Inclusive Workplace Guide

Transport and infrastructure:
Manager's guide to creating an inclusive workplace

TRAINING
FOR THE FUTURE

Contents

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Acknowledgement of Country

Please note: this is a digital guide, and includes videos and hyperlinks. Please consider this before printing.

Foreword

Inclusive employment is not merely a concept; it is a transformative force that reshapes workplaces, enriches communities and advances societies. The journey towards inclusive employment is a path toward a brighter, more equitable future —one where every individual, regardless of their background, abilities or circumstances, can not just participate in, but thrive in the workforce.

This foreword serves as a guide to explore the principles and practices that underpin the notion of inclusive employment. It invites you to delve into the essential elements of creating work environments that champion diversity, foster belonging and elevate the human potential within our organisations.

Inclusive employment is grounded in the belief that diversity is a strength and that everyone brings a unique set of skills, perspectives and experiences to the table. It is a testament to the understanding that by embracing these differences, we open doors to innovation, creativity and resilience.

Moreover, inclusive employment is about dismantling barriers that have historically limited opportunities for underrepresented and marginalised groups. It calls for policies, practices and cultures that ensure equal access and equitable treatment for all.

Throughout this journey, you will encounter stories, insights and strategies that showcase the power of inclusive employment. These are not abstract concepts but real-world examples of organisations and individuals making a difference in the lives of their employees and communities.

As you read, consider the role you play in championing inclusive employment. Whether you are a diversity and inclusion (D&I) professional shaping policies, a manager leading a team, or an individual contributing to your workplace culture, your actions can contribute to a more inclusive future.

As an industry, we can build a world where employment is not a privilege but a right, where diversity is not a challenge but an asset and where every person has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and contribute their unique talents to the betterment of our organisations and society as a whole.

Let this exploration of inclusive employment serve as a catalyst for positive change and may it inspire you to take meaningful steps toward a more inclusive, equitable and prosperous future.

Caitlin Ryan
Director, Industry Capability, and Inclusion
Level Crossing Removal Project

