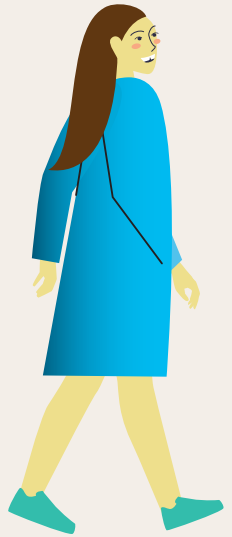
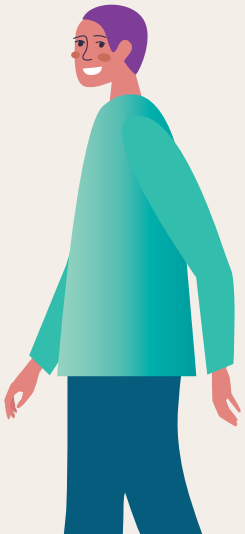
MercyCare





DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

2025 – 2028

Acknowledgement of Country

MercyCare acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, work, and serve. We pay our deepest respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging, and honour their enduring connection to land, water, and culture.

We recognise the invaluable contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to our community and their leadership in resilience, knowledge, and diversity. As part of our commitment to reconciliation, we are dedicated to building meaningful partnerships based on equity, respect, and understanding.

In acknowledging this history, we also reflect on our role in creating a more inclusive future, one that celebrates the strengths and intersectional identities within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and one that ensures equity for all.

Introduction

MercyCare's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy 2025 – 2028 reaffirms our commitment to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace where everyone belongs and is valued for their uniqueness. Our roots are in the Catholic community, grounded in the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy, who devoted their lives to supporting those experiencing disadvantage and marginalisation, this strategy extends their work by ensuring compassion, justice, and inclusion remain at the heart of everything we do.

This strategy builds on our previous milestones, including the launch of our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2015 and the development of our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in 2019, this strategy sets the direction for the next phase of our DEI journey.

Our Priority Groups

Through consultation and data insights, we have identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, LGBTQIA+ communities, and people with disability as priority groups for focused action. While these groups are central to this strategy, our commitment extends to all, such as culturally and linguistically diverse individuals, carers, neurodiverse people, or those with intersecting identities. Our goal is to reflect and celebrate the diversity of the communities we serve while ensuring an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.

Acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of this land is central to our commitment. We are dedicated to advancing reconciliation, respecting cultural protocols, and addressing all forms of discrimination through a zero-tolerance approach.

A Shared Responsibility

Everyone at MercyCare has a role in bringing this strategy to life. Together, we will build on our strengths and address barriers to inclusion, creating a workplace where every individual feels empowered to bring their whole self to work. With this strategy as our guide, we aim to make meaningful progress toward a truly inclusive future, where our workforce reflects the rich diversity of the communities we serve.

Message from the CEO

We often talk about compassion and justice as being at the heart of who we are at MercyCare. But these values only carry weight when they're lived, not just spoken. That means creating a workplace where equity isn't assumed and inclusion isn't accidental, but ensuring our workplace is where these principles are built into how we lead, listen, and show up for one another.

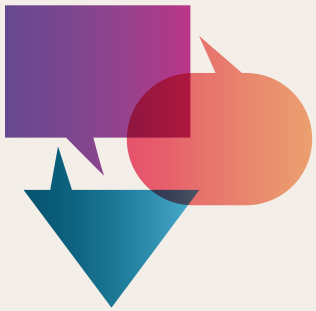
We're proud of the culture we've created – a culture shaped by respect, care, and a deep commitment to walking alongside people from all walks of life. We've made meaningful progress in diversity, equity and inclusion, and this strategy builds on that foundation.

This Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy offers an invitation to pause and reflect, but it is also a call to act. It asks us to look closely at our systems, and our assumptions. Who has access? Who feels safe? Whose voices are missing? And what we can do about that.

We know that systemic barriers don't disappear on their own.
So, this isn't just about ticking boxes, it's about ensuring MercyCare is a place where every person, no matter their background, ability, identity or experience has the opportunity to thrive.

Anthony Smith (He/Him)
Chief Executive Officer

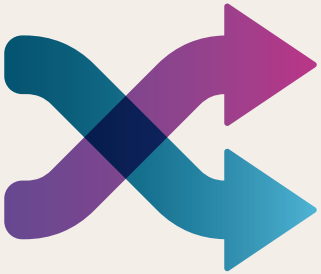
Our Understanding of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Intersectionality



Diversity means recognising and valuing the differences in people's backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. A diverse team reflects the community we serve and strengthens our work by bringing together a wide range of viewpoints.

Inclusion is about creating a workplace where everyone feels respected, valued, and safe to be themselves. It involves making space for all voices and supporting individuals to contribute and thrive.

