Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Framework

Inclusive by Design: Everyone, Everywhere, All the Time

RMIT UNIVERSITY

Acknowledgement of Country

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University.

RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.

RMIT's Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Framework seeks to include and benefit from Indigenous knowledges and perspectives in the continued delivery and evaluation of this plan towards 2030.

Contents

Our Aim: Inclusive by Design

RMIT knows that when a system is built with inclusion in mind, enabling practices become the norm, and fewer barriers impede a person's agency and ability to thrive.

We also know we still need to address unique needs and discrimination, and create enabling environments for people with differing lived experiences.

This Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) Framework creates a blueprint for our continued journey towards a more inclusive and accessible RMIT. To achieve our strategic aspirations, we need to ensure that everyone is included and enabled to thrive, whoever and wherever they are.

This means we need to enhance local action across the locations and entities of the RMIT Group, and over the nine years of the Framework, we aim to shape an RMIT that is: Inclusive by design.

Vice-Chancellor's Foreword

Inclusion is a commitment against which we must all be held to account.

At RMIT, inclusion is a core value. It's at the heart of our Knowledge with Action strategy, and it's integral to the way we contribute to the communities we exist to serve.

In developing our new Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) Framework to 2031, we undertook community-wide consultation. Staff, students and external partners all had a voice in developing the approach that will inform how we achieve our equity, diversity and inclusion aspirations in the years ahead.

My thanks to everyone who took part in the consultation – because of you, we have identified important strategies and priorities. Building on the significant progress we've already made, this new Framework groups our aspirations into five areas of focus:

Access, participation and success: We aim to build a more diverse student and staff profile with equity in retention, success and outcomes.

Culture, capability and leadership: We will create an environment where all individuals are supported, are respected, feel a sense of belonging and have the opportunity to thrive.

Education and research: We will demonstrate best practice in inclusion, diversity, equity and access through our education and research.

Infrastructure, service and operations: We will provide inclusive facilities and services, and plan, resource and communicate our IDEA aspirations and achievements.

Community and partnerships: We aim to engage reciprocally and in partnership with the communities we serve, promoting equity, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing.

The IDEA Framework is the successor to our Diversity and Inclusion Framework and its related Action Plans. Its purpose is to build an RMIT that is inclusive by design – an accessible place of learning and discovery where where everyone feels included, respected and supported.

If we recognise that diversity is a strength, then inclusivity must be fundamental. This aspiration in mind, I invite every member of our community to feel empowered and to continue to work with me towards a genuinely equitable RMIT.

Alec Cameron
Vice-Chancellor and President
RMIT University

> "
> *'We must continue to walk our talk and lead in all aspects of equality.*
>
> *We must continue to challenge, question and speak up.'*

Professor Alec Cameron
RMIT Vice-Chancellor and President

Background

RMIT strategy: 'Knowledge with Action'

The IDEA Framework is an important part of achieving the goals of the RMIT strategy 'Knowledge With Action'.

Our RMIT Group strategy, 'Knowledge with Action' builds on RMIT's strengths and values. It brings together what we have learned from the experience of recent years, with our ambitions for accessible lifelong education, impactful research and innovation, and an inclusive, sustainable future for the communities we serve.

Our goals at RMIT are ambitious and require new ways of thinking, being and doing. We know that if we only have some of our community contributing, we will not achieve our strategic aims.

For our strategy to be successful, we need full participation of our community, students, staff, alumni and partners. We need inclusion, diversity, equity and access to be a real and consistent experience for everyone to achieve excellence.

Our values

Our values are the durrung (heart) of who we are and what we stand for at RMIT. They guide what we do, how we make decisions, and how we treat each other.

Our values are
• Inclusion
• Courage
• Imagination
• Impact
• Integrity
• Passion

Our value of inclusion at RMIT

We work to grow opportunity and participation. We welcome students and staff from diverse backgrounds, embrace differences and treat people with dignity and respect.

We ensure RMIT is an accessible and open institution, dedicated to serving the needs of the whole community.

RMIT is an international university of technology, design and enterprise.

RMIT UNIVERSITY

Vision

To be a leading university of impact in the Asia Pacific region, using technology, design and enterprise to achieve an inclusive and sustainable future.

Mission

To empower people and communities to adapt and thrive across generations with education, research and civic engagement that are applied, inclusive and impactful.

Ambition

To lead internationally in four key areas: emerging technologies, smart and sustainable cities, social innovation and regional collaboration.

A history of achievement

RMIT has a long and proud history of commitments and action to ensure that opportunities to develop and succeed are open to all.

Drawing on our longstanding commitment to inclusion, the 2016 RMIT Diversity and Inclusion Framework and related Action Plans outlined the University's key commitments to build a more diverse community and ensure inclusive and equitable experiences and outcomes, with priority for the following:

- Accessibility (people with disability)
- Cultural, linguistic and religious diversity
- LGBTIQA+
- Gender equality
- Students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds

Since then, RMIT has made significant progress, with improvements in the diversity of representation in our student and staff community and in their experience and outcomes.

We have also been recognised as a leader for our commitments and achievements as measured by our performance in several rigorous national and international benchmarking schemes.

In alignment with the RMIT *Knowledge with Action* strategy, we need to consider how we are living up to our value of inclusion across the RMIT Group, where we are doing well, where we need to improve, what we need to do to get there, and what emerging issues we are yet to address. Adopting an intersectional lens will greatly support this work.

After extensive consultation and engagement, this Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) Framework aims to guide a whole-of-institution approach to achieve our new aspirations and drive effective inclusion.

Adopting 'Responsible Practice' to guide us in reconciliation, equity, diversity and inclusion

At the heart of how we live our values, including the RMIT value of inclusion, is our commitment to a just and meaningful relationship between Indigenous communities and the RMIT community.