Project partners

What is inclusion?
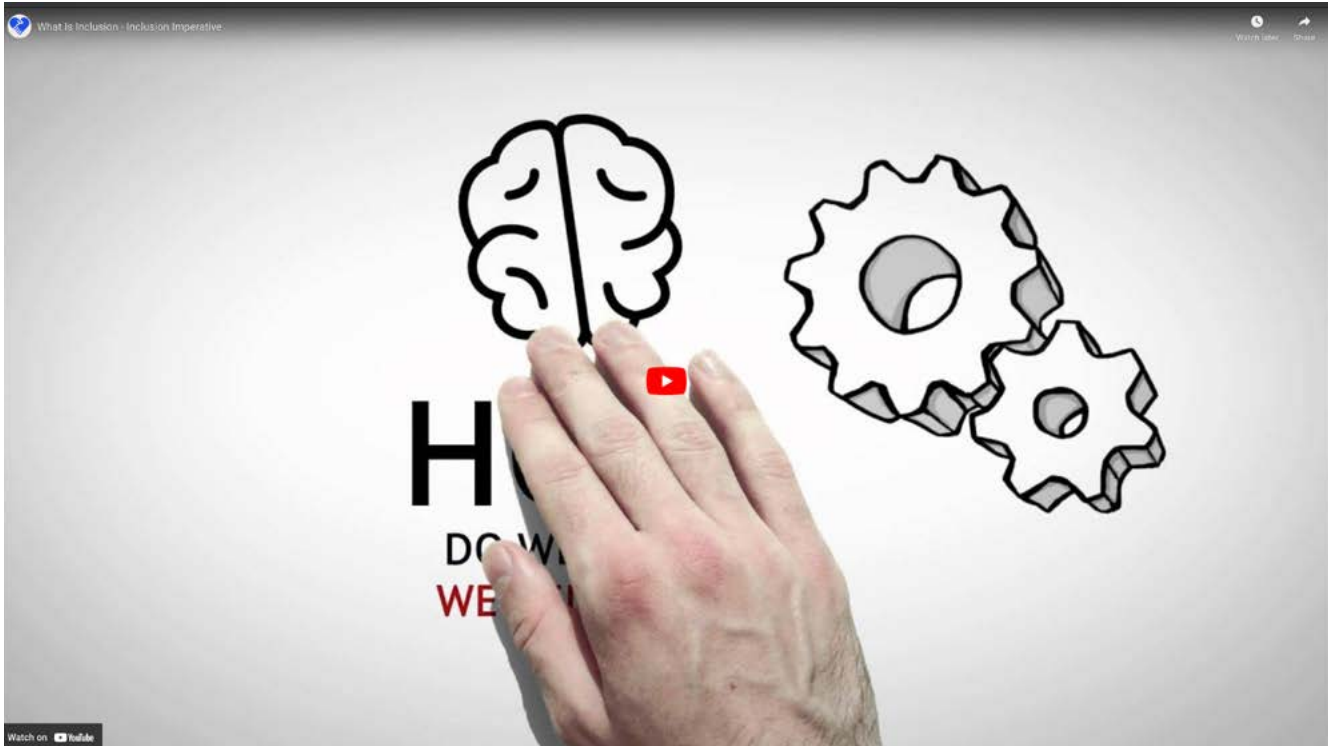
What is diversity?
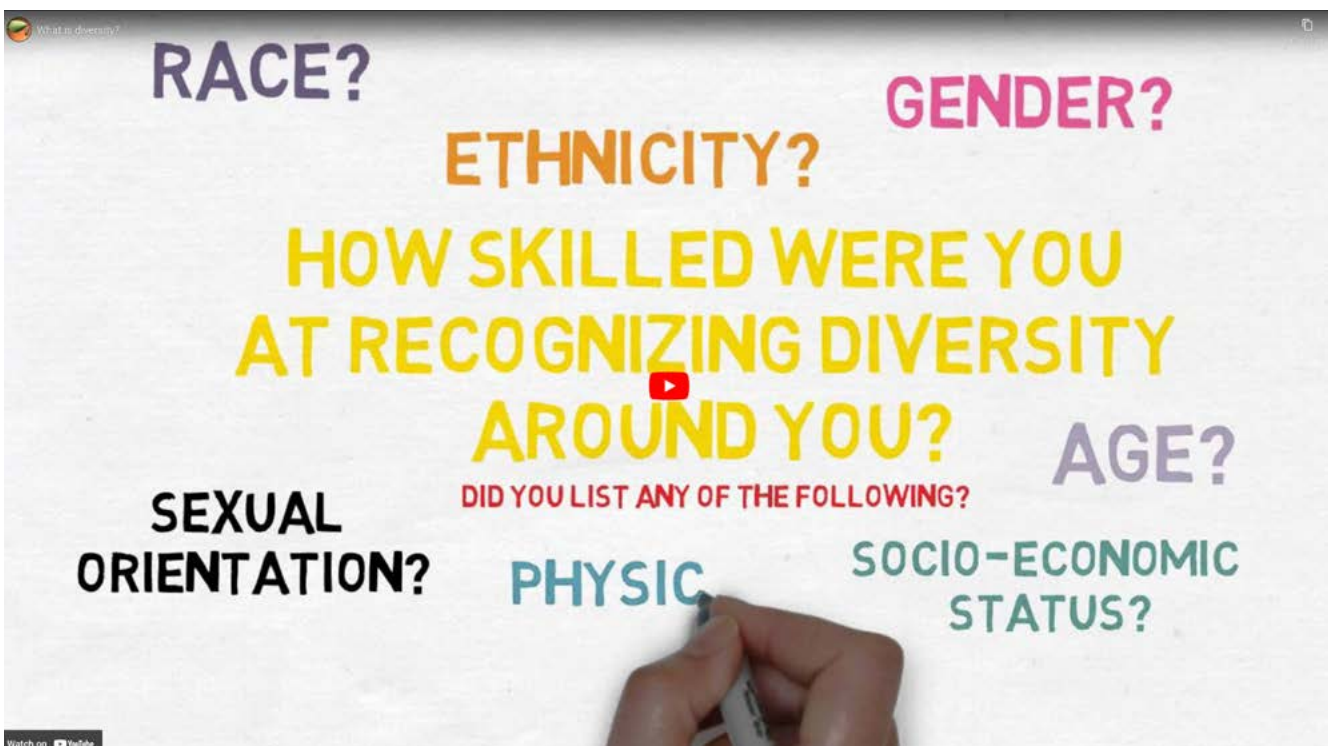
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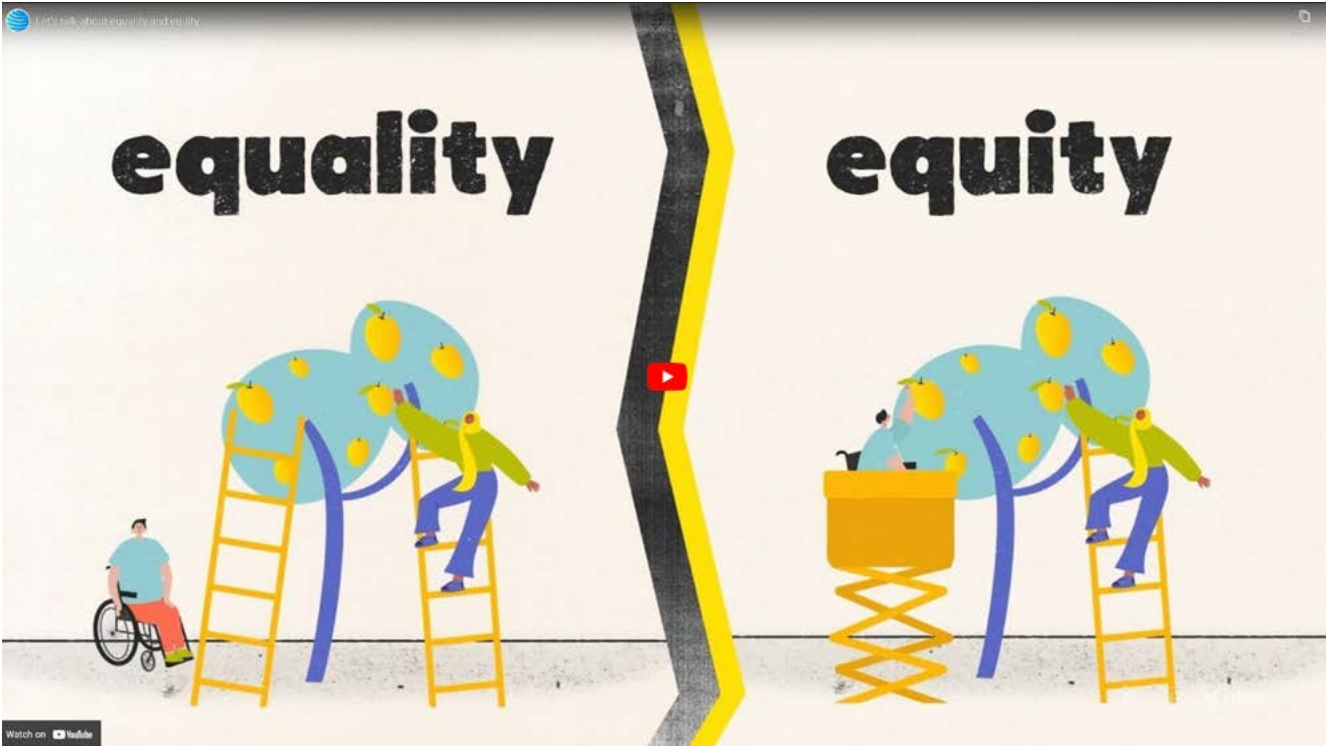
What does it mean to be an inclusive employer?

Being an inclusive employer means fostering a work environment where every employee, regardless of their background, identity, or characteristics, feels valued, respected and empowered. Inclusive employers prioritise diversity, equity and belonging in their workplace culture and practices.

Inclusive employers understand that inclusivity is an ongoing journey and they are committed to continuous improvement. They create workplaces where employees not only have a sense of belonging but can also thrive and contribute their unique talents to the organisation's success. Being an inclusive employer is not just a checkbox; it's a fundamental value that shapes the culture, policies and practices of the organisation.

Diversity stops at all stations

In the ever-evolving landscape of today's globalised society, the concept of diverse cohorts has emerged as a pivotal force in driving positive change and innovation.

A cohort, traditionally defined as a group of individuals sharing a common characteristic or experience, takes on a new dimension when imbued with diversity.

The term diverse cohorts encapsulate the idea of assembling groups that bring together individuals from varied backgrounds, perspectives, cultures and experiences. These diverse cohorts serve as dynamic microcosms, fostering creativity, resilience and adaptability in an increasingly interconnected world.

This introduction delves into the significance of diverse cohorts, exploring their role in shaping inclusive communities, driving organisational success and contributing to a richer tapestry of human collaboration and understanding.

