SA Ambulance Service

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION PLAN 2025 - 2026

Government of South Australia
SA Health

SA Ambulance Service

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

SA Ambulance Service (SAAS) acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands on which SAAS provides health services and honours their Elders past, present, and emerging. We recognise Aboriginal cultural authority, and the ongoing spiritual connection to country.

SAAS acknowledges Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing and prioritises Aboriginal culture, addressing trauma and supporting healing across mental health and social and emotional wellbeing services. Our commitment is to ensure the cultural safety of all services irrespective of where treatment, care and support is delivered, it is safe, inclusive, respectful, and responsive for all Aboriginal people, families, and communities.

Furthermore, we acknowledge Aboriginal self-determination is a human right as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and we commit to supporting Aboriginal peoples' right to practice self-determination. We support Aboriginal self-determination through Aboriginal people having the power to make decisions on matters that affect them and their communities, and this will help ensure they can achieve and sustain strong social and emotional wellbeing based on their own cultural values and way of life.

Language statement

We recognise the diversity of Aboriginal people living throughout South Australia. Whilst the term 'Kaurna' is commonly used to describe Aboriginal people within the Adelaide region, SAAS use the term 'Aboriginal' to include all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities who are living in South Australia, unless stated or referenced otherwise.

Artwork story

Our artwork, designed by Ngarrindjeri artist, Jordan Lovegrove, shows SAAS's reconciliation journey through learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's history and culture, and working with communities and other health services to Close the Gap.

SAAS is represented by the large meeting circle in the middle, with the big yellow pathway showing the learning journey. The smaller meeting places represent different communities, with SAAS going out to them to provide emergency medical assistance, treatment and transport. The green section represents all the individuals and groups that SAAS has responded to. The dots and symbols represent the lives saved or quality of life improved for patients and their families and friends. No two sections are the same, demonstrating the diversity of patients.

STATEMENT FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As you'll see in this Plan, diversity, equity and inclusion is so important to everything we do at SA Ambulance Service (SAAS); we are committed as an organisation to increasing the opportunity for everyone who wants to contribute to our achievements. It is a feature of our Strategic Plan 2023-2027, it is embedded in our RISE culture statement (respectful, inclusive, supportive/supported, equitable), and we strive for our workforce to be more and more representative of the community we serve.

In recent years, SAAS has made increasing efforts to increase the diversity of our workforce – drawing talented people from various genders, ethnic backgrounds, and socio-economic groups. While we can all be proud of this progress, there is still more work to be done.

In 2025, we will build on the foundations of previous diversity and equity programs and plans, with firm goals to increase the number of staff identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and those living with disability in our workforce. We also list our White Ribbon reaccreditation, and addressing suggestions from the People Matter Employee Survey and Volunteer Insights Survey as high priorities for the next two years.