We acknowledge that RMIT was established, and continues to operate, as a colonial institution on Aboriginal country in its Australian locations.

The RMIT strategy 'Knowledge with Action' commits to our strategic transition as an RMIT community from Reconciliation to Responsible Practice. This transition reflects the growth in our maturity in this space through our shared reconciliation journey over the past six years.

- Responsible Practice is about behaving in a fair, honest and ethical manner in all our activities and relationships, respecting Indigenous populations across the globe and in the locations RMIT operates.

- This involves recognising, interpreting, and acting upon multiple principles and values including reconciliation, cultural safety, ethical responsibility, diversity and inclusion, among others.

- It also means being conscious of and working to address the power dynamics, biases, and prejudices at play in our own and other's behaviours and that are embedded structurally within the RMIT Group and across society more broadly.

- Responsible practice is therefore about working continually and with great focus to enliven these principles and values in our day-to-day as part of who we are, not as separate or standalone activities and behaviours that we engage with at specific times or in certain contexts.

- The commitment to responsible practice informs this Framework and its implementation.

Responding to our whole community:

An intersectional approach

Intersectionality, coined by Dr Kimberle Crenshaw when considering the experience of Black women in the US justice system, is a framework for understanding how systems of oppression overlap and impact people in complex ways.

Historically, diversity and inclusion work has been approached in silos based on a particular identity, community, or lived experience. While much progress has been made, this approach has left many to fall through the cracks - particularly for those whose experience cannot be narrowly described through the lens of one identity or community.

Intersectionality exposes the conceptual limitations of single-issue analysis and encourages us to consider the ways that discriminatory practices may overlap and compound for some, for example, women of colour, LGBTIQA+ neurodivergent people, migrants living regionally.

In this sense, it encourages us to interrogate the ways that our policies, procedures, and programs may not consider the complexity of student and staff experiences and may only benefit some of our community. This does not mean forgetting about people's unique needs, but rather provides a way to ensure that the whole community is considered and supported.

> **"**
>
> *"...if we can't see a problem, we can't address a problem"*
>
> Dr Kimberlé Crenshaw

Examples from our students and staff

"In terms of academics and study, my disabilities are well catered for and understood by all of my professors. I have never been judged for needing extensions on most assessments; in fact, they reassured me that taking the extensions was the right thing to do. However, in terms of social life at RMIT, I do feel a bit left out because of my disabilities and location [Regional Victoria]".

"It's not only male teachers who judge you. In my second year my female teacher said, people like you with the hijab, do you want yourself to be escorted to the side...".

"My observation has been that gender discrimination at RMIT is exacerbated with age, which creates more barriers".

Consultation and review to guide our insights and planning

The voices of our learners and staff were critical in shaping an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access Framework that serves our community.

Consultation sought to gain insight into what RMIT is doing well, where we still need to improve, and what we need to do to get there. Grounded in principles of inclusion and accessibility, consultation included listening groups, roving polls, online surveys, and 1:1 conversations.

Consultation, engagement and playback sessions were undertaken with working groups, operational units, committees, leaders and leading external organisations.

We considered both quantitative and qualitative data, looking at the representation, experience and outcomes for diverse learners and staff at RMIT.
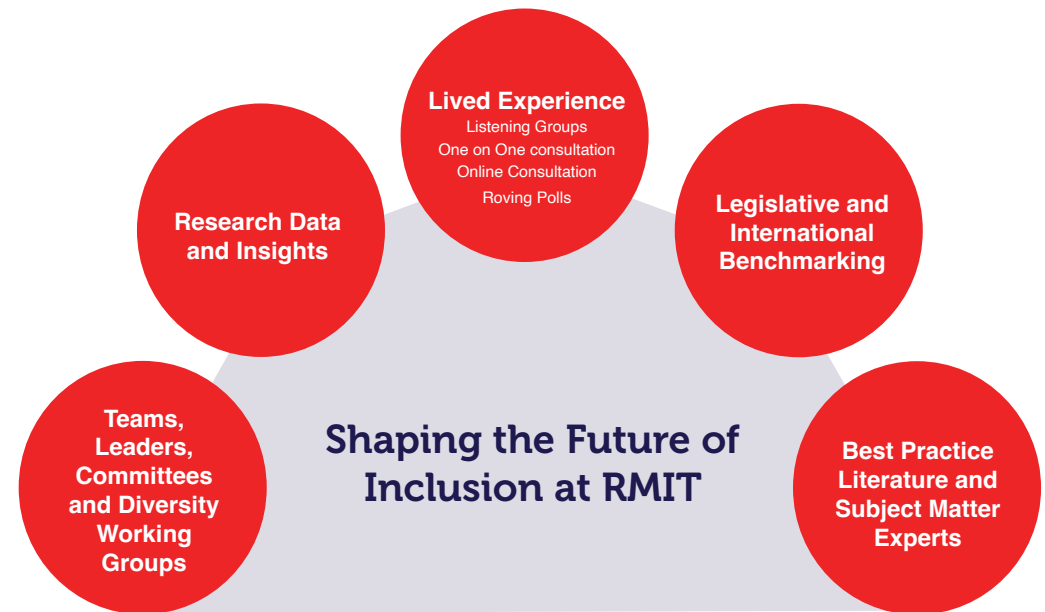
We reviewed our performance against several rigorous national and international benchmarking schemes to identify gaps and opportunities.

We considered the requirements of relevant legislation, policy and regulation, and drew on research and practice insights, including from our own staff experts.

While we were able to capture a broad range of voices, lived experience and perspectives through consultation and the development of this Framework, we know that we did not hear from everyone.

