



The Case for Diversity

By

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Manager, Equity and Diversity



Topics



- Understanding Diversity
- MFB and Diversity
- Why diversity
- Benefits
- Barriers
- Strategies

Understanding Diversity



Diversity

- the characteristics that differentiate us from each other; e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, education, personality, faith, socio-economic background, **rank, length of service, employment status**

Valuing Diversity

- Understanding, Appreciating and Harnessing our differences (rather than tolerating)



Managing Diversity

Is the set of policies, plans and processes put in place to understand, appreciate and maximise the benefits of diversity in a workplace

Individual Diversity Competence

The ability to effectively respond to challenges and opportunities of a diverse workplace



Organisational Diversity Competence

- Having large proportion of individual members who are personally competent and
- Having the necessary infrastructure in place to support individuals seeking to display competency in managing diversity

Policies development



Assimilation (White Australia Policy)

Integration

Multiculturalism (70s onward)

- Access and Equity (deficit model)**
- EEO (compliance)**
- Productive Diversity (diversity as an asset)**

Contribution of Diversity to Evolution of Fire Service



- The first fire pump was invented somewhere near the 4th century BC by a Greek. This first simple device, which was a double cylinder piston pump, remained the basic mechanical method for pumping water for hundreds of years.

Much of what occurred in Rome and other early civilizations are the roots of fire fighting and fire prevention materials that are used today. Most concepts used today can be traced back nearly two thousand years.

<http://www.georgetowncityfire.org/admin/history.html>

Context



- The MFB protects a population of 2,293,844
- 870, 000 dwellings
- 33,081 emergency calls in a year
- 27% fire incidents
- 28 % non-fire incidents
- 44 % false alarms

Profile



MFD profile

- 49 % males
- 51 % females
- 62% born in Australia
- 70% speak English only at home
- 11.3 % non-Christian

MFB profile (677 respondents)

- 87.7% males
- 12.7% females
- 88.5% born in Australia
- 89.3% speak English only at home
- 1.8 % non-Christian

Other MFD Facts



- 236 languages spoken
- 7609 identified as ATSI
- 214 countries of birth
- 106,546 do not speak English well or at all (5% of the MFD population)
- 19% have a disability



Is Diversity in The MFB Important and Why?



- Reflecting Our Community
- The Moral Obligation
- Community Cohesion, Trust and Confidence
- Economic Reality
- Legislative Imperative

Benefits



- Creativity
- Access to many perspectives
- Improved productivity
- Complementary skills
- Links to broader community networks
- Corporate knowledge
- Public image of equity and inclusion

Barriers to Diversity



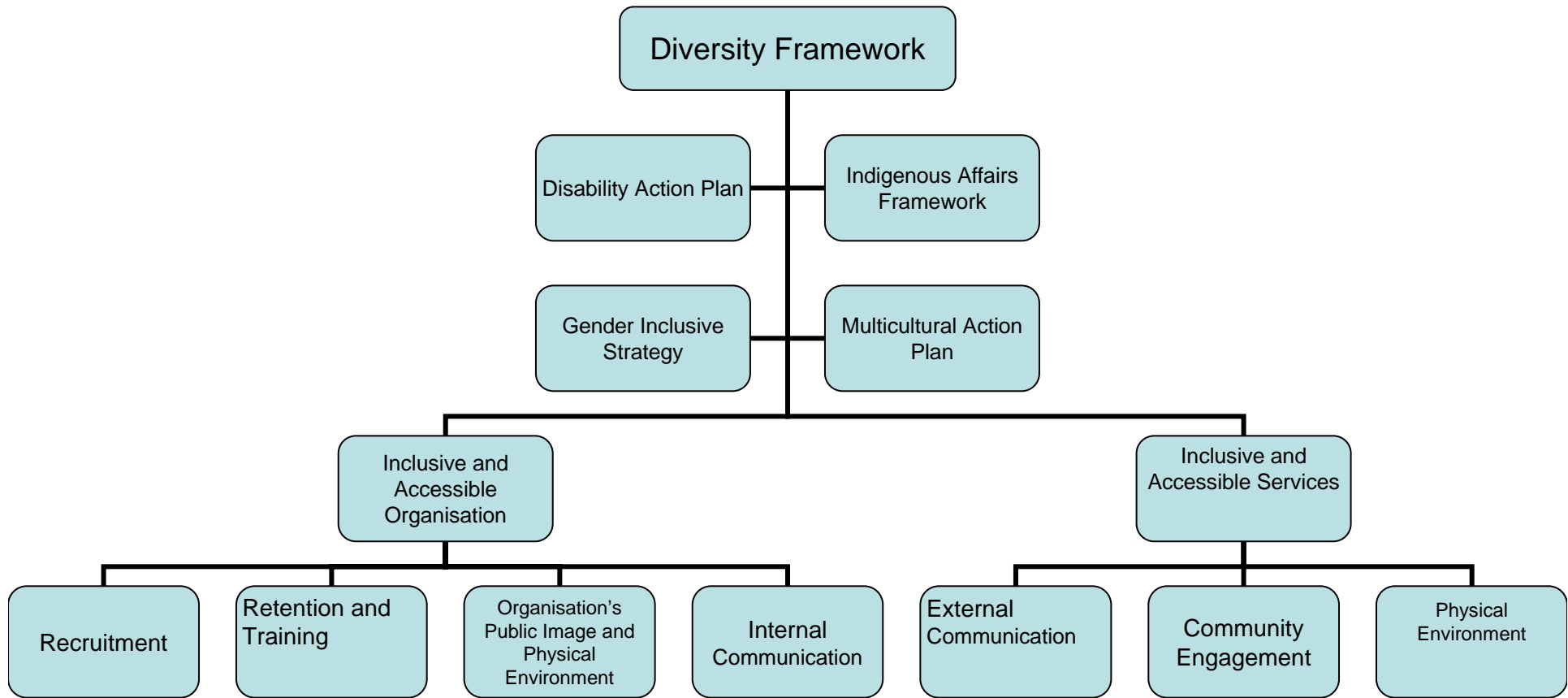
- Lack of conviction in benefits of diversity
- Treating Everyone the same *Motto*
- Strong attachment to traditions and “way things are done”
- Lack of genuine commitment by the organisation
- Lack of resources to drive the diversity agenda forward
- Marginalisation and trivialisation of diversity as an add-on

Strategies For Change



- Building and disseminating the Case for Diversity
- Relationship building
- Leadership support
- Internal structures
- Resource allocation and utilisation
- Consultative policy development process
- Action plans, monitoring and evaluation

MFB Diversity Framework



Diversity in Emergency Services Conference

31 October – 2 November 2007
Melbourne Cricket Ground
www.des2007.com

