

ACHIEVING PROGRESS BEYOND COMPLIANCE: A STRATEGIC DEI ROADMAP



EMBEDDED ADVISOR – GOVERNANCE, DEI AND ENTERPRISE CHANGE

BACKGROUND

Our client sought an enterprise-grade approach to equity and inclusion, anchored in governance, measurable targets, and leader accountability.

Sun North Consulting was engaged to design a 5-year DEI strategy and execute a suite of enterprise initiatives spanning board governance, recruitment, policy, reporting, and workforce engagement.

APPROACH

Governance-led, evidence-based and co-designed with executives, HR, ERG leaders, and frontline stakeholders. Work was delivered through structured workstreams with defined owners, milestones, and success measures.

WORKSTREAMS AND DELIVERABLES

1) Strategy, Governance and Accountability

- Designed a 5-Year DEI Strategy and detailed, resourced Action Plan; endorsed at Executive and Board levels.
- Authored an organisation-wide Accountability Map (Board → CEO → ELT → Function leads → ERGs) with clear owners, decision rights and reporting cadence.
- Updated D&I Steering Committee Terms of Reference to sharpen mandate, KPIs, risk oversight and decision velocity.
- Embedded DEI controls into the enterprise risk register (risk statements, causes, controls, and assurance activities).

2) Leadership and Board

- Board Gender Strategy drafted and endorsed, with pathways for appointments, pipelines, and succession planning.
- Quarterly Board and ELT reporting pack established: targets, leading/lagging indicators, risks, mitigations, and narrative.

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WORKSTREAMS AND DELIVERABLES CONT.

3) Targets, Metrics, Reporting

- Set company-wide gender targets (workforce, leadership bands, candidate slates) with time-bound milestones.
- Implemented a single source of truth for DEI data (definitions, taxonomies, data quality checks).
- Established monthly ELT dashboards and quarterly Board updates.
- Compliance improvements attributable to this engagement:
 - Closed process and data gaps tied to reporting accuracy and timeliness.
 - Introduced gender pay equity analysis rhythms and remediation governance.
 - Embedded target-tracking and narrative reporting aligned to WGEA requirements.
 - Uplifted manager accountability via KPIs and performance conversations.

3) Recruitment, Selection and Talent Systems

- Overhauled recruitment methodology and tools (role design, inclusive adverts, structured interviews, assessment guides).
- Implemented shortlisting commitments and diverse panels for specified role bands.
- Introduced interviewer accreditation and decision logs to reduce bias and improve defensibility.
- Built early-career and internal pipeline mechanisms (intern/grad, return-to-work, non-traditional pathways).

5) Policy and Benefits (Leave, Flex, Accessibility)

- Reviewed and recommended updates to leave policies (parental, carers, family & domestic violence, cultural/ceremonial, compassionate).
- Codified flexible work principles and request/approval pathways.
- Standardised reasonable adjustments guidance and escalation.



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WORKSTREAMS AND DELIVERABLES CONT.

6) Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

- Designed the ERG operating framework: charters, leadership roles, sponsor model, budgets, and reporting.
- Established measurement (participation, initiatives delivered, outcomes, enterprise linkages).

7) Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Employment and Development

- Drafted an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development strategy (pathways, mentoring, progression, measurement).
- Aligned actions with broader DEI and talent rhythms to avoid siloed effort.

8) Change, Communication and Backlash Management

- Created plain-language resources for leaders and employees to explain the “why”, address myths, and manage resistance.
- Delivered leader toolkits, comms calendars, and Q&A packs to support consistent, confident messaging.
- Set up feedback loops (listening channels, pulse items) to track sentiment and adapt delivery.

9) Stakeholder Engagement & Capability Uplift

- Ran targeted exec and senior leader engagements, decision clinics, and alignment sessions.
- Facilitated capability workshops (inclusive leadership, bias interruption, accountable hiring).
- Coached workstream owners to ensure handover and continuity post-engagement.



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THE OUTCOMES



- Board-endorsed 5-Year DEI Strategy with resourced action plan and clear governance.



- Enterprise targets operationalised (workforce, leadership, slates), with transparent dashboards and regular forums.



- Recruitment and shortlisting commitments embedded; improved defensibility and fairness in hiring decisions.



- ERG framework established, enabling scaled employee leadership and clearer impact reporting.



- Policy modernisation delivered (leave, flex, accessibility), strengthening inclusion and wellbeing.



- Accountability uplift: improved data integrity, clearer narratives, pay-equity rhythms and accountability, directly attributable to this work.



- Leaders equipped with toolkits and language to explain initiatives, reduce backlash and build buy-in.



- Sustained operating rhythm (monthly ELT / quarterly Board) ensures momentum and oversight beyond project close.



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