

AES Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

Vision statement

Our vision is for an organisation that creates, nurtures and sustains a culture of belonging where differences drive innovation in evaluation to meet the complex issues of a changing and diverse Australia.

Scope

This Diversity and Inclusion Policy (the Policy) applies to all AES members, employees, volunteers, directors, officers and contractors, where the diversity of our evaluation community is embraced. It is concerned with the diversity and inclusion of the organisation and its members, but does not extend to diversity of evaluation practice, which is addressed through other aspects of the AES Strategic Plan.

In celebrating our diversity, the AES recognises, values and respects First Nations Australians as the custodians of these lands and as members that make a unique contribution to our organisation and profession.

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

Uluru Statement from the Heart, 2017

What is Diversity and Inclusion?

At AES, we are committed to enhancing diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility. We define these terms as follows:

Diversity

Diversity at AES is about the ways in which people differ, whether visibly or not, and what makes a person unique. People are unique because of an infinite range and combination of characteristics including their gender, age, culture, ethnicity, race, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation, educational background, geography, socio-economic factors, skill, work style, caring responsibility, family status, medical condition, cognitive functioning, personality and many other individual characteristics and experiences. The diverse experiences and perspectives of our community will enrich AES membership and the organisation.

Inclusion

Inclusion at AES means an environment where all people are valued, the diversity of people's identity and experiences is respected, and members enjoy equal opportunity without any barriers due to personal characteristics or circumstances. We value and learn from each other in an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Equity

Equity at AES means just and fair opportunity to participate and contribute irrespective of origin, identities, characteristics, world views and values. This means recognising and addressing structural and systemic barriers related to diverse characteristics or overlapping forms of disadvantage to provide conditions that allow all to reach their full potential, including by adjusting for visible and hidden power imbalances that perpetuate privilege.

Accessibility

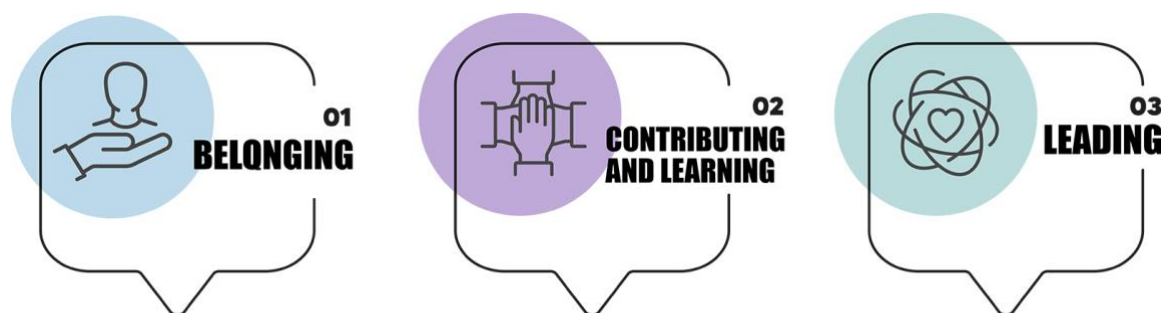
Accessibility means AES's commitment to design AES offerings to be flexible and accommodate the needs and preferences of members and potential members along the continuum of human ability and experience.

Our commitments

As a member-based organisation, we recognise that embracing diversity and inclusion is fundamental to the enrichment of our organisation and our membership base. We are committed to nurturing all our members and embracing all aspects of diversity.

This Policy is a first step to demonstrating this recognition and commitment, on which AES will continue to build.

As an organisation, we are guided by the following three commitments:



AES Diversity and Inclusion commitments

1. Belonging

We are a welcoming, safe, respectful and nurturing organisation for all our members in all their diversity. We provide a safe, friendly, respectful and inclusive organisation for all members and potential members so that everyone feels valued and part of our community.

2. Contributing and learning

We embrace the diversity of our community of evaluators and beyond, as this is how we learn from each other and enrich our organisation. We support our members to learn from each other. As we increase the diversity and inclusion of our membership base, we build diversity of perspectives and our individual and collective knowledge.

3. Leading

We encourage and nurture the development of organisational processes that address inherited power imbalances. We encourage and nurture members of our evaluation community and tackle any barriers to inclusion, access and development. We support a diverse range of members on the pathway to developing into leaders, for example, encouraging a diverse range of people to participate in AES governance committees.

Roles and accountabilities

The roles and accountabilities of the AES Board, staff, committees and members in relation to this Policy are outlined below.

A working group will be formed to recommend specific actions and responsibilities against the three commitments of the Policy statement.

AES Board

AES is governed by a Board of Directors which provides overall governance and strategic direction for the organisation. As the public face of AES, the Board will lead by example in embracing this Policy.

Each year, the Board will reflect on its performance against the initiatives under this Policy and publish a summary of efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in the Annual Report.

AES staff

AES is managed by a Chief Executive Officer and staff. The Chief Executive Officer manages operations and has delegated responsibility for implementing the directions and decisions of the Board.

The Chief Executive Officer is accountable for contributing to and maintaining an inclusive workplace and organisation, respecting the diversity of others and demonstrating inclusion through the AES values and adherence to this Policy. Staff are expected to implement this Policy in their daily work.

AES Strategic Advisory Committees

The AES Board is supported by a number of committees, including Strategic Advisory Committees, which advise on the current strategy, emergent strategy and operational strategy.

All committees are responsible for considering how their work contributes to AES's commitment to diversity and inclusion and play a key role in supporting the implementation of this Policy.

AES Regional Network Committees

Regional Networks provide networking and seminar events in their region, assist in the planning of the professional learning program and advise the AES Board and its committees on member issues in their region. Regional Networks have their own committees.

Regional Network Committees are accountable for creating and contributing to an inclusive environment by designing forums and events which aim to make everyone feel comfortable, safe and confident to share information and ideas. These committees have an opportunity to ensure that the implementation of this Policy is appropriately tailored to their specific community to optimise and ensure inclusive and respectful practice.

AES members

AES members represent diverse sectors and areas of evaluation practice and meet regularly through Regional Networks, special interest groups, discussion groups and an annual conference.

All members are expected to contribute to, and maintain, an inclusive environment at AES activities, respecting the diversity of evaluation community and demonstrating inclusion through adherence to this Policy.

Related policies

This Policy is a commitment under the AES Strategic Plan. It should be read in conjunction with our other AES diversity and inclusion initiatives including those contained in:

- [AES Code of Ethics](#) and [AES Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations](#), which aim to promote ethical evaluation practice, support member rights, and maintain AES as a trusted organisation
- [AES Strategic Priorities](#), which articulates the strategic priorities for the organisation
- [AES First Nations Cultural Safety Framework](#), which aims to address the Cultural Capacity priority for the AES Strategic Plan
- [AES Reconciliation Action Plan](#), which provides direction for realising AES's commitment to leading the evaluation community on reconciliation.

Reporting

The AES Board will reflect and report on activities to promote diversity and inclusion in AES annual reports and propose further diversity initiatives as appropriate. Diversity and inclusion activities under this Policy will be a quarterly standing agenda item at Board meetings. Some more formal reporting will be developed once specific actions are agreed on which will be monitored against relevant metrics. The overall Policy will be reviewed within four years of its launch.

We will support continuous improvement of the AES Diversity and Inclusion Policy by collecting data that improves knowledge about the diversity of our members, evaluating AES offerings and undertaking ongoing improvement to support accessibility, inclusion and equity. It will also be critical to collect feedback about how key stakeholders perceive us and how that aligns with the three commitments of the policy statement.

Document information

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified
I	AES Board	March 2023	April 2023	Original version