I urge everyone reading this Plan to carefully consider the four initiatives proposed, and to incorporate them into your work at SAAS. By creating a more diverse workforce, and better support diversity in SAAS, we empower South Australians and ourselves at the same time.
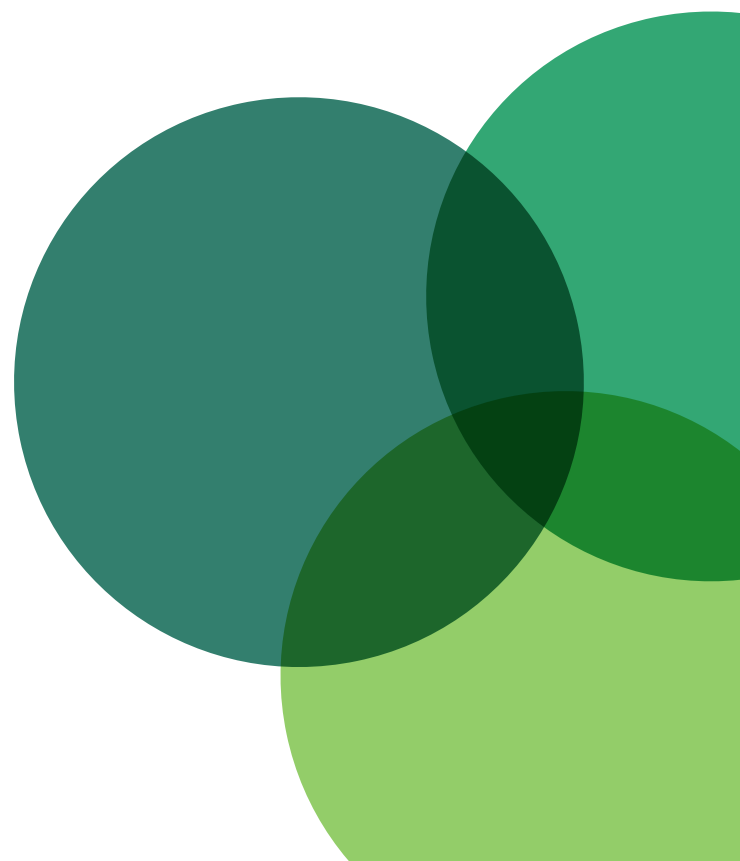
Rob Elliott ASM
Chief Executive Officer

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INTRODUCTION

SA Ambulance Service (SAAS) is committed to developing a diverse, equitable, and inclusive (DE&I) workforce where everyone belongs.

This Plan builds on our inaugural SAAS Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2020–2023 (D&I Plan) and the SAAS Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020–2024 (DAIP) and is guided by the following statewide DE&I initiatives:

› Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment (OCPSE) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2026

› OCPSE Anti Racism Strategy 2023–2028

› SA Health Aboriginal Workforce Framework 2023–2026

› People Matter Employee Survey 2024.

Other significant SAAS initiatives that reflect diversity, equity and inclusion include:

› Reconciliation Action Innovate Plan 2020–2022

› White Ribbon Accreditation Plan 2024–2025

› Volunteer Insights Survey 2024

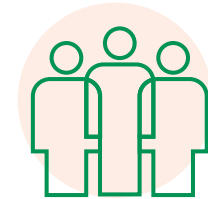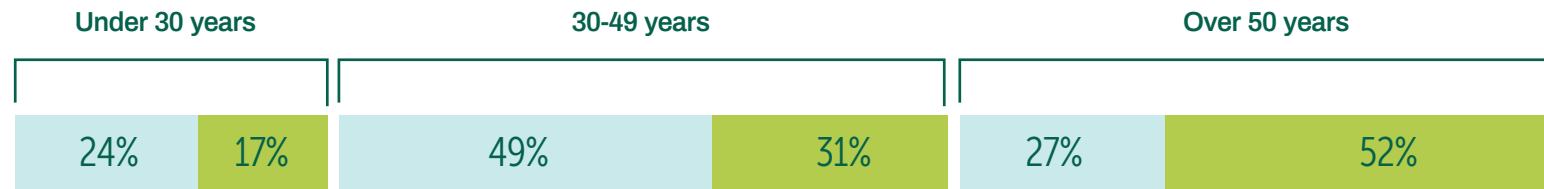› Consumer and Community Engagement Plan 2023–2025.

South Australia has a diverse population and SAAS acknowledges Aboriginal people as our State's first people. We also acknowledge the wider diversity of our community inlcuding:

› Cultural, linguistic and religious diversity

› Age

› Ability

› Gender diversity
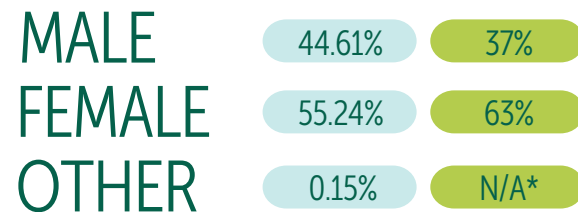
› Sexuality

› Relationship status

› Reproductive status.

