

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Operational Plan 2023-2024



Definitions

Diversity takes many forms, including values, religion, culture and language, ethnicity and nationality, biological traits, disability, the spectrums of gender and sexuality, socio-economic status, stage of life, education, geography, or access to resources and opportunities. People require different supports and opportunities to make their best contributions at work. They are diverse in the way they like to work, socialise and interact. Diversity is also found in family structures, social traditions and communities, with individuals holding diverse roles and responsibilities within them. We recognise and respect that our customers, community and people have diverse opinions and expectations, as well as life experiences.

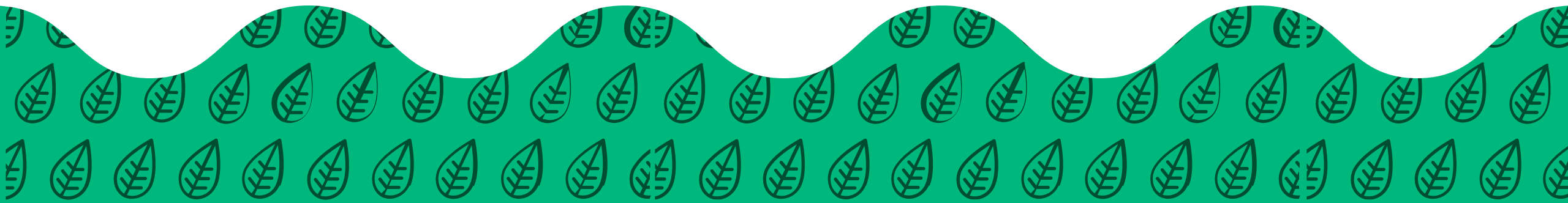
Equity means fair inclusion. It can be demonstrated when we provide processes, opportunities or resources that fit individual, or group needs or circumstances so everyone can participate and succeed. This may involve action to reverse the impact of disadvantage stemming from a person or group's differences.

Inclusion is the practice of making sure we encourage the involvement and engagement of diversity in all our systems and practices relating to our customers, community and people.

South East Water acknowledges the Bunurong, Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Gunaikurnai people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we operate and pay respect to their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge their songlines, cultural lore and continuing connection to the land and water.

We recognise and value their rich cultural heritage and continued contributions of Aboriginal people and communities to our society in Victoria.





South East Water Purpose & Strategic Focus Areas

Our Vision

INNOVATE WITH PURPOSE. ACT WITH CARE.

Our Purpose **To deliver healthy water for life for our customers, community and environment.**

