoughtfully building culturally diverse pipelines.

(Source: Cultural Diversity Network)



LGBTQIA+

- A safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where LGBTQIA+ staff and clients can be their authentic selves, and where everyone steps in to eliminate bias and consciously include all.

(Source: Pride Network)



Disability Inclusion

- A disability inclusive and confident environment across all Uniting.
- Increased employment and retention of people with disability across all of Uniting.

(Source: Disability Inclusion Network)

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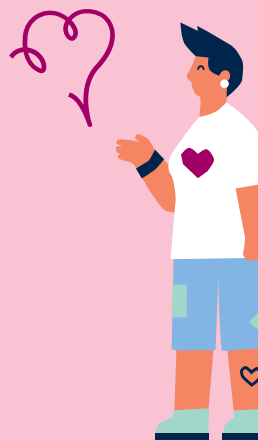
Bringing our 2026 DEI Strategy to life.

To meet our DEI Strategy goals, we will align our focus on 5 pillars of activity that align with our First Nations People and Place Strategy pillars. We believe that by working across this, Uniting will see the change we aspire to achieve.

Pillar 1

Our people

We are increasingly diverse at all levels, and culturally safe and inclusive in all areas.



Pillar 2

Our capability

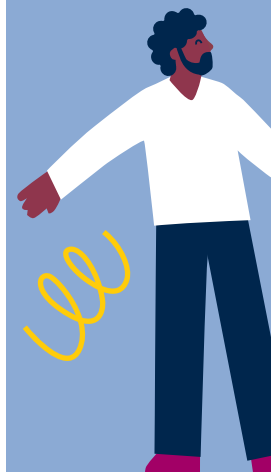
We are equipping our people to be confident to lead inclusively, and deliver quality care and services across diversity.



Pillar 3

Our leadership

We are accountable to our goals, led by lived experience, and can track our progress.



Pillar 4

Our partnerships

We collaborate to share the skills, resources and ideas for a better and more inclusive world.



Pillar 5

Our impact

We confront injustice and deliver systemic change for diverse people and communities.



We will build and strengthen these pillars to deliver our 2026 goals.

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Pillar 1 - Our people

Why

- When our people feel safe and proud to be themselves, they are more likely to share their identity and perspectives, benefitting both current and future employees and clients.
- When we better reflect the diversity of the communities we serve, we are more representative and inclusive, enhancing our ability to understand and meet the needs of our diverse clients.
- Investing in our people leads to higher engagement, making us an employer of choice that attracts and retains top talent. Additionally, leveraging the diverse perspectives of our people fosters innovation, enabling us to create more effective and innovative solutions.

Our commitment

We are increasingly diverse at all levels, and culturally safe and inclusive in all areas.

To succeed, we will focus on

Fostering greater diversity in leadership, enhancing career mobility and development, and prioritising a culture of safety and belonging, while actively increasing employment opportunities for First Nations communities and people with disability.

We are succeeding when

- We see an annual 3% increase in leadership diversity of our 4 priority cohorts (cultural diversity, LGBTIQ+, First Nations, people with disability).
- We see a 5% increase in the cultural safety and belonging engagement scores across our 4 priority DEI cohorts, or a matching of the average engagement score with Uniting peers.
- We grow, retain, and develop our First Nations and people with disability workforce.



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Case Study 1

2023 DEI Employee Summit

In March 2023, over 130 DEI employee network members attended the DEI Employee Summit. Members of Uniting's Cultural Diversity, Pride, Disability Inclusion, and Ngumbadal networks from across NSW and ACT gathered at the Novotel Parramatta to enhance their skills in storytelling, career development, and DEI leadership.

"Our DEI Summit was an amazing opportunity for our DEI networks to connect, share stories, and support each other within Uniting," reported Pride Network Chair Jo Mills. "Staff from diverse communities are such an asset, and it was brilliant to have a day to enrich our people, energising them to continue advocating for inclusion."