For the purposes of this Inclusive Employment Guide the diverse cohorts we touch on are:

- Workplace gender diversity – women in rail
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- People with disabilities
- LGBTIQA+
- Seasons of life
- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)
- People of colour.

Workplace gender diversity – women in rail

Gender equality is the responsibility of all.

Gender equality is a fundamental principle of human rights and a critical aspect of achieving a fair and just society. It refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of all individuals, regardless of their gender.

Gender equality is a multifaceted and ongoing societal goal that requires the active participation and commitment of governments, organisations, communities and individuals. Achieving gender equality benefits everyone by creating more equitable and just societies, fostering economic growth and enhancing the well-being of all individuals.
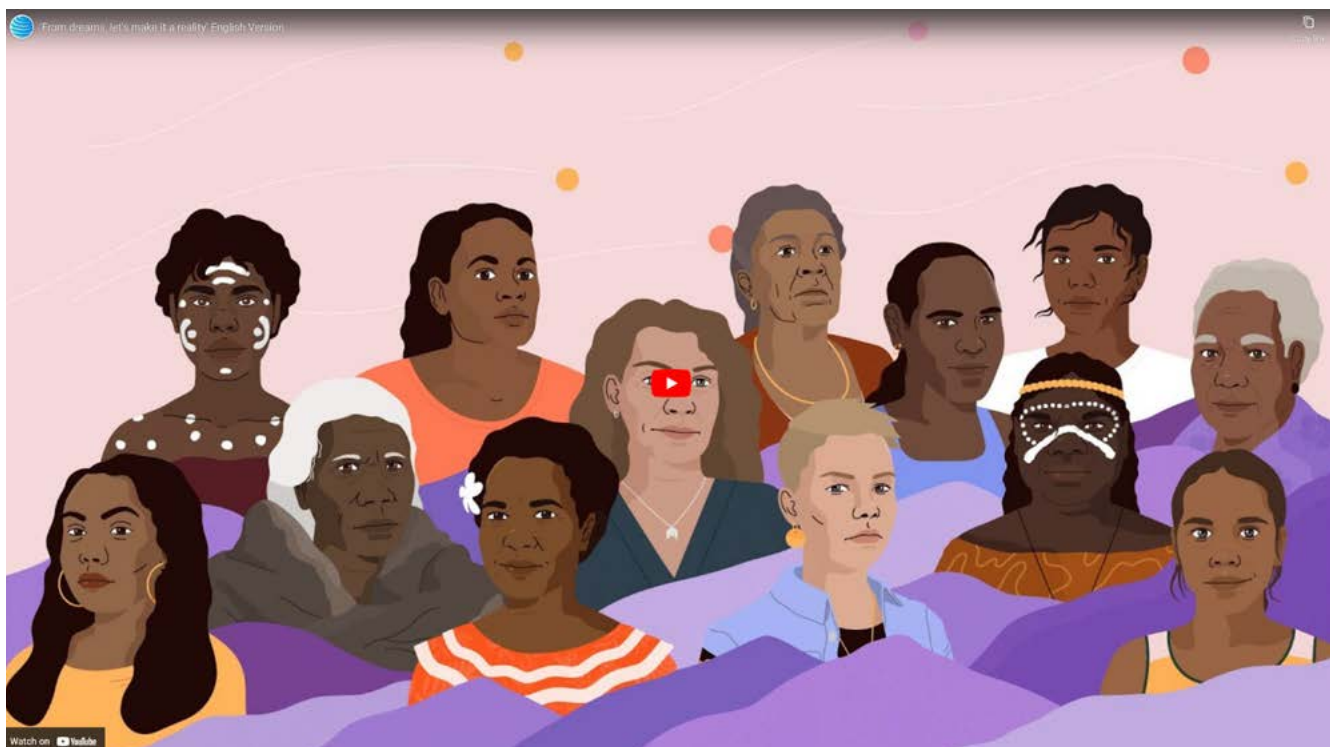
What does gendered workplace discrimination look like?

Discrimination based on gender is still occurring in Australian workplaces. It can be overt or subtle and could include the following:

- not hiring a person because the employer thinks they may not fit into a 'traditionally male/female' workplace

- not being hired, or being given a lower-paying position because gender (for example, when an employer refuses to hire women or only hires women for certain jobs)

- having a gender pay gap

- allocating work tasks based on a person's gender

- being held to different or higher standards, or being evaluated more harshly, because of gender, or because they do not act or present themselves in a way that conforms to traditional ideas of femininity or masculinity

- being insulted, called derogatory names or slurs because of gender, or hearing hostile remarks about people of a certain gender identity

- being intentionally or repeatedly called by a name or referred to as a different gender that they do not identify with. This is called misgendering

- being subject to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature

- being rejected for a job, forced out on leave, or given fewer assignments because they are pregnant.

Key challenges women face in the rail industry

Equal pay

One of the key aspects of gender equality is achieving equal pay for equal work. The gender pay gap, which refers to the disparity in earnings between men and women, has been a long-standing issue in many societies. Australia's gender pay gap is currently 21.7 per cent, down 1.1 per cent since 2021.

Despite progress prior to COVID-19, the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) highlights that Australia is not moving forward in Gender Equality or in repairing the gender pay gap.

Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2023

$1 Man
21.7 %
gender pay gap
78¢ Woman
down 1.1pp
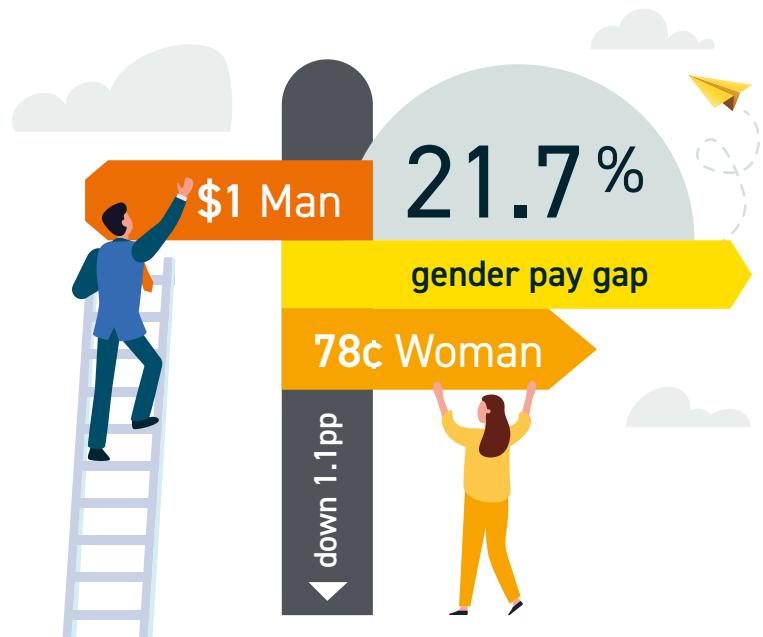
Representation:

Women are underrepresented in key decision-making roles across almost all industries in the Australian workforce. While women make up half of the employees in the 2020-21 WGEA dataset (51 per cent), women comprise only:

- 32.5 per cent of key management positions
- 33 per cent of board members
- 18 per cent of board chairs.

