

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Action Plan 2023-2026

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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 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.



## We connect

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

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 challenge

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



## We are real

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

Cancer doesn't discriminate and neither do we.

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 framework will allow Canteen to embody our values through action to create an environment all young people and families feel valued, respected and supported, and where everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.



## Acknowledgement of Country

Canteen acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and sovereign Custodians of this land. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We are committed to providing inclusive and appropriate support for First Nations young people, their kin and community impacted by cancer. First Nations peoples are respectfully advised this resource may contain images, names or stories of people who have passed away.



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



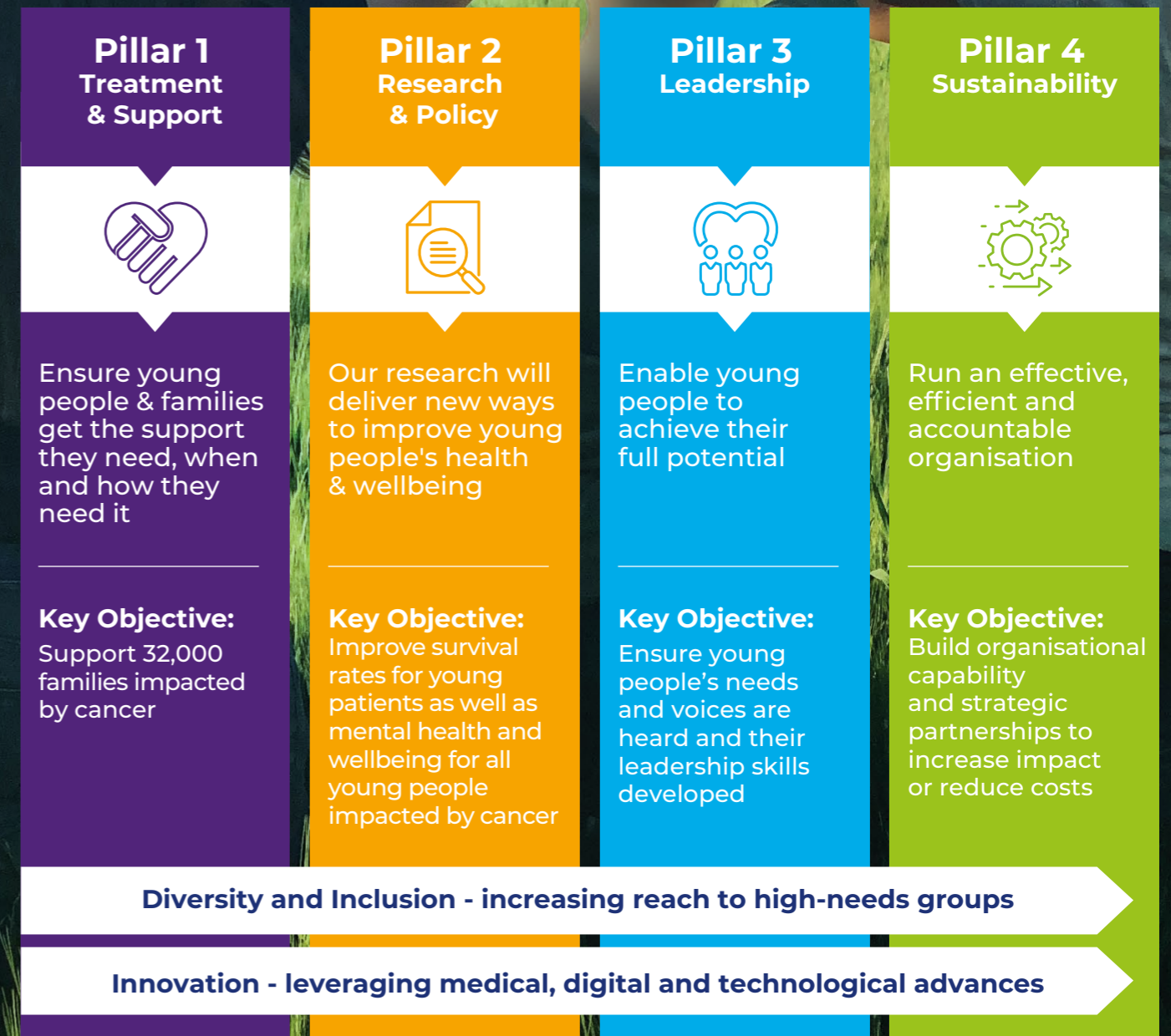
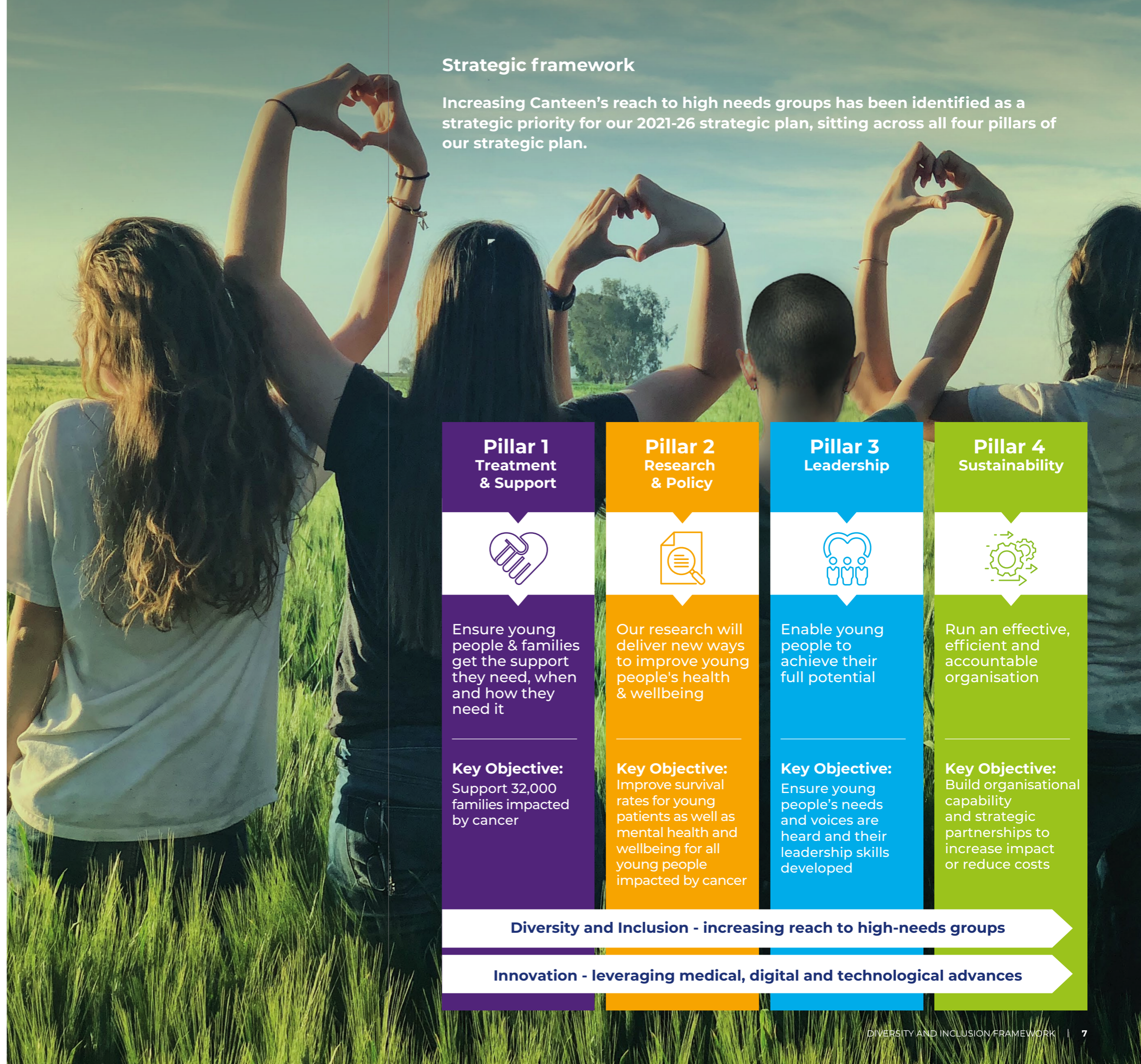
# Strategic Plan