We acknowledge and respect our expansive communities and recognise that knowledges and languages continue to grow and evolve, allowing for future voices to be represented over the horizons.

Issues and challenges will continue to emerge. Seeking to understand and respond to the diversity of identities and experiences within our community is an ongoing process.

Shaping the Future of Inclusion at RMIT

Lived Experience
Listening Groups
One on One consultation
Online Consultation
Roving Polls

Research Data and Insights

Legislative and International Benchmarking

Teams, Leaders, Committees and Diversity Working Groups

Best Practice Literature and Subject Matter Experts

Planning for the future

Development of BIM, IoT, and VR Technologies for Real-time
Monitoring of Fires and Up-skilling of Firefighters

Supervisor: Dr. Lei Hou , Students: Zikai Zhao , Haosen Chen
School of Engineering (Civil and Infrastructure), RMIT University

RMIT
UNIVERSITY

Towards a new approach: 'Inclusive Excellence' at RMIT

Meaningful engagement and targeted initiatives on inclusion, diversity, equity and access have been a critical part of our success so far and will continue to be an important part of what we do. Alongside this, we know that to level up, we must build these into the core of what we do.

The 'Inclusive Excellence'* model was developed in response to calls to connect educational quality and inclusion efforts. In this model, what a university does to ensure inclusion, diversity, equity and access is critical to its capacity to achieve excellence in its teaching, research, and engagement. It is focussed on embedding insight and action across the institution, and on developing more inclusive and equitable cultures, systems and practices.

Consultation, analysis and drafting have been framed around the domains of this Inclusive and Excellence model.

Inclusive Excellence link:
* https://www.clemson.edu/otei/documents/AACU%20InclusiveA%20Excellence%20Framework.pdf

Access, Participation and Success

Culture, Capability and Leadership

Education and Research

Infrastructure, Services and Operations

Community and Partnerships

Inclusive Excellence

Some key insights to shape the future

**These insights have informed the development of this Framework**

- Previous plans and actions that focussed on issues and individual identities (such as gender or disability) served us well. However, these did not always consider the **multifaceted intersecting identities of our community**, which require a more holistic approach.

- **The diversity of our learners and staff needs to better reflect the broader population in the communities we serve,** particularly when we consider distribution across our disciplines, our work roles, and in progression through RMIT to higher qualifications, equitable employment outcomes, and leadership.

- Our students and staff want to **see visible diverse role models,** to believe that they can stay, succeed and progress.

- They also want us to make sure that everyone who comes to RMIT is aware of our value of inclusion, that **we are working to identify and address structural and systemic barriers and inequities, and their drivers,** and that we support all staff and students to develop their inclusive practice.

- Because we have not always considered **the needs across our diverse community** when we are planning new programs, policies, or services, not all staff and learners can participate equitably from day one, so we undertake costly and inefficient remediation or individual provision to 'make things work' for individuals.

- There is an opportunity for us to **commit to designing for universal provision for all people,** personalised where needed to support the ways individuals learn and work best.

We are recognised as a leader in diversity and inclusion for our years of action and achievement

- There are great teams, leaders, and practices everywhere. We have effective programs on related significant issues such as sustainability, sexual harm, health safety and wellbeing, and gender equity, such as through the Athena SWAN program.

- We should be proud of these achievements, and of the shared RMIT value of inclusion and the benefits for retention and success, innovation and creativity - but we need to understand the ways in which we are not 'living up to the promise' for everyone in our community.
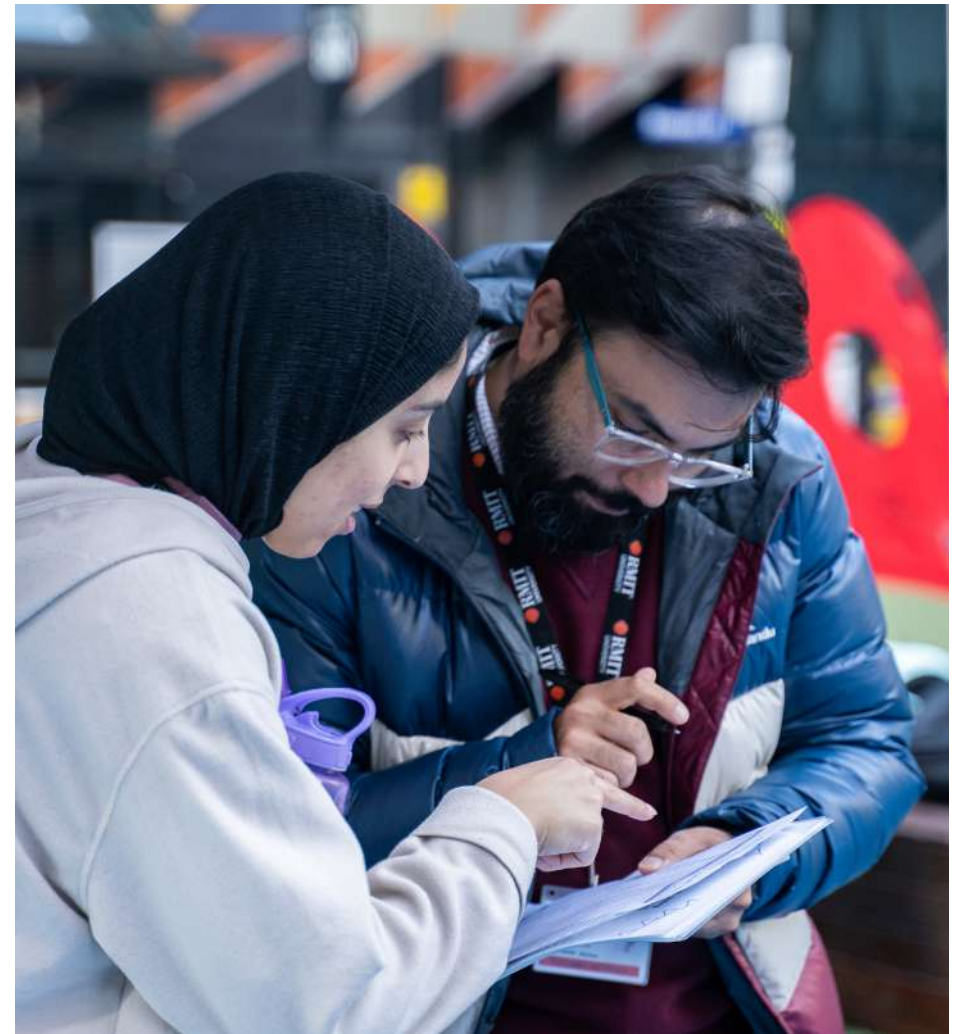
Guiding principles to inform our aspirations and actions

