



# Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging strategy

# Acknowledgement of Country

AFCA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and future – for they hold the songlines, the stories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of First Nations Australia.

This land is, was, and always will be traditional First Nations Country.

We also acknowledge and pay our respect to the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, including the Wurundjeri, Boon Wurrung, Wathaurong, Taungurung and Dja Dja Wurrung peoples of the Kulin nation and the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.



Artwork by Edwin Lee Mulligan  
*Ngalimba*, 2022

# Uluru Statement from the Heart

AFCA accepts the invitation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

The Uluru Statement is a gift, an invitation for all Australians to walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples towards a better future. It calls for recognition of the sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the opportunity for their voices to be heard.

We support Australia’s First Nations peoples in their call for a constitutionally enshrined First Nations Voice and Makarrata Commission.

We make this commitment through our Reconciliation actions and encourage our people and our community to do the same, based on the principles of Voice, Treaty and Truth.

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# Message from the Chief Ombudsman and Chief Executive Officer



I am delighted to introduce AFCA’s Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy and 2023-25 Action Plan.

To achieve our vision of being a world class ombudsman service, we need to ensure we have genuine inclusion and accessibility for all our employees and customers. Our organisation needs to represent, respect, and celebrate the diversity of the Australian community, including but not limited to diversity of gender, age, disability, race, socioeconomic status, thought and lived experience.

AFCA plays an important role in the community. A renewed commitment to diversity and inclusion will enable us to deliver better, fairer, more equitable and human-centred experiences for complainants and members.

We are a values-led organisation. Everything we do is underpinned by our People for Purpose culture, and our cultural quality ‘our passion for inclusion sets us apart’. While inclusion at AFCA is a source of strength, it is also an opportunity for improvement. We must continue to strive for a more inclusive culture and work environment, through concrete actions, to ensure everyone can participate, thrive, and feel that they belong.

Our vision for diversity, inclusion and belonging at AFCA is an organisation where we value different backgrounds and encourage distinct perspectives. We see and hear people for who they are; we feel safe, respected, and able to be our authentic selves. We use this approach to deliver better outcomes for the customers and communities we serve.

This strategy and 3-year action plan outline our key activities across four pillars of work: Inclusive Systems and Processes, Leadership Capability, Diverse Thinking Teams and Governance and Accountability. As you will see in the plan, we will improve the policies we have, how we recruit and promote people, and the messaging we send.

The senior leadership team and I are committed to implementing this plan, learning from all our employees and the community, so that together we can ensure AFCA is a place where everyone belongs.

**David Locke**  
Chief Ombudsman and Chief Executive Officer

# Message from the Deputy Chief Ombudsman



As the Executive Sponsor of this work, I’m proud to support AFCA’s Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging strategy and 2023-25 Action Plan.

Our people are at the heart of everything we do at AFCA. I am committed to understanding the work and action required to achieve genuine diversity at AFCA, where all our people are included, and feel like they belong.

This Strategy and Action Plan complements our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan, which affirms our commitment to reconciliation with First Nations peoples, our people, and our wider stakeholder network; and our Accessibility Strategy, which ensures we are listening to our diverse stakeholders and taking their expertise and insights into consideration, and continuously improving the accessibility of our service.

Central to the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging strategy is a deep understanding of the challenges that our employees and customers face, and we are committed to uncovering opportunities to strengthen our policies, systems, education, and leadership behaviours.

AFCA has made strides in fostering an inclusive workplace. We know from recent annual employee experience survey results that we are rated higher than the global average, and in general our people feel that they belong, but we recognise that we must challenge ourselves to improve and meet the changing needs of our employees, recruitment candidates, customers, and the wider community.

I am passionate about delivering fair, equitable, and timely outcomes for the customers and communities we serve, and I am confident that the diversity of thought, distinct perspectives and different backgrounds of our people enables this.

I look forward to joining the senior leadership team and all AFCA colleagues on this journey, and seeing this plan come to life.

**Dr June Smith**  
Deputy Chief Ombudsman



# AFCA's culture story

Our **People for Purpose culture** embraces our people and the people we serve: the Australian community, consumers and small business, and members. AFCA's cultural qualities complement our values. Our people have developed four cultural qualities – these are the behaviours to enable us to live our values and realise our purpose:

## Our values

**Fair and independent**

**Honest and respectful**

**Transparent and accountable**

**Proactive and customer focused**

## Our cultural qualities

Our approach  
is human-  
centred



Our teams are  
empowered and  
take ownership



Our passion  
for inclusion sets  
us apart



Our ideas  
move us  
forward



# Our definitions

## Diversity

At AFCA, we have a broad view of diversity that includes all the ways all people are different.

We extend this definition to go beneath what's visible to include all the deeper ways we are diverse including values, experiences, identities, perspectives, expertise, knowledge and ideas that make up AFCA. These differences come together to benefit all.

## Inclusion

Inclusion is the achievement of a work culture in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to AFCA's success.

## Belonging

Belonging is the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for employees.

Employees that feel as though they belong feel safe to speak up, supported, inspired, confident and empowered to do their best work and to learn and grow.