## What success looks like in 2026:

- 1 Canteen will have helped **32,000 families cope with the immense challenges of cancer** while also increasing our reach amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, the LGBTQI+ community as well as culturally and linguistically diverse young people.
- 2 Canteen led service models will **continue to inspire changes** in practice internationally and nationally while our research unit will remain at the forefront of psycho-oncological and youth specific psychosocial research into the most effective interventions for issues affecting young people's wellbeing.
- 3 Canteen will be at the **forefront of medical, digital and technological innovation** in order to enhance the treatment and support provided to young people and families dealing with illness in the family and other adversities.
- 4 Canteen will **lead advocacy in national and international arenas** which will see governments and other stakeholders prioritising the needs of young people dealing with issues which heavily impact their wellbeing.
- 5 Canteen will investigate the needs of **young people dealing with the impact of significant health issues (other than cancer)** or struggling with **grief and loss** and explore the potential for extending our high-quality support services to them.
- 6 Canteen will apply our strong organisational capability **to build powerful partnerships with other charities** in a way that enhances the missions of all organisations and/or streamlines costs for the partners involved.

## Strategic framework

Increasing Canteen's reach to high needs groups has been identified as a strategic priority for our 2021-26 strategic plan, sitting across all four pillars of our strategic plan.





# Our D&I Framework: Priority population groups

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

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Nations Peoples
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex communities (LGBTQI+)
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people (CALD)
- People living with a disability, including neurodiversity

Our strategy consists of three approaches. Firstly, we will continue to action the Reconciliation Action Plan Framework through Reconciliation Action Plan's as a commitment to achieving true reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Secondly, we will seek to implement and achieve accreditation for the Rainbow Tick Standards, which is the gold standard in LGBTQI+ inclusive practice.

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 impacted by cancer.



## Framework outline

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





## Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

We are proud to have launched our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan in February 2023, which continues to build on the steps taken in our Reflect RAP, strengthen our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, organisations, the community, and provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to access Canteen services when they need us.

Canteen's vision for reconciliation is that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and their families, 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 Innovate RAP, which can be read [online](#). 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 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 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 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 embark on achieving accreditation against the Rainbow Tick standards, a quality framework that helps health service organisations demonstrate that they are safe, inclusive and affirming service and employers 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 the Rainbow Tick framework to strengthen our ability to meet the unmet psychosocial needs of LGBTQI+ young people and families 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 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. neurodiversity

Cancer not only affects people living with disabilities, but cancer treatment may result in permanent physical and neurological disabilities for young cancer patients and survivors. Approximately one in five Australians are living with 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 living with physical disabilities, 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 with disabilities are often excluded in decision making around their health care, especially those with intellectual disabilities. For individuals with cognitive impairment, intellectual disability, and neurodiversity, navigating the health care system can be challenging, making it essential to revise our approach to working with young people and families living with disabilities.

We will conduct research into the cancer specific needs of young people with cancer living with disabilities, as a gap in current knowledge exists. Canteen is committed to reviewing our programs, therapeutic frameworks, physical and online locations to ensure provide additional supports that are always available when needed and there are no barriers for disabled young people, families and 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.

