

Next Review Due: On release of the Department's Diversity Framework. Scheduled 2018.
Date Reviewed:
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Diversity Plan

Introduction

Australia has one of the most diverse populations in the world. The people we work with and provide services to, now and into the future, may be very different to us and may not aspire to be like us.

Diversity is about us and the people we work with. It is about understanding the individual differences of people who come from a broad range of abilities, backgrounds and cultures. It is about recognising the value of using those different perspectives and working towards enhancing the quality and relevance of Country Home Services (CHS) work.

What is diversity?

Diversity is reflected in things such as gender, age, language, cultural background, sexual orientation, religious belief, family responsibilities, marital status, life experience, level of education, socio-economic background, geographic location, disabilities, personality, values, perceptions and attitudes.

Specifically, Diversity within the older Australian cohort looks like this:

- Almost one third of older Australians were born outside of Australia and one in five older Australians are from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds;
- There are over 100,000 older people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' in Australia;
- More than one in ten people have diverse sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex characteristics;
- Almost 15,000 older Australians experience homelessness or are at risk of homelessness;
- One in ten Australians over sixty-five lives with cognitive impairment and dementia;
- More than 80% of older Australians report an affiliation to a religion of some kind;
- Over half of older Australians experience some sort of disability;
- More than one in ten older Australians live in regional, rural and remote communities;
- One in twelve older Australians experience significant financial or social disadvantage;
- One in twelve older Australians have four or more chronic diseases;
- There are over 150,000 older Australian veterans; and
- There are half a million care leavers in Australia who are now between 40 and 90 years of age, with the numbers of parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal still unknown.¹

To better manage the unique challenges and opportunities related to providing services to those with diverse needs, the Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health, has asked the Department of Health to co-design an Aged Care Diversity Framework (due by December 2017).

¹ National Aged Care Alliance (2017) *Ensuring equity of access and outcomes in the future aged care system*

This Framework will focus on older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences as outlined below:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- People from CALD backgrounds;
- LGBTI peoples;
- People who live in rural, remote or very remote areas;
- People who are financially or socially disadvantaged;
- Veterans;
- People who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless;
- Care-leavers;
- Parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal;
- People with a disability;
- People with mental health problems and mental illness; and
- People living with cognitive impairment, including dementia.

CHS research² has identified the following themes in relation to diversity across our Aged Care Planning Regions:

- In relation to those people identifying as ATSI, the most significant population cohort is based on the Yorke Peninsula. The traditional owners of this area were the Narungga people. Outside of the Yorke Peninsula, there are very few people identifying as ATSI and, therefore, limited supports in relation to this cohort.
- In relation to those people identifying as CALD (those born outside of Australia), a very small percentage of the total population were born in, mainly, European countries – Germany, Italy and Greece. However, there is an emerging community of older Australians born in Vietnam mainly located in the Adelaide Plains area.
- In relation to those people identifying as CALD (speaking a language other than English), the percentage of people against total population is small. Varying between 5% and 2% depending on the location.
- In relation to those people located in rural/ remote areas, using the Modified Monash Model (MM) – most people reside in areas classified as follows:

Modified Monash Category	Inclusions
MM 3	Areas categorised ASGS-RA 2 and ASGS-RA 3 that are not in MM 2 and are in, or within 15km road distance, of a town with population between 15,000 and 50,000.
MM 5	All other areas in ASGS-RA 2 and 3. ³
MM 6	All areas categorised ASGS-RA 4 that are not on a populated island that is separated from the mainland in the ABS geography and is more than 5km offshore

Therefore the majority of CHS customers are classified as rural/ remote. CHS identifies as a provider of services specific to the rural/ remote cohort on My Aged Care.

- In relation to those identifying as part of the Veteran community, CHS provides services to 160 people through the Veterans Home Care program. CHS identifies as a provider of services specific to the Veteran cohort on My Aged Care.

² *Researching the CHS Environment*, 2016. Author. S. Stutley

³ Refer: <http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/Classification-changes>

CHS acknowledges that this information is relatively easy to elicit from customers and/ or existing data. Data related to emerging communities can be difficult to quantify. However as per Part 1.1 of the CHS Strategic Plan (Embed Diversity strategies into all aspects of service delivery) CHS is committed to understanding all elements of Diversity and enacting meaningful services to meet those needs.

