
The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations was created on 1 October 2006 as a result of machinery-of-government changes after the Queensland state election. The department brought together the activities of the former Department of Industrial Relations and the Employment and Indigenous Initiatives Division of the former Department of Employment and Training.

Economic
growth and
social wellbeing
through fair, safe
and decent work

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Communication objectives

This annual report provides the Minister, the Parliament and the people of Queensland with an accurate and informative report about the efficiency and effectiveness of the operations of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations during 2006–07.

The report provides information about our performance, achievements and financial position. It also explains how the department operates: its structure, its governance and its organisational capability. This report is an important element in this department's corporate governance framework. Its content responds to legislative obligations and government policies for performance reporting including the requirements of the *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1997* and the *Financial Management Standard 1997*.

More information

This annual report and other documents about the department's strategy and performance are available from the department's website, www.deir.qld.gov.au.

Relevant documents include:

- *Department of Employment and Industrial Relations Strategic Plan 2007–11*
- *Queensland Workplace Health and Safety Strategy 2004–12*
- *Electrical Safety Plan for Queensland 2003–08*
- *Department of Employment and Industrial Relations' Ministerial Portfolio Statement 2007–08*

Our goals

- Maximise workforce participation opportunities for those disengaged or under-engaged in the labour market
- A fair and equitable industrial relations system
- Safe and healthy work environments
- Electrically safe homes, workplaces and other environments
- A fair, safe and productive public sector work environment

Our purpose

- **Improve productivity, equity, safety and participation in Queensland workplaces**

Our vision

- **Economic growth and social wellbeing through fair, safe and decent work**

Our values

.... **Commitment to purpose**

We focus our efforts on achieving results that make a significant difference to the wellbeing of Queenslanders.

.... **Commitment to performance**

We strive for quality, innovation and excellence in all that we do.

.... **Commitment to service**

We strive to deliver effective, fair and impartial services.

.... **Commitment to people**

We will be respectful and open in our interactions and we always look for better ways of working together.

Contributing to

Whole-of-government outcomes

- A strong and diversified economy
- A community of well-skilled and knowledgeable people
- Safe and secure communities
- A fair, socially cohesive and culturally vibrant society



Talking with Peter Henneken

The department's Director-General, Peter Henneken, talks about the new Department of Employment and Industrial Relations' role, challenges and goals for long-term growth and prosperity in Queensland.

Peter Henneken
Director-General
Department of Employment and Industrial Relations

About the creation of the department ...

We have identified our purpose as improving productivity, equity, safety and participation in Queensland workplaces. For most people, paid employment is their link to prosperity. Fair, safe and decent work is a necessary and important contributor to long-term economic growth and social wellbeing for all Queenslanders.

This department brings together Queensland Government policy and services about work and workplaces with a strong focus on fairness and safety. Our three main business areas are:

- employment — where our focus is on helping those not in the labour market, unemployed or underemployed people into the workforce
- industrial relations — where we focus on improving equity and fairness at work and the contribution this makes to productivity
- safety — both workplace health and safety and electrical safety in the workplace and the wider community.

Without doubt, one of this department's great assets is its people. Within its first year of operation, the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations has seen some significant changes and I believe we have achieved a great deal. I commend the efforts, energy, and commitment of department's staff and look forward to continuing to work with them to achieve better outcomes for the people of Queensland.

Biggest challenge ...

The department faces some significant challenges on several fronts — but I would say the biggest issues are centred around the need to increase workforce participation and equity as drivers of increased growth.

Currently Queensland has very low levels of unemployment and we know that many industries are already facing skills and labour shortages. Yet there remain pockets of higher unemployment in our communities and significant numbers of potential workers are outside the active labour market. So this forms the basis of our challenge to improve workforce participation in Queensland. If Queensland were to increase its workforce participation rate to a level comparable to higher performing OECD countries, we would add 140,000 people to the workforce. There are over 1 million people outside the Queensland labour market and a number of them could be targeted for participation.

Greater workforce participation will improve Queensland's economic position as well as provide benefits for those joining the labour market. A decent job is the best way to participate in the prosperity generated by economic growth.

Responding to labour and skills shortages ...

Certainly, an adequate supply of appropriately skilled workers is essential for a strong and diversified economy in Queensland. DEIR is responding to the skills shortages in Queensland in three ways.