This Framework builds on a foundation of inclusion, with existing policies and processes that have fostered inclusion and built our capability in IDEA at RMIT. Recognising this, the principles below will further elevate our IDEA maturity across RMIT Group, ensuring consistent inclusive experiences across campuses, colleges, portfolios and entities.

These five principles underpin the aspirations and priority actions identified throughout the Framework:

Intersectional

RMIT will adopt and drive an intersectional whole-of-institution approach, sharing and celebrating our good practice and aligning around common aspirations.

Responsible Practice

We commit to recognising, interpreting, and acting upon multiple principles and values including reconciliation, cultural safety, ethical responsibility, diversity and inclusion, in all our activities and relationships.

Universal Design

Ensuring that our products, systems and environments are built for the diversity of the community from the outset so they are usable by all people underpins our commitment of being 'inclusive by design'.

Local Leadership

Local leadership and action will support continued insight and action on inclusion, diversity, equity and access across all locations and operations in the RMIT Group.

Flexibility

Having the flexibility to respond to emerging needs and priorities will be essential to our aspiration of being inclusive by design for everyone, everywhere, all the time.

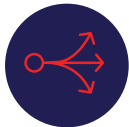# Our aspirations for inclusion, diversity, equity and access for 2031

Inclusive by Design: Everyone, Everywhere, All the time.

This Framework sets out five domains of Inclusive Excellence:

1. Access, Participation and Success

A more diverse learner and staff profile with equity in retention, success and outcomes.

2. Culture, Capability and Leadership

An environment where all individuals are supported, are respected, feel a sense of belonging and are thriving.

3. Education and Research

Education and research that demonstrate best practice in inclusion, diversity, equity and access.

4. Infrastructure, Services and Operations

Inclusive facilities, tools and services. Planning, resourcing and communicating our IDEA aspirations and achievements.
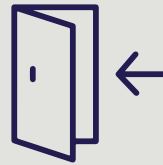
5. Community and Partnerships

We engage reciprocally and in partnership with the communities we serve, promoting inclusion, diversity, equity and access.

The following pages further articulate RMIT's IDEA Framework, including our aspirations and priorities for action under each of the five domains of Inclusive Excellence.

Access, Participation and Success

The Access, Participation and Success domain focusses on continuing to build the diversity of our student and staff profile, ensuring all can participate and thrive in learning through life and work and in fulfilling careers.

It includes the actions we take to attract and recruit diverse staff and learners, especially for groups that remain under-represented. It includes what we do to ensure successful transition, development and progression through RMIT.

This means ensuring that our mainstream policies, provisions and services are responsive to diversity, and that we also develop and deliver targeted initiatives for particular groups where needed.

What we learned:

The diversity of our student and staff profile does not yet match the communities we serve, particularly when we consider distribution across our disciplines and work roles.

Women in STEMM, people with disability, and low socioeconomic and regional students remain under-represented. There remain challenges with retention, success and progression, with employment outcomes for students from some of these groups being below the RMIT average, and a lack of diversity in RMIT staff leadership identified.

When considering what causes these issues and how to take action, compounding intersectional barriers factor into these inequities, requiring a holistic approach.

Flexible, personalised adjustments and supports (such as for disability among our staff and learners) have a positive impact, however it was noted these provisions are not implemented consistently.

Learners cited finance, time, travel, and RMIT processes and systems as the main challenges for their participation in learning at RMIT and in industry. Staff raised concerns about inequitable workload allocations along with access to career pathways and developmental opportunities.

Our Aspirations

1. We empower all learners and staff to pursue learning through life and work and fulfilling careers.

2. We are a diverse community and enable equity in retention, success and outcomes for staff and students.

3. All RMIT students will thrive and succeed in their education, enabled through personalised student experiences and services delivered at scale.

4. We are a leader in employability and strive to achieve parity in employment outcomes for all our students.

5. We provide equitable access to career development and progression opportunities for staff.

Access, Participation and Success
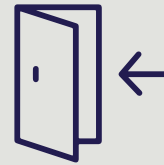
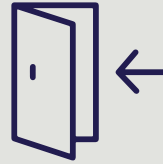## Our priorities for action (learner focus):

- Inform aspiration towards education for under-represented groups through outreach and engagement opportunities, services and supports, including career and program advice.

- Value diverse students' potential, agency and capability for success through inclusive admissions including equity access schemes, alternative selection criteria, and recognition of prior learning.

- Facilitate successful student transition by outreach contact, mentoring, career and academic advice, counselling, and peer engagement.

- Support learning skills development with the provision of resources and professional services and advice.

- Build students' financial capability and provide financial supports for participation, targeting students in need.

