

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy

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Project manager:	Tony Wheeler, Roshni Sharma
Purpose	To commit to best-practice performance with regards to diversity, equity and inclusion for GCA through eradicating discrimination, bias, and exclusion, and fostering a vibrant, inclusive culture within our organisation and its services and initiatives for the Australian geospatial community.

Document History and Status

Revision	Date issued	Reviewed by	Approved by	Date approved	Revision type
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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Geospatial Council of Australia (GCA) is dedicated to embodying, modelling and encouraging the highest standards of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices within Australia's geospatial community. This policy outlines GCA's commitment to DEI best practices, both internally with staff and externally with the large number of volunteer professional members, comprising of individuals businesses, not-for-profits, government entities, universities and training organisations.

We also highlight the priorities and values that the organisation commits to, which are foundational to allowing us to be a diverse, inclusive, innovative and psychologically safe presence in the Australian geospatial industry.

Our Strategic Priorities are to:

- Deliver **valued** member services for organisations and individuals, while remaining a strong, growing, and sustainable organisation
- Advocate for our members through considered and deliberate representation by ensuring our studies, white papers, and policy development are **impactful**
- Operate with transparency, demonstrating **strong leadership and governance**
- Develop and sustain **strategic** and enduring **partnerships** and collaborations both nationally and internationally
- Build **industry recognition** across all levels of government, other sectors of the economy, and the wider community

Our Values are:

- **We do things well** - we always act with integrity and strive to deliver outcomes of a high standard while caring for our members and the whole community.
- **We are inclusive** - we collaborate respectfully and diligently to represent all our members in an inclusive environment, embracing all perspectives, to make a positive impact.
- **We are passionate** - we celebrate achievements, exceptional outcomes and create impact for our members and in turn the geospatial industry.
- **We aim high** - we stay focused on outcomes to continuously improve opportunities for the geospatial industry so that we can grow together.

In line with our stated commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, The Geospatial Council of Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians of the country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, skies and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures; and to elders past and present and emerging, and strive to embed this respect into all that we do.

1.2 Policy Statement

GCA highlights the priorities and values that the organisation commits to, which are foundational to allowing us to be a diverse, inclusive, innovative and psychologically safe presence in the Australian geospatial industry.

This policy affirms our dedication to eradicating discrimination, bias, and exclusion, and fostering a vibrant, inclusive culture within our organisation and its services and initiatives for the Australian geospatial community.

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1.3 Business case for DEI for GCA & alignment with GCA Strategy

GCA recognises that fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive geospatial community is pivotal to advancing our purpose - to sustain a vital, diverse and thriving geospatial community for the benefit of the nation. We acknowledge that embracing differences and promoting equal opportunities enhances creativity, collaboration, and effectiveness. Indeed, one of our core values is that we are inclusive - we collaborate respectfully and diligently to represent all our members in an inclusive environment, embracing all perspectives, to make a positive impact.

We recognise that it is only through creating a diverse, equitable and inclusive foundation that we will be able to achieve our vision. An engaged and satisfied membership where there are recognised and budding thought leaders who inspire can only be created when there is room for diverse thought among people from diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities. We must also provide an environment in which these people can be and feel to be confident, accepted, celebrated and accessible. It is through these actions that we will foster the future of our sector to be viable, relevant and thriving, with successful collaborations grounded in meaningful and creative collaborations that create real impact at scale across both time and space.

1.3 Objectives

This policy aims to:

1. Cultivate a diverse membership base, active volunteer groups, staff body and leadership team by proactively welcoming and facilitating ongoing equity for individuals from various backgrounds, experiences and identities across both visible and invisible aspects of diversity.
2. Ensure equitable participation in GCA events and initiatives by dismantling barriers that hinder equal engagement and representation.
3. Create an inclusive environment where every member, including volunteers, feels valued, empowered, and encouraged to actively gain value from their membership in ways that work for them.
4. Promote continuous learning and awareness around unconscious biases, microaggressions, and DEI topics within the geospatial community.