Equity is about acknowledging that not everyone starts from the same place. It means providing fair access to opportunities and resources by actively addressing barriers to participation and success.



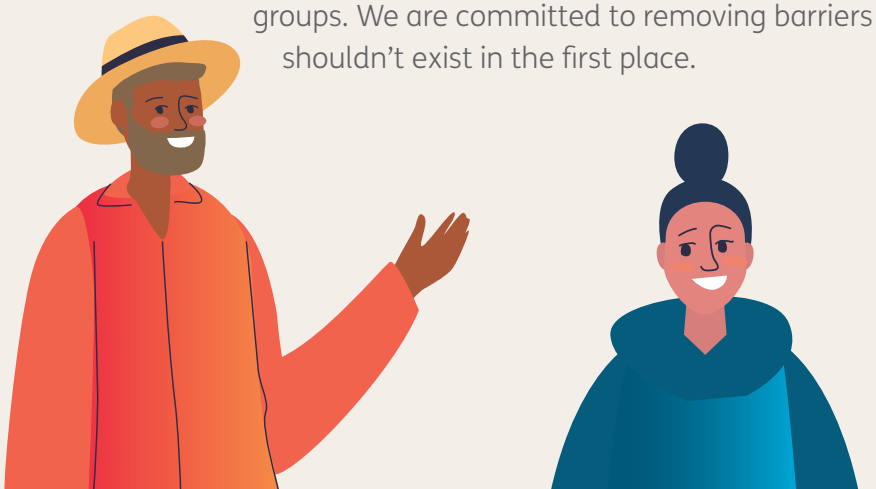
Intersectionality recognises that people's identities, such as race, gender, culture, sexuality, or ability, can overlap and influence how they experience inclusion or discrimination. By considering these intersections, we can better understand people's challenges and create fairer, more responsive solutions.

Our Vision and Commitment

At MercyCare, everyone should feel like they belong, no matter who they are or where they come from. No matter what.

Belonging isn't just a goal we have; it's a commitment we stand by. To us, this means constantly striving to create a safe and inclusive workplace, where people from diverse communities have the support they need to truly shine.

We acknowledge that not everyone starts from the same place. We know that systemic change is necessary to level a broken playing field, and we are dedicated to making that change happen. This includes people of all backgrounds, whether they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, the LGBTQIA+ community, people with disability, or other underrepresented groups. We are committed to removing barriers that shouldn't exist in the first place.



Our vision is to be a place where all differences are not only accepted but celebrated because we know they make us stronger. This was embodied by the Sisters of Mercy nearly 180 years ago, and it remains at the heart of MercyCare today. Our mission is to care about all people, without exception.

We believe that when people feel safe to voice what matters most to them, MercyCare becomes a better place to work and, in turn, a better provider of care. Whether we are supporting young children in early learning, walking alongside families and communities, or providing compassionate care to our aged care clients and residents, we are committed to ensuring a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

Sisters of Mercy - Founding Mothers

Our People

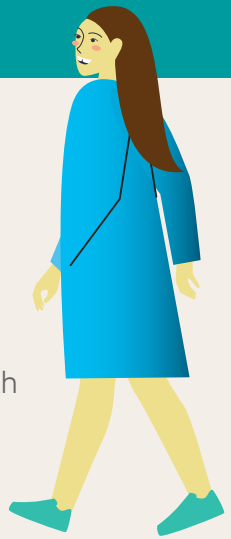
At MercyCare, we are committed to creating a workforce that reflects the communities we serve while building a culture where every employee feels valued, respected, and included.

We acknowledge that workforce data collected through self-disclosure at the time of employment provides a partial view of our diversity, and some aspects of identity, such as disability, cultural background, or LGBTQIA+ identity, may not always be fully captured.

Recognised as a Diversity Council Australia (DCA) Inclusive Employer (2024-2025), MercyCare continues to build on our strengths in building an inclusive workplace.

Recent engagement insights highlight:

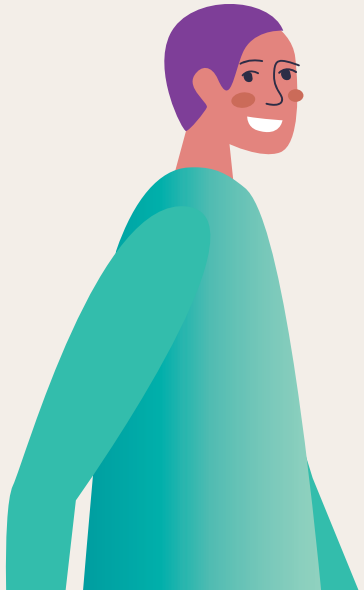
- A culture that encourages belonging, inclusion, and diverse perspectives.
- Employees feeling safe to be themselves at work and supported by their teams.
- Strong leadership commitment to embedding inclusive workplace practices.