- Analyse and address the barriers to progression and completion in learning, considering the distribution of students across disciplines, program levels, research and developmental opportunities.

- Enhance career and employability services and opportunities for target priority cohorts that have worse employment outcomes.

- Ensure equitable participation in industry-based learning for diverse learners with individual adjustments where needed, engaging with industry to enhance diverse graduate recruitment.

> "
>
> *"I think there needs to be more financial support for students to do placements and unpaid internships. I can't afford to take that much time off work."*
>
> (RMIT Learner)

Access, Participation and Success

## Our priorities for action (staff focus):

- Ensure equitable access to career development and progression opportunities through all career stages (international conference attendance, visibility in talent mapping).

- Develop and implement a compelling Employee Value Proposition that speaks to our values, promotes our commitment to inclusion, attracts and retains diverse people, and reinforces our culture of care.

- Review performance frameworks to ensure a focus on career and personal development (considering flexibility, accessibility, professional development, workload, wellbeing, and engagement) that recognises individual's needs, barriers, and aspirations.

- Undertake an end-to-end review of the onboarding process from point of hire, to end of probationary period through the lens of universal inclusive design. Implement identified improvements.

- Leverage inclusive hiring practices (Special Measures, Achievement Relative to Opportunity and targeted/identified roles) to increase workforce diversity in areas of underrepresentation.

- Enable people facing systemic and/or personal barriers/societal expectations (i.e., parents and carers) to fully participate and experience success at RMIT by implementing adequate individual and team support, training and tailored initiatives.

- Explore and expand opportunities to partner with community organisations and continue participation in diversity employment and mentoring programs such as the 'Stepping Into' and 'PACE' programs for people with disability and 'Out for Australia' mentoring for early career employees.

"

"It is not managers necessarily creating the problem of not being supportive; they (including mine) are. It is the system that lacks flexibility in academic careers and workloads"

(Staff member)

Culture, Capability and Leadership
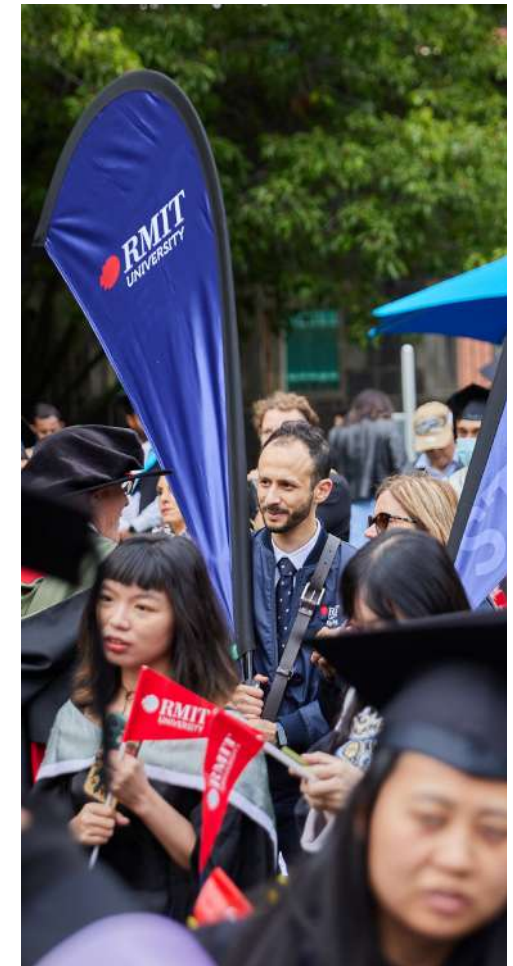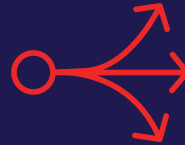
The Culture, Capability and Leadership domain focuses on core enablers of inclusion. It recognises that the visible artefacts, the values, beliefs and behaviour, and the implicit assumptions and norms we adopt at RMIT will shape inclusion and belonging.

This domain also recognises the critical roles leaders at all levels play in setting the tone and in modelling inclusion. It acknowledges that creating inclusive cultures requires a commitment to ongoing learning, continuous improvement and capability uplift – both as individuals and as an organisation.

What we learned:

Legislation, our students, current and prospective employees are all demanding a proactive approach to ensuring inclusive learning and working environments and services. Our students, staff and external research reinforced the importance of leadership at all levels having a deliberate focus on culture.

Learners and staff consistently expressed a need to develop the capability of the RMIT community to work in diverse environments and create inclusive cultures. While for many, RMIT represents a place where our students and staff could be their 'whole selves,' this was not consistent. Increasing visible role models at all levels of leadership was identified as a key action that would increase belonging for both learners and staff.

Microaggressions and unconscious biases impact belonging and inclusion for people with diverse backgrounds, orientations, cultures, religions and identities. This theme emerged during consultation with women in male-dominated fields, older (50+) women, carers, people who are gender diverse, people with disability and people who are neurodiverse, and has been a recurring theme across all facets of identity and diversity. It was particularly prevalent in conversations regarding cultural inclusion and racism.

Actively challenging assumptions and norms, and an active commitment to antiracism, while eliminating all forms of discrimination, are crucial to embedding a culture where everyone can thrive.

Challenging cultures and systems built on colonial foundations is essential to creating an RMIT group that is inclusive by design. It requires all leaders to challenge ingrained structures, and to commit to self reflection, continual learning and understanding different ways of being and doing.

Our Aspirations

1. Inclusion and belonging are core to our identity at RMIT. All members of the student and staff community play an active role in inclusion. Our culture creates an environment where all individuals are respected, experience safety and belonging, and are thriving.