MC, General Manager Impact and Innovation Tammy Pararajasingham, said, "I'm still buzzing from the energy, talent, and passion at the DEI Summit. When DEI challenges overwhelm me, I'll remember this day. Small acts like storytelling and connecting can have a huge impact. As leaders, we need to create space for this and visibly value it."

Many participants resonated with guest speaker Julie Chai, Founder & CEO of the Asian Leadership Project, who shared her story of establishing the Asian Leadership Foundation, enabling culturally diverse women to break through leadership barriers. Our panel of Uniting Senior Leaders also shared their career journey experiences.

In 2 interactive workshops, hard truths and hope were shared. Story expert Moya Sayer Jones led a session to strengthen storytelling skills. And a career planning workshop was conducted by 2 of our own career development experts from the People Experience team.

"The Summit helped me recognise my past experiences and path of privilege. It highlighted how, as the DEI Network, we are disrupting privilege systems to achieve inclusion and equality . . . My next steps will involve key communications linked with our emerging First Nations People and Place Strategy."

– Ngumbadal Network Chair
Gavin Mate

"Be curious, encourage personal stories - sometimes it's the only way we learn. It's time to lead the change we want to see."

– Cultural Diversity Network Chair
Ozlem Bayman

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Pillar 2 - Our capability

Why

- Enhancing inclusive leadership of managers ensures diversity is valued, embraced, and leveraged, fostering a culture where inclusion is integral to our work. Catalyst Research shows 45% of employees' inclusion experiences are due to their manager's leadership.
- Improving cross-cultural communication and practices enhances service quality, fosters inclusion, builds trust, and empowers both workforce and clients.
- Investing in storytelling and creating safe spaces empowers growth, ensuring diverse voices shape our decision-making processes.

Our commitment

We are equipping our people to be confident to lead inclusively, and deliver quality care and services across diversity.

To succeed, we will focus on

Increasing the inclusive leadership skills and confidence of our middle and front-line leaders, improve cross-cultural skills and inclusive practice across service delivery channels, and equipping our DEI network members to share their lived experiences, while educating our leaders to create safe spaces for storytelling.

We are succeeding when

- We increase the inclusive leader capability and confidence survey scores of our middle and front-line people leaders.
- We increase the people leader and team completion rates of our cultural sensitivity and capability training.
- We recognise and act on the invaluable insights provided by our customers through our Voice of Customer measures.



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Case Study 2

Introducing our DEI Network's Inspire and Grow Mentoring Program

Our inaugural DEI Network's Inspire and Grow Mentoring Program was launched by Tracey Burton, Uniting Executive Director NSW.ACT at the March 2023 DEI Employee Summit.

This 6-month program was designed to support Uniting DEI network members, with a focus on growing the careers of our diverse workforce from First Nations, cultural diversity, LGBTQIA+ communities, and people with disability aspiring to leadership. The program was designed to empower participants through 1:1 mentoring and career guidance from a senior leader.

The program was implemented to help fulfil Uniting's 10-year and DEI Strategy goals to increase the career mobility of our diverse staff and increase their representation in leadership roles. It also provided our senior leader mentors with lived experience insights on the challenges diverse staff face in growing their careers, and how leaders can provide a welcoming, safe and inclusive workplace to attract, retain, and develop more employees from diverse backgrounds.

This first iteration of the mentoring program saw 21 Uniting senior leaders partnering with 21 emerging leaders across our 4 DEI employee networks, to guide and share their career experience, wisdom, and learnings.

Employee feedback indicated that the program encouraged and supported our emerging leaders to develop practical career goals, and to develop and implement an action plan for professional and personal growth. It also enabled them to build confidence to seize new career opportunities.

The mentoring program resulted in several employees setting more ambitious career goals and expanding their networks across Uniting with a number of participants securing new and more senior roles.

In 2024, the inaugural program has been evaluated with a view to future scaling to other Uniting cohorts.