Our Focus Areas



**EMPOWER
OUR PEOPLE**



**DELIVER
FOR OUR
CUSTOMERS**



**PROTECT OUR
ENVIRONMENT**



**OPTIMISE OUR
OPERATIONS**



**DRIVE
INNOVATION
AT SCALE**

Our values

**We put
safety first**

We're bold

We care

We discover

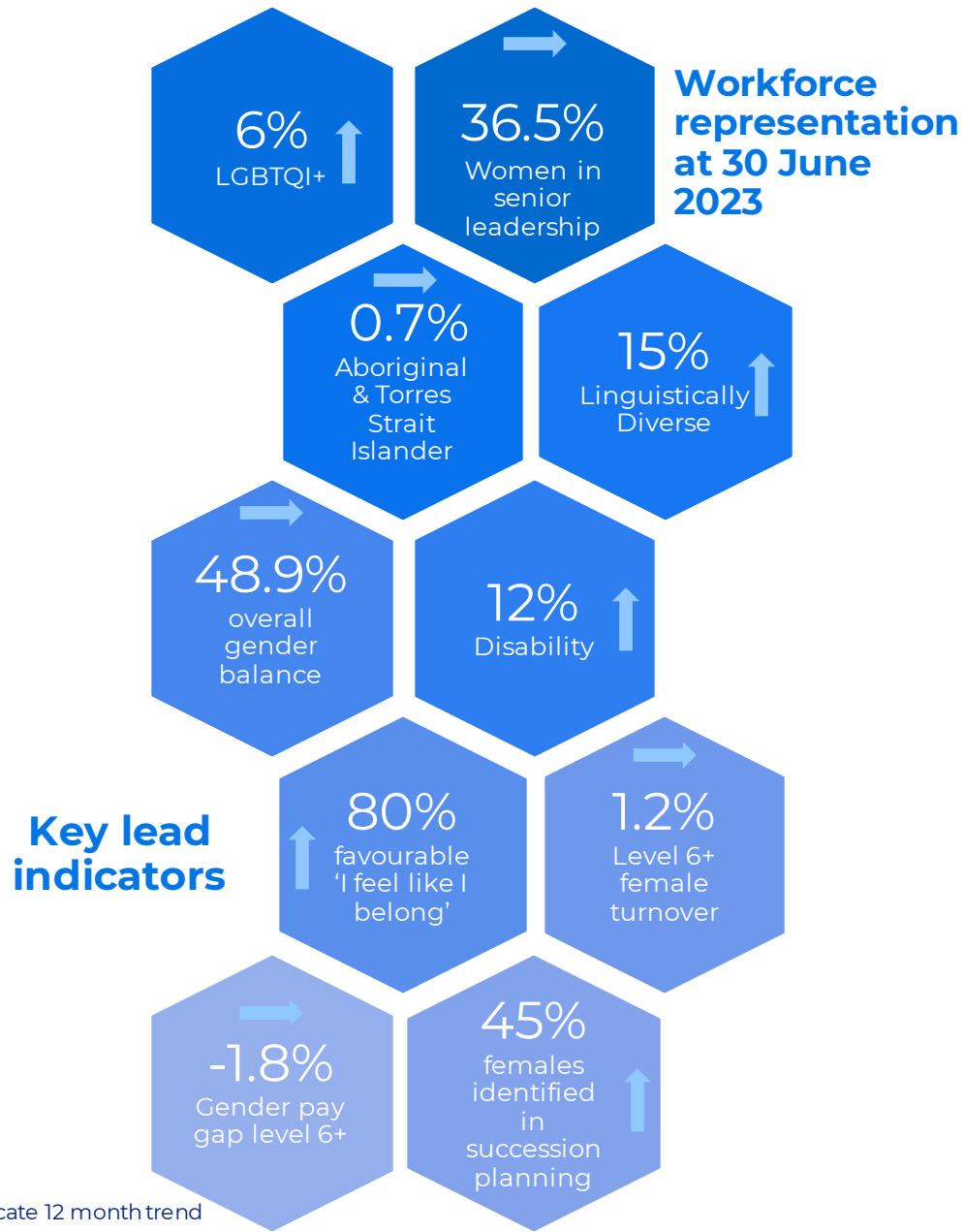
We're real

**We deliver
sustainably**

**INNOVATE WITH
PURPOSE.
ACT WITH CARE.**



A message from our Executive Sponsor, Daniel Sullivan



"Rigorous debate about the challenges we face drives better decisions leading to outcomes for our customers and community."

Diversity is critical for the opportunity to bring different perspectives to the discussion; while inclusion is key to them being contributed and considered on merit. We need to provide a safe place for diversity to thrive." Daniel Sullivan 2023

Our vision

Our vision is clear, we value an inclusive and diverse culture to enhance our collaboration, innovation and deliver outcomes for our customers.

Over the next two years we will continue to build a workforce that reflects the diversity of our customers and community as well as developing an inclusive workplace culture that enables everyone to thrive.