22%
of CEOs
are women
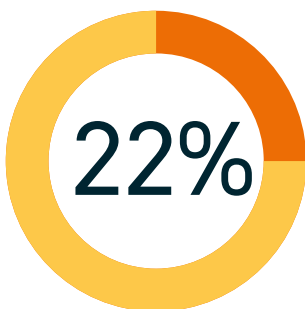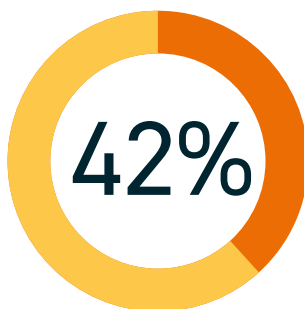
42%
of managers
are women

30%
of women work
part time
– only 7% of
management roles

Work-related gendered violence

WorkSafe describes work-related gendered violence as *"any behaviour directed at or affecting a person because of their sex, gender, sexual orientation, or because they do not adhere to socially prescribed gender roles, that creates a risk to health and safety."*

This includes violence targeted directly at someone specifically because:

- they are a woman
- they identify as LGBTIQA+
- they don't follow socially prescribed gender roles and stereotypes
- they are aged under 40
- they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- they are a person with disability.

Work-related gendered violence can also be experienced indirectly. A person may experience gendered violence not targeted specifically at them (such as overhearing a conversation that affects them) or witness violence directed at someone else.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics states that an estimated eight million Australians (41 per cent) have experienced violence (physical and/or sexual) since the age of 15, including:

- 31 per cent of women and 42 per cent of men who have experienced physical violence
- 22 per cent of women and 6.1 per cent of men who have experienced sexual violence.

This **factsheet** from WorkSafe presents further information relating to work-related violence and psychological safety.

Types of work-related gendered violence can range in severity from comments and gestures, through to sexual assault and rape. It can include:

- stalking, intimidation or threats
- verbal abuse
- ostracism or exclusion
- sexually explicit gestures
- offensive language and imagery
- put downs, innuendo and insinuations
- being undermined in your role or position
- sexual harassment
- sexual assault or rape.

Glossary

Socially prescribed gender roles: Society's traditional ideas about how men and women should look or act, what characteristics they should have, or their roles in the workplace, home or public life.

LGBTIQA+: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and other sexually or gender diverse people.

What is sexual harassment

As outlined in Section 92(1) of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (EO Act), a person sexually harasses another person if they:

1. makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the other person, or
2. engages in any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the other person.

Sexual harassment occurs in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Work-related sexual harassment

Work-related sexual harassment is sexual harassment directed at a person, that can happen at work, work related events, or between people sharing the same workplace. Work-related sexual harassment isn't always obvious, repeated or continuous.

It can be a one-off incident and can involve unwanted or unwelcome:

- touching
- staring or leering
- suggestive comments or jokes
- sexually explicit pictures or posters
- repeated invitations to go out on dates
- requests for sex
- intrusive questions about a person's private life or body
- unnecessary contact, such as deliberately brushing up against a person
- insults or taunts based on sex or gender
- sexually explicit physical contact
- sexually explicit emails, text messages or social media activity.

Key factors that contribute to the risk of work-related gendered violence

If power is distributed unequally along gendered lines

If a culture of sexism, homophobia and norms that support gendered violence is present

If violent and agressive behaviour is supported, accepted and rewarded

Legislative and Policy Framework

- The **Sex Discrimination Act 1984** protects people from unfair treatment based on their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital or relationship status, pregnancy, and breastfeeding.

- **The Gender Equality Act 2020** (Vic.) aims to improve workplace gender equality across the Victorian public sector including universities and local councils.

- **The Building Equality Policy** (BEP) will create training and employment opportunities for women in the construction industry.

- **Gender Equality Action Plans** (GEAP). To meet the obligations under the **Gender Equality Act 2020**, defined entities/departments must develop a GEAP.

- The Victorian Government has made gender equality a priority with the publication of **Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy** which aims to change stereotyped attitudes towards women, contribute to the prevention of family violence and work towards gender equality.

- The Free from Violence: **Victoria's Strategy to Prevent Family Violence** is Victoria's plan to break the cycle of family violence and violence against women. Primary prevention requires social and cultural change. Primary prevention necessitates a shift in social and cultural dynamics.

Strategies to improve the attraction and retention of women in rail

Gender-balanced recruitment, selection and promotion play a key part of workplace gender equality and inclusion. Robust data analysis and rigorous practice in this area can help to shine a light on gender biases that may occur during recruitment and promotion processes.

Review your organisation's data with a focus on gender, comparing the percentage of women and men in:

- applications, shortlists, interview lists, offers and commencements by role, including graduate programs
- promotions by business unit and location.

Moving the agenda forward

Consider the following questions:

- how does your organisation attract a range of applicants for roles in your organisation? (**Gender strategy toolkit | WGEA**)
- how is your organisation acting to give leaders the tools and as-needed support to interrupt bias in selection and promotion decisions?
- are you able to accurately measure gender-based representation at all stages of your selection processes?

HOT TIP!

- Use a **diagnostic tool** supplied by the WGEA to understand your organisation's areas of strength and development
- Use the **WGEA's online resource** to help plan and execute a gender equality strategy
- Use this **data explorer** to gain a deeper insight into gender equality performance and outcomes and compare results across employers and industries.

Attracting women to your organisation

The rail industry is one of the hardest industries to recruit women globally. This is for several reasons ranging from a lack of women studying STEM, rail or construction related tertiary courses, to how the industry is perceived as a male-dominated industry.

Therefore, organisations need to put their best foot forward when it comes to attracting women to organisations.