The information below shows the current diversity for the SAAS Workforce in 2024.

SAAS Career Staff   **SAAS Volunteers**

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Under 30 years		30-49 years		Over 50 years	
24%	17%	49%	31%	27%	52%

GENDER DISTRIBUTION

MALE	44.61%	37%
FEMALE	55.24%	63%
OTHER	0.15%	N/A*

EXECUTIVE GENDER DISTRIBUTION

MALE	62.5%
FEMALE	37.5%

PEOPLE WHO IDENTIFY AS ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
1.38%
1.97%
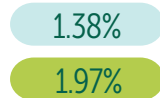
PEOPLE WHO IDENTIFY AS LGBTIQA+
N/A*
N/A*

PEOPLE LIVING WITH A DISABILITY
0.35%
N/A*

PEOPLE BORN OVERSEAS (CALD)
11.7%
N/A*

*Data not available at time of publishing.

The OCPSE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2023–2026 has set the following diversity and inclusion targets for public sector agencies to achieve:

› Increase Aboriginal employment to 3% in each public sector agency/entity by 2026.

› Implement a sector-wide employment target for people living with a disability of 3% by 2026.

This Plan is structured according to the four strategic goals in the OCPSE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan 2023–2026:

1. Diversity, equity and inclusion is central to all we do.

2. Empowering all voices.

3. Reflecting the community we serve.

4. New targets to advance disability employment.
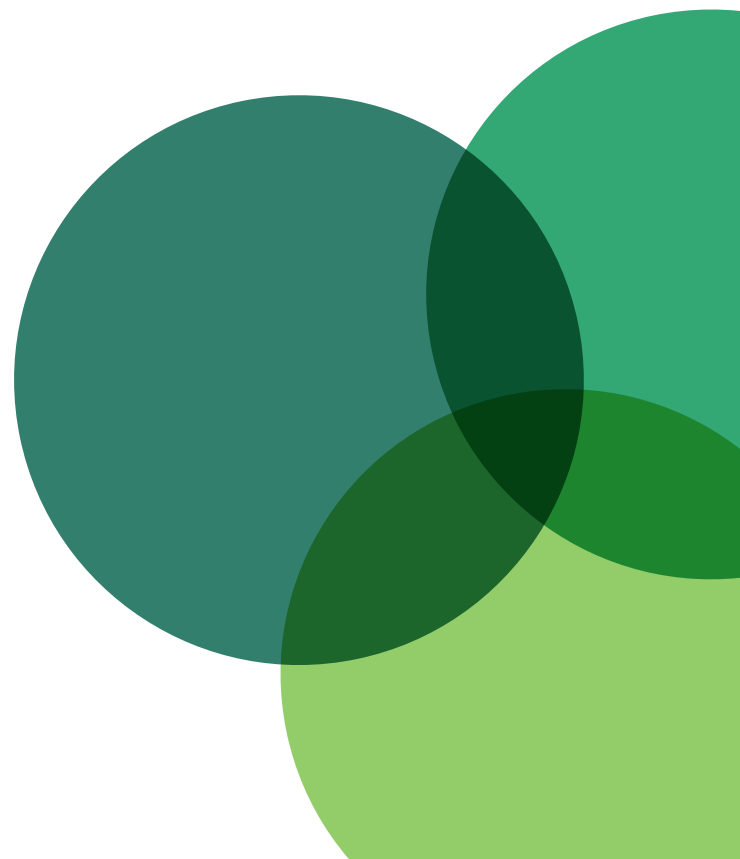
GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Some of the actions identified in this Plan are already underway and some will be initiated for the first time. Below are the three formal committees and working groups, and relative reporting arrangements responsible for various DE&I initiatives in SAAS. Each governance group has responsibility for reporting on initiatives both internally and externally.