2. Our leaders and decision makers are highly skilled and inclusive with diverse backgrounds and perspectives who are committed to reflecting and advancing the communities we serve.

3. Our community of leaders, learners and staff are empowered to develop and apply best practice in inclusion, diversity, equity and access.

Culture, Capability and Leadership
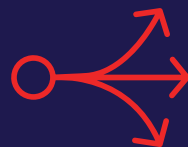
Our priorities for action:

- Embed IDEA capability and accountabilities in all student and staff leadership roles and development programs. Develop and deliver a suite of capability uplift initiatives that address existing and emerging capability needs of leaders, students and staff, and empower action in inclusion.

- Increase the number, diversity and visibility of diverse role models at various stages of progression and leadership.

- Identify and eliminate unique, systemic and/or intersectional barriers for staff and learners accessing leadership opportunities at all levels creating pathways for diverse staff and students to take on leadership roles.

- Support the creation and sustainability of dedicated staff and student networks to progress advocacy and/or creating belonging in interest areas or identities/orientations (eg cultural inclusion, gender, women of colour, disability/accessibility)

- Proactively build cultures of inclusion that challenge colonial structures and systems.

- Build on current programs to prevent and respond to inappropriate behaviours, discrimination and harassment and microaggressions, including through:

  - partnerships to implement approaches to active bystander action, antiracism and civility,

  - reinforcing positive approaches to addressing unconscious biases and behaviours, and

  - improving support, complaints and reporting processes.

- Continue to challenge stereotypes and gendered norms and roles in education and work, with a view to addressing resistance and backlash and building equitable systems and structures that enable all RMIT learners and staff to thrive.

- Ensure equitable access to, and participation in professional development, career opportunities and events of significance for people of all backgrounds, cultures, religions, abilities and orientations.

- Empower teams, individuals and networks to affirm and celebrate diversity, including celebrating days of significance.

> "
>
> *"Differences in leadership are very important. We need to celebrate and promote different styles of leadership."*
>
> (Staff member)

Education and Research

The Education and Research domain ensures that inclusion is part of everything we teach and research. It builds students and graduates who consider alternative perspectives and are well equipped to take inclusive practice into the communities they live and work.

Like the Culture, Capability and Leadership domain, Education and Research builds the capacity of the RMIT community to apply inclusive practice. The distinction is that Education and Research focuses on shifting pedagogical approaches to teaching and embedding diverse perspectives and experiences into curriculum and research.

What we learned:

The RMIT community provided examples of good practice in education and research, while highlighting the need for greater consistency across RMIT along with other opportunities for improvement.

There was a clear call to action for more consistent and frequent development on the principles and practice of equity, diversity and inclusion and how to work with diverse cohorts of learners. There were positive examples of educators facilitating inclusive environments, with opportunities to share further the current good practice.

There is a continued need to design our curriculum, learning resources, pedagogy and assessment for inclusion and accessibility for all. Learners also made

a strong call for embedding First Nations and other diverse perspectives in curriculum, and for inclusion, diversity, equity and access content to be embedded.

Educators shared challenges in embedding inclusive practices and implementing Equitable Learning Plans. Researchers highlighted barriers to progression and the need for continued attention to diverse representation in research including teams, events and conferences. They also pointed to concerns about biases and workload distribution, describing how these disproportionately impact some people.

Our Aspirations

1. Our programs, curriculum, pedagogy, and delivery are inspiring, inclusive, accessible, and flexible.

2. Equity and inclusion principles and practices, and First Nations knowledges, are embedded into the curriculum, valuing diversity of thought, perspectives, and experiences.

3. RMIT learners and staff are culturally intelligent Ethical Global Citizens who can lead and apply best practice in inclusion, diversity, equity and access across all disciplines and vocations.

4. RMIT researchers are internationally-recognised trailblazers in research on inclusion, diversity, equity and access matters, and in research with, about and for the diverse communities we serve.

Education and Research

Our priorities for action:

- Continue to develop the capability of our community of leaders, students, and staff so they are empowered to develop and apply best practice in inclusion, diversity, equity and access.

- Embed the ability to understand and apply concepts of universal design, accessibility, and inclusive practice as a graduate capability.

- Continue to build upon inclusive, accessible, and flexible program and course design and pedagogies so that all can participate from day one, and provide personalised adjustments, services and support for individual students where required.

- When policies, programs and services that have a significant impact on students are being developed or reviewed, consider how they will meet the needs of different students, and design or change for improvements where needed.

- Support educators in inclusive teaching practice and including diverse perspectives in curriculum, through capability development, sharing their best practice and the provision of resources.

- Unite and amplify diverse researcher and educator profiles and support them to engage with topics of inclusion, diversity, equity and access across disciplines and vocations.

- Apply and share best practice in research about and with diverse communities, valuing lived and learned experience and community partnerships.

- Amplify research and research practice that advances social impact, inclusion and equity outcomes to influence and support industry, government and communities.

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"Amplifications of minority cultures and perspectives and embedding these into curriculum (are required) to foster culturally responsive and safe learning environments for all RMIT students."

