

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

FRAMEWORK 2023–2028



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ABOUT CANTEEN

Every year, **23,000** young people have their world turned upside down by cancer, whether it is their own or a close family/kin member’s diagnosis. They are up to six times more likely to face mental health issues like depression and anxiety than their peers. Canteen reduces that risk by providing evidence-based support and counselling, connecting them with other young people in the same situation, and if they have been diagnosed themselves, we also provide access to specialist, youth specific treatment teams. Combined with our leading-edge research into the emotional and social impacts of cancer, it ensures that we truly understand how cancer is different in a young person’s world.

Canteen’s mission is to be in the corner of every young person when cancer crashes into their world.

OUR VALUES AND COMMITMENTS

We are guided by our values and our commitment to ensure that everyone at Canteen feels respected, included and safe.



Connection is our core. We connect young people with others their age who 'get it' and with specialist staff who truly understand cancer's challenges.



We empower young people to lead within and beyond Canteen to shape the organisation they need and the world they want to live in.



We use research and evidence to constantly challenge ourselves and others to be better in order to deliver the best outcomes for young people.



Young people's real experiences are at the heart of everything we do. We don't shy away from the tough stuff - we use it to build hope, resilience and meaning.



Diversity and Inclusion

Canteen welcomes people with diverse sexualities, gender identities and intersex variations and from all cultures, backgrounds and abilities.

We believe that diversity in all its forms is a strength and are committed to working towards being an organisation that is inclusive of all individuals, so we can create a more vibrant and innovative culture.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Framework will guide our progress in creating an environment where all young people, families/kin, volunteers, stakeholders, and staff feel valued, respected, and supported, ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed at Canteen.



Acknowledgement of Country

Canteen acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of this land. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We are committed to providing inclusive and appropriate support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, their kin and community.



Ngalaya (Dharawal for ally or friend in battle), is an artwork commissioned by Canteen created by Kamilaroi and Jerrinja woman and artist Jasmine Sarin.

CANTEEN 2025–2029 STRATEGY ON A PAGE

PURPOSE

To provide life changing treatment and support to young people facing cancer.

MISSION

Be in the corner of every young person when cancer crashes into their world.

VALUES

We connect.
We empower.
We challenge.
We are real.

Young people are at the heart of everything we do.

OUR DNA



OUR PEOPLE

Our people are our strength, and they are empowered to ensure our organisation delivers exceptional support to young people.

A 10% increase in our employee engagement score.



OUR SUSTAINABILITY

Create a Canteen for now and in the future. Our financial strength is underpinned by innovation and high-quality experiences for our supporters.

Raise \$220 million over 4 years.

GROW OUR REACH



The treatment and support we offer changes lives, but too few young people are getting access. We will ensure that more young people are provided with our vital support each year.

Reach 25% of young people newly impacted by cancer each year with our services and programs.



DEEPEN OUR IMPACT

We will direct our efforts where we can make the greatest difference. We will support young people so they are living longer, more fulfilling and connected lives.

90% of service users recommended Canteen to others facing cancer in their lives.



AMPLIFY OUR VOICE

We are an influential force in the cancer landscape, driving system level change, policy and outcomes. We will build connections for greater impact through our partnerships, advocacy and supporter communities.

Through advocacy and key partnerships, we secure ongoing funding to improve experiences for young people.

KEY ENABLERS

PRIORITIES

OUR AMBITION

Over the next four years, we commit to deliver over **1 million meaningful touchpoints**, to ensure that every young Australian impacted by cancer can access the support and care they need.

OUR D&I FRAMEWORK: PRIORITY POPULATION GROUPS

Our D&I framework will initially focus on four priority population groups:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex communities (LGBTQI+)
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people (CALD)
- People with a disability, including neurodivergent related disability'

Our strategy consists of three approaches. Firstly, we will continue to action the Reconciliation Action Plan Framework through Reconciliation Action Plans as a commitment to achieving true reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Secondly, we will undertake ACON's Health and Wellbeing Equality Index (HWEI) to assess and benchmark our LGBTQ+ inclusive service provision.