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Pillar 3 - Our leadership

Why

- Expanding our DEI network membership and geographic reach is crucial for embedding diverse lived experience into all aspects of Uniting.
- In DEI what gets measured, gets done. Increasing the reliability and utilisation of our DEI workforce and client data will provide valuable insights to inform business strategies and processes, driving the creation of a more inclusive environment for everyone.
- Enhancing collective ownership and accountability ensures leaders and employees prioritise DEI, leading with intent and adapting to achieve long-term DEI and our 10 year strategy goals.

Our commitment

We are accountable to our goals, led by lived experience and can track our progress.

To succeed, we will focus on

Increasing our DEI employee networks' size and impact, securing and increasingly utilising more reliable DEI workforce and client data to drive awareness, commitment, and action, and enhancing data transparency and leader and directorate accountability to shift the DEI maturity dial.

We are succeeding when

- 70% of our anticipated DEI Strategy activities and milestones are delivered, ensuring that our strategic initiatives are effectively implemented and we have capacity to act opportunistically to deliver our strategy goals too.
- We see a 10% increase in DEI network membership across all directorates and geographic locations, fostering collaboration and engagement to drive our diversity agenda forward.
- There is a 15% increase in employee diversity identity data disclosure, recognising the importance of comprehensive data collection and the importance of cultural safety for people to feel safe to share their identity.



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Case study 3

Enhancing inclusion via Your Voice workforce survey

To measure the progress of our DEI Strategy, our DEI Council assessed the inclusion experienced by our Uniting workforce and 4 priority diversity cohorts. This data provided key measures of the workforce impact of our DEI Strategy and qualitative insights into employee engagement and inclusion.

After evaluating external survey tools, the DEI Council added 6 new inclusion questions to Uniting's 2022 Your Voice survey. These questions focused on the inclusion experiences of our priority DEI cohorts: First Nations people, culturally diverse individuals, people with disabilities, and the LGBTQIA+ community. The survey reached over 10,000 employees and volunteers, with a 52% response rate (5,039 participants).

In 2022, the overall DEI factor engagement score was 70%, with key metrics like authenticity at work, team inclusion, being valued for diversity, and leadership commitment to DEI also scoring 70%.

The survey findings highlighted significant progress in inclusion but also revealed areas needing improvement to ensure all employees feel valued and respected.

The employee data informed the midpoint review of our DEI Strategy, leading to a renewed leadership focus and employee network initiatives aimed at continuing to foster an inclusive culture across Uniting. This culture encourages employees to safely question, challenge, share opinions, feel safe to be themselves, and proud of who they are.

In 2023, repeating 4 DEI questions from the previous survey showed notable improvements, especially in feeling safe to share ideas and being valued. However, responses varied across DEI cohorts, with some employees feeling a strong sense of belonging and others raising concerns. This variation helped us identify improvement areas and tailor our DEI interventions more effectively.

As a result, our diverse staff's experience of the inclusion of our organisational culture has improved, with DEI visibly valued by leaders at all levels, contributing to higher staff engagement and satisfaction.



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Pillar 4 - Our partners

Why

- Strategic partnerships and collaborative approaches enable us to build and share our capabilities to address diverse community needs, creating a more inclusive environment for everyone.
- DEI maturity depends on strong internal and external collaborations within our dynamic ecosystem.
- Fostering a cohesive approach to delivering shared goals and initiatives across directorates and teams are crucial to achieving our DEI aspiration.
- Specialist and community partnerships leverage expertise and resources, contributing meaningfully to the communities we serve.

Our commitment

We collaborate internally and externally to share the skills, resources, and ideas for a better and more inclusive world.

To succeed, we will focus on

Strengthening DEI collaborations within Uniting to deliver shared goals, increasing our intersectional identity, understanding and project outcomes, and growing specialist and community partnerships to build our capabilities and contribute to the communities we serve.

We are succeeding when

- Our internal stakeholder feedback and participation results demonstrate positive and improving collaboration and alignment.
- We see an increase in new collaborations and DEI initiatives led by our DEI networks and business units.
- We see an increase in the number of active external partnerships with specialist DEI and sector agencies.



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Case Study 4

Empowering CARM female leaders.