While we acknowledge the limitations in our current workforce tracking, we are committed to strengthening representation by:

- Encouraging safe self-disclosure, ensuring employees feel supported in sharing demographic information.
- Enhancing workforce data collection, aligning our insights with the communities we serve.
- Continuing to embed inclusive practices, ensuring MercyCare remains a workplace where everyone can thrive.

Through these actions, we aim to evolve our workforce tracking and diversity insights, reinforcing our ongoing commitment to building an inclusive and representative workplace.



Key Domains, Outcomes, and Actions

Domain 1: Embedding Inclusion into Culture and Foundations

Outcome:

An organisation that embeds inclusive values into its policies, systems, and culture to ensure that everyone, regardless of background or identity, is valued, respected, and empowered to succeed.

Key Actions:

1. Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP):

MercyCare will update its Innovate RAP to ensure it aligns with best practices and meaningful reconciliation outcomes. This process will engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group, Boordiya Bidi, the Reconciliation Implementation Working Group, community partners, and key stakeholders to assess progress, identify improvements, and shape future commitments.

Desired Outcome:
Updated Innovate RAP launched by Q4 2025.

2. LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Roadmap:

Develop an LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Roadmap to support visibility, inclusion, and community for LGBTQIA+ employees, volunteers, students, and clients. This roadmap will outline key actions and commitments to creating a more inclusive environment.

Desired Outcome:
LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Roadmap launched by Q3 2025.

3. Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP):

Collaborate with employees, clients, community members with lived experience of disability, and advocacy groups to review and strengthen MercyCare's DAIP. The plan will aim to identify and remove systemic barriers, improve accessibility, and ensure an inclusive environment that supports people living with disability. This includes leveraging innovative technologies, such as AI-powered tools, to improve service accessibility, communication, and tailored support.

Desired Outcome:
DAIP launched by Q1 2026.

Key Domains, Outcomes, and Actions

4. DEI Policy Development and Employment Practice Review

Develop a DEI Policy and conduct a review of employment and organisational practices to ensure inclusivity and alignment with DEI best practices, with a focus on policies, recruitment, and employment documents.

Desired Outcome 1:
DEI Policy launched by Q4 2025.

Desired Outcome 2:
Policies and practices reviewed by Q3 2026.

5. Develop an Inclusive Language Guide:

In consultation with relevant stakeholders, create a guide to support respectful communication, covering terminology for gender, culture, disability, and other identities. This guide will serve as a reference for MercyCare people, promoting an inclusive and respectful workplace.

Desired Outcome:
Inclusive Language Guide developed by Q1 2027.

6. Continual Identification of DEI priorities

Continue to identify and report on emerging DEI priorities not originally captured in the strategy.

Desired Outcome:
Additional areas for action identified annually, with updates on any initiatives undertaken.

Key Domains, Outcomes, and Actions

Domain 2: Enabling a Diverse and Equitable Workforce

Outcome:

A workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve and ensures equitable access to development, leadership, and support so that all employees can thrive.

Key Actions:

1. Conduct Aboriginal Employment Self-Assessment and Improvement Plan

Use the NDS Aboriginal Employment Organisational Self-Assessment Tool to evaluate MercyCare's readiness to support and enhance Aboriginal employment. Insights gained will inform the review of the Innovate RAP.

Desired Outcome:
Complete initial readiness assessment by Q3 2025.

2. DEI Training Pathways

Strengthen MercyCare's existing DEI training pathways to ensure they remain relevant, engaging, and impactful. Expand the pathways to include targeted modules on neurodiversity, unconscious bias, anti-racism, and allyship.

Desired Outcome 1:
Anti-racism and allyship training developed and made available to all employees by Q1 2027.

Desired Outcome 2:
Unconscious bias training for leaders developed and implemented by Q4 2026.

Desired Outcome 3:
Neurodiversity awareness training developed and implemented by Q1 2027.

Desired Outcome 4:
Annual review of current DEI training for leaders conducted, with updates implemented as needed, starting Q1 2027.

Key Domains, Outcomes, and Actions

3. Disability Employment Growth

Develop accessible employment pathways and supportive practices to increase the representation and inclusion of people with disability within MercyCare's workforce.

Desired Outcome 1:
Ensure that employment practices focus on providing reasonable adjustments and support mechanisms by Q4 2026.

Desired Outcome 2:
Increase opportunities for confidential self-disclosure through improved communication on privacy and support by Q4 2026.

Desired Outcome 3:
Aim to increase the overall proportion of employees living with disability to 5% by Q2 2028, with progress reviewed annually.