Thirdly, we will identify best-practice guidelines to support CALD and young people with disabilities living with cancer through research and consultation, as limited research exists into the needs of these two population groups.

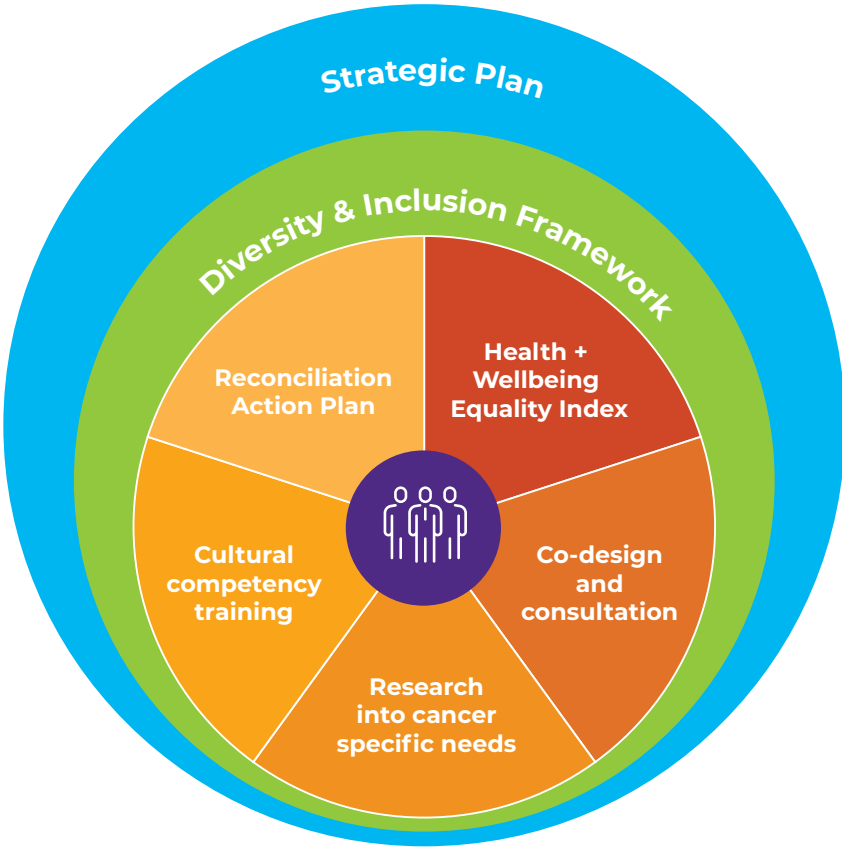
This approach aligns with the priority population groups chosen by the Australian Governments 10-year Cancer Plan which aims to provide equitable access of care, world class cancer outcomes and improve the lives of all Australians affected by cancer.

We will continue to identify and include other populations as we evolve our efforts. Our goal is to build a diverse and inclusive community that supports and empowers families/kin impacted by cancer.



Framework outline

-  **Organisational strategy**
-  **Governing frameworks**
-  **Strategies and initiatives**



Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

We are proud of our Reconciliation journey thus far. With each iteration of our Reconciliation Action Plan, we build on the steps taken previously to deepen our connections with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations, communities, and we continue to walk alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to support access to Canteen Services when needed. Canteen is committed to growing and evolving our approaches in authentic and meaningful ways.

Canteen's vision for reconciliation is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and their families/kin, parents and kinship carers experience equitable and safe access to cancer support and health services.

Our D&I action plan will be carried out alongside our Stretch RAP. Visit our [website](#) for more information on Canteen's reconciliation action plans.

Research highlights that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a higher prevalence of health and wellbeing-related risk factors, may be less likely to have access to support and treatment services, and as a result, may also experience poorer cancer-related outcomes. We recognise the intersectionality that exists among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and families/kin impacted by cancer who also belong to LGBTQI+ communities, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and with varying abilities, and the compounding impact that this can have on an individual's social and emotional wellbeing.

Our D&I Framework strives to incorporate the voices and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and families/kin impacted by cancer throughout.