(Student)

Infrastructure, Services and Operations
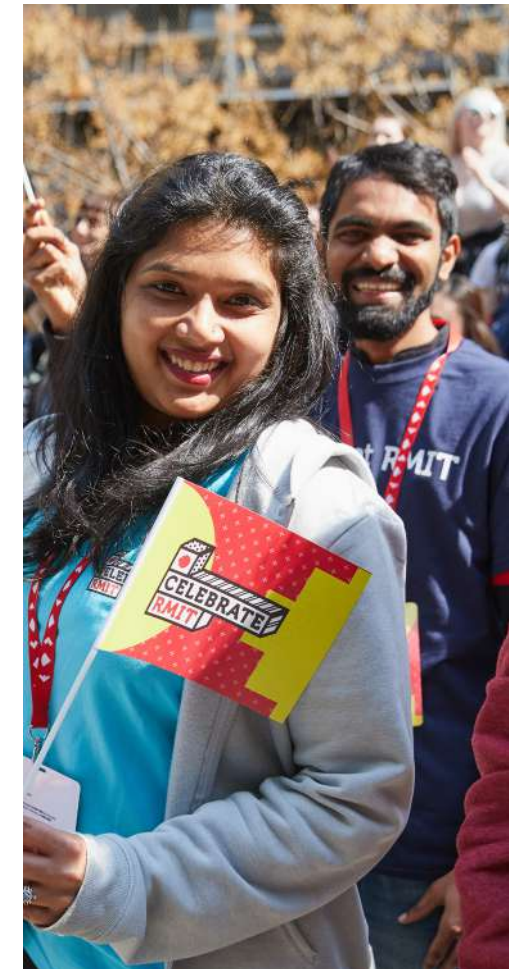
The Infrastructure, Services and Operations domain focuses on our physical, digital and cultural environments, tools and services and how these enable inclusion at RMIT. It is about demonstrating inclusion and welcome, while providing practical provision for our diverse community in our campus facilities, our digital tools and systems, and in our communications and operations.

It highlights the importance of planning, resourcing, evaluation and communications, and the ways in which each of these respectively, and together, support inclusion, diversity, equity and access.

What we learned:

There was a generally positive response from students about built environments at RMIT campuses. It was noted, however, that accessibility and ease of use of physical and digital facilities at RMIT were still identified as a barrier to full participation by both students and staff.

There was strong demand from students and staff to design for universal participation by people of diverse needs and circumstances as a means for overcoming these barriers and ensuring access for all. This feedback is congruent with best practice, noting that considering diverse needs in design not only ensures inclusion, but is far more cost effective and less inconvenient and stigmatising for individuals than making adjustments afterwards.

Our community of learners and students are both aware of, and positive about, the work being undertaken and the progress being made, however there is a need to continue to further promote diverse voices and signal welcome, inclusion and our pride in the richness of our diverse community.

Through consultation and research, we know that our systems, structures and support services are built on colonial foundations that have created and continue to reinforce systemic barriers. These need to be addressed in our planning, resourcing, evaluation, physical and digital spaces, policies, processes and procedures.

Our Aspirations

1. RMIT is 'inclusive by design'.

2. All RMIT physical, digital and cultural environments are inclusive, accessible and safe.

3. We use evidence and evaluation to continuously improve our practice.

4. RMIT applies a lens of inclusion, diversity, equity and access to assess the impact of strategic and operational priorities, planning and investment decisions, and leverages its buying power to drive inclusion and positive community outcomes.

Infrastructure, Services and Operations

Our priorities for action:

- Embed universal design across the RMIT Group, with an initial focus on the built environment, digital tools and platforms, communications, policies and processes, and curriculum and pedagogy.

- Eliminate barriers to accessing information, services and resources. Continue to communicate resources and services and monitor usage.

- Implement services and initiatives to enhance wellbeing, retention, success, and participation in the life of the RMIT community, using data and analytics to provide personalised services that affirm strengths.

- Review and update workplace and learning adjustment processes in line with current best practice, with adequate knowledge and resourcing for staff and learners to seek advice and support.

- Embed Indigenous perspectives and cultural safety requirements into our systems procurement, requirements gathering, tendering and implementation processes.

- Continue work to improve reporting, support and complaints processes, including alternative avenues for raising concerns, with improved communication to staff and learners about how to resolve or report inappropriate behaviours.

- Progress a data improvement project to enable accurate and fulsome data collection with robust reporting capability providing quality insights to inform analysis and action on inclusion, diversity, equity and access. This must include hearing from our community and responding to emerging issues.

- Implement and embed an institutional governance model to support the implementation of this Framework across the RMIT Group, supported by reporting and evaluation, intersectional frameworks, and the operationalisation of principles to ensure the Framework and associated plans are responsive to local needs.

- Regularly review and amend the model to reflect ongoing maturity and progress towards embedding action at the local level.

"

"We need to make sure access ... to facilities and technology is considered; this goes hand in hand with universal design."

(RMIT Staff)

Community and Partnerships

The Community and Partnerships domain considers how others contribute to our knowledge and success in relation to inclusion, diversity, equity and access, and how we can reciprocate.

It considers the ways we can have a positive impact in the communities we serve, sharing our resources and expertise and learning from others.

What we learned:

Recognising our position as a leading organisation, there is an expectation that RMIT will demonstrate leadership and public advocacy in support of inclusion and diversity, particularly concerning marginalised communities or related issues.

We can also influence broader societal outcomes through our purchasing power and by the standards we expect of organisations that host our students and researchers.

Partnering with organisations can reinforce or diminish safety and inclusion among RMIT staff and learners, and the communities we serve, so we need to carefully consider who we 'go into business' with.

RMIT partners with a number of organisations to provide specialist advice, resources and services for its students and staff, for example in relation to groups such as people seeking asylum.

We are also called upon to share our wonderful campus facilities, our research and practice insights with other organisations with similar aspirations towards greater social inclusion and equity.

We also have wonderful campus facilities that we make available to community organisations that empower and advocate.

Our Aspirations

1. We live up to our ambition to make a positive societal difference in the communities where we are located.

2. We seek to be a source of good practice in inclusion, diversity, equity and access and to address our mission to the broader community through a positive influence on public policy, academic practice and broader societal debate and practice.

3. RMIT partners with industry, communities and community organisations to identify and overcome needs and challenges and to engender a more inclusive society.