First, the current shortages and strong economy present an excellent opportunity to increase workforce participation for people not currently in the workforce and others who would like to participate more in the labour market. DEIR employment policies and programs are responding to this need.

As a large and diverse employer, the Queensland Government is also feeling the impact of labour shortages. Against this background, DEIR has an important role in implementing a fair and equitable public sector wages policy, as well as contributing to initiatives to help the Queensland public sector attract and retain skilled staff.

And thirdly, the department itself is an employer and we face challenges similar to many other employers. Attracting, retaining and developing a workforce that allows us to do our job effectively continues to be an important issue. We have further expanded our workforce development programs, provided our staff with a wide range of wellbeing programs and options to help them balance work and life, and revised our attraction and retention policies.

Responding to the Work Choices changes ...

A significant area of work this year has been the continued response to the federal government's Work Choices changes. Queensland, together with other state governments, was part of a High Court challenge to the validity of Work Choices. After hearings in 2006, the court found the states' challenge to be unsuccessful. Since this decision became known, the department has continued its work in protecting Queenslanders through a range of programs — some existing, some refocussed and some new services.

Around 40% of Queensland's workers remain under the jurisdiction of Queensland industrial law and our industrial relations inspectors are continuing their work in protecting the rights of those workers.

For Queensland workers and employers now covered by the federal system, we have developed new services. For example, our *Fair Go Queensland Advisory Service* offers independent information and assistance about the impact of Work Choices. To help vulnerable workers, we have provided additional funding to community organisations so they can deliver information, advice and advocacy to Queensland workers disadvantaged by Work Choices.

Our *Smart Workplaces* program is being developed to encourage an alternative approach to Work Choices, emphasising the benefits of cooperative workplaces where employers, employees and unions work together to maximise good workplace practices. We are also undertaking more audits and continue to develop work and family policies and information. We will continue to undertake extensive legal, policy and research work into the impacts of Work Choices on Queenslanders.

One of the most significant initiatives was the creation of the Workplace Rights Ombudsman. This new service commenced on 1 July 2007.

Achievements ...

Safety is a key element in productivity and creating decent work. We have continued our work in implementing the *Queensland Workplace Health and Safety Strategy 2004–12* with a strong focus on enhancing safety laws, effective public education programs and targeted compliance and enforcement actions. The rate of work-related injuries has fallen in recent years, however the social and economic costs of work-related injury and disease remain unacceptable.

We have continued to improve electrical safety by delivering information to the community about how to be electrically safe and by setting and enforcing electrical safety standards. Electrical safety in Queensland has improved and the rate of electrical fatalities in Queensland continues to be below the Australian average.

In industrial relations, our responses to Work Choices have helped to protect the wellbeing of Queenslanders and contributed to continued economic growth. We have continued to play a significant role in effective public sector wage bargaining. This year, 26 agreements were finalised.

The unemployment rate in June 2007 was at a record low of 3.4%. The *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle* initiative, which operated from October 1998 to 30 June 2007, has assisted 175,615 disadvantaged jobseekers and resulted in 124,103 jobs. The Queensland Government's new program, *Skilling Queenslanders for Work*, as outlined in the *Queensland Skills Plan*, commenced on 1 July 2007.

Working together ...

DEIR has just over 1,000 staff and spent \$191 million in 2006–07 to deliver services. The work of our department touches the lives of every Queenslander through electrical safety in homes and the community, workplace equity and safety and our employment programs.

To achieve our goals and contribute to the Queensland Government's outcomes, we have developed and maintained strong working relationships with a wide range of clients and stakeholders. For example, community groups take a leading role in implementing many of our employment programs.

We have also worked closely with other Queensland Government agencies and interstate jurisdictions to improve service delivery in a wide range of areas. For example, we have worked closely with other Australian jurisdictions to provide greater national consistency in workplace health and safety and workers' compensation. DEIR also makes effective contributions to the work within the Queensland Government on strategic policy priorities through the work of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Committees.

Future priorities ...

We have developed a new strategic plan for the department that clearly sets out our plan for the future. To achieve our vision of *Economic growth and social wellbeing through fair, safe and decent work*, our focus will continue to be on four key areas: productive workplaces; equitable, fair and safe workplaces; workforce participation; and balanced regulation. Our organisational values of commitment to purpose, people, partnership and performance will guide our work.