Uniting NSW.ACT has taken a significant step towards increasing senior leadership diversity by joining the Diversity Council of Australia's **RISE (Realise. Inspire. Support. Energise.)** project.

This pioneering national program addresses barriers that hinder culturally and racially marginalised (CARM) women from advancing into senior leadership roles. The move underscores Uniting's commitment to enhancing culturally diverse leadership representation.

Diversity Council Australia (DCA) in partnership with Settlement Services International (SSI) and Chief Executive Women (CEW), launched the RISE project in mid-2023. In January 2024, Uniting NSW.ACT was welcomed as the only not-for-profit participant.

For RISE, 19 culturally diverse female middle and front-line managers with senior leadership aspirations were selected from across Uniting. The program is designed to empower them to enhance their career and leadership skills to accelerate into senior leadership. Through the support of our external program partners, Uniting is providing program participants with access to external career and leadership training, coaching, mentoring and sponsorship.

As well as focusing on supporting our program participants, the Uniting RISE project team (led by CARM women) is identifying and implementing effective interventions to tackle systemic barriers to CARM women's leadership. To identify these barriers, Uniting RISE participants and project team members completed a self-audit survey tool. This assessed our maturity progress through the lens of 4 key change levers to shift the organisational system to improve CARM women's leadership: gendered racism; organisational culture; intersectional policies and processes; and impact. The analysis of this data will inform a tailored 12-month action plan that will include training from DCA and SSI on anti-racism and cultural responsiveness.

Uniting's participation in the RISE project aligns with our business purpose to foster a safer, better, brighter more inclusive world. As one of 6 prominent Australian organisations involved, Uniting is collaborating with leaders from various sectors to drive meaningful change and create a more diverse and inclusive leadership landscape in Australia.



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Pillar 5 - Our impact

Why

- To be a sector leader in DEI, we must maintain a strong and visible presence as a diverse, inclusive, and safe service provider and employer. By prioritising DEI in all operations, we aim to be a role model of inclusion fostering belonging for all who engage with us.
- As part of the Uniting Church in NSW and the ACT, we use our voice, experience, and expertise to drive DEI shifts, contributing to a more diverse and inclusive society where everyone feels they belong.
- Achieving increased DEI Strategy maturity requires systemic shifts in policies, mindsets, behaviours, relationships, and institutions. Our commitment to confronting injustice and delivering systemic change ensures we advocate for DEI-promoting policies and practices.

Our commitment

We confront injustice and deliver systemic change for diverse people and communities.

To succeed, we will focus on

Maintaining a strong and visible presence as a diverse, inclusive, and safe person centred service provider and employer, and will contribute to more inclusive communities through our advocacy, celebration, and thought leadership, advocating for system shifts, policies and practises that deliver DEI.

We are succeeding when

- We increase our community visibility, engagement and recognition as a diverse, inclusive and safe service provider and employer.
- We are actively participating in an increasing range of DEI conference or sector events with thought leadership and advocacy initiatives.



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Case Study 5

Mardi Gras 2024 celebration and protest

Uniting made a bold statement at the 2024 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, showcasing our commitment to LGBTQIA+ inclusion, advocacy, and celebration. Led by the Pride Network, Uniting's participation was not just about festivities - it was a powerful demonstration of solidarity, activism, and community engagement.

With a goal to position Uniting as a leading LGBTQIA+ inclusive provider and employer of choice, our Pride Network spearheaded efforts to advocate for issues affecting LGBTQIA+ individuals. Under the theme 'we want a safer, brighter, fairer future for LGBTQIA+ people', Uniting rallied over 500,000 community members, families, and allies to join the cause.

Despite challenges such as the cancellation of our Fair Day Stall due to asbestos contamination, Uniting demonstrated resilience and creativity by pivoting to digital platforms. An engaging social media reel showcased our values and mission, reaching a wider audience, and reinforcing our commitment to LGBTQIA+ inclusion.



