DIVERSITY INCLUSION BELONGING

NSW GOVERNMENT

Double the representation of people with disability from 2.7% to 5.6% by 2025

Disability inclusiveness in the workplace – Benefits from an **Employee Perspective**

Disability inclusiveness has been shown to lead to:

- increased levels of engagement and productivity
- better workplace morale
- diversity in problem solving approaches; and
- enhanced teamwork.

It also provides opportunities to learn about the challenges faced by individuals with disability first hand. Providing employment opportunities for people with disability contributes to a sense of self-empowerment and identity. This can lead to positive health outcomes for the individual as well as a potential decreased reliance on social services, which has greater economic impacts.

What can employees do to support the target?

- *Celebrate events*
  A number of events are held each year which celebrate, raise awareness of and promote understanding of individuals with disability and their rights and wellbeing. These events provide an opportunity to share stories and connect socially. Events include Carers Week, R U OK Day, World Autism Awareness Day and International Day of People with Disability. The Australian Network on Disability shares an annual events calendar.

- *Be a buddy or mentor*
  Partnering with a new or current employee with disability provides a personal level of support and guidance in the workplace. In the event of a workplace emergency or evacuation, a buddy system also ensures the safety of all employees. Mentoring Made Easy: A Practical Guide is available on the Public Service Commission website. It provides information on the benefits of mentoring and the expectations of those who become a mentor. The Australian Network on Disability also coordinates the Positive Action towards Career Engagement Mentoring Program (PACE) for member organisations which provides opportunities for mentors to be matched with student and job seeking mentorees or phone 02 8270 9200.

- *Form employee networks*
  Employee networks are voluntary workplace groups comprised of employees with disability, those with carer responsibilities and employees with an interest in disability inclusion. Members meet in a friendly informal environment to share information, experiences, initiatives and stories. Networks provide a source of advice on disability matters, along with building supportive relationships between employees. The Public Service Commission NSW has developed Guidelines for Employee Networks which details how to establish and operate an employee network.

- *Incorporate accessibility principles into your work*
  Creating work content that is accessible to everyone, not just those with a disability, is important to ensure that information delivered can be accessed easily and is understood by its target audience. Helping to address any potential communication difficulties may be achieved by considering the use of different mediums, designing accessible web pages, using images in place of text, displaying information in practical locations and using appropriate fonts and text sizes when developing content and resources. Guidelines and support tools for employees responsible for developing and publishing workplace content include:

  - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

  - National Relay Service

  - Beginners guide to accessible content

  - Vision Australia online and print inclusive design principles

  - Media Access Australia accessibility resources and services

  The NSW Police Service webpage detailing the cluster's commitment to achieving disability targets has information presented in a number of formats to address accessibility of information, for example an Auslan summary of their Disability Inclusion Action Plan via video.

- *Complete the Public Service Commission's Disability Awareness training modules*
  The Public Service Commission has developed eLearning modules to improve disability awareness among staff in the NSW public sector. The modules aim to create a more inclusive and accessible workplace by providing information about what staff should know, say and do to confidently and effectively work alongside colleagues with disability. Training Modules developed for employees.

- *Consider your role in creating an inclusive workplace*
  Creating inclusive workplaces is a joint effort that everyone has a role in contributing to. Being conscious of how disability and inclusion impacts your role and how your role impacts diversity initiatives and service delivery all contribute to cohesion in the workplace as well as between NSW Health and the public. Being open to individual differences, demonstrating behaviours that align to the CORE values and speaking up and reporting cases of discrimination, harassment or unacceptable behaviour all play an important part in achieving the target and creating positive work places and culture.
  A lack of understanding, uncertainties and stereotypes often contribute to an individual's fears and discomforts about interacting with people with disability. To counteract this, the Australian Government initiative, National Disability Coordination Officer Program, have developed a free eLearning course to equip individuals with knowledge regarding the legislative framework supporting those with disability, barriers experienced by those with disability and inclusive language and communication principles.