Strategies include:

- 50/50 split at intern and graduate level positions
- ensuring women are included in the selection process from start to finish
- gender pay gap alleviation through salary bench marking which should occur each quarter of the working year
- flexible working arrangements
- hybrid working

- advertise all positions as flexible (i.e., part time, casual)
- ensure parental leave policies are competitive to industry
- structured mentoring programs (e.g., Women in Transport Mentoring Program)
- ensure Talent Acquisition Teams are following the guiding principles of inclusive recruitment.

Retention

The term 'talking the talk' comes to mind when discussions around retaining women in organisations occur. An employee's experience (no matter the gender) should match the impression they have been given through the recruitment and selection process.

Retaining women in the rail and construction industry is crucial for promoting diversity, equality and a skilled workforce. Women have historically been underrepresented in this field, but efforts can be made to create a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

Here are some strategies to help retain women in the transport industry:

Mentorship and support

- Establish mentorship programs to provide guidance and support to women in the industry.
- Create support groups or networks for women to share experiences and challenges.

Safety and well-being

- Ensure workplace safety and address any concerns related to physical safety and health.
- Provide adequate resources for personal safety, including appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

HOT TIP!

The **Women in Transport** (WiT) Mentoring program is designed to improve access to employment and career advancement for women and people of diverse gender identities in transport.

The program is a free, six-month, industry-wide initiative and includes networking opportunities, professional development, plus regular guidance to help structure monthly mentee/mentor meetings.

At the end of the program, participants report a 10 per cent increase in their likelihood of staying in the transport industry, demonstrating the important role that mentoring plays in improving retention.

CASE STUDY

The Level Crossing Removal Project's Metropolitan Roads Program Alliance (led by Fulton Hogan) developed a range of personal protective equipment (PPE), specifically for women to wear at night-time.

Up until this initiative was implemented, women could only purchase PPE designed for men, which resulted in the PPE being ill-fitted. If clothing is ill-fitting, it can be a potential safety hazard.

By women only being able to purchase men's PPE it sends a message that women don't belong in the industry. This initiative has had a positive impact on both the Level Crossing Removal Project and the broader industry, with other projects now following suit.

Career advancement

Create clear pathways for career advancement, including promotions and leadership roles.

It is essential for the transport industry to recognise the value of gender diversity in their workforce and take proactive steps to create an inclusive and supportive environment for women. By implementing these strategies, the construction industry can better retain and advance women, benefiting the industry.

Women's health

Women's health in the workplace is a critical issue that requires attention and support from employers to ensure that female employees can thrive in a safe, healthy and accommodating work environment.

Women have complex and varying health concerns throughout their life including (but not limited to) fertility, pregnancy and menopause. Many women will experience miscarriage or baby loss, and one in seven will develop breast cancer.

At these times, care and support from employers can mean the difference between women feeling able to continue in work or having no choice but to leave their roles.

Useful links and resources

- Women's Health Week runs in the first week of September. **Jean Hailes for Womens Health** is a wonderful resource to find out more information on how your organisation can bring more awareness and support
- **Managing menopause at work**
- Jean Hailes has many useful **factsheets** that can be used to educate and inform

Here are some key considerations and practices for promoting women's health in the workplace:

Wellness programs:

- Implement wellness programs that address women's specific health needs, such as reproductive health, mental health, nutrition and menopause.
- Offer access to exercise facilities and fitness classes to promote physical well-being.
- Promote awareness of women's health issues through workshops, seminars and educational materials.
- Encourage regular health check-ups and screenings.

Inclusive policies:

- Develop policies related specifically to women's health, including fertility leave, pregnancy termination leave, miscarriage leave, menopause leave, and endometriosis leave.

Work-life balance:

- Promote a healthy work-life balance to reduce stress and prevent burnout.
- Consider offering part-time or reduced-hour options for employees who need them.

Supportive leadership:

- Encourage open communication between employees and management to address health-related concerns.
- Train leaders and supervisors to be empathetic and supportive of employees' health needs.

Period-positive policies:

- Provide access to period care products and a discreet place for women to manage menstruation.
- Promote understanding and acceptance of menstruation in the workplace.

By addressing these aspects of women's health in the workplace, employers can create an environment that supports the well-being and success of their female employees.

Fostering a healthy and inclusive work culture benefits not only women but the organisation, as it leads to increased productivity, reduced turnover and a more diverse and skilled workforce.

TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

DISABILITY GUIDE

Transport and Infrastructure: Manager's Guide to Creating a Disability Inclusive Workplace

TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

ABORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT RESOURCE

A resource for Victoria's transport and infrastructure industry

Updated version coming soon!

Creating an Inclusive Workplace for LGBTIQA+ Individuals

An inclusive workplace not only cultivates a sense of belonging and equality but also boosts productivity and overall job satisfaction. This guide outlines practical steps for organisations to create a supportive and welcoming environment for all employees, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

We are dedicated to fostering diverse and inclusive workplaces where everyone is valued and respected. This includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer (or questioning), and asexual (LGBTIQA+) people. An inclusive workplace not only cultivates a sense of belonging and equality but also boosts productivity and overall job satisfaction. This guide outlines practical steps for organisations to create a supportive and welcoming environment for all employees, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination:

1. Develop and enforce a comprehensive anti-discrimination policy explicitly stating protection for sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status. Ensure a clear complaints/grievance process is in place to address any discrimination issues.

2. Ensure fair, accessible, and transparent recruitment, hiring, promotion, and termination processes. Provide relevant training to decision-makers to mitigate biases.

3. Offer equal opportunities for professional development and career advancement for all employees, irrespective of sexual orientation or gender identity.

4. Recognise and integrate the experiences of employees with intersecting identities.

5. Provide secure, permanent job opportunities and ensure LGBTIQA+ individuals hold positions in senior decision-making roles.

Identity and Expression:

Pronouns serve as a means for individuals to refer to themselves and each other. Using correct pronouns for employees is essential in supporting them in affirming their gender identity.

Pronouns are deeply personal and can reflect an individual's gender identity. One's pronouns may aim to affirm or highlight their gender identity, whether they identify as a man, woman, neither, or both. It's crucial to recognise that a person's pronouns may not always align with societal expectations associated with their gender identity.

Using a person's correct pronouns validates and respects their gender identity. While most men, including trans men, use "he/him" pronouns, and most women, including trans women, use "she/her" pronouns, some individuals prefer gender-neutral pronouns such as "they/them."

For instance:

"Alex is our new Product Manager. They often get a coffee on the way to work"

If you're uncertain about someone's pronouns, respectfully ask them. For example, *"Can I ask what pronoun you use?"*

It's also important to consider the context and necessity of knowing a person's pronouns. Why do you need to know? Is it solely to ascertain their gender identity? If so, what is the reason behind it?