Management

The department uses its **corporate governance** systems to direct, manage and control the organisation's business and ensure that the department delivers its outputs efficiently, effectively and sustainably. The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations is committed to achieving a high level of accountability, transparency and rigour in all its processes.





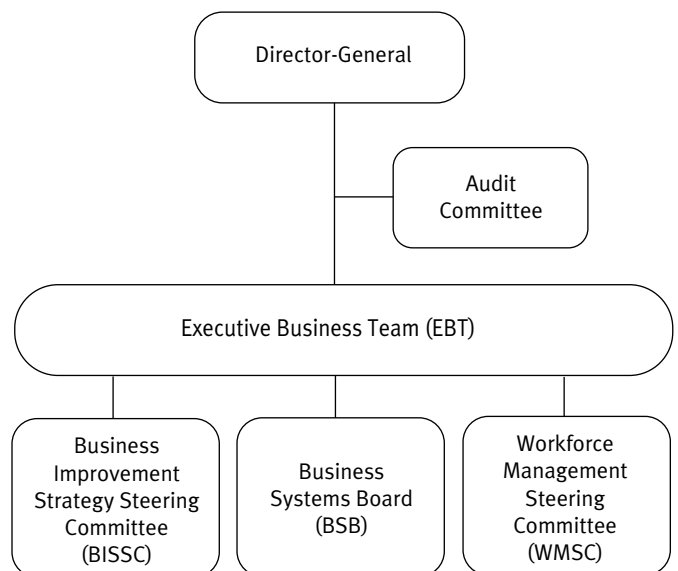
Governance framework

The Director-General of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations is responsible to the Minister for State Development, Employment and Industrial Relations¹.

The Executive Business Team (EBT) acts as the ‘board of management’, supporting and advising the Director-General in the governance, strategic direction and management of the department. Three supporting governance committees provide advice on organisational capability issues. These committees are: Business Improvement Strategy Steering Committee; ICT Business Systems Board; and Workforce Management Steering Committee. Committee membership generally consists of the Director-General and/or Deputy Director-General as Chair and the General Managers of each division supported by expert members. The Director-General is also supported by an Audit Committee and internal audit services (see report page 76).

In addition to these whole-of-department governance arrangements, each division has its own strategic management group.

Further details about DEIR’s governance arrangements are provided in the Governance Report on page 16.



¹ As at 30 June 2007. Following Cabinet changes in September 2007, DEIR is now part of the portfolio of the Minister for Transport, Trade, Employment and Industrial Relations.



Management Team
(From left to right)

Brett Walker, Barry Leahy, Bernie Carlon, Peter Henneken, Helen Ceron, Simon Blackwood, Peter Lamont, Judy Bertram

Our management team

Peter Henneken

Director-General

Peter was appointed Director-General of the new Department of Employment and Industrial Relations when it was created in October 2006. He was previously Director-General of the former Department of Industrial Relations and he has also served as the Deputy Director-General of the former Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. Peter has a longstanding interest in the labour market and its impact on the lives of working people.

Barry Leahy

Deputy Director-General

Barry was appointed Deputy Director-General in February 2005. He was previously CEO of Comcare, the organisation responsible for workplace safety, rehabilitation and compensation in the Commonwealth jurisdiction. Barry has worked in the Australian public service for some 30 years and held senior positions in industrial relations, occupational health and safety and workers' compensation.

Judy Bertram

General Manager

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Judy has been General Manger of WHSQ since 2003. She was previously the General Manager, Executive and Strategic Services in the former Department of Industrial Relations. She has held a range of other senior executive positions in the Queensland public sector, primarily in the field of employment and training.

Simon Blackwood

General Manager

Division of Private Sector Industrial Relations

Simon has been the General Manager of this division since March 1999. He is highly experienced in the field of industrial relations having spent more than 20 years working and studying in the area. He holds a PhD in industrial relations from The University of Queensland.

Bernie Carlon

General Manager

Employment and Indigenous Initiatives

Bernie has been leading the division since its inception in 1998. He joined the Queensland public service in 1993 and was the Executive Director of Training and Employment Queensland, and General Manager of the Vocational Education Training and Employment Commission. Before this, Bernie spent 25 years with the Australian Government, including senior positions in employment, training and industrial relations.