Community and Partnerships

Our priorities for action:

- Expand and deepen new and existing relationships with people who have diverse lived experience as well as specialist community organisations, government, universities (local and international), research institutes and industry in support of our aspirations and actions for enhanced inclusion, diversity, equity and access at RMIT.

- Share our research, resources, facilities, knowledge, and practices beyond the RMIT doors in ways that serve the communities where we operate, and that contribute to broader and sustained social inclusion and equity, recognising that we can learn from others.

- Enhance RMIT Group's approach to serving our communities, with a view to

ensuring RMIT partners with organisations with similar values and practices, with evidence of their capacity to provide safe and inclusive environments and cultures.

- Engage with and influence industry on the benefits and practices of inclusive recruitment and employment.

- Empower and support RMIT leaders, students and staff to take action in support of social inclusion and equity in the broader community, through public advocacy or other contributions including volunteering.

> "
> *"I have started to realise the importance of community and supporting/utilising community to tackle diversity and inclusion challenges."*
>
> (Staff member)

Making it Happen

Evaluating our impact

Evaluating our impact will involve assessing our position as a leader in inclusion, diversity, equity and access against external benchmarks and peak body research, identifying and measuring learner and workforce demographics against comparative populations and analysing qualitative and quantitative feedback to ensure accountability and delivery of the Framework.

	This evaluation area means:	Example indicators for monitoring progress include:	
Who we are	We aim to understand the diversity of our learner and staff profile and to measure representation, retention, progression, and outcomes for priority groups. Where relevant, we will compare data for priority groups to a relevant comparator population such as all students or all staff, with a view to moving towards parity over the course of the Framework.	• Staff recruitment outcomes for priority diversity groups, where relevant by work role, or level • Numbers of applications and enrolments from our student equity access schemes • Access rates of commencing students from priority groups	• Representation of diverse identities and backgrounds in student and staff leadership roles • Distribution of students and staff across disciplines, including those in which certain groups are traditionally under-represented (such as women in STEMM)
How we feel and what we say about RMIT	Understanding how our learners and staff experience the culture and navigate the systems, tools, and structures at RMIT will indicate progress towards an RMIT that is 'inclusive by design'. We expect that this will be reflected in qualitative and qualitative data across all demographics, comparing outcomes for the priority diversity cohorts to other cohorts of learners or staff to identify gaps. Our goal is an RMIT Group where all individuals are supported, respected, feel a sense of belonging and are thriving with the tools, facilities, support and development they need to succeed.	• Staff engagement survey: identifying differences in the scores and qualitative feedback of staff across backgrounds, abilities, orientations and identities including their intention to stay at RMIT and perceptions of career development opportunities • Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey: identifying mental wellbeing indicators and psychosocial safety risks that are exacerbated or disproportionate for staff and/or students across diverse backgrounds. orientations, identities and abilities	• Evaluative measures of teaching, learning, and the student experience, as in student survey responses on 'overall satisfaction' and the 'Good Teaching' score • Number of student equitable learning plans containing recommended reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities • Student participation in developmental programs and services and work integrated learning • Retention of priority student cohorts
What we achieve	We aim for parity in completion and graduate outcomes for our students, and in career progression and recognition for our staff. This requires inclusive programs, curriculum, pedagogy, and delivery that are inspiring, accessible, and flexible for our students. For our staff, this means ensuring access to developmental and higher-level opportunities.	• Outcomes for priority student cohorts including courses passed, retention, and program completion • Graduate outcomes (such as graduates in employment or further study) for priority cohorts • Staff and student access and participation in events, professional development opportunities, resources and guidance materials	• Academic promotion among priority cohorts: rates of application and success • Internal mobility (workforce demographics) – internal recruitment rates, short term opportunities such as secondments and higher duties appointments, appointments to higher level roles.
How we influence	RMIT's ambition is to make a positive societal difference in the communities where we are located. Understanding the nature and scale of our impact will inform how we continue to contribute to a more inclusive community, wherever we operate.	• Research outputs related to Sustainable Development Goals • Social procurement outcomes and panel partnerships	• Evaluative frameworks for industry partnerships and projects

Driving local action and international impact

Achievement of our aspirations requires a whole-of-RMIT approach. Alongside existing planning and implementation mechanisms across our operations and locations, our diversity-focused networks, committees and working groups support the implementation of this Framework. Their roles are outlined below:

Identity and issue-based groups

RMIT has active learner and staff networks based on issues and identities. These provide a forum for peer support, and to discuss common experiences or concerns, which may be referred to the Forum or the Advisory Committee.

All locations and operations

RMIT has many existing planning and implementation mechanisms such as working groups and committees at the local level.

We aim to ensure efficiency by utilising these existing mechanisms wherever possible, with agenda items reflecting an IDEA focus.

Forum

Brings together key people from networks, working groups and aligned projects, to share progress and knowledge, raise concerns and focus on professional development.

Advisory Committee

Endorse, approve and champion IDEA initiatives.

Members will have an initial responsibility to activate and support local action.

Provides a pathway to other Committees, Academic Board and Council.

Driving local action and international impact (cont.)

Over the life of the Framework, reflecting our aspiration towards 'Inclusive by design: *Everyone, everywhere, all the time*', **planning resourcing and governance will be embedded into standing mechanisms at the local level, with whole-of-Group oversight and evaluation.**

Through our planning and implementation structures and processes we aim to:

• Drive local area action, aligned with this Framework's aspirations and action areas

• Hear the voices of people with diverse lived experiences

• Enable collaboration and knowledge sharing, efficient and effective planning and implementation, supported by technology

• Link or integrate related agendas and programs of work, improving impact and minimising duplication