Using they/them pronouns can prevent assumptions when meeting new individuals. While they/them is linguistically plural, it can be appropriately used to refer to a singular person. This grammatically correct usage serves as a respectful placeholder until an individual's preferred pronouns are known. Alternatively, if you know the person's name but are unsure of their pronouns, use their name instead.

1. Respect employees' self-identified gender identities and preferred names/pronouns.

2. Establish policies supporting gender transition processes, including restroom and dress code accommodations.

3. Conduct training sessions to educate staff on transgender and gender-diverse issues, fostering understanding and sensitivity.

Inclusive Policies and Benefits:

The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) protects people from unfair treatment based on their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital or relationship status, pregnancy and breastfeeding. It also protects workers with family responsibilities and makes sexual harassment against the law.

The Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) aims to improve workplace gender equality across the Victorian public sector, universities and local councils. It will also improve the Victorian community's results through improved policies, programs, and services. Gender equality benefits people of all genders. The Act aims to level the playing field so that Victorians can have equal rights, opportunities, responsibilities, and outcomes.

The Victorian Government is creating the state's first whole-of-government strategy for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer, questioning, and asexual (LGBTIQA+) individuals and communities. The Victorian Government LGBTIQA+ Strategy will guide the government's continued efforts to achieve equality for LGBTIQA+ people for years to come.

1. Provide gender-neutral parental leave policies inclusive of LGBTIQA+ families.

2. Implement LGBTIQA+ inclusive menstrual leave policies.

3. Offer Domestic and Family Violence leave policies that cater to LGBTIQA+ individuals.

4. Review existing policies to ensure they do not inadvertently discriminate against LGBTIQA+ individuals.

5. Develop policies in consultation with LGBTIQA+ employees to ensure they are relevant and inclusive.

6. Provide flexible work arrangements that consider LGBTIQA+ specific needs and circumstances.

Safe and Respectful Work Environment:

1. Establish a zero-tolerance policy for homophobic, transphobic, and discriminatory behaviour, clearly communicated to all employees.

2. Create policies preventing bullying, sexual harassment, and discrimination, aligning with relevant legal acts.

3. Establish confidential reporting mechanisms to address complaints promptly.

4. Promote diversity training and awareness programs to foster respect and inclusion.

Employee Resource Groups and Support:

1. Encourage the formation of employee resource groups or affinity networks for LGBTIQA+ individuals.

2. Support community events, pride celebrations, and diversity initiatives.

3. Provide access to counselling services tailored to the unique needs of LGBTIQA+ employees.

4. Acknowledge LGBTIQA+ negative public discourse and support allyship among non-LGBTIQA+ employees.

Language and Communication:

Adopting inclusive language has a profound impact, benefiting not only LGBTIQA+ employees but everyone in the workplace. When we consciously use LGBTIQA+ inclusive language, we demonstrate respect for individuals within this community, fostering trust and a more inclusive workplace culture. It's crucial to emphasise that embracing inclusive language is just one aspect of cultivating a more inclusive workplace culture.

What is LGBTIQA+ inclusive language?

Inclusive language acknowledges and respects how individuals describe their own bodies, genders, and relationships.

By embracing LGBTIQA+ inclusive language, we ensure that all employees within this community feel included in our conversations and work interactions. This extends to instances when we communicate directly with colleagues or describe individuals who are not present.

We strive to incorporate inclusive language into our policies, procedures, internal and external communications, and interactions with other employees and customers. Inclusive language recognises the diversity of individuals we engage with and serve, fostering an environment of openness and respect that helps dismantle prejudice, stigma, and stereotypes.

LGBTIQA+ inclusive language ensures that everyone is treated with dignity and respect, devoid of words or tones that disparage, prejudice, discriminate, or stereotype, whether intentional or unintentional.

How do we promote inclusive language?

Avoid assumptions of heterosexuality by refraining from language such as "wife" or "husband" that assumes all relationships are heterosexual. This practice excludes non-heterosexual individuals and diminishes the value of their relationships.

Examples of inclusive language when referring to relationships:

Partner, Parents, Relationship, In a relationship

Avoid language that assumes everyone identifies as either a woman or a man. Consider using *"everyone"* instead of *"ladies and gentlemen," "boys and girls."*

Examples of inclusive language when referring to a group of people:

Everyone, Team, Family, Friends, Folks, or informally "peeps"

However, there are instances where gendered language may be appropriate. For instance, if you're aware that the group you're addressing identifies as women (including trans women), it's acceptable to use gendered terms like "good morning, ladies."

Refrain from questioning or making assumptions about someone's gender, sexuality, or relationship. Accept and respect how individuals define their gender and sexuality. It's imperative to acknowledge employees, including those who identify as transgender or gender diverse, by their identified gender.

Being LGBTIQA+ isn't a preference or a lifestyle choice. Discussions about gender, sex characteristics, or sexuality are not about preferences or choices but about individuals' identities. Avoid asking individuals what terms they "prefer." If necessary, respectfully inquire about the terms they use and adhere to those terms.

Ensure you possess an understanding of LGBTIQA+ communities and the significance of the acronym. Additionally, having a foundational knowledge of sex, gender, and sexuality is essential.

1. Use inclusive language in all communications, avoiding assumptions about individuals' sexuality or gender identity.

2. Respect confidentiality and privacy regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.

3. Follow diversity and inclusion guidelines when collecting and using data on LGBTIQA+ staff.

4. Solicit regular feedback from employees on the inclusivity of workplace policies and practices.

By embracing inclusive language and fostering understanding and respect, we create a workplace where all individuals feel valued and supported.

Training and Education:

1. Provide regular training sessions on LGBTIQA+ awareness, diversity, and inclusion for all employees.

2. Offer implicit bias training, particularly for decision-makers, managers, and recruiters.

3. Invite external experts to conduct workshops on relevant topics.

4. Cultivate a culture of continuous learning and growth regarding LGBTIQA+ issues and best practices. Creating an inclusive workplace for LGBTIQA+ individuals is an ongoing commitment. It requires dedication, education, and continuous effort from both employers and employees. By fostering an environment that values diversity and respect, organisations can unlock the full potential of their LGBTIQA+ workforce and create a positive and inclusive work environment for everyone.

FAQs

What if I make a mistake?

It's natural to be concerned about using the wrong word, name, or pronoun, especially when addressing trans and gender diverse individuals. The key is to strive for respectful language. If you make a mistake, promptly apologise and continue the conversation. Nobody gets it right all the time, but the effort to use respectful language is crucial. Repeated mistakes can show a lack of respect and may constitute bullying or discrimination, which is unlawful.