Committee/Working Party	Executive Sponsor and Chair	Reports to	External reporting
Disability, Diversity and Inclusion Committee	Executive Director, Workforce Services	Service Delivery Committee	Office for the Commissioner of Public Sector Employment (OCPSE)
Reconciliation Action Plan Committee	Executive Director, Country Operations	Chief Executive Officer	Reconciliation Australia
Workplace Equity and Respect Working Group	Operations Manager, Executive Operations Support (Chair) Executive Director, Workforce Services (Executive Sponsor for White Ribbon reaccreditation)	Service Delivery Committee	White Ribbon Australia

CURRENT STATE

In 2020, SAAS introduced two plans to commence strategic delivery of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives across the agency.

These plans are:

› Diversity and Inclusion Plan in 2020–2023 (D&I Plan)

› Disability, Access and Inclusion Plan 2020–2024 (DAIP).

The D&I Plan recently expired, and a review of the initiatives was conducted. SAAS successfully completed over 50% of the initiatives it set out to achieve. Some are still in progress, and some were explored but not initiated.

The DAIP also achieved over 50% of the identified initiatives. In 2020, SAAS was advised it was required to have a DAIP as part of the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018* (SA), however this is no longer a requirement.

The Department for Health and Wellbeing conduct external reporting on behalf of all health agencies. SAAS-specific disability, access, and inclusion initiatives will now be captured as part of this new Plan.

Some of the key initiatives that have been achieved over the past four years include:

› Reconciliation Action Innovate Plan 2020–2022

› White Ribbon re-accreditation (up to June 2024)

› Introduction of the Gender Transition and Affirmation in the Workplace Procedure and training package

› Annual participation in Adelaide Pride March

› Awareness raising for Reconciliation Week

› Awareness raising for International Day of Older Persons

› Awareness raising on International Day for People with Disability

› Awareness and fundraising on White Ribbon Day

› Annual celebration of NAIDOC Week.

FUTURE STATE

The DD&I Committee have developed this Plan after considering a gap analysis of the previous D&I Plan and DAIP, as well as consultation with all SAAS directorates.

Building on the previous plans' achievements, this Plan follows the structure of the OCPSE Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan 2023–2026 and identifies new initiatives within SAAS.

This Plan is not an exhaustive list of all DE&I initiatives SAAS plans to undertake over the next two years, rather, it is a comprehensive guide for strategic initiatives intended from a review of both statewide public sector frameworks and SA Health frameworks. A deliberate approach to reduce the number of DE&I initiatives has been taken to enable a strategic focus on achieving milestones, rather than listing many activities.

Initiatives are organised according to priority areas identified by OCPSE.

Priority areas:

1. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is central to all we do
2. Empowering all voices
3. Reflecting the community, we serve
4. New targets to advance disability employment.

Diversity streams with a particular focus in SAAS will include the following groups and themes:

› Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People
› Age
› LGBTIQA+
› Gender equity and respect
› People living with a disability
› Neurodivergence, including autism
› Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people.

I. DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IS CENTRAL TO WHAT WE DO

Our policies and processes across SAAS prioritise inclusiveness and our staff feel included, safe, visible, and represented.					
No.	Initiative	Deliverable	Which diversity stream does it focus on?	Who	By When
1.1	Develop the Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–2026.	Reconciliation Action Plan 2024–2026 endorsed by Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and available on the staff intranet and public website.	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	› RAP Committee	2025
1.2	Apply for White Ribbon re-accreditation in 2025.	Achieve White Ribbon re-accreditation on 3 July 2025.	Gender equity and respect	› Executive Operations Support	2025
1.3	Identify DE&I themes from the 2024 People Matter Employee Survey and Volunteer Insights Survey.	Develop DE&I theme report with the DD&I Committee and other relevant groups.	All diversity streams	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development	2025
1.4	Report on progress towards initiatives as per DE&I Plan 2025–2026.	Report progress towards initiatives in the DE&I Plan 2024–2026 with the Service Delivery Committee (SDC) once year or as relevant.	All diversity streams	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development	2025 2026