As the Mardi Gras parade approached, Uniting's staff, clients, and advocacy partners prepared to march in solidarity. A lively social media reel captured their excitement and motivations, becoming one of Uniting's most popular external posts to date. On the evening of March 2nd, 40 LGBTQIA+ employees and clients, along with Rainbow Christians colleagues, gathered at Pitt Street Uniting Church to march proudly up Oxford Street. The presence of a decorated Uniting minibus, carrying LGBTQIA+ seniors and disability clients, symbolised our commitment to inclusion and representation.

Simultaneously, a Mardi Gras Watch Party was held at the Parramatta Club, providing a space for friends, families, and supporters to celebrate the occasion. The event fostered a sense of community and solidarity, highlighting Uniting's dedication to creating inclusive environments for all.

Our participation in Mardi Gras 2024 is an example of Uniting's impact beyond traditional boundaries. By advocating for LGBTQIA+ rights, celebrating and valuing diversity, and fostering community engagement, we're contributing to creating a more inclusive and equitable world for everyone.

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Demonstrate visible leadership

Engage heads, hearts and hands through leader led communication and activities sharing why DEI matters, and DEI expectations of leaders and employees.



Demonstrate lived experience storytelling

Shift mindsets and create deeper connection through employee “hard truths, hope and belonging” storytelling to inspire our people to take visible, intentional action.



Demonstrate intersectionality

Profile multiple diversity identities through data, images and stories.



Visibly and intentionally embed DEI into everything we do

Weave diverse imagery and DEI narrative into training, stories, case studies, activities, policy and practice, with a focus also on increasing regional reach, employee empowerment and intentional action.



Increase DEI data reliability, shared ownership, and accountability

Design and continuously refine DEI measurement tools and indicators to monitor progress and impact towards achieving our DEI goals.



Create simple, sustainable longer-term assets

New content and resources inspire and empower employees to listen, learn, act and where possible will be repurposed from other events.



Promote active allyship

Shift workforce from passive to active DEI allyship through awareness, empowerment, and intentional action to include everyone.



Increase client involvement

Engage and empower participation of diverse lived experience clients and allies.

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Saying what we mean and meaning what we say

Achieving cultural change and shifting mindsets requires us to be thoughtful, inspiring and intentional about the way we communicate our aspirations and goals.

Since the formation of Uniting in 2015, we've been proud to incorporate a powerful DEI strapline in our communications:

Welcoming you, exactly as you are.

We expanded on this in Uniting's boilerplate statement:

We celebrate diversity and welcome everyone, exactly as they are.

However with a goal of DEI maturity in this strategy, we have revisited this strapline.

Reflecting on our DEI journey, we sought a message that captured our evolution from acceptance and celebration to actively valuing and leveraging our differences in ability, age, ethnicity, spirituality, culture, gender, sexuality and all identities and lived experiences.

Several iterations of alternative straplines were developed in consultation with Uniting's First Nations, Pride, Cultural Diversity, and Disability Inclusion employee networks, and tested internally and externally with DEI audiences for resonance and meaning.

In quantitative and qualitative terms, the results clearly revealed that our existing strapline, and variations of it, resonate most. Based on these findings, we've evolved our existing strapline and boilerplate statement to maintain core integrity while building maturity.

Our new DEI strapline is:

**Always welcoming you,
exactly as you are.**

Our new boilerplate statement is:

**We value diversity and
always welcome everyone,
exactly as they are.**

The addition of 'always' reinforces the non-negotiability of our resolve, and the replacement of 'celebrate' with 'value' reflects progression from acceptance and celebration, to active valuing and real growth.

A strapline is a sentence or caption used to communicate the essence of a brand or organisation. Ideally it should capture what we stand for, our values and our personality. It should be simple, meaningful and memorable enough to stand the test of time.

About Uniting

Uniting NSW.ACT contributes to the work of the Uniting Church in NSW and the ACT, through social justice advocacy, community services and spiritual care.

We provide services for people through all ages and stages of life, and drive solutions to systemic issues so people experiencing disadvantage can live their best lives.

Our purpose is to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.

We value diversity and always welcome everyone exactly as they are.

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Uniting

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the environment
before deciding
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