Through aligning to this policy, GCA will enhance its ability to meet its key strategic priorities:

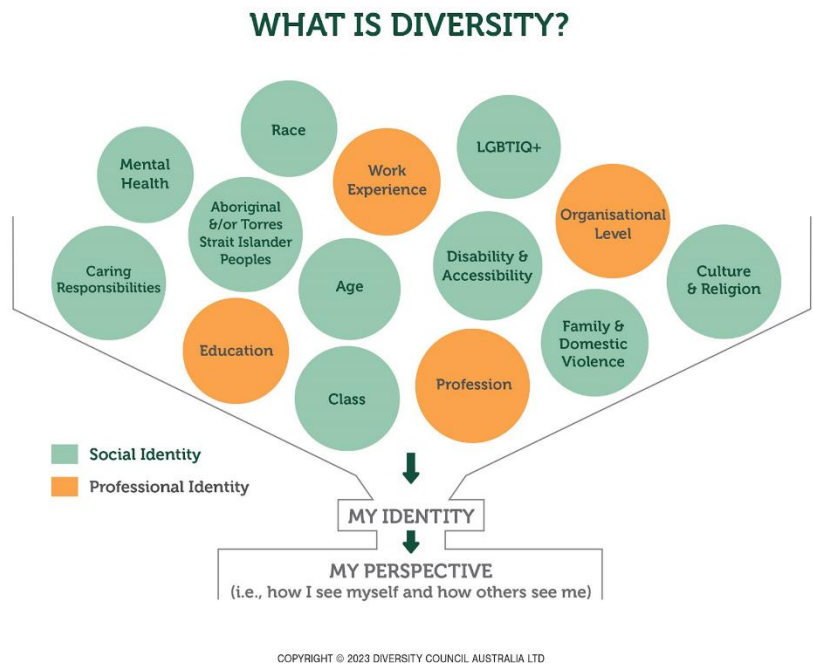
- Increase the profile of geospatial-related occupations to attract and retain talent
- Increase investment into, and the recognition of, the geospatial ecosystem to provide global best practice technology and services across the economy; and
- Strengthen the voice of the geospatial ecosystem across whole of government, industry, and communities throughout Australia and internationally.

3. Definitions

3.1 Diversity and intersectionality

GCA subscribes to the definitions of diversity and inclusion from the Diversity Council of Australia (2017), such that **diversity** refers to the mix of people in a group (such as an organisation or industry) - that is, all the differences between people in how they identify in relation to their:

- SOCIAL IDENTITY e.g., Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, gender, caring responsibilities, LGBTIQ+ status, culture or faith.
- PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY e.g., profession, education, organisational level, location.



These aspects come together in a unique way for each individual and shape the way they view and perceive their world and workplace. This definition is IDENTITY-BASED, as it recognises that the starting point should be how each of us identifies ourselves rather than just how others categorise or label us. This diversity definition also takes into account multiple INTERSECTING diversity dimensions. A person’s identity is often influenced by multiple dimensions. For each individual, these different dimensions come together or ‘intersect’ to form their particular identity. For example, an individual may not just identify as a woman, but also someone with a trans history who comes from a culturally diverse background.

3.2 Inclusion

Inclusion refers to supporting the mix of people in an organisation to work together to improve performance and wellbeing. Inclusion in an organisation or industry is achieved when a diverse range of people (e.g. ages, cultural backgrounds, genders, perspectives) feel that they are:

- RESPECTED for who they are and able to be themselves;
- CONNECTED to their colleagues and feel they belong;
- CONTRIBUTING their perspectives and talents to the workplace; and
- PROGRESSING in their career at work (i.e. have equal access to opportunities and resources)



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3.1 Equity

GCA subscribes to CultureAmp's definition of **equity**. When everyone is treated equally, they are treated the same - but when everyone is treated equitably, unique individual needs are taken into account. In a diverse group (such as a workplace or industry), differences exist, and people require support in different ways. Equity asks us to acknowledge that everyone has different needs, experiences, and opportunities. Equitable design tries to give people what they need as individuals. A focus on equity helps to uphold diversity and inclusion-related goals and actions through the design of our systems and processes. Organisations and industries must examine their diversity and inclusion efforts to design and implement them in an equitable manner.

4. Implementation

4.1 Leadership Commitment

GCA's leadership, at both the Board and CEO level, will champion DEI practices by integrating them into strategic planning and decision-making as well as proactively role modelling inclusive practices, thinking and behaviours.

