

# Client Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Autism Queensland's approach to supporting diversity and ensuring access and inclusion for all clients.

Autism Queensland (AQ) is committed to providing all clients with access to high-quality services free from discrimination and provisioned in a supportive environment that ensures safety and wellbeing. AQ is dedicated to supporting the understanding of both employees and clients of client rights and responsibilities.

## 2.0 Scope

This Policy applies to all employees and clients who access AQ services. A reference to "employees" includes permanent, fixed-term, temporary and casual employees, directors, contractors, volunteers and other representatives acting on behalf of AQ in any capacity.

For the purpose of this document, "clients" may refer to: service users; school students; the parents, guardians or carers of clients or organisations.

## 3.0 Definitions

**Diversity** – is what makes each of us unique, including our backgrounds, personalities, and beliefs and other factors such as ethnicity, gender, age, race, religion, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also refers to individual characteristics and experiences such as communication style, career path, and life history that influence how we see the world.

**Inclusion** – when individuals feel valued and respected, regardless of their personal characteristics or circumstances. In an inclusive environment:

- people have the chance to reach their full potential, both individually and collectively;
- they have access to opportunities and resources;
- they can bring their best to every interaction; and
- there is a sense of belonging.

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### 4.0 Policy

AQ recognises that every person is an expert in their own lives, we respect all aspects of the person when providing individualised supports. When working with clients we aim to understand their world view, values, beliefs, and diverse needs. Support is tailored to the diverse needs of each client to enable them to feel safe, heard, and able to express themselves in a way they are most comfortable.

AQ is committed to ensuring all policies, practices, services, and supports are responsive, respectful, and inclusive of all clients. This commitment extends to ensuring employees are supported to understand the diverse needs of all clients by providing appropriate training and professional development, resources, and linkages to specialist community support. AQ is inclusive of all clients, valuing individual status or characteristics, including but not limited to:

- ability;
- age;
- breastfeeding;
- cultural background;
- family structure;
- gender identity or intersex status;
- impairment;
- marital or relationship status;
- political beliefs;
- pregnancy;
- race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status;
- religious beliefs and ideologies;
- sex; or
- sexual orientation.

AQ aims to minimise barriers to clients accessing service in all areas of the organisation. AQ reviews and adjusts practice, policy, services and supports where barriers are identified and welcomes feedback from clients, employees, and the community.

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## 5.0 Autism Queensland's Approach to Diversity and Inclusion

AQ is committed to providing safe, respectful and inclusive services for all people. We value diversity and recognise that each person's identity, background and lived experience shape how they engage with supports. Our approach promotes equity, reduces barriers to access and participation, and upholds the rights, choice and dignity of every client, family member and carer. We embed inclusion through person-centred practice, including individualised planning, strengths-based approaches and reasonable adjustments to support meaningful participation. We use accessible communication, including the use of alternative communication, and we work in partnership with clients and their support networks to ensure services are culturally safe and responsive to individual needs.

- **Respect and safety:** We promote a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, bullying and abuse.
- **Access and reasonable adjustments:** We identify and address barriers to participation, including communication and environmental needs.
- **Cultural safety:** We respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and connections to Country, and support culturally safe practice for people from all cultural, linguistic and faith backgrounds.
- **Inclusive supports:** We support inclusion for people of all genders, sexualities and family structures.
- **Inclusive environments:** We deliver services in spaces tailored to best support each client's needs and goals, ensuring environments are adapted to individual requirements rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach. Our commitment is to create settings where everyone feels comfortable, respected, and empowered to participate fully.
- **Capability and reflection:** We build workforce capability through induction, training, supervision and reflective practice, and we actively learn from feedback and incidents.

We encourage feedback and provide accessible ways for people to raise concerns or make complaints. We use feedback and outcomes data to monitor service quality, identify any inequities, and continuously improve how we support diverse individuals and communities.

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## 5.1 Individualised Planning Across Services

AQ implements individualised plans for every client across all services, ensuring that the unique differences, strengths and aspirations of each person are recognised and celebrated. These plans are developed collaboratively, capturing personal goals for service delivery and establishing clear measures of performance to monitor progress towards these goals.

In addition to collecting feedback and complaints reactively, AQ proactively seeks input regarding satisfaction with outcomes and satisfaction with service delivery. This ongoing approach enables continuous improvement by identifying opportunities to enhance our supports, rather than relying solely on traditional feedback mechanisms. By embedding person-centred planning and regular review, AQ ensures services remain responsive, effective and tailored to the diversity of each client.

## 6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Delivering on our diversity and inclusion commitments is a shared responsibility across AQ. Leaders and employees are expected to model inclusive practice, identify and address barriers, and respond to issues promptly and respectfully.

### 6.1 Leaders

**Leaders are responsible for:**

- setting clear expectations for inclusive, culturally safe and rights-based practice;
- ensuring policies, procedures and service delivery models promote equity and accessibility;
- supporting workforce capability through recruitment, induction, training, supervision and performance development;
- consulting with clients, families and communities, and using feedback and data to improve inclusion outcomes;
- responding to concerns, incidents and complaints appropriately, including escalating where required;

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- creating psychologically safe workplaces where people feel respected and able to speak up.

### 6.2 Employees

#### Employees are responsible for:

- treating all people with dignity and respect, and providing supports free from discrimination;
- using person-centred and trauma-informed approaches, including making reasonable adjustments in practice;
- communicating in accessible ways and seeking guidance or specialist support when needed;
- reflecting on personal bias and participating in required learning and development;
- speaking up about barriers to inclusion and reporting concerns, incidents or risks in line with AQ processes;
- protecting privacy and confidentiality and obtaining consent where required.

### 7.0 Related Documents

#### Legislation

*Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)*

*Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*

*Australian Human Rights Commission Act  
1986 (Cth)*

*Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*

*Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*

*Disability Discrimination and Other Human  
Rights Legislation Amendment Act 2009  
(Cth)*

*Disability Services Act 2006 (Qld)*

*Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools)  
Act 2017 (Qld)*

*Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)*

*Education and Care Services Act 2013 (Qld)*

*Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*

*Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)*

*Industrial Relations Act 2016 (Qld)*

*National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013  
(Cth)*

*Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*

*Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*

*Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*

*Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)*

# Client Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## Standards and Principles

- Australian Privacy Principles
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)
- National Disability Standards (Cth)
- NDIS Quality & Safeguarding Framework
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

## NDIS Modules and Practice Standards

### Core 1: Rights and Responsibilities

- 06 Person-centred Supports
- 07 Individual Values and Beliefs
- 09 Independence and Informed Choice

### Core 3: Provision of Supports

- 19 Access to Supports

### Module 3: Early Childhood Supports

- 56 The Child
- 57 The Family
- 58 Inclusion
- 62 Outcome Based Approach

## Internal

- Child Protection (Non-School) Procedure
- Child Protection (School) Procedure
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Client Protection (Adult) Procedure
- Client Safeguarding (Adult) Policy
- Client Service Charter
- Clients' Rights Policy + Easy Read
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints & Feedback Management Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy & Procedure
- Whistleblower Policy & Procedure

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