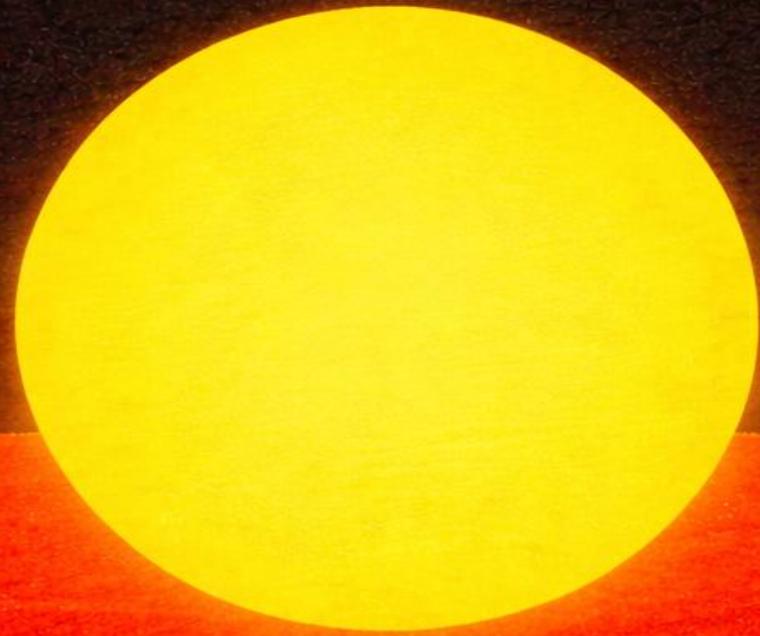


I acknowledge and give my genuine respect to the enduring strength and vitality of First Nations culture and their connection to Country, to each other, and to the rich tapestry of traditions that define Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



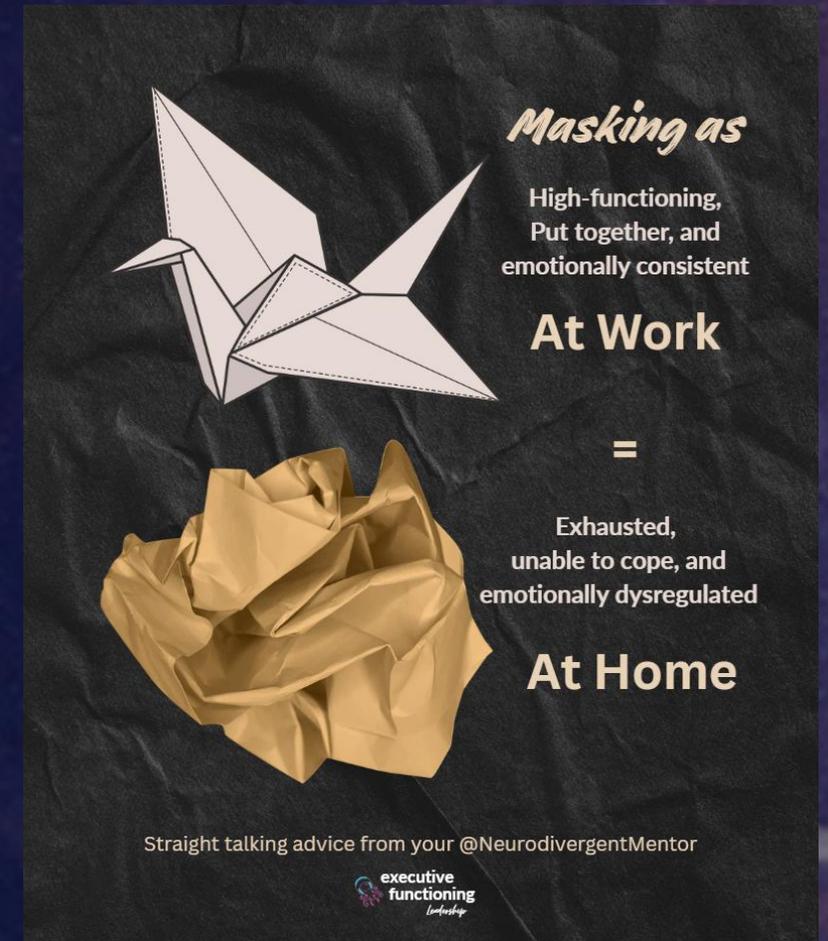
I give my respect to Elders past, present, and emerging