2. EMPOWERING ALL VOICES

SAAS staff feel welcome and empowered to speak up, their concerns are taken seriously and discrimination and harassment is addressed.					
No.	Initiative	Deliverable	Which diversity stream does it focus on?	Who	By When
2.1	Increase Aboriginal employment to 3% by 2026.	Achieve an Aboriginal employment rate of 3% by 2026.	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	› Workforce Services - Human Resources	2026
2.2	Review opportunities for Aboriginal cadetships and Aboriginal traineeships.	Provide a discovery report to DD&I Committee for Aboriginal cadetships and Aboriginal traineeships.	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development	2025
2.3	Conduct baseline analysis of workforce to identify the number of Aboriginal staff (and other workforce measures) to inform workforce planning each year.	Share baseline analysis of workforce to identify the number of Aboriginal staff (and other workforce measures) to relevant groups i.e., workforce groups.	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development and Human Resources	2025
2.4	Engage with Aboriginal staff on how we can increase Aboriginal employment.	Share report and recommendations on how we can increase Aboriginal employment with DD&I Committee and other relevant groups.	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development and Human Resources › RAP Committee	2025 2026
2.5	Establish an Aboriginal Volunteer Peer Network (expanding to career Aboriginal staff once established).	First meeting of Aboriginal Volunteer Peer Network has occurred.	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	› Volunteer Support Unit	2025
2.6	Require new staff to complete the OCPSE Anti-Racism training and conduct reporting.	The OCPSE Anti-Racism training package is available on SAAS eLearning. Report of organisational completion available.	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development › Clinical Services - Clinical Education	2026

SAAS staff feel welcome and empowered to speak up, their concerns are taken seriously and discrimination and harassment is addressed.					
No.	**Initiative**	**Deliverable**	**Which diversity stream does it focus on?**	**Who**	**By When**
2.7	As per OCPSE guideline, implement unconscious bias, training, privilege awareness training, bystander training, and conduct reporting.	The following training is available on SAAS eLearning: › Unconscious bias › Privilege awareness › Bystander awareness.	All diversity streams	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development and Human Resources › Clinical Services - Clinical Education	2026
2.8	Incorporate OCPSE guidance on bullying and harassment into policies and procedures.	Bullying and harassment policies and procedures are promoted via several channels to all staff, including volunteers.	All diversity streams	› Workforce Services - Human Resources › Communications and Engagement	2025
2.9	Include statement in job advertisements that the agency has zero tolerance of racism, in addition to the current statement about diversity.	Zero tolerance for racism statement added to job advertisements.	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people CALD	› Workforce Services - Human Resources	2025
2.10	Review and adjust agency systems and processes for managing and investigating staff complaints about racism in the workplace with participation from people with lived experience or advice from a suitably qualified provider from the across government workplace investigation services panel.	Review of agency systems and processes for managing and investigating staff (including volunteers) complaints about racism in the workplace is completed.	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people CALD	› Workforce Services - Human Resources	2025
2.11	Develop a Menopause Action Plan.	Menopause Action Plan is endorsed and implemented.	Gender equity and respect	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development	2025

3. REFLECTING THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE

SAAS is positioned as an inclusive employer of choice and our workforce reflects the community we serve.

No.	Initiative	Deliverable	Which diversity stream does it focus on?	Who is leading?	By When
3.1	Acknowledge National Reconciliation Week.	National Reconciliation Week is acknowledged.	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	› RAP Committee › Communications and Engagement	2025 2026
3.2	Increase awareness of the use of LGBTIQA+ pronouns.	Awareness of LGBTIQA+ pronouns is increased.	LGBTIQA+	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development › Communications and Engagement	2025
3.3	Acknowledge International Women's Day and Men's Day.	International Women's Day and International Men's Day is acknowledged.	Gender equity and respect	› Executive Operations › Support › Communications and Engagement	2025 2026
3.4	Acknowledge White Ribbon Month.	White Ribbon Month is acknowledged.	Gender equity and respect	› Executive Operations › Support › Communications and Engagement	2025 2026
3.5	Explore opportunities for Young Professional's Group.	Staff and volunteers interested in Young Professional's Group have met to reinvigorate YPG.	Age	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development	2026
3.6	Review staff and volunteer onboarding and induction to ensure information is culturally inclusive.	Onboarding and induction is updated to ensure cultural inclusion.	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people CALD	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development › Volunteer Support Unit	2025
3.7	Require recruitment panel members to complete unconscious bias training.	Review recruitment procedures to include unconscious bias training as a requirement for recruitment panel members.	All diversity streams	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development and Human Resources	2025