LGBTQI+ Communities

LGBTQI+ young people can experience a disproportionate cancer burden compared to the general population. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge and address their unique experiences and health needs to ensure that they receive high quality and culturally safe care throughout their cancer journey. The LGBTQI+ acronym has been intentionally chosen by Canteen to focus its inclusivity efforts on lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, queer and/or intersex people, as well as other sexuality, gender and bodily diverse people. We recognise that intersex people are born with physical sex characteristics that do not fit medical or social norms for female or male bodies, and thus face similar experiences of marginalisation, discrimination and stigma as their LGBTQ counterparts. This is especially important within the context of cancer, as many intersex infants and children are routinely subject to coerced or involuntary medical interventions without their freely-given and fully informed consent, as a result of cancer risk being intertwined with non-therapeutic rationales for treatment.

Historically there has been a limited understanding of LGBTQI+ people's experience of cancer due to systemic issues with LGBTQI+ data not being collected and reported consistently and appropriately across population health surveys, screening participation data, cancer registries and research. Canteen has been a partner of the Out with Cancer study which was established in 2019. The Out with Cancer study explored LGBTQI+

experiences of cancer and cancer care from the perspectives of people with cancer, carers and healthcare professionals. The study found that for many LGBTQI+ young people, cancer can exacerbate existing stressors such as discrimination, stigma, and a lack of family/kin of origin support. This can lead to feelings of isolation and a sense of disconnection from the larger cancer community. Additionally, many LGBTQI+ young people may face barriers to accessing appropriate care and support due to a lack of understanding and acceptance among healthcare providers.

To meet the needs of LGBTQI+ young people affected by cancer, Canteen needs to adapt our support offerings to provide access to culturally responsive care and support services, including peer support groups. It is also essential to raise awareness about the unique challenges faced by LGBTQI+ young people, and to educate healthcare providers about the importance of providing person centred, inclusive and affirmative care.

This is why Canteen has chosen to undertake the HWEI to assess and benchmark Canteen's LGBTQI+ inclusive service provision to help Canteen structure the work required to become a safe, inclusive and affirming service and employee for the LGBTQI+ community. The findings of the Out with Cancer study will be embedded into Canteen's policies, procedures and model of care alongside regular assessment and benchmarking against the HWEI to strengthen our ability to meet the unmet psychosocial needs of LGBTQI+ young people and their families/kin impacted by cancer.



Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

According to the 2021 census, 27.6% of the Australian population were born overseas, and 5.8 million people speak a language other than English at home.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, particularly those with experiences as refugees or migrants, can experience a range of difficulties in accessing services and receiving culturally safe support. These include, but are not limited to: social isolation, lack of understanding of the legal and service systems, mental health and community engagement, English as an additional language, availability, effectiveness or fear of interpreters, stresses related to residency or visa status, negative past experiences with services, particularly government services and a lack of culturally appropriate or responsive services.

For CALD young people, language barriers, lower health literacy, and difficulties navigating an unfamiliar system can result in poorer health outcomes, especially when dealing with the complexities of cancer when it comes crashing into their world. Children of migrants for whom English is not their first language face the unique responsibility of needing to act as a translator for parents, with studies finding this negatively impacts many young people leading to stress, anxiety and frustration. Seeking to avoid this stress and anxiety can lead to delays in seeking medical care and reduced access to preventive care. Language barriers also lead to an increased risk of miscommunication and medical errors, especially when navigating a complex illness like cancer.

CALD young people and families/kin may also face additional challenges, such as cultural beliefs or stigmas around cancer, which can affect their willingness to seek medical help or comply with treatment plans.

Due to a lack of research limited knowledge exists about the specific needs of young people living with cancer from CALD backgrounds. Canteen will improve our teams cultural capacity through training and conduct research into the specific unmet needs of CALD young people. This will allow us to tailor the services we offer to reduce health disparities and improve outcomes for this vulnerable population.



People with a disability, incl. Neurodivergent related disability

Cancer not only affects people with disability, but cancer treatment may result in permanent physical and neurological disability for young cancer patients and survivors. Approximately one in five Australians have a disability, with around 410,000 of these individuals aged 15–24 years old.

