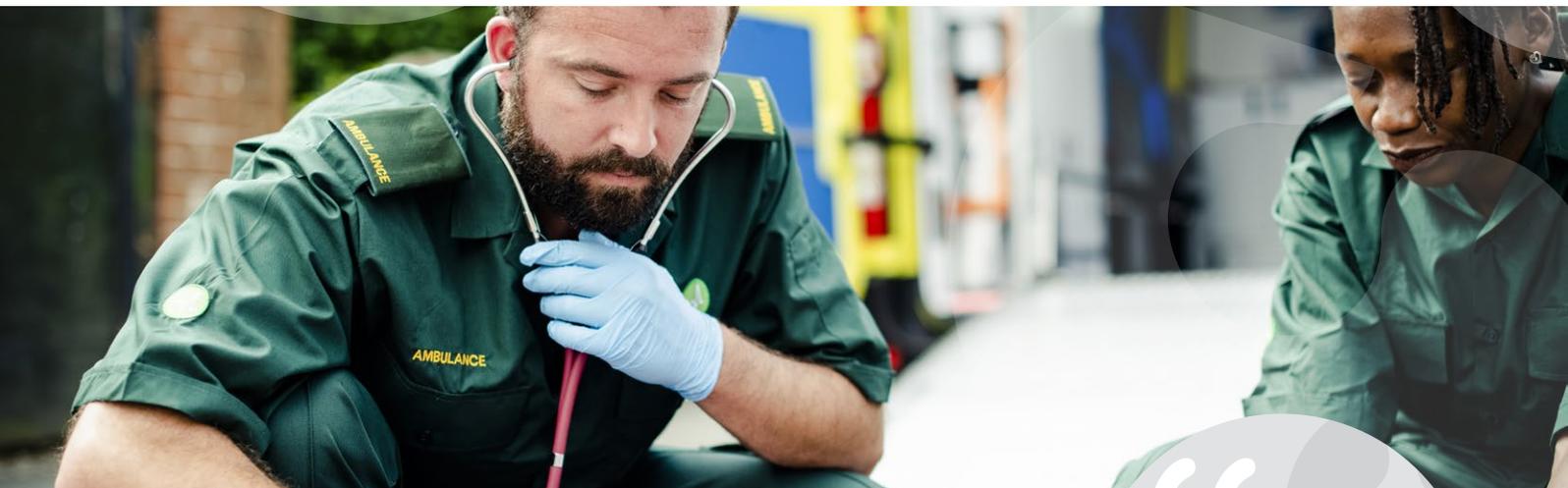


DIVERSITY IN THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SAFETY INDUSTRY



WHAT PROGRESS HAVE WE MADE?

Significant research has shown the value of diversity in the workplace. Organisations with a diverse workforce have been found to have improved financial performance, productivity, innovation, market share and retention. Creating a diverse and inclusive workforce has been particularly challenging in the public safety industry, where traditionally workforces have been predominantly comprised of Caucasian males. Given the substantial efforts by these organisations to create a more diverse workforce, in this paper we explore what, if any, progress has been made. Specifically, we focus on representation of diverse people in the recruitment phase, particularly in applicant attraction, assessment and progression to interview.

Diversity means having employees from a wide range of backgrounds, including age, gender, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, work experience, educational background and life experience

CURRENT RESEARCH

The current research involves a longitudinal analysis of the representation of diverse groups in different stages of the recruitment process. We specifically focus on the following jurisdictions within the public safety industry:

- Police
- Fire
- Ambulance
- Corrections and Youth Justice

As the leading provider of pre-employment psychometric assessment in the public safety industry, SafeSelect has rich data about the representation of applicant diversity demographics over time. For the purpose of this paper, we looked at candidate diversity at two stages of the recruitment process:

1. **Attraction** – those candidates invited to complete the psychometric testing, with summary results provided to the employer; and
2. **Progression to Interview (shortlisted)** – those candidates invited to an interview and for whom employers received a comprehensive report on their psychometric risk profile.

Diversity was measured in terms of the following candidate demographics:

1. Gender (women)
2. Age – both younger and older candidates
3. Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) and
4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI).