Our five focus areas will continue to include:

- Gender Equality
- Multicultural Community
- LGBTIQ+
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability
- Disability and Neurodiversity

We are guided by four strategic objectives

01

Advocacy and Leadership

leading and promoting inclusion and diversity benefits at every opportunity

02

Sense of belonging

a workplace culture that fosters respect, connection and fairness for all

03

Seeing inclusion

a workplace culture that celebrates differences and engages everyone

04

Reflecting our customers

we report on and continuously improve our employee demographics to closely reflect the diversity of our customers

Strengthening our approach

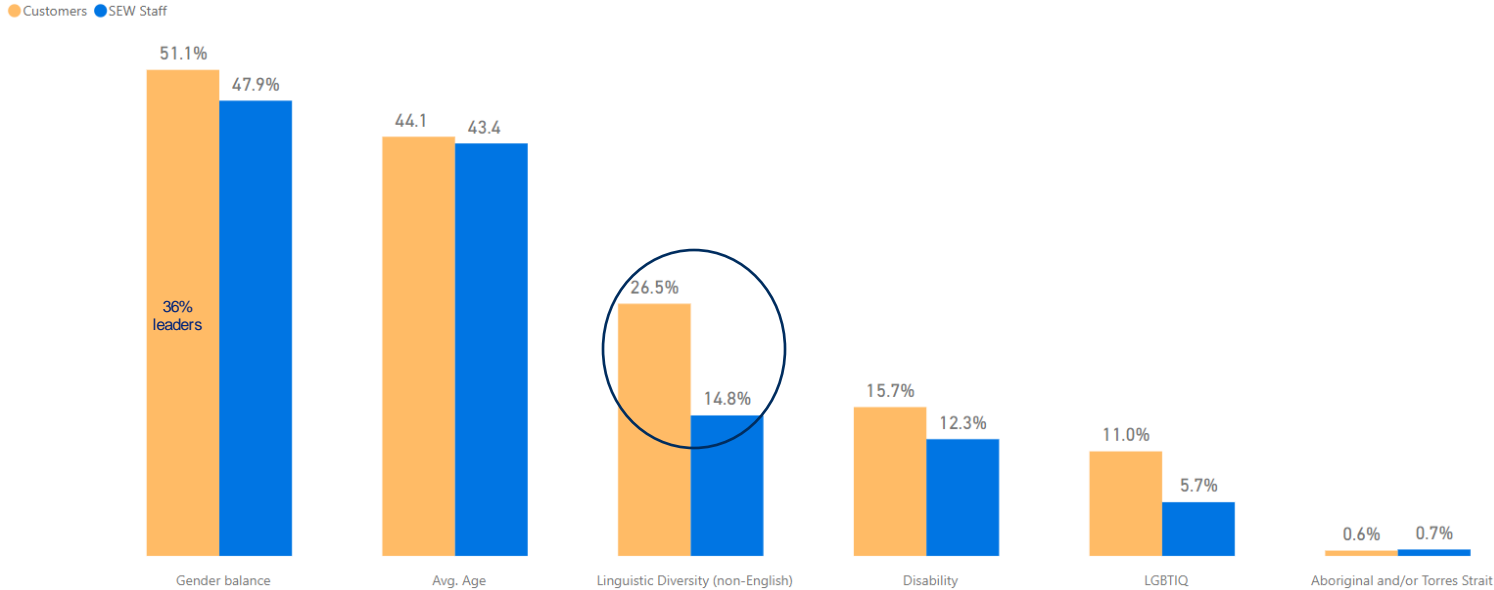
By reflecting the diversity of our customers in the diversity of our employees we are more likely to understand their needs.

Our two main gaps in customer v's employee demographics are:

- 1. Gender representation – slightly behind in total employees, only 36% in leadership positions
- 2. Multicultural diversity

Therefore, we will strengthen our approach in these two areas of diversity and inclusion.

Our current diversity



Our commitment

We will continue to embed inclusion and diversity actions across the organisation as we evolve with the changes in our customers and communities, and government legislation. We aspire to be recognised as a leader in inclusion and diversity across the water industry and the following activities relevant to our five areas of inclusion and diversity will allow us to achieve this by:

- Accountability of all employees and the role they play in creating and maintaining an inclusive and diverse workforce.
- Awareness and skill development of our employees so they practice inclusive behaviours effectively and understand the importance of inclusion and diversity in the workplace.
- Review of our systems, tools and processes and the ways we work together, ensuring they are inclusive, considerate and enable everyone to bring their authentic selves to work.