The NSW Disability Act (2014) defines disability as a long-term impairment that may hinder a person’s full and effective participation in the community on an equal basis with others. For young people who have physical disability, it is essential to ensure that spaces, programs, and events are accessible, allowing them to feel safe, welcomed, and able to participate.

Studies have found that people who have a disability are often excluded in decision making around their health care, especially those with intellectual disability. For individuals with cognitive impairment, intellectual disability and those who have neurodivergent related disability, navigating the health care system can be challenging, making it essential to revise our approach to working with young people and families/kin with disability.

We will conduct research into the cancer specific needs of young people with disability, as a gap in current knowledge exists. Canteen is committed to reviewing our programs, therapeutic frameworks, physical and online locations to ensure that we provide additional supports when needed and that we work towards the elimination of barriers for all young people and their families/kin accessing our services and participating in peer support programs.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a framework that recognises the interconnected nature of social identities and how they impact an individual's experiences and outcomes.

Intersectionality is defined as: ‘an approach that understands the interconnected nature of social categorisations—such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, religion, class, socioeconomic status, gender identity, ability or age—which create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage for either an individual or group’. Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement 2019–2029 (Everybody Matters), published in 2018.

Within the health context, intersectionality acknowledges that an individual's health is influenced by multiple factors, such as their gender, race, socioeconomic status, sexuality, ability, sex characteristics and more. These factors do not exist in isolation but interact with one another, creating unique experiences and challenges for individuals.

Canteen will work to ensure that the population specific strategies outlined within this framework and our Action Plan are reflective of an intersectional and collaborative approach, and seek to better understand and overcome the compounding experiences of multiple, overlapping forms of exclusion discrimination and violence within our services.



D&I ACTION PLAN

Action	Deliverable	Area responsible	Timeline (Canteen FY)	Area of focus
Formalise organisational commitment to Diversity & Inclusion	D&I Framework launch	Executive team, Marketing & Communications	Q1 2023	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability
	Establish governance	Executive team	Q1 2023	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability
	Develop and implement D&I policy	Executive team, People & Culture	Q1 – Q2 2023	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Reconciliation Action Plan endorsed by Reconciliation Australia	Services & Impact	Ongoing	RAP
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Elders Group	Services & Impact	Q4 2024	RAP
Embed lived experience in D&I initiatives	Review commitment to affirming the Darlington Statement	Executive team	Q3 2025	LGBTQI+
	Establish D&I Working Group	Services & Impact	Q1 – Q2 2023	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability
Create a welcoming and accessible organisation	Engage with Canteen young people & families/kin around D&I activities to embed their preferences in the design, development and delivery of Canteen Services	Services & Impact	Ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability
	Include D&I statements on websites	Marketing & Communications	Q1 2023	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Develop style guides for culturally safe and affirming language	Marketing & Communications	Q1 – Q2 2023	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Create new resources and content for LGBTQI+ young people and families/kin living with cancer	Marketing & Communications, Services & Impact, YCS	Q2 2023 – Q4 2024	LGBTQI+, RAP
	Translate resources into 2 languages other than English	YCS, Marketing & Communications	Q2 2026	CALD, Disability, RAP
	Review and update informational content, for LGBTQI+ inclusive language based on Out with Cancer findings	Marketing & Communications	Q1 2024	LGBTQI+
	Identify possibilities for improvement of accessibility within State and National offices	People & Culture, Services & Impact	Q1 2026	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability,
	Identify opportunities to improve accessibility of physical office spaces and ensure all off site locations utilised for work or services are accessible	People & Culture, Services & Impact	Q4 2026	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Update Canteen Connect to meet accessibility standards	Data & Technology	Q4 2026	CALD, Disability