How should I welcome people to meetings or events?

Use inclusive language to include individuals of all genders, such as "Welcome, everyone," "Good morning, team," or "Hello, family and friends!"

What titles should I use when writing letters or formal emails?

Whenever possible, use the title that the individual prefers or uses in their correspondence. If they don't use a title, address them by their first and last names. Consider using gender-neutral titles like Dr and Mx where applicable, as gendered titles such as Ms, Miss, Mrs, or Mr may not apply to everyone and could offend some individuals.

What terms should I use when answering the phone?

Avoid using gendered language such as "Ma'am" or "Sir" if you're unsure of someone's gender. Instead, ask and address them by their name.

How do I ask for pronouns when inviting people for a job interview?

In your invitation email, you can respectfully ask for pronouns and preferred names ahead of the interview: "Please feel free to let me know the following details ahead of your interview: What pronoun you use (e.g., she/her, he/him, they/them) and What name you would like us to refer to you by."

Why do I need to display my pronouns in my email signature?

While displaying pronouns in your email signature is optional, it can foster inclusivity by clarifying how you'd like to be addressed and signalling respect for gender identity and pronoun choice. It helps normalise discussions about gender and creates a safe space for trans and gender diverse individuals. Before implementing this as a workplace policy, educate your team on its importance and ensure everyone is on the same page.

What should I avoid?

Avoid asking inappropriate and offensive questions about someone's body or sexuality, such as "Are you really a guy?" or "Did you used to be a woman?" Also, refrain from using LGBTIQA+ terms in derogatory ways, like using "gay" negatively. Respect individuals' boundaries and be mindful of language that could be hurtful or exclusionary.

How else can I be inclusive in my work?

Beyond language, consider other ways to promote inclusivity, such as reflecting diversity in visual materials, addressing biases in dress codes, providing gender-neutral bathrooms, and creating forms and surveys inclusive of LGBTIQA+ individuals.

Remember, creating an inclusive environment takes practice, willingness to learn, and openness to feedback. Start small and continue to evolve your practices over time.

Seasons of change (Ageing workforce)

The aging workforce represents a significant demographic shift in today's employment landscape. With advancements in healthcare and changing attitudes toward retirement, more individuals are choosing to remain in the workforce longer, extending their careers well beyond traditional retirement ages.

This trend brings both opportunities and challenges for businesses and societies alike. On one hand, older workers often possess valuable experience, expertise, and institutional knowledge that can benefit organisations. Their seasoned perspectives contribute to innovation, problem-solving, and mentorship within the workplace. However, organisations must also address age-related biases and stereotypes that may hinder the full of older workers' talents.

Additionally, the aging workforce prompts discussions around workplace flexibility, retirement policies, and healthcare systems. As we navigate this demographic shift, it's essential for businesses and policymakers to embrace age-inclusive practices, foster diverse and multigenerational work environments, and adapt policies to support the evolving needs of older workers while ensuring equitable opportunities for all.

The **Diversity Council of Australia** has developed a framework for Organisational Action for Older Workers, that will 'assist in the attraction, engagement, and retention of older workers, as well as to structure effective transitions into retirement.'

You can access this online via the members portal. The following are some easy steps organisations can introduce.

Source talent

The first step in better leveraging the talents of older workers is reflecting on the extent to which existing sourcing practices tap into a wide-ranging pool which includes this critical segment of your workforce of the future.

You can do this by diversifying your recruitment messages. Aim for these to:

- use descriptors that value 'experience', 'life skills', 'long service' or 'multiple careers'
- highlight that skills likely to be developed through caring and volunteering are valued (e.g., communication skills, problem-solving skills, teamwork, planning and organisation, self-management etc.)
- emphasise ability to access flexible work for a range of reasons (e.g., semi-retirement, caring and volunteering).

Consider careers and capabilities

A second step in ensuring your organisation is better leveraging the talents of older workers is ensuring career and capability development opportunities adequately respond to their career motivations and development requirements.

Monitor career and learning and development metrics. Review career mobility and learning and development statistics to ensure older workers (including those in part-time and casual work) have equivalent access to opportunities as other key employee segments. Report on your findings to the leadership team.

Take a 'life stage' view of capabilities. Better recognise prior learning when appointing, rewarding and/or promoting staff by taking a 'life-stage' view of skills and capabilities, which recognises older individual's non-formal qualifications, skills and experience.

Find specialist reskilling providers. If your organisation has clusters of older workers from non-English speaking backgrounds, consider provided targeted in-house training to maximise their ability to participate and contribute to the organisation.

Provide flexible development options. Ensure training and development are flexible in time and location (i.e., held at 'family-friendly' times and on-the-job, off-site and/or online) to respond to older individual's circumstances.

HOT TIP!

The Federal Government's **Department of Employment and Workforce Relations – Mature Age Hub** is a great source of information.

Cultivate culture

Providing a workplace in which all employees feel valued and respected will ensure older workers are provided with sufficient incentive to remain attached to the labour market and not retire early or choose to cease looking for employment.

Create a specific employee value proposition. Develop a value proposition for older workers through focusing on key employment drivers (e.g., flexible work, career opportunities and financial wellbeing).

Factor ageism into cultural change. Address ageism in any cultural change initiatives. Ensure workplace culture audits or reviews assess performance on issues relevant to older workers (e.g., flexible work, health and wellbeing, financial wellbeing, inclusive culture).

Consider multiple discrimination in legal compliance. Ensure anti-discrimination and equal employment opportunity initiatives address the issue of how age, gender, cultural background, disability and family responsibilities can combine to make workplace discrimination especially prevalent for older individuals.

Get flexible

Mainstreaming flexible work – creating an organisation in which flexibility is treated as standard business practice – is a central component of generating a high performing organisation capable of attracting, engaging and transitioning an older workforce.

Many older women are currently facing a perfect storm of caring responsibilities – caring simultaneously for children, grandchildren and relatives who are elderly and/or have a disability. This has a substantial impact on older women's workforce participation and subsequently their financial security in retirement.

Invest in health and wellbeing

Organisations that promote physical and emotional health and wellbeing in the workplace can maximise older worker engagement and retention, while also assisting all staff to stay safe at work.

Tailor health and wellbeing initiatives. Develop workplace physical wellness programs (e.g., exercise opportunities, nutrition seminars and quit smoking support) and ensure these programs address health and wellbeing initiatives which may be pertinent to older individuals.