4. NEW TARGETS TO ADVANCE DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT

| No.	Initiative	Deliverable	Which diversity stream does it focus on?	Who is leading?	By When
	More people living with a disability choose a career with SAAS and their employee experience is positive.				
4.1	Explore where opportunities exist to employ people with disabilities.	A discovery report available for consideration by the DD&I Committee and ELT.	Disability	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development and Human Resources	2025
4.2	Consult with Disability Employment Services on requirements to attract and retain staff with a disability.	Consultation incorporated into employing people with a disability discovery report.	Disability	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development and Human Resources	2025
4.3	Conduct a pilot program to increase employment of people with a disability.	Employment of people with a disability pilot project completed and recommendations provided to DD&I Committee and ELT.	Disability	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development and Human Resources	2025
4.4	Implement disability awareness and inclusion training and conduct reporting.	Disability awareness and inclusion training is promoted and reported on a regular basis.	Disability	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development and Human Resources › Clinical Services - Clinical Education	2026
4.5	Create employment pathways to increase engagement and participation of neurodivergent staff.	Neurodivergence included in scope of employment of people with a disability pilot project.	Neurodivergence	› Workforce Services - Organisational Development and Human Resources › Clinical Services - Clinical Education	2026
4.6	Implement the State Autism Strategy including training and associated reporting requirements.	Autism included in the scope for the people with a disability pilot project and training made available on SAAS eLearning once available.	Autism	› Organisational Development › Clinical Services - Clinical Education	2026
4.7	Evaluate the Communication Access Books Project pilot and develop recommendations.	Communication Access Books Project pilot completed, and recommendations provided to DD&I Committee and ELT.	Disability	› Communications and Engagement	2025

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES POST-2026

SAAS is committed to a long-term approach of building on its progress and focusing on new areas post-2026.

There are many areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion in which we can all improve. Unfortunately, all cannot be tackled at once and so a long-term strategic view is taken to progress DE&I across SAAS. It is also worth noting that DE&I is a fast-moving area, and it is likely SAAS may need to adapt as particular DE&I areas have an increased focus, such as neurodiversity and menopause.

Below are several DE&I areas for future consideration:

› Consider reproduction status/leave opportunities (endometriosis, menstruation, menopause, vasectomy, etc.).

› Consider LGBTIQA+ Rainbow Tick accreditation or Pride in Diversity membership.

› Consider We're Equal program membership.

› Advocate for improved DE&I data to inform policy development.