Neuroinclusion Capability Framework (NICF)TM

**BUILDING AUSTRALIA'S MOST
CAPABLE, INNOVATIVE, AND
NEUROINCLUSIVE PUBLIC SERVICE**

The importance of Neurodiversity conversations

- All teams and all organisations are neurodiverse, so all teams and leaders need to know about neurodiversity, and how to lead and operate in neuroinclusive ways
- The ABS estimates 1 in 8 people in Australia are neurodivergent and around 12% of Australian employees are neurodivergent. These figures are low due to fears around disclosure
- In Australia, many neurodivergent diagnoses fall under the protection of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)
- Neurodivergent people are often overrepresented in workplace performance management and bullying statistics (APS Census)
- Hearing positive neurodiversity conversations in the workplace can significantly increase sense of connection and safety for neurodivergent individuals



APS Census Results 2023- 2025

Do you consider yourself to be neurodivergent?

	2023	2024	2025
Yes	8%	9%	11%
No	81%	72%	72%
Maybe	11%	9%	11%
What is ND?	NA	10%	6%

SvA	2025
Yes	9%
No	71%
Maybe	10%
What is ND?	10%

Year	Neurodivergent (ND) Staff (%)	Neurodivergent (ND) Staff (#)	Discrimination – All Staff (%)	Discrimination – ND (%)	Bullying/ Harassment – All Staff (%)	Bullying/ Harassment – ND (%)
2023	10.59%	89	11%	31%	14%	19%
2024	9.78%	83	10%	35%	18%	38%
2025	13.91%	116	9%	18%	11%	20%

Data is real but adjusted and de-identified to remain anonymous and agency-agnostic

Neuroinclusion: the practical distinction

How work is designed and led

Focuses on reducing unnecessary cognitive, sensory and relational barriers

Enables people to perform without needing exceptional adjustments or disclosure

The Numbers

Line manager - 42% of neuroinclusion experience & psych safety 29%

Inclusive teams 9.5x more innovative, 8.5x more likely to work effectively & 4x more likely to give excellent customer service

98% retention rate where neuroinclusive practices implemented

The Reality

Traditional workplace design creates unnecessary barriers

Exceptional talent leaving or never entering public service

Standardised approach doesn't optimise performance

High attrition in key capability areas

The Opportunity

Cognitive diversity drives innovation and problem-solving

Neurodivergent strengths match critical APS capability needs

Evidence-based practices

Early adopters identifying competitive advantages

Cost of Inaction

Without a deliberate, capability-based approach to neuroinclusion, APS agencies are likely to **continue investing in leadership development, digital capability and inclusion initiatives that deliver inconsistent or diminishing returns.**

Practical risks include:

- ★ ongoing loss of skilled talent
- ★ underutilisation of existing workforce capability
- ★ rising psychosocial risk and burnout
- ★ ongoing friction in multidisciplinary delivery

Over time, this contributes to higher recruitment and onboarding costs, slower time-to-competence, reduced adaptability to change, and increased exposure to performance management challenges and complaints, particularly in roles critical to digital transformation.

Neuroinclusion Capability Framework (NICF)TM

A structured, evidence-based capability framework, focused on leadership behaviours, work design and system conditions. Treats neuroinclusion as a workforce capability, not a policy or inclusion issue. The NICF helps to:

- ★ Attract exceptional talent
- ★ Retain high-performing diverse teams
- ★ Optimise individual and organisational performance
- ★ Innovate through cognitive diversity

The NICF works across diverse government contexts - from highly specialised technical roles to large-scale service delivery.

NICF Structure: Three levels of accountability

Leading Self

Everyday practices that enable individuals to manage cognitive load, communicate effectively and work sustainably

Leading Others

Leadership behaviours that shape team norms, performance expectations and psychological safety