Gender Equality

Our vision for gender equality is to be a safe, progressive equal opportunity employer where you're valued and respected for who you are and where your rights, talents and expertise are embraced, celebrated and rewarded without discrimination, prejudice or unconscious bias.

Over the next 12 months we will continue to implement the actions from our Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) 2021–2025, you can read our [GEAP here](#).

What does success look like?	How is this achieved?	By Who?	Alignment with I&D Strategic Objective
Implemented FY23-24 GEAP actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a GEAP working group Develop a GEAP cheat sheet/action plan with business areas to support implementing actions Implement new insights from GEAP 2-year review 	I&D Coach	2/3
Communication Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement internal and external communication activities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote inclusive recruitment 'right person for the right job' Creating opportunities for all - as gender equality is about equity Increase employee engagement and buy-in Increase accountability for stakeholders 	I&D Coach Comms Team GEAP Working Group Talent Team	1/2/3/4
Gender Equality and Equity Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and implement gender equality and equity training utilising memberships such as DCA and Work180 and the Go1 Platform 	I&D Coach Digital Learning Advisor	1/2/3

Multicultural Community

The term 'Multicultural' is used to describe communities with diverse cultures, languages, ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, traditions, societal structures and religions.

Multicultural communities are an integral part of the Victorian population and with almost 27% of our customers representing the Multicultural community. South East Water is continuing to build a workforce that reflects the diversity of our customers and community, as well as developing an inclusive workplace culture that is fair and equitable.

What does success look like?	How is this achieved?	By Who?	Alignment with I&D Strategic Objective
Employee demographics are within 10% of our customer Multicultural demographics Currently 11.7% difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join two (2) Multicultural community stakeholder networks and leveraging existing partnerships to build networks and promote SEW employer brand LinkedIn life page stories expanded from 5 to 10 featuring multi-cultural employees Improve collection of data i.e., include cultural background information on I&D Dashboard 	I&D Coach Community Manager Employee Experience Coach Reporting Analyst	1/2/3/4
People Leaders complete Unconscious Bias Training Target just before recruitment / all TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt People Leaders before any interviews Promote training at every opportunity including through Aquanet articles Promote through People Leader communication channel New People Leader eLearning pathway (TBC) 	Talent Team I&D Coach Leadership & Culture Coach	1/2

LGBTIQ+

South East Water will strive to create meaningful impact through the power of pride by expanding the idea of community through social interaction, support and education to foster an inclusive and safe environment for all.

What does success look like?	How is this achieved?	By Who?	Alignment with I&D Strategic Objective
Implement employee/SME driven initiatives from 1) SEW Pride group 2) WSAA Pride in Water Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support initiatives the Pride Social Connection Groups (SCG) sees and important for achieving their new purpose 	I&D Coach Pride SCG	1/2/3
Acknowledged and celebrated Wear it Purple Day, IDAHOBIT Day, Midsumma Festival and Melbourne Pride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement internal and external communication activities including feature articles to promote LGBTIQI+ inclusion and awareness 	I&D Coach Comms Team Pride SCG	2/3
Updated policies reflecting inclusive language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and modify policies during the review period to reflect inclusive language practices i.e., Gender neutral language, pro-nouns. 	I&D Coach People Partnerships Legal Counsel Pride SCG	2/3
Updated Leave Policy in-line with new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the implementation of Gender Re-assignment leave. Review policy to include neutral language Promote through Aquanet article 	I&D Coach People Partnerships Remuneration, Payroll & People Pride SCG	1/2/3

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

South East Water is committed to meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve our goals, while creating mutually beneficial partnerships and opportunities.

We will work together to develop and implement our policies and programs; support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to have a stronger voice in our approaches; and incorporate Indigenous values and knowledge across environment, heritage protection and water management initiatives.

