

Diversity & Inclusion Policy (including Equal Opportunity Statement)



Purpose

This policy sets out Affords commitment to diversity and inclusion in the workplace at all levels and provides a framework to achieve Affords diversity objectives.

We are committed to creating and ensuring a diverse work environment in which everyone is treated fairly, with respect and where everyone feels responsible for the reputation and performance of Afford, and we represent, support and reflect the rich diversity of the communities we serve. A commitment to an inclusive and diverse workforce reflects the values and purpose of Afford.

Diversity refers to characteristics that make individuals different from each other. Diversity encompasses differences in background, qualifications, experiences, and differences in approach and viewpoints. It includes factors such as gender, age, disability, ethnicity, marital or family status, mental health status, criminal history, religious or cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy and language, and other areas of potential difference.

Inclusion occurs when the unique diversities that people bring are valued. Individuals feel respected, safe and connected, and have opportunities to progress and contribute to organisational success. An inclusive environment ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities for all. Afford supports and facilitates an inclusive environment that embraces all that makes us different and recognises the benefits that these differences make to each employee and the organisation.

Scope

This policy applies to all Directors, Board Committee members, officers, employees, volunteers, students, contractors, consultants, suppliers and other persons that act on behalf of Afford such as agencies or brokers.

Definitions

Director – Any person who is a Director of the Board of Afford

Board Committee member – Any person who a Director of the Board of Afford and a member of a Board Committee and any person who attends a Board Committee as a subject matter expert

CEO means Chief Executive Officer

Executive Director means Chief Operations Officer (COO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Executive Director Consumer Experience and Safeguarding, Executive Director People and Organisational Development, Executive Director Strategy and Growth

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Client - People who use Afford services, with the exception of Supported Employees

Employees - People who work for Afford, whether paid or unpaid

Volunteer – a person who works for Afford in an unpaid capacity

Students – a person who is undertaking a placement at Afford through a formal arrangement with an educational institution

Contractor – a person who is engaged by Afford to work on a short term contract, to provide a body of work, engaged through a labour hire company to fill vacant shifts

Our Organisation – description of ‘the business’ or ‘the company’

Services - the various supports we provide, irrespective of what type they are

Policy Statements

1. Afford will actively seek to represent, support and reflect the rich diversity of the communities we serve, the clients we support, and our employees.
2. Afford will take an active role in promoting diversity and inclusion as a provider of disability services
3. Employees and clients can bring their unique, authentic selves and feel safe, secure and supported at Afford.
4. We value consultation and diverse voices to inform, influence and enhance our decision making to improve the quality of our services and the experience of our employees
5. Diversity can broaden the pool for recruitment of high quality employees, enhance employee retention, improve Afford's brand and reputation, and foster a closer connection with and better understanding of our clients. It is important that Afford is able to attract, retain and motivate employees from the widest possible pool of talent. To this end, we:
 - a. Take a human rights based approach to decision making and aim to develop and promote a workforce based on inclusion where individuals, irrespective of individuals gender, age, disability, ethnicity, marital or family status, mental health status, criminal history, religious or cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy and language, are respected, supported and provided with appropriate opportunities.
 - b. Aim for our Board and Management composition to reflect the diversity of our staff, clients, and communities in which we work.
 - c. Recognise the differing needs at different stages of life, e.g., study, family responsibilities and retirement. Therefore, we endeavour to support and accommodate individual changing life needs so that our employees reach their full potential.

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- d. Actively seek to create career and employment pathways, leadership training opportunities, and diverse leadership representation for employees in underrepresented groups.
6. Afford will actively seek to recruit and retain a diverse workforce as part of our Recruitment and Selection Policies and Procedures, by proactively sourcing candidates from diverse and inclusive backgrounds as well as identifying qualities and backgrounds in teams that may be underrepresented.
7. We will include an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statement in all our job advertisements and have specific strategies and measures aimed at attracting candidates with particular attributes underrepresented within the Afford workforce. All staff involved in the recruitment, selection and development of staff must undertake these duties in a way that supports inclusion and equal opportunity as outlined in this policy.
8. Afford staff must ensure recruitment and selection processes across all levels of Afford are structured so that a diverse range of candidates are sourced and considered. This includes understanding how institutional barriers and unconscious bias affect people's employment opportunities, making the recruitment process accessible to all candidates by advertising positions both broadly and in specific publications, using professional recruitment services where required, and providing guidance on its recruitment processes.
9. Afford will undertake reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process, role specifications and workplaces, wherever practicable, to facilitate recruitment and selection of diverse candidates. This includes, but is not limited to, adjustments to work environment, the scope and hours of available roles, role types themselves, and provision of adaptive equipment and technology.
10. Afford's goal is to create a safe and respectful environment. We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, vilification and victimisation including where it is based on religious, political, or personal views. All employees are required to follow the Bullying and Harassment Policy at all times.
11. Afford is committed to gender diversity and the fundamental principle that gender identification is not a barrier to participate in our workforce, management, Executive or Senior Leadership teams, and our Board.
12. Afford is committed to an inclusive workplace that embraces and promotes diversity as part of our culture and leading inclusive and accessible services. This involves supportive and inclusive policies and practices within our business. Initiatives and areas of focus include:

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- a. Understand the visible and invisible barriers to access, inclusion and belonging in measurable ways.
- b. Measurement of key diversity indicators in line with best practice including but not limited to, culturally and linguistically diverse, gender identification, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, and disability
- c. Grow the cultural awareness of our employees through induction, training and other programs promoting cultural awareness and diversity
- d. Affords Reconciliation Plan
- e. Diversity action groups formed and functional. We will hear the voice of our employees and clients and learn from experts to regularly update our thinking and practice.
- f. Share opportunities, experiences and expertise in the disability sector and community to accelerate and grow inclusion for people living with disability.
- g. Establish, growth and maintain partnerships and relationships with strategic alliances to promote the interests of culturally and linguistically diverse, gender diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people living with disability.
- h. Develop thought leadership and advocacy initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion internally and externally.

13. The Board will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy, including in relation Board diversity.

Breach of Policy

Director or Board Committee member breaches will be dealt with by the Board Chair.

Employee breaches of this policy will be dealt with by the CEO.

Responsibilities

All Directors and Board Committee members must adhere to this policy.

The Board Chair must ensure Directors and Board Committee members understand and adhere to this policy and that the Board skills and experience matrix reflects the organisations policy positions.

The CEO is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and up to date, and the Executive Director People and Organisational Development will monitor the policy for effectiveness and compliance.

Where a position or organisational unit title changes or is no longer the title that appears in a policy document, and where a position and/or deliberative body named in the policy approval pathway has changed, the nearest appropriate equivalent body or position will have the same role and/or responsibility until that policy is updated.

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Exceptions

Any exception granted will require approval confirmed in writing via email by the CEO.

Policy Owner

The owner of this policy is the Board.

Policy Approval

This policy was approved by [the Board](#).