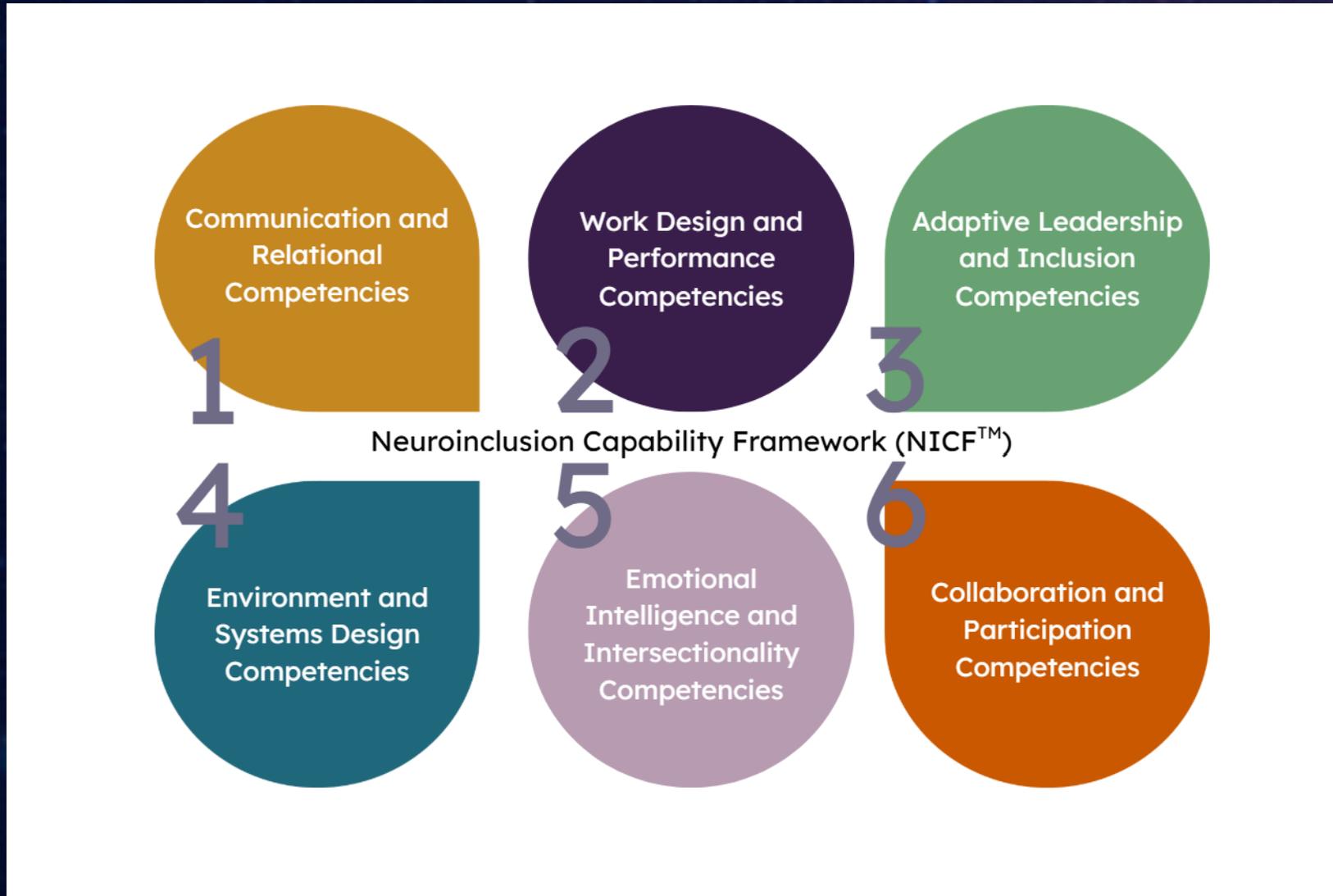
Leading Organisation

System-level decisions that embed neuroinclusion into workforce, digital and governance processes

The NICF is not:

- ★ Awareness training
- ★ A diagnosis-based model
- ★ A culture or values program
- ★ A replacement for APS frameworks

NICF Capability Domains



NICF at Agency Level

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

Recruitment of technical, analytical, and specialised roles

Competition for talent

Retention and Mobility

Critical capability skills shortages

Graduate program attrition

Loss of organisational knowledge

Performance Management and impact of processes

Bullying and Harassment, Discrimination

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Integrated Leadership System (ILS)

APS Work Level Standards

SES Performance Leadership Framework

APS Disability Employment Strategy 2020-25 (and beyond)

National Autism Strategy 2025-2031 (employment objective)

APS Workforce Strategy 2025

Agency-specific diversity and inclusion strategies and workforce plans

CAPABILITY UPLIFT

Leadership capability for cognitive diversity

Evidence-based neuroinclusive practices

Performance optimisation approaches

Innovation and analytical capability

Systemic barriers removal

COMPETITIVE POSITIONING

First-mover advantage as neuroinclusive employer

Attract previously untapped talent pools

Reputation as innovative, evidence-based organisation

Model for other government agencies

Exemplar for other sectors, especially for digital and technical talent

HOW TO ENGAGE WITH THE NICF

- Shared leadership and HR discussions
- Mapping against existing frameworks
- Applying the NICF lens to a known pain point
- Request an agency presentation

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