Helen Ceron

Acting General Manager

Division of Public Sector Industrial and Employee Relations

Helen has been acting in the General Manager's position since January 2007. Helen was previously a senior negotiator with the division and has worked in public sector industrial and employee relations over the past 10 years.

Peter Lamont

General Manager

Electrical Safety Office

Peter was appointed General Manager of the Electrical Safety Office (ESO) in January 2006. He has almost 25 years experience in the public sector. Before joining ESO he held senior positions in the areas of industrial relations, workplace health and safety and policy coordination.

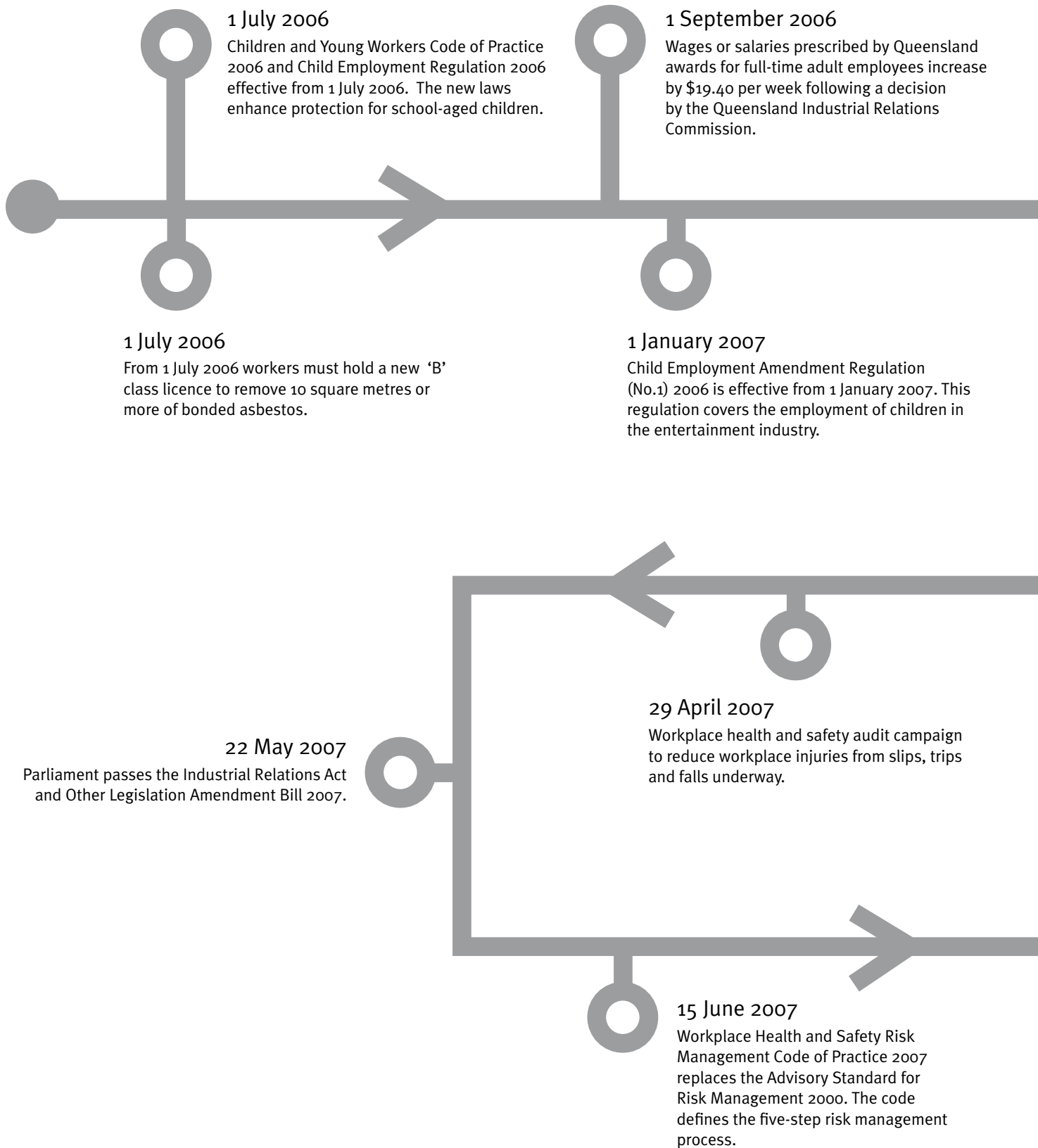
Brett Walker

General Manager

Executive and Strategic Services

Brett has been General Manager, Executive and Strategic Services since August 2005. Over the past 10 years, Brett has undertaken a number of senior roles within the former Department of Industrial Relations and his career in the public sector spans more than 25 years and a number of departments. He is a Fellow of CPA Australia.

