



# Positive and healthy workplace cultures guide

## Frequently asked questions

### How was this guide developed?

The guide was developed using design thinking and co-design approach. Inputs include:

- a multi-agency (8) and multi-disciplinary culture working group
- reviews and research based on quantitative and qualitative data
- employee experience workshops
- Chandler Macleod People Insights to validate research and propose behaviours and habits needed for sustainable change.

### How does this relate to the Queensland public sector values?

Values and culture go hand in hand. It is important they align because our culture brings strategy to fruition.

**Our values** guide our behaviours and the way we do business. They are deeply held principles that are the foundation of our decision making.

**Culture** describes the systems, processes, shared beliefs and interactions that describe the work environment.

Culture can be a strong influencer in the way people act and behave. Values are enduring while culture is often in a constant state of evolution.

### Isn't there just one public sector culture?

Although the Queensland public sector **values** are enduring and span the whole sector, there are many cultures, and indeed many sub-cultures across the organisations. Often they will have some elements in common – and sometimes elements in conflict, but particularly large organisations, or those that have differences in physical location can develop their own way of '*how we do things around here*' based on shared experiences.

Multiple cultures adds another **layer of complexity** to cultural transformation efforts. The more diverse the cultures, the broader the range of behaviours and interests, and the more complex the transformation efforts become.

The goal is **not a one-size-fits-all culture**, rather a set of **indicators** for healthy and positive cultures that **respect individual agency uniqueness** and the enduring nature of the public service values. The indicators also articulate **unifying qualities** important in the workplace.



## How do we start transforming our culture?

Transforming cultures is complex – our cultural vision, values, attributes, behaviours and enablers must align. Without consistent reinforcement between these, conflict and issues can arise.

Our research indicates there are **six attributes** of workforce and workplaces essential to positive and healthy cultures in the Queensland public sector:

1. **Inclusive:** people feel empowered and supported, enabling them to speak up and contribute to their full potential
2. **Adaptable and agile:** people welcome and seek to introduce change and innovation
3. **Purpose-driven:** people understand their contribution and how their work contributes to the bigger picture
4. **Trustful:** people are trusted and empowered to do good work
5. **Wellness-oriented:** people's health, safety and wellbeing is advanced in the workplace
6. **Creative:** innovation is enhanced through people's creative thoughts and proactive behaviours.

To transform culture just **pick one or two attributes** and consider them for your organisation through the lens of the **behaviours** you want to focus on. From there you can determine the new routines and habits you want to reinforce.

## What is expected of agencies?

The extent to which agencies use this guide is a matter for your HR and leadership teams to determine.

This guide has been developed as a thought leadership piece, with input from across the sector to support agencies in their cultural transformation journey, and provide **a common set of principles** for sustained cultural change and real impact.

## We have already started our culture transformation journey – how do we align with this?

If your approach is a behavioural based approach you are already somewhat aligned. You can **review how aligned** your cultural aspirations are with the cultural attributes outlined in the guide. Are you trying to create inclusive, adaptable/agile, purpose-driven, trustful, wellness-orientated, and creative cultures?

Finally are you targeting changes to the following **behaviours** – empowering, responsible, accountable, initiating, connected, risk mastery? By focusing on changing cues and rewards that promote these you will be well aligned.

## How do the behaviours and enablers interact?

The behaviours and enablers **work together** to establish and reinforce new routines and ways of working. For example if you are focusing on the behaviour of ‘initiating’, results will be maximised if your leaders are championing innovative approaches to problem solving, your organisation is designed for flexibility, you have simplified governance etc. Below are just a **few examples to illustrate**.

		Targeted behaviours					
		Empowering	Responsible	Accountable	Initiating	Connected	Risk mastery
Enablers to reinforce a new routine	<b>Leadership and vision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspiring trust</li> <li>More autonomy and involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor wellbeing of self and others in the organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct difficult conversations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Champion innovative approaches to problem solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Champion innovative approaches</li> <li>Story telling</li> <li>Inclusive leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take smart risks</li> <li>Make fast decisions</li> <li>Openness to failure or mistakes</li> </ul>
	<b>Organisational design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flatter structures</li> <li>Networks of teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delegated design making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reward and recognition of team performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible teams that assemble and disassemble easily</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobility and integration across teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teams are empowered to deliver</li> </ul>
	<b>Systems and practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distributed decision making</li> <li>Diverse talent selection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An emphasis on experimentation and lessons learned through failure or mistakes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reward delivery of commitments</li> <li>Active management of performance issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplified governance to support prompt decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee mobility</li> <li>Talent attraction and selection for inclusive behaviours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talent attraction and selection for risk appetite</li> </ul>
	<b>Job design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Autonomy to deliver results</li> <li>Ownership of work-life balance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback conversations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results or outcomes focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobility across sector</li> <li>Flexible work arrangements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hot desking across diverse workspaces and teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-disciplinary flexible teams</li> </ul>
	<b>Capability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coaching</li> <li>Co-design</li> <li>Project management</li> <li>User-centricity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growth mindset</li> <li>Design thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional and social intelligence</li> <li>Communication skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Novel and adaptive thinking</li> <li>Data literacy</li> <li>Curiosity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital skills</li> <li>Co-design</li> <li>Design thinking</li> <li>Computational thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk intelligence</li> <li>Iteration</li> <li>Challenging status quo</li> </ul>
	<b>Engagement and communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genuine team conversations</li> <li>Involvement by all levels and generations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-design with customers, community and employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-design and test performance systems with employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forums for people to speak up and create ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diverse thinking in working groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key messaging from leadership</li> </ul>

## How can we learn from what other agencies are doing?

The Public Service Commission (PSC) provides **biannual reports** to the Leadership Board on progress against the strategic imperatives in the sector's 10 year human capital outlook. This includes a summary of activities across the sector where an agency is:

- interested in partnering/learning
- undertaking research
- developing/designing a project
- currently piloting
- going to market
- looking for partners
- a better practice site.

Other avenues include the **Strategic Workforce Council**, and the CHRO forums. Through these groups, agencies can **share** relevant activities and consider and opportunities to **collaborate, partner and learn**.

The [Queensland Government Yammer](#) also has plenty of discussion and resources.

## What are the three key messages?

1. The future of work will require us to **think and behave differently**
2. Cultural transformation **takes time**
3. Focus on the **few** – better to start with one to two attributes or behaviours to really effect change