4.2 Inclusive Volunteer Engagement across Areas of Practice, Special Interest Groups, Functional Committees, and States and Territories

GCA will emphasise the importance of diversity (both visible and invisible), seeking to involve individuals with varied backgrounds and perspectives in committees across Areas of Practice, Special Interest Groups, Functional Committees, and States and Territories.

GCA will foster an environment where volunteers are actively encouraged to share their perspectives and ideas, ensuring their voices are heard and valued. Volunteer roles and responsibilities will be structured to be accessible and flexible, accommodating diverse schedules and abilities.

4.3 Awareness of Bias and Privilege in Policy and Advocacy

GCA recognises that unconscious biases and privilege often inadvertently shape policies and advocacy initiatives, potentially excluding certain voices or perspectives within the geospatial sector and its stakeholders. We are committed to working to ensure that our consultation for advocacy and development of policy are inclusive and representative of the diverse range of voices within the geospatial sector, not just those that are the loudest or find it easiest to speak with us. We are also committed to recognising and mitigating biases in decision-making processes. By promoting awareness of biases and privilege, and integrating this understanding into policy and advocacy work, GCA aims to create a more equitable and inclusive environment for all members of the geospatial community. This, in turn, enhances the effectiveness and impact of its initiatives.

4.4 Advancing the Workforce with a Diverse Mindset

Where relevant, GCA will offer accessible DEI resources for both staff and volunteers, enhancing awareness and understanding of biases, inclusive communication, and respectful behaviour. For example, GCA provides Judges for the Geospatial Excellence Awards with a Judges Pack inclusive of This pack includes information addressing unconscious bias in the award judging process, along with valuable tips to heighten awareness and minimise its impact during the judging phase.

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Resources and tools will be provided to support staff and volunteers in creating inclusive spaces within their respective roles. For example, GCA will work towards providing improved accessibility within its events in a tiered system, over time facilitating Auslan interpretation at international- and national-level events and creating an accessible website.

4.5 Proactively Promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Events, Awards and Recognition, and GCA News

GCA will acknowledge and celebrate the valuable contributions of all volunteers, ensuring recognition is equitable and reflects the diverse range of expertise and efforts.

GCA will work to ensure that all opportunities, resources, information, and communications are accessible to volunteers with different abilities.

GCA will work to optimise virtual platforms and communication channels to facilitate open dialogue and engagement, recognising that volunteers may be located across diverse geographical regions, particularly rural areas.

GCA recognises that ‘you can’t be what you can’t see’ and is committed to taking a proactive role in showcasing the geospatial sector’s diverse and inclusive workforce through its communications and events. GCA will work to proactively approach female and non-binary speakers and other diverse sections of the community, acknowledging the established fact that women are less likely to put themselves forward than men for opportunities for career progression, visibility, etc. The reality is that there are less people from underrepresented groups in mid-tier and higher positions within the sector because of systemic structures that have historically limited access and opportunity. GCA is therefore committed to building a pipeline of diverse speakers and role models. We understand that trade-offs need to be built into our strategy to source diverse speakers and role models, including creating processes to proactively source and support visibility opportunities for individuals who, as a result of systemic bias, may not traditionally or otherwise have access to these platforms. Within this, GCA recognises the importance of showcasing speakers and panel members at events in a meritorious manner, whilst also recognising that there are systemic biases within society at large which mean that there might be other capable and intelligent people who do not have equitable access to these opportunities for visibility. Thus, GCA is committed to working to ensure greater diversity and inclusion within the geospatial sector through equity, created through robust and inclusive processes and systems that facilitate a levelling of the playing field through deconstructing these societal systemic biases which create inequity.

4.6 Consciously Ensuring Certification and Acknowledging Professional Expertise Equitably

With regards to training and development, GCA focuses on competency-based assessment of expertise. GCA recognise the importance of merit within professional development whilst recognising that alongside this, there are systemic societal unconscious biases which prevent capable and intelligent people who are part of minority groups to access this merit as equitably as other members of society. Thus, GCA is committed to working to ensure greater diversity and inclusion within the geospatial sector through equity, created through robust and inclusive processes and systems that facilitate a levelling of the playing field through deconstructing these societal systemic biases which create inequity. For example, GCA will work with subject matter experts on certification panels to reduce bias within assessments and facilitate greater equity

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through equitable assessment of skills development and timing, taking into consideration aspects including but not limited to not penalising for career gaps for parental leave or caring responsibilities, etc. GCA will also work towards consciously ensuring recognition of professional expertise equitably inclusive of fellowships and honorary fellows.