Timeline 06–07



Snapshot 06–07



Maximise workforce participation opportunities for those disengaged or under-engaged in the labour market

175,615 disadvantaged jobseekers assisted

This year the *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle* initiative provided funding to assist 21,423 jobseekers. Under *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle*, from October 1998 to 30 June 2007, 175,615 disadvantaged jobseekers were assisted.

more on page 26

Experience Pays

The *Experience Pays Awareness Strategy* was launched and supported by a state-wide mass media advertising campaign.

more on page 26

First Start program for young and disadvantaged jobseekers

The *First Start* program to support entry-level training for young and disadvantaged jobseekers with little or no work experience allocated 1,900 additional traineeship places through a budget of \$22.8 million.

more on page 30

Safe and healthy work environments

Greater national consistency for workplace health and safety and workers' compensation

Queensland is cooperating with other state and territory jurisdictions to drive development of nationally consistent standards, codes and guidance material through the Australian Safety and Compensation Council.

more on page 35

Strong focus on communication, education and information

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland continued to use a range of communication to promote improved workplace health and safety outcomes. This included extensive use of internet and telephone advisory services, advertising and publicity, newsletters and other printed material, seminars and workplace visits.

more on page 36

More than 25,000 workplace visits by WHS Inspectors

This year inspectors visited 25,741 workplaces and issued 17,603 notices.

more on page 38

Electrically safe homes, workplaces and other environments

Improving electrical safety in Queensland

Queensland's five-year moving average of electrical fatalities per million population has declined to 1.01 — lower than the Australian average rate.

[more on page 44](#)

Regulatory changes

Amendments to the Electrical Safety Regulation 2002 will commence on 1 July 2007. The four electrical codes of practice called up in electrical safety legislation are being reviewed.

[more on page 47](#)

Improving the community's knowledge about electrical safety

ESO informs electrical workers and the wider community about electrical safety through telephone and internet services, seminars, industry newsletters and mass media advertising campaigns. Approximately 270,000 clients accessed information and advisory services in 2006–07.

[more on page 48](#)

More than 1,400 notices issued by electrical safety inspectors

Electrical safety inspectors issued a total of 1,458 notices including 1,005 improvement notices, 250 electrical safety protection notices, 7 unsafe equipment notices and 196 infringement notices.

[more on page 50](#)

A fair and equitable industrial relations system

Lowest levels of industrial disputation in decades

The Queensland industrial relations system has helped ensure the lowest levels of industrial disputation in decades. Queensland's average quarterly strike rate for the 12 months ending 30 June 2007 was 2.5 working days lost per 1,000 employees.

[more on page 54](#)

Regulatory amendments to protect children and respond to Work Choices changes

The Child Employment Regulation 2006 was amended to regulate working conditions for children in the entertainment industry; and other amendments to respond to the impact of the federal government's Work Choices reforms.

[more on page 55](#)

More than \$6 million in unpaid wages

IR inspectors finalised 3,717 wage investigations and 5,383 general audits. As a result, \$6.05 million in unpaid wages was adjusted on behalf of employees.

[more on page 57](#)

A fair, safe and productive public sector work environment

Public sector wage bargaining

A total of 26 agreements were finalised. The department is currently reviewing the public sector wages policy in preparation for the next round of bargaining scheduled to commence in 2008.

[more on page 60](#)

Organisational sustainability

Financial resources

The department expended a total of \$191.54 million to deliver services.

[more on page 20](#)

Effective governance framework

DEIR's corporate governance systems direct, manage and control the organisation's business to ensure the department delivers its outputs efficiently, effectively and sustainably.

[more on page 16](#)

Workforce

DEIR employs over 1,000 staff (full time equivalents). DEIR is a diverse workplace where staff access a wide range of learning and development programs and are supported with flexible work practices to assist them to balance work and life.

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