We analysed the percentage of job applicants within each of those diversity categories across three points in time: 2000 – 2005; 2006 – 2011; 2012 – 2018.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

AGE

Age – Overall Fire had the least diversity in age representation, with over half of all applicants at both stages of the recruitment process falling in the 21-30 years age bracket. Similarly, police had a stronger representation of younger candidates, with the majority (50%) of candidates interviewed in 2018 falling into the 21-30 age bracket. This had only slightly increased since the 2000's. Corrections and Ambulance had the best age representation of candidates, with candidates being reasonably distributed across all age brackets for both jurisdictions. Correctional Officer roles also attracted older candidates, with the average age of a Correctional Officer being over 45 years, and often from an ex police or military background.

FOR MORE
INFORMATION

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CaLD ATSI

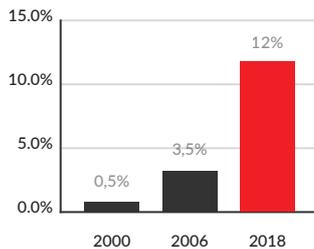
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI) –

There has been little change in the representation of CaLD and ATSI candidates in the Ambulance jurisdiction over time, as the representation of both groups has remained relatively stable at 6% and 3%

respectively. This was consistent across the two recruitment stages, i.e. invited to testing and invited to interview. There also has been little change in the representation of these groups in the fire industry, with approximately 8% of candidates invited to interview being CaLD, and 3% being ATSI. Notably however the Northern Territory had significantly greater representation of ATSI candidates at interview for fire roles, sitting at 10% of candidates.

Corrections and Police have shown significant improvement in the representation of CaLD and ATSI candidates over time. For Police Officer roles the representation of CaLD candidates has improved from 0.5% in 2000, to 3.5% in 2006, to 12% in 2018. There has been a similar increase in the representation of ATSI candidates within police, with there being an average of 2.5% of ATSI candidates at both attraction and interview stages in 2006, to 5% in 2018. Notably NT once again has the highest levels of ATSI police candidates at both stages, with 21% being ATSI.

CaLD POLICE CANDIDATES ADVANCING TO PSYCHOMETRIC ASSESSMENT 2000-2018



There also appears to have been a steady increase in the representation of CaLD candidates in Corrections, both in the attraction and interview stages. In 2000, CaLD candidates made up approximately 2% of the candidate pool and by 2018 this has increased to 20-25%. This is particularly evident in SA (24%) and the ACT (23%).

There has been relatively little change in the representation of ATSI candidates in Corrections, sitting at approximately 4-5% of candidates across all years

SUMMARY

Our longitudinal analysis of the representation of candidate diversity groups found the following:

- There is no significant difference in diversity representation of candidates between the two recruitment stages (attraction and progression to interview).
- Therefore, no apparent bias is at work when candidates are moved from the psychometric testing stage to the interview stage of the selection process. This is evidence that the psychometric testing in itself does not discriminate between candidates on diversity factors.
- Across all areas of public safety, the predominant group of candidates remains to be younger, Caucasian males even in 2018.

- Examining each jurisdiction on its own merits, we can conclude that Ambulance are the most representative of candidates from each diversity group and particularly have the greatest gender representation.
- Finally, we can conclude that Fire is the least represented jurisdiction across all the diversity groups.

The below table shows the percentage of candidates represented by the diversity groups who were invited to interview in 2018.

Jurisdiction	Gender (Female)	CaLD	ATSI
Police	36.50	15.27	5.56
Fire	17.40	8.29	3.02
Ambulance	72.73	6.69	3.11
Corrections	33.43	21.46	4.06
Youth Justice	40.44	28.35	12.67

Note that there are too many brackets/variables to summarise age.

SO WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Achieving diversity and inclusion in the Public Safety sector requires significant cultural change. There are well-entrenched stereotypes within the sector and society more broadly as to the image of Public Safety personnel. These stereotypes are limiting and are focused on a narrow view of Public Safety that overlooks the many different roles in the sector and the ability of many diverse members of the community to fill them. Within the sector there are varying levels of maturity in the approach to diversity and inclusion. Most organisations, across all jurisdictions have a diversity and inclusion strategy or framework of some kind, designed to bring a cohesive approach to achieving diversity and inclusion across the sector and in its connections with the community.



LEAD FROM THE FRONT

Is the face of your organisation a diverse one?



TARGETS

Minimum targets for the representation of diversity groups



ACCOUNTABILITY

Public reporting on diversity targets



EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS

Every employee needs to know the role they can play to ensure a diverse and inclusive culture



DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Tailored for diverse groups



ADAPTING WORK PRACTICES

To create an inclusive and flexible work environment

FOR MORE
INFORMATION

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