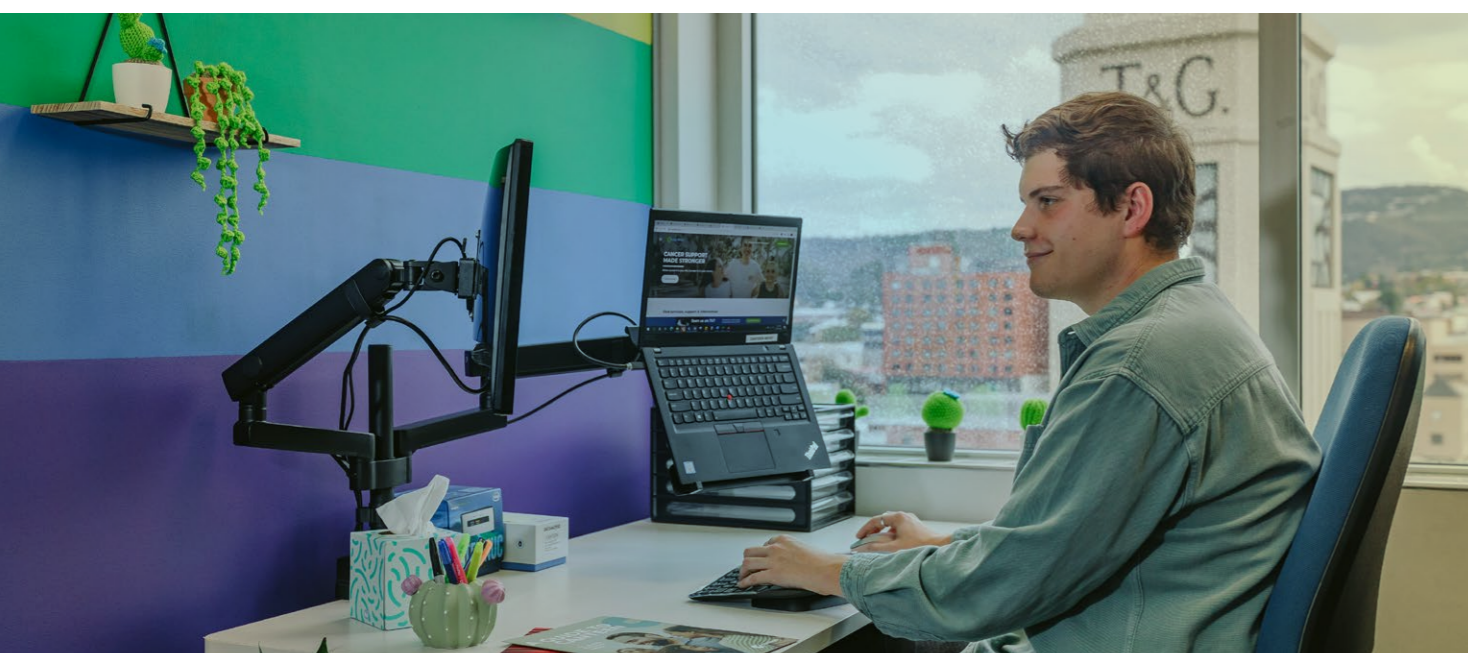
Intersectionality is defined as: 'an approach that understands the interconnected nature of social categorisations – such as gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, religion, class, socioeconomic status, gender identity, ability or age – which create overlapping and interdependent systems of 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.

## Action plan

Action	Deliverable	Area responsible	Timeline (Canteen FY)	Area of focus
<b>Formalise organisational commitment to Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b>	D&I Framework launch	Executive team, Marketing & Communications	Q1 2023	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability
	Establish Executive Steering Committee	Executive team	Q1 2023	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability
	Develop and implement D&I policy	Executive team, HR	Q1 – Q2 2023	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Reconciliation Action Plan endorsed by Reconciliation Australia	Services	Ongoing	RAP
	Affirm the Darlington Statement	Executive team	Q1 2024	LGBTQI+
<b>Embed lived experience in D&amp;I initiatives</b>	Establish D&I Working Group	Services	Q1 – Q2 2023	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability
	Develop a strategy to engage Canteen young people & families in D&I initiatives	Services, RESP	Q3 – Q4 2023	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability
	Implement consumer engagement strategy	Services, RESP	Q1 2024 – ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability
<b>Create a welcoming and accessible organisation</b>	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 living with cancer	Marketing & Communications, Services, YCS	Q2 2023 – Q4 2024	LGBTQI+, RAP
	Translate resources into 2 languages other than English	YCS, Marketing & Communications	Q1 – Q3 2024	CALD, Disability, RAP
	Review and update informational content, for LGBTQI+ inclusive language based on Out with Cancer findings	Marketing & Communications	Q1 2024	LGBTQI+
	Audit of State and National offices for accessibility	HR, Services	Q1 2024	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability,
	Improve accessibility of physical office spaces	HR	Q1 – Q4 2025	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Update Canteen Connect and Parenting Through Cancer to meet accessibility standards	Data & Technology	Q1 2024 – Q4 2025	CALD, Disability
<b>Celebrate our diverse community</b>	Participation in Pride events around the country	Services, 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	HR	Q1 2023 – Ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP





Action	Deliverable	Area responsible	Timeline (Canteen FY)	Area of focus
<b>Build staff capacity and understanding</b>	Review and update HR policies in alignment with best-practice standards for inclusivity	HR	Q1 – Q3 2023	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Implement and embed HR policy updates	HR	Q3 – 4 2023	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Professional development and training for All-Staff	HR	Q3 2023 – ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Track staff participation and engagement in training	HR	Ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
<b>Culturally safe service provision</b>	Service delivery staff to participate in training addressing the health needs specific to diverse population groups	Services	Q2 2023, yearly	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	RESP, Services, Fundraising, Data & Technology	Q3 – 4 2023	LGBTQI+
	Outward facing staff to participate in confidentiality and data training	Services, Fundraising, Data & Technology, HR	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	Services	Q3 2023 – Q4 2024	LGBTQI+
	Development and implementation of a First Nations Cultural Framework	Services	Q1 2023 – Q2 2024	RAP
	Consult with the YARN to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded within LGBTQI+ inclusion as part of the First Nations Framework	Services	Q3 2023 – Q4 2024	LGBTQI+, RAP
	Engage with expert organisations, referral networks and Communities of Practice	Executive team, HR, Services	Q1 2023 – ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
<b>Foster relationships with community organisations</b>	Identify opportunities to meaningfully engage with community organisations through state team community engagement plans	Services	Q3 2023 – Q2 2024	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Create resource library with information and appropriate referral pathways for young people and families from diverse communities	Services	Q3 2023 – ongoing	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Explore collaboration opportunities across content development, merchandise and events	Marketing & Communications, Fundraising	Q1 – Q4 2024	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP

Action	Deliverable	Area responsible	Timeline (Canteen FY)	Area of focus
<b>Develop an action plan targeting the cancer specific needs if young people and families belonging to CALD communities and living with disabilities</b>	Environmental scan to identify best-practice standards for engaging CALD and young people with a disability living with cancer.	RESP	Q1 – Q4 2024	CALD, Disability
	Needs assessment to identify cancer specific needs and evidenced-based strategies to engage young people and families belonging to CALD communities and living with disabilities	RESP	Q1 2024 – Q1 2025	CALD, Disability
	Co-design CALD and disability inclusion strategy with young people and families	RESP, Services	Q1 2025 – Q2 2026	CALD, Disability, RAP
	Consult with YARN and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and families to ensure their perspectives are embedded	RESP, Services	Q1 2025 – Q2 2026	CALD, Disability, RAP
	Create and implement the CALD and Disability inclusion strategy	Executive team	Q3 – 4 2026 and beyond	CALD, Disability, RAP
	<b>Recognition as an affirming and safe organisation for diverse communities</b>	Regularly share updates to stakeholders on D&I initiatives	Marketing & communications	Q1 2023 – ongoing
Participate in Pride in Health and Wellbeing Equality Index		Services, HR	Q1 2023 – ongoing	LGBTQI+
Begin Rainbow Tick Accreditation Process		Services	Q1 – Q4 2025	LGBTQI+
Achieve Rainbow Tick accreditation		Services, HR	Q1 2026	LGBTQI+
<b>Continuously strive to be more D&amp;I as an organisation</b>	Ensure Risk management plans are culturally responsive	Executive team	Q3 2023 – Q2 2024	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Embed identified risks to diverse communities organisational risk management structure	Executive team	Q3 2023 – Q2 2024	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Create mechanisms for collecting feedback from young people, families and staff	HR, Services	Q1 2024	LGBTQI+, CALD, Disability, RAP
	Update processes, systems, programs periodically based on consumer feedback & best practice standards	HR, Services	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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