CHS Philosophy

CHS philosophy that guides the delivery of all CHS services is based on the Better Practice Project (BPP)⁴. All staff have been trained in the BPP, namely 'appreciative enquiry'. All staff have access to the latest BPP Handbook, *Imagining Possibilities*, and should refer to it as required.

The key goal for the BPP is to ensure that people remain central to the essence of the human service work.⁵ There is a natural synergy between this goal and best practice service delivery in a diverse needs construct.

The six drivers of CHS Philosophy are:

- *Partnership* - A 'power-with' relationship (the person being decisively influential in how they are to be assisted);
- *Choice* - To decide what services are provided and who provides them;
- *Tailor made services* - A bespoke approach;
- *Can do approach* - Solutions to the most obscure challenges;
- *Imagination* - Our commitment to find the tools to make life better; and
- *Community* - Support to remain connected with their community.

All CHS staff, contractors and board members will adhere to strategies that meet this philosophy. This information is available for review on the CHS website and drives decisions in relation to service delivery and service support.

Your role, supporting Diversity

Depending on the role of the person, CHS staff, contractors and board members will adhere to the follow actions.

As an individual:

- Treat each other (including colleagues, customers, visitors) with courtesy and respect;
- Foster good working relationships and act in a friendly manner when delivering services in a customer's home, carrying out tasks in the CHS workplace and when attending external functions including meetings, conferences and promotional events;
- Listen to the views of others without prejudice;
- Recognise that others have skills to offer and seek ways to draw on their diverse backgrounds, skills and talents;
- Develop personal understanding and knowledge of diversity, undertake training as required through the Aged Care Channel;
- Contribute to the consultation processes within CHS so that my own diverse experiences, background and perspectives are reflected in decisions we make;
- Foster flexibility in work/personal life balance;
- Recognise the non-work related responsibilities of others;

⁴ <http://www.agedcommunity.asn.au/providers/better-practice-project/>

⁵ Refer: Section 7 (Understanding Diversity) of the BPP Guidebook, *Imagining Possibilities*

- Commit to eliminating all forms of discrimination, harassment and bullying from the workplace be that a customer's home or CHS offices (including reporting all incidents).

As a Team Leader or Brokerage Coordinator:

- Model CHS Code of Conduct in work and management of staff and lead by example in fostering a culture where the diversity of the workforce is recognised and valued and display a positive commitment;
- Actively support and implement this Diversity Plan and actions in the workplace, be that a customer's home or CHS offices;
- Monitor the application of these principles by CHS staff and contractors, using the BPP Guidebook, *Imagining Possibilities*;
- Make use of Diversity by consulting with, seeking a range of views from, and encouraging all CHS staff, customers, contractors and board members to contribute positively to service delivery outcomes;
- Deal with inappropriate behaviour in the workplace including the home of a customer and/or CHS offices in a timely manner;
- Communicate appropriately and share knowledge to increase productivity;
- Ensure decisions are transparent, consistent and fair; and
- Use the Employee Performance Development Review (EPDR) and attributes function in CIM to understand and maximise our diverse qualities and enhance knowledge-sharing.

As a Manager or CEO or Board Member:

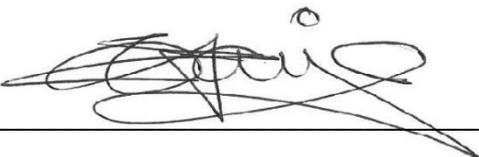
- Demonstrate a personal commitment to the principles of equity and diversity;
- Support the aims and implementation of CHS's Diversity Plan and actions;
- Lead by example in creating and developing a culture where the diversity is recognised and valued;
- Model CHS Code of Conduct and promote appropriate behaviour throughout CHS;
- Foster a culture where diversity is recognised and valued; and
- Plan for and invest in the current and future workforce.

Resources

It is the responsibility of all CHS to have an expert knowledge of what resources are available to support those identifying as having diverse needs. It is also important to note that any one given person may have multiple diversities and those should be acknowledged.

The CHS Website refers to a range of resources that assist in the provision of services to a person identifying as having diverse needs. These resources can be sourced via the via the 'Useful Links' page, pathway 'Info & Contact' @ <https://countryhomeservices.org.au/index.php/info-contact/useful-links>

In August 2017, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare launched the GEN Aged Care Data website. This site provides specific information in relation to diverse needs as per Aged Care Planning Region. <https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/My-aged-care-region>

Signature: 

Date: 23 / 10 / 2017

Chief Executive Officer