# Our vision for diversity, inclusion and belonging

At AFCA, we value different backgrounds and encourage distinct perspectives.

We see and hear people for who they are; we feel safe, respected, and able to be our authentic selves.

We use this approach to deliver better outcomes for the customers and communities we serve.

## Principles

To embed a culture of diversity, inclusion and belonging within AFCA we have developed five principles which have shaped the development of this strategy:

**1. Aligned to strategy**

Clear link to AFCA’s strategy and corporate plan and acknowledged as an enabler of our culture.

**2. Evidence based and data driven**

Actions are based on evidence from trusted sources, best practice, and reflective of the community.

**3. Incorporates the voice of the employee**

Actions are developed through listening and input from all AFCA employees, especially those with lived experience.

**4. Practical and impactful**

Actions are practical, measurable, and meaningful to our people.

**5. Collective responsibility, and clear accountability**

Our leaders are responsible for actively modelling inclusive behaviours.

Employees have individual and collective responsibility for diversity and inclusive behaviours, while clear accountability is embedded into each action.

### Contributions to our strategy

- The voice of AFCA employees
- External industry best practice
- Data from engagement surveys
- Employee Resource Groups



# Our people<sup>1</sup>



## Age of employees

**1.9%** are 18-25  
**26.6%** are 25-34  
**36.2%** are 35-44  
**20.6%** are 45-54  
**12.2%** are 55-61  
**2.5%** are 62+



**14%** of employees work part-time



**50%** of employees identify as being culturally or linguistically diverse



**23%** of employees speak English as a second language



**45%** of our leaders identify as female



**2%** of our leaders are non-binary



**1%** of employees identified as Aboriginal Australians

**0.5%** of employees identified as Torres Strait Islander peoples



**11%** of employees are people living with disability



**36%** of employees were born outside of Australia

**61%** of employees had one or both parents born outside Australia



**12%** of employees identified as being part of the LGBTQIA+ community



## Employees as carers

**34%** are carers for children  
**20%** are carers for elderly  
**9%** are carers for persons with a disability



## Religious practice/identities of employees

**29%** Christianity  
**6%** Hinduism  
**4%** Islam  
**3%** Other religions  
**2%** Buddhism  
**1%** Judaism



<sup>1</sup> Statistics are based on our employee engagement survey conducted in October 2023 survey, 960 respondents, representing 95% of all AFCA employees.



# Employee Resource Groups

**AFCA has five Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)** that act as centres of expertise and support our efforts in following best inclusion and belonging practices, raising awareness, creating change, promoting allyship, and connecting with various diverse communities across AFCA.

ERGs are employee-run and are sponsored by our senior executive. Well-functioning, purposeful ERGs help us ensure we stay competitive as an employer, inclusive as a workplace and well informed as an ombudsman service.

Our Employee Resource Groups are focused on the following groups:

- **LGBTQIA+**  
Sponsored by Chief Ombudsman and CEO David Locke
- **Disability**  
Sponsored by Chief Operating Officer Justin Untersteiner
- **Family and Carers**  
Sponsored by General Counsel Anna Campbell
- **Multicultural**  
Sponsored by Chief Advisor and Head of Government Relations Silvia Renda
- **The Women's Network**  
Sponsored by Deputy Chief Ombudsman Dr June Smith

## AFCA's Reconciliation Action Plan

AFCA was proud to launch our inaugural Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2023. The RAP outlines the actions that we will take as an organisation and individuals to work towards our vision for reconciliation.

This journey will take both professional and personal investment and commitment from all of us.

An internal working group has been established to deliver our commitments to reconciliation sponsored by Deputy Chief Ombudsman Dr June Smith.



# Our focus areas and commitments

Using input from AFCA employees across the organisation, our strategy focuses on four focus areas, with specific commitments under each one.



## Ambitious vision with strong governance and accountability

- Develop living vision and strategy for diversity, inclusion and belonging
- Drive accountability through organisational goals and metrics
- Demonstrate commitment through big and bold signals



## Create inclusive systems and process

- Amplify inclusion of diverse talent through all stages of the employee lifecycle
- Review and update our systems and processes to align with our vision and strategy
- Continue to evolve our strategy to ensure best practice including partnering with external experts



## Embed inclusive leadership capability

- Set clear expectations of leaders
- Develop inclusive leadership capability at all levels
- Integrate inclusive behaviours in AFCA leadership development programs



## Build diverse thinking teams

- Develop and roll out supportive team toolkits
- Continually provide training to help our people service AFCA's diverse consumers and members
- Share stories of the impact of diverse thinking teams



# Recognition of partnerships, memberships and relationships

AFCA has meaningful partnerships and relationships with the following organisations, who provide cutting-edge Australian research, comprehensive resources, learning solutions, accreditation opportunities and practical tools to inform our strategies.





## Contact us

Australian Financial  
Complaints Authority

**1800 931 678** (Free call)  
(9 am to 5 pm from Monday to Friday)

**(03) 9613 6399** (Fax)

**info@afca.org.au** (Email)

**afca.org.au/complaints** (Complaint form)

GPO Box 3 Melbourne VIC 3001

[www.afca.org.au](http://www.afca.org.au)