GCA is committed to equal opportunity in our certifications and facilitation of professional development opportunities. We understand that our members and stakeholders are increasingly encompassing a diverse array of identities, experiences, and perspectives. Therefore, it is imperative that we create a culture that values and celebrates this diversity, ensuring that everyone feels respected, included, and empowered to take part in our offerings around certification and professional development. Through strategic initiatives such as advocating for equitable policies and practices within our industry, promoting representation and participation from underrepresented groups, facilitating education and awareness programs, and fostering partnerships with organisations committed to DEI, we endeavour to cultivate an environment where all individuals have equal opportunity to thrive and succeed. By embracing DEI, we not only strengthen our organisation but also drive positive change within our industry and beyond, advancing social justice and equity for all.

4.7 GCA DE&I Knowledge Hub

GCA understands that part of its role with regards to diversity, equity and inclusion is to support education and awareness-raising for members about what diversity, equity and inclusion are and how they emerge in the workplace and in the industry (such as unconscious bias, etc).

Acknowledging that there are many established professional organisations available (such as Diversity Council of Australia) and geospatial-focused networks (such as the Space, Spatial and Surveying Diversity Leadership Network), we are not seeking to compete with these, instead encouraging ways to collaborate for the benefit of our members.

Within this spirit, GCA will establish the GCA DE&I Knowledge Hub, a virtual platform available for GCA individual and organisational members to access to assist in learning about and implementing DEI-supportive practices, processes and behaviours within their own groups and organisations. The Knowledge Hub will include a combination of material generated by GCA, outcomes of the Inclusion@Work diversity and inclusion surveys run in 2021 and 2024 (when complete) and their recommendations, as well as collaborative links to resources available from other associations and networks.

4.8 Reputational, brand and aligned messaging to build and strengthen through the use of diversity

GCA underscores the critical role of diversity in shaping its brand identity and reputation. We acknowledge that diversity is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic asset that enhances innovation, creativity, and problem-solving within the geospatial sector. Therefore, we are committed to leveraging diversity as a cornerstone of its brand messaging and reputation-building efforts. This involves highlighting and celebrating the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of its members, volunteers, and stakeholders across communication channels, events, etc. By showcasing the richness and breadth of diversity within the geospatial community, GCA aims to strengthen its brand identity as an inclusive and forward-thinking organisation at the forefront of industry innovation.

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Moreover, GCA recognises the importance of proactively addressing potential challenges or criticisms related to diversity and inclusion in its initiatives or communications. This includes developing communication guidelines and protocols to guide responses to public comments or inquiries regarding diversity initiatives or representation, led by the CEO with regular dialogue with the board. GCA will strive to ensure that its messaging emphasises positive narratives and opportunities for growth and advancement within the geospatial sector, thereby inspiring greater participation and engagement from diverse communities. Through strategic and aligned messaging efforts that prioritise diversity and inclusion, GCA aims to build a stronger and more resilient brand identity that resonates with stakeholders and reinforces its commitment to fostering an equitable and inclusive geospatial community.

7. Key Outcomes

GCA will report on its diversity, equity and inclusion performance each year within its Annual Report in a dedicated Diversity Dashboard section. This will include (but is not limited to) diversity, equity and inclusion metrics from annual member survey, member statistics, events statistics, and other sections as deemed relevant.

8. Review and Evolution

To remain effective, this policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and refined by the GCA Board in response to the evolving needs of the organisation and the geospatial community.

GCA will conduct annual assessments of DEI initiatives and tracking key metrics related to diversity, equity and inclusion. This will be used to oversee progress and assessing the need for adjustments.

9. Conclusion

By adhering to DEI best practices, GCA endeavours to become a role model for diversity, equity and inclusion, demonstrating that a small team and a diverse volunteer membership can work harmoniously to cultivate innovation, collaboration, and excellence. Through this policy, we reaffirm our dedication to fostering and sustaining a vital, diverse and thriving geospatial community for the benefit of the nation.