› Continue to promote flexible work practices in SAAS.
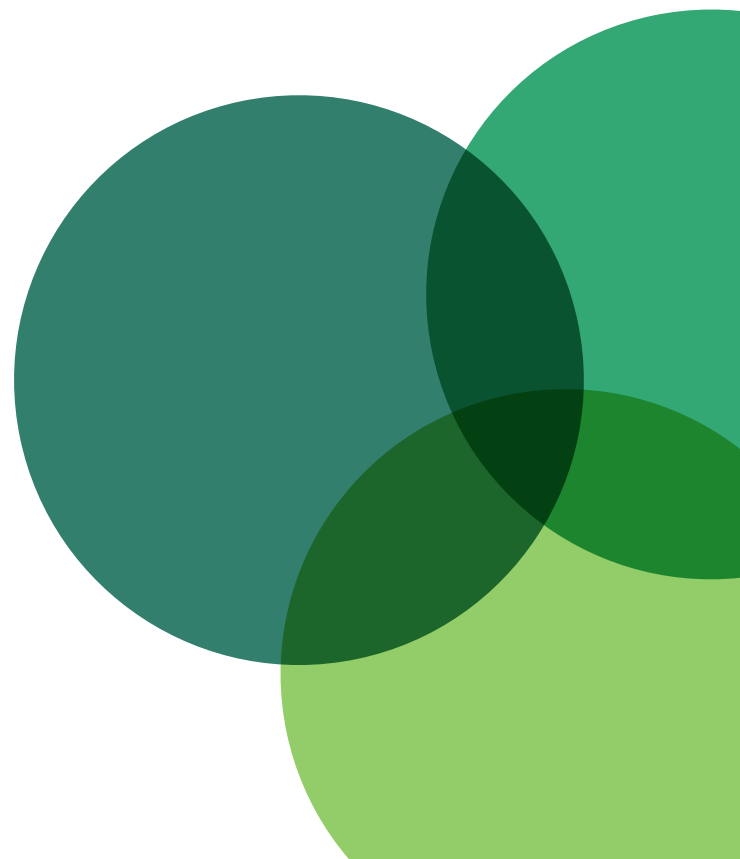
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aboriginal people

Aboriginal people are inclusive of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people within South Australia.

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)

Refers to people from different countries, who have different cultural backgrounds, can speak more than one language and/or who may align with a religion.

DHW

Department for Health and Wellbeing.

Disability

The *Disability Inclusion Act 2018* (SA) defines disability to a person as including long-term physical, psychosocial, intellectual, cognitive, neurological, or sensory impairment, or a combination of any of these impairments. Any disability in interaction with various barriers may hinder the person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Gender transition and gender affirmation

Gender transition refers to the steps a person can take to transition from the gender they were assigned at birth to live as the gender with which they identify. Gender affirmation refers to an interpersonal process whereby a person is recognised in society for their gender identity and expression.

LGBTIQA+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual, Plus refers to the diverse sex, sexual orientation and gender identities represented in the community. LGBTIQA+ is used as an effort to be as inclusive as possible, though it is recognised there are many more terms that may describe diverse community members.

OCPSE

Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment.

People Matter Employee Survey

A survey conducted by OCPSE across the SA public sector every two years to capture employee experiences at work including diversity and inclusion experiences.

Volunteer Insights Survey

A survey, first conducted in 2024, and to be conducted biennially, to gain a better understanding of the experiences, perceptions and satisfaction levels of SAAS volunteers.

Pride in Diversity membership

Pride in Diversity is Australia's first and only national not-for-profit employer support program for all aspects of LGBTIQA+ workplace inclusion. A social inclusion initiative of ACON, Pride in Diversity are specialists in HR, organisational change and workplace diversity dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ people by reducing exclusion, invisibility, homophobia, and stigma in the workplace.

Rainbow Tick accreditation

This process provides independent recognition, based on a set of national standards, to indicate that an organisation has demonstrated its commitment to LGBTIQA+ inclusive service delivery, and is aware and understanding of the needs of LGBTIQA+ customers, clients, and staff.

RAP

The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) provides a framework for organisations to support the national Reconciliation movement. An organisation's RAP outlines practical actions to develop respectful relationships and meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Reproductive Status

Being treated unfairly based on reproductive status, which can include fertility treatment, menopause, vasectomy etc.

SA Health Aboriginal Workforce Framework 2023-2031

A framework developed that outlines the SA Health's approach to grow and strengthen their Aboriginal workforce. It includes a 3% employment target.

SAAS

SA Ambulance Service.

We're Equal program

We're Equal identifies businesses and organisations committed to treating everyone equally, regardless of their age, ability, gender diversity, sexuality, relationship and reproductive status, race, religion, and culture.

White Ribbon accreditation

White Ribbon accreditation recognises workplaces that are taking active steps to stop violence against women by recognising them as a White Ribbon Accredited Workplace.