4. Career Development for Underrepresented Groups:

Review current career development pathways, with a focus on supporting individuals from priority cohorts (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, LGBTQIA+ community, people with disability) and other underrepresented groups to advance into leadership roles.

Desired Outcome:
Establish baseline leadership representation by Q1 2026 and achieve a 10% increase in leadership roles filled by employees from priority cohorts and other underrepresented groups by Q2 2028.

Key Domains, Outcomes, and Actions

5. Supportive Work Practices:

We recognise that a truly inclusive workplace provides equitable access to supportive work arrangements that help employees balance work, personal commitments, and wellbeing. While not all roles have the same flexibility due to operational requirements, we are committed to strengthening work practices that enhance employee wellbeing and engagement, including flexible arrangements where feasible, leave policies that support diverse needs, and workplace adjustments for employees requiring additional support.

Desired Outcome 1:
Supportive workplace practices reviewed by Q4 2026.

Desired Outcome 2:
Implement any key measures that have been identified in the review by Q2 2027.

6. Harassment and Discrimination:

Review and enhance current reporting mechanisms to ensure incidents of discrimination or harassment are confidentially tracked, categorised and addressed. Introduce high-level trend reporting to help identify systemic issues and guide proactive improvements.

Desired Outcome 1:
Updated harassment and discrimination reporting system, with the ability to categorise and track discrimination and harassment incidents by Q1 2026.

Desired Outcome 2:
Bi-yearly high-level trend reports presented to the DEI Committee, starting Q3 2026, with actionable recommendations to address systemic barriers.

Key Domains, Outcomes, and Actions

Domain 3: Inclusive Practice and Community Connection

Outcome:

Demonstrate our dedication to achieving DEI goals by building inclusive practices and strengthening genuine relationships with the communities we serve.

Key Actions:

1. Transparency Through DEI Reporting

Publish updates on DEI progress, including workforce demographics, actions taken, and success stories.

Desired Outcome:
First DEI update published by Q3 2026.

2. Community Engagement and Partnerships:

Strengthen partnerships with Aboriginal organisations, LGBTQIA+ advocacy groups, and disability networks to ensure our services are inclusive and responsive to community needs. This includes forming targeted partnerships to support workforce development and employment pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Desired Outcome:
Establish at least two new partnerships for each focus area formed by Q3 2026.

3. Client and Community Feedback:

Review current feedback mechanisms to ensure that clients and service users can easily and safely share their experiences. This review will focus on improving accessibility, inclusivity, and responsiveness to ensure feedback channels reflect the diverse needs of the people we serve.

Desired Outcome:
Launch enhanced client and community feedback mechanisms by Q3 2026.

Key Domains, Outcomes, and Actions

4. Inclusion-Focused Feedback Channels

Strengthen existing feedback channels to include options specifically focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. These channels will allow employees, volunteers, and community members to share experiences or raise concerns relating to inclusion, accessibility, and cultural safety.

Desired Outcome:
Update feedback systems to incorporate DEI-specific categories and accessibility features by Q3 2026.

Measuring Our Success:
MercyCare will measure the impact of this strategy through:

- Action-Driven Outcomes – Monitoring progress against the specific outcomes outlined for each initiative.
- Employee Feedback – Gathering insights through regular Pulse Surveys and the external DCA Inclusion@Work Index (at least every three years) to assess inclusion, satisfaction, and experiences across the organisation.

DEI: A Shared Responsibility

At MercyCare, we recognise that creating an inclusive workplace is a responsibility shared by all. From senior leaders to frontline employees and volunteers, everyone plays a critical role in ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion are embedded in everything we do. Whether through learning, supporting others, participating in initiatives, or modelling inclusive behaviours, we all have the power to drive meaningful change.

Outlined below are the key roles that help drive our DEI Strategy to life:

Leadership and Accountability (Executive Leadership Team)

Our Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is responsible for ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion are integrated into MercyCare's operations. They provide strategic oversight, champion DEI initiatives, and are accountable for creating an environment where inclusive practices are prioritised at every level.

DEI Committee: Leading the Charge

The DEI Committee serves as the driving force behind MercyCare's DEI Strategy. Comprising a diverse group of representatives, the committee steers implementation, maintains a strong focus on our priority cohorts, and ensures that an intersectional lens is applied to all initiatives.

Collaborative Partnerships for Inclusion

- Boordiya Bidi
- Aboriginal Reference Group
- Reconciliation Implementation Working Group
- Rainbow Working Group (RWG)
- Disability Service Team

All MercyCare People

Every MercyCare employee, volunteer, and student has a part to play in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. Whether it's learning more, speaking up, supporting a colleague, or embracing inclusive behaviours in everyday actions, each of us contributes to making MercyCare a place where everyone feels safe, respected, and empowered to thrive.

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