Action	Deliverable	Area responsible	Timeline (Canteen FY)	Area of focus
Celebrate our diverse community	Participation in Pride events around the country	Services & Impact, Marketing & communications	Ongoing	LGBTQI+
	Publicly recognise dates of significance	Marketing & communications	Q1 2023 – Ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Create opportunities for staff to celebrate days of significance	People & Culture	Q1 2023 – Ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
Build staff capacity and understanding	Review and update People & Culture policies in alignment with best-practice standards for inclusivity	People & Culture	Ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Implement and embed People & Culture policy updates	People & Culture	Ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Professional development and training for All-Staff	People & Culture	Q3 2023 – ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Track staff participation and engagement in training	People & Culture	Ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
Culturally safe service provision	Service delivery staff to participate in training addressing the health needs specific to diverse population groups	Services & Impact	Ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Update forms collecting demographic data with best-practice language including data indicators on sexual orientation, gender identity and variations of sex characteristics	Services & Impact, Fundraising, Data & Technology	Q3 – 4 2023	LGBTQI+
	Outward facing staff to participate in confidentiality and data training	Services & Impact, Fundraising, Data & Technology, People & Culture	Q4 2023, yearly	LGBTQI+, Disability, CALD, RAP
	Review, update and implement policies, guidelines and frameworks relating to service provision for LGBTQI+ young people and families/kin	Services & Impact	Ongoing	LGBTQI+
	Development and implementation of a Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culturally Responsive Framework	Services & Impact	Q1 2023 – Q2 2024	RAP
	Consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure that their perspectives are embedded within the LGBTQI+ inclusion as part of the Culturally Responsive Framework implementation	Services & Impact	Q4 2025	LGBTQI+, RAP

Action	Deliverable	Area responsible	Timeline (Canteen FY)	Area of focus
Foster relationships with community organisations	Engage with expert organisations, referral networks and Communities of Practice	Executive team, People & Culture, Services & Impact	Q1 2023 – ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Identify opportunities to meaningfully engage with community organisations through state team community engagement plans	Services & Impact	Q1 2025 - Ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Create resource library with information and appropriate referral pathways for young people and families/kin from diverse communities	Services & Impact	Q3 2023 – ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Explore collaboration opportunities across content development, merchandise and events	Marketing & Communications, Fundraising	Q4 2025	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
Develop an action plan targeting the cancer specific needs of young people and families belonging to CALD communities and those with disability	Systematic literature review to identify cancer specific needs and best-practice standards for engagement of young people and their families/kin belonging to CALD communities and those who have disabilities	Services & Impact	Q1 2025 - Transition to BAU	CALD, Disability
	Design CALD and disability inclusion strategies in consultation with young people and families/kin	Services & Impact	Q1 2026 - Transition to BAU	CALD, Disability
	Create and implement CALD and disability Inclusion strategies	Services & Impact	Q1 2026 - Transition to BAU	CALD, Disability, RAP
Recognition as an affirming and safe organisation for diverse communities	Regularly share updates to stakeholders on D&I initiatives	Marketing & communications	Q1 2023 – ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Participate in Pride in Health and Wellbeing Equality Index	Services & Impact, People & Culture	Q1 2023 – ongoing	LGBTQI+
Continuously strive to be more D&I as an organisation	Ensure Risk management plans are culturally responsive	Executive team	Q3 2023 – Q4 2025	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Embed identified risks to diverse communities organisational risk management structure	Executive team	Q3 2023 – Q4 2025	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Create mechanisms for collecting feedback from young people, families/kin and staff	People & Culture, Services & Impact	Q1 2024	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Update processes, systems, programs periodically based on consumer feedback & best practice standards	People & Culture, Services & Impact	Q2 2024 – ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP

Definitions:

- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse: people born overseas, in countries other than those classified by the ABS as 'main English speaking countries'.
- Disability: long-term physical, psychiatric, intellectual or sensory impairment that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the person's full and effective participation in the community on an equal basis with others.
- LGBTQI+: lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender, intersex, queer and other sexuality.
- Gender diverse: These are umbrella terms that describe people whose gender is different to the legal sex that was assigned to them at birth. This includes transgender people and non-binary people.
- Intersex: Intersex people have innate variations of sex characteristics that differ from medical and social norms for female or male bodies. Intersex is an umbrella term for a diverse range of different traits that can be determined prenatally, at birth, during puberty and at other times.
- Non-binary: Genders that sit within or outside of the spectrum of the male and female binary are non-binary.



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