What does success look like?	How is this achieved?	By who?	Alignment with I&D Strategic Objective
Achievement of 1% Aboriginal employment target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote South East Water as a workplace of choice within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community Create a culturally safe workplace through education and training to retain current Aboriginal employees 	Aboriginal Employment Coordinator - Lead Senior Aboriginal Cultural Advisor Aboriginal Community Partnerships Advisor I&D Coach	1/2
Increased participation in Cultural Awareness Training E-Learning from 44% to 60% Face-to-Face from 2.7% to 30% Immersion Activities From 8.2% to 20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote training at every opportunity including through Aquanet articles Through cultural safety strategy identify focus areas Leverage the newly created identified roles to increase awareness and education across the organisation. 	Senior Aboriginal Cultural Advisor - Lead Aboriginal Employment Coordinator I&D Coach	1/2/3
Participated in water sector and community initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the TOFN water industry working group Leverage existing partnerships and build network by attending Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community events 	Senior Aboriginal Cultural Advisor - Lead Aboriginal Community Partnerships Advisor Aboriginal Employment Coordinator	1
Acknowledged and celebrated National Reconciliation week, NAIDOC week and other significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement internal and external communication activities including feature articles to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander awareness and inclusion 	I&D Coach - Lead Comms Team Senior Aboriginal Cultural Advisor Aboriginal Community Partnerships Advisor	2/3

Disability and Neurodiversity

South East Water is committed to furthering inclusion of people with disabilities in a work environment that is free from discrimination. This includes ensuring accessibility in our physical and online environments and maximising employment participation for people with disabilities.

What does success look like?	How is this achieved?	By Who?	Alignment with I&D Strategic Objective
Implemented employee/SME driven initiatives from 1) WaterAble 2) Intelligent Water Network Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively participate in WaterAble and implement, monitor and evaluate recommended actions: FY23 Actions are: Currently planned activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hearing from peoples lived experience Include reasonable adjustments at the start of meetings and standard templates. One page guide – how to create inclusive interviews. Participate in IWND Trials 	I&D Coach Embrace SCG Comms Team Wellbeing Team Talent Team/Recruitment Coach	1/2
Acknowledged and celebrated International Day of Persons with Disability and Carers week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement internal and external communication activities including internal feature articles to promote Disability and Neurodiversity awareness 	I&D Coach Embrace SCG Comms Team	2/3
Implemented DCA Tool Kit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise and implement Diversity Council Australia Recruitment Toolkit 	I&D Coach Talent Team Embrace SCG	1/2/3
Improved systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve collection of data, include neurodiversity questions in People Central Review training to ensure our learning is accessible and takes into consideration neurodiversity. 	I&D Coach Digital Learning Advisor Embrace SCG Systems Analyst	2/3/4

How employees can support the strategy

We all have a role to play in creating an inclusive and diverse workplace.

All Employees	
What employees can do	What SEW are doing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in learning opportunities to build skills and knowledge about inclusion and diversity e.g., Cultural Awareness Training, Unconscious Bias Training.• Update diversity information in People Central to ensure we are reflecting our customers and offering and providing equitable opportunities to all.• Participate in opportunities that show support for inclusion and diversity, such as joining a South East Water Social connect group and/or attend an I&D event.• Share stories and experiences to contribute to diversity and inclusion here at South East Water.• Support colleagues by being inclusive, we are all responsible for the culture of our organisation, if you see behaviour that is not in line with our code of conduct or values, call it out, speak to your People Leader or HR Business Partner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employees have access to learning opportunities including access to GO1, Diversity Council of Australia membership, short courses etc.• Policies and IT that will reflect a more diverse range of needs whilst ensuring we uphold privacy obligations under the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic).• Provide a safe space for employees to connect with colleagues across the business to share similar passions or hobbies, learn new skills and valuable experiences.• Provide opportunities for employees to share their stories through Aquanet articles, Town Hall and at I&D events.• Employees have access to up-to-date policies and procedures along with honest conversations training, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and a range of mental health services.

How Our Leaders can support the strategy

We lead by example and encourage and foster an inclusive and diverse workplace.

