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Everyone belongs

By Paul Verschuer, Executive General Manager, AEMO Services

The need to belong is an intrinsic motivation for all human beings. By belonging to a group, we feel as if we are a part of something bigger and more important than ourselves.

As business leaders, we have a responsibility to foster cultures within our organisations that establish awareness and transform mindsets, behaviours, and practices to create and sustain a diverse, equitable and inclusive (DEI) environment, where our people feel a sense of belonging and shared purpose. Not only is it the right thing to do, but there are also benefits to us as an organisation and the work we deliver for NSW electricity consumers.

The business case for DEI is well proven. Countless studies have shown that workplaces that embrace DEI perform better, make better decisions, and experience greater profitability. Inclusive companies are almost twice as likely to be considered innovation leaders in their market, organisations with diversity in senior positions have higher financial performance, and a sense of belonging is the top driver of employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention.

At AEMO Services, we unite brilliant minds from all walks of life. Our values and company culture reflect inclusivity, integrity, empowerment, empathy, and collaboration and our policies and processes embrace, value, and make use of DEI in our leadership and workforce.

This diversity fosters greater innovation and creativity, provides wider perspectives and skills to enhance business decision-making, and creates a happier, more engaged, and productive working environment.

Actively incorporating DEI in the workplace is crucial to organisational success. It requires organisation-wide effort and commitment to creating a culture that embraces and celebrates DEI. At AEMO and AEMO Services, we:

- utilise recruitment practices that support DEI
- encourage behaviours that support a DEI workplace, including company policies to address discrimination, harassment, bullying, vilification, and victimisation
- support physical and mental health and wellbeing and provide reasonable adjustment for employees with a disability or mental illness
- support LGBTIQ+ employees including those who may be transitioning or affirming their gender
- provide flexible working practices that balances our employees' needs and personal circumstances while delivering on business and stakeholder needs
- provide opportunities for our people to play an active role in DEI committees, with focus areas including women, pride, cultural background, flexibility, all abilities, and reconciliation

- confidential employee surveys to help build suitable programs to support DEI in the workplace.

As a relatively new organisation, AEMO Services has been intentional in our organisational design and planning to build a company culture that fosters a sense of belonging and makes everyone feel like they are a valued part of the team. For us, it is about having the right people in the right role and setting people up for success by removing as many barriers as possible to enable qualified and suitable people from diverse backgrounds to join and contribute to our team. We draw out diverse perspectives and build on them, so we get better ideas, question assumptions, identify blind spots, develop innovative approaches, and create better solutions. As a result, we have seen massive team innovation, performance, and growth.

DEI is important, not only because it is fair and the right thing to do, but because it also contributes to a positive workplace culture, greater innovative capacity, and improved company performance. While I am proud of how our organisation embraces DEI, there is always room for improvement. We are committed to investing time and effort into improving DEI to help facilitate positive change and demonstrate industry best practice.

-ENDS-

About the author

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Paul leads AEMO Services, a subsidiary of the Australian Energy Market Operator.

Prior to joining AEMO Services in June 2021, Paul spent more than 35 years in senior governance and management roles across the financial, government and energy sectors. This includes working with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Westpac, the Commonwealth Treasury and NSW Treasury.

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