Our Leaders	
What Our Leaders can do	What SEW are doing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect on what a diverse and inclusive workforce means to them. Share views to enable open and respectful conversations.• Demonstrate and champion inclusion and diversity at every opportunity.• Encourage inclusion and diversity development goals.• Recognise our colleagues who champion Inclusion and Diversity and demonstrate our values e.g., Seweet, Team Awards• Become a sponsor for one of the five focus areas of Inclusion and Diversity; Gender, Multicultural Community, LGBTIQ+, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability and Disability and Neurodiversity.• Review Inclusion and Diversity data annually to develop team plans to increase inclusion and diversity within your team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusion and Diversity will have an Executive sponsor.• Provide access to learning opportunities including access to GOI, Diversity Council of Australia membership, short courses etc.• Provide access to development and personal growth opportunities.• Employees have access to policies and IT that will enable them to recognise colleagues.• Provide the opportunity and support leaders to become a sponsor.• Provide annual Have Your Say survey results and Diversity and Inclusion data.

South East Water Inclusion and Diversity Days

January

21-Jan	Midsumma Festival
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22-Jan	Chinese Lunar New Year
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26-Jan	Australia/Survival Day
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February

11-Feb	International Day of Women and Girls in Science
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12-Feb	Melbourne Pride
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13-Feb	National Apology Day
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March

8-Mar	International Women's Day
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10-Mar	Start of Ramadan
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21-Mar	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
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21-28-Mar	Cultural Diversity Week
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April

28-Apr	World Day for Safety and Health At Work
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May

9-May	Mental Health Awareness Week
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15-May	National Families Week
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17-May	IDAHOBIT Day
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26-May	National Sorry Day
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31-May	Transgender Day of Visibility
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27 May to 3 June	National Reconciliation Week
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June	
3-Jun	MABO Day
23-Jun	International Women in Engineering Day
July	
4-11-July	NAIDOC Week
August	
4-Aug	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Childrens Day
9-Aug	International Day of the World's Indigenous People
25-Aug	Wear it Purple Day
September	
1-Sep	Indigenous Literacy Day
14-Sep	Ruok? Day
October	
1-Oct	International Day of Older Persons
7-Oct	World Smile Day
10-Oct	World Mental Health Day
15-Oct	Carers Week
18-Oct	World Menopause Day
November	
4-Nov	Diwali Festival of Lights
19-Nov	International Men's Day
December	
3-Dec	International Day of Persons with Disability

We do recognise this is not an exhaustive list of all significant dates, if you would like us to consider adding something please email our I&D Coach Kirsty.Bell@sew.com.au

Accountability

South East Waters Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Operational Plan 2023-2024 outlines our strong commitment to inclusion and diversity, we take our work in this space seriously and will hold ourselves to account by ensuring we:

- Provide quarterly I&D updates to I&D steering committee
- Provide an annual dashboard of Diversity and Inclusion progress to the PSG, Executive and Board
- Provide our annual inclusion and diversity data to VicWater
- Provide a progress report on the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) to the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector.
- Provide an annual Aquanet story to share progress and achievements.

Definitions

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people are members of the population who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Multicultural Community was previously known as the Cultural and linguistic diverse community (CALD) refers to those parts of our identity that stem from where our parents were born and the languages they speak, our ancestries and our religious identity. For data purposes the definition is usually people whose first spoken language is not English.

Disability is any condition that restricts a person's mental, sensory or mobility functions. It may be caused by accident, trauma, genetics or disease. A disability may be temporary or permanent, total or partial, lifelong or acquired, visible or invisible. A person has a disability if they have a limitation, restriction or impairment, which has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months and restricts everyday activities.

Neurodiversity - LaTrobe academic Professor [Cheryl Dissanayake](#), who is Founding Director at Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, describes neurodiversity as, "a different way of being – thinking, feeling, acting – to so-called neurotypicals." Neurodiversity sees Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia and other neurological variances as different ways of perceiving the world that should be understood, not as conditions to be cured.*

Gender equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different, but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

LGBTIQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Gender Diverse, Intersex, Queer and Questioning is an inclusive umbrella abbreviation to encompass a range of diverse sexualities, genders and sex characteristics.

SCG (SCG) Social Connect Group is an internal South East Water employee social connect group, we currently have 11 social connect groups and you can find out more information [here](#).

*Definition from DCA Website