Factor mental health into health and wellbeing initiatives. Support strategies relating to mental health, for example, participating in the SANE Mindful Employer program or Beyondblue workplace program.

Challenge age and health-related stereotypes. Ensure diversity initiatives and communications.

Consider workplace accessibility. Develop and review a disability action plan which addresses the possible needs of an older workforce and maximises workplace-built environment accessibility.

Leverage flexibility to support wellbeing. Support any older workers who may be managing long term health problems or chronic illnesses by providing flexible work, transition to temporarily reduced hours and/or keeping in touch programs.

Factor older workers into safety initiatives. For example:

- When reviewing workplace health and safety programs, factor in older worker's experiences and needs, and ensure adequate consultation is carried out with this group.
- Target occupational health and safety initiatives in industries and occupations where older workers are engaged in physical work (e.g., health and aged care industries, cleaning, administration and textiles).
- Conduct ergonomic assessment for workstations, work cycles and equipment to ensure these are designed well for employees.

Tailor transitions

With an ageing workforce upon us, smart employers are assisting their older workers to transition smoothly and productively from regular work to full retirement. In doing this, organisations are provided with advance notice of employee career intentions including departures, which enables effective strategic workforce planning, succession planning and knowledge management.

Monitor the present and plan for the future. Factor older individuals into your workforce planning strategy. For example:

- Collect and monitor your older female versus older male employee attrition rates, as well as their relative workforce representation, including at different organisational levels and occupations and by employment status.
- Ensure older employees are represented in workplace development committees, succession planning decision teams and any other bodies responsible for active workforce planning.

Develop a retention strategy. Draw on employee survey and exit interview findings to develop a specific staff retention strategy for your older workforce, including the younger age group (45-54 years) who are at higher risk of leaving their current employers.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people (CALD)

As organisations leading the way within diversity and inclusion, we want to foster a culture that celebrates and embraces Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD). By recognising and valuing the unique backgrounds, languages and perspectives of our diverse workforce, we cultivate an environment where everyone feels seen, heard and appreciated.

By prioritising CALD, we create a workplace that not only reflects the global society but also thrives on the unique contributions of each individual. Embrace diversity, and together, let's build a workplace that values, respects, and empowers every member of our team.

Understanding Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity refers to the presence of various cultural groups and languages within a workplace, recognising and respecting the richness everyone brings.

Key benefits to having a CALD workforce:

- Innovation: diverse perspectives lead to creative problem-solving.
- Global competence: enhance our ability to engage with a global audience.
- Employee satisfaction: a more inclusive environment contributes to higher job satisfaction.

When it comes to fostering inclusion of employees who identify themselves as CALD there are some key initiatives to put in place.

Language inclusivity

Translation services: Offer access to translation services for official documents and company-wide communications.

Cultural sensitivity and awareness

Training programs: implement cultural sensitivity training to promote awareness and understanding among employees.

Celebrating cultural events

Recognise and celebrate cultural holidays and events, fostering a sense of belonging and pride.

Employee Resource Groups

Establish Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to provide a platform for employees to connect based on shared cultural backgrounds.

Addressing microaggressions

Reporting mechanisms: establish clear procedures for reporting microaggressions, ensuring a safe space for employees to express concerns.

Education: conduct workshops to educate employees on identifying and addressing microaggressions, fostering a culture of mutual respect.

Mentorship and networking

Mentorship programs: develop mentorship initiatives that connect employees of diverse backgrounds, fostering professional growth.

Networking events: organise networking events that facilitate connections and promote a sense of community among employees.

Glossary terms

Microaggressions are the casual expressions that perpetuate racist stereotypes and ideas. An example of a microaggression might be commenting on how well a person of African heritage speaks English, or repeatedly mispronouncing someone's name, despite being corrected.

Many microaggressions are not necessarily visible to everyone. People who directly experience racism (or other forms of discrimination) are typically much more aware of them. It's important to remember that "micro" in microaggression doesn't mean that these acts can't have a severe impact. Microaggressions have a cumulative effect and can cause considerable psychological distress.

"Where are you from" is a question that migrant people of colour will be asked many times over their lives, which is a reminder that they are considered "Other," or "different" to the majority group." - Dr Zuleyka Zevallos

> **Victorian Government frameworks and policy**
> Multicultural policy statement
> Multicultural Victoria Act 2011

Intersectionality

What is intersectionality?

Intersectionality is the concept that illustrates how an individual's characteristics and circumstances intersect to shape their experiences in life. This encompasses both their advantages, or privilege, and the discrimination or disadvantages they face. Understanding intersectionality aids in comprehending the complexities of inequality by revealing how various forms of discrimination can intersect and amplify one another, including those related to sexuality, gender, age, class, and race.

Applying an intersectional lens to policy analysis ensures that government initiatives are more attuned to the diverse and specific needs of communities. By acknowledging the interconnected and overlapping nature of discrimination and inequality, it facilitates the development of more effective services that cater to the entire community.

Consider the issue of employment discrimination within the transgender community. Conventional policy approaches often make broad assumptions about transgender individuals, neglecting the significant diversity within the community. An intersectional approach, however, examines the varying experiences of employment discrimination among different segments of the transgender population, such as transgender people of colour, those with disabilities, and individuals of different genders.

In the Australian context, adopting an intersectional perspective necessitates recognising the enduring impacts of colonisation. Non-Indigenous Australians have benefited from the colonisation and displacement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, resulting in laws, policies, systems, and structures that have historically marginalised and continue to exclude Indigenous Australians, perpetuating systemic racism. Despite this adversity, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families, and communities exhibit resilience and strength.

Managing intersectionality in the workplace

Managing intersectionality in the workplace involves recognising and addressing the complex ways in which various aspects of employees' identities intersect and impact their experiences. Here are some strategies for effectively managing intersectionality in the workplace.

Raise Awareness and Foster Understanding: Educate employees and leaders about the concept of intersectionality and its relevance in the workplace. Encourage discussions about how different aspects of identity, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and socioeconomic status, intersect to shape individuals' experiences.

Promote Inclusive Policies and Practices: Review and revise organisational policies and practices to ensure they are inclusive and considerate of the diverse needs and experiences of employees. This includes policies related to hiring, promotion, compensation, benefits, and workplace accommodations.

Provide Diversity and Inclusion Training: Offer training programs that focus on diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias to help employees and leaders understand the impact of intersectionality and develop skills for creating an inclusive work environment.

Encourage Open Dialogue and Feedback: Create opportunities for employees to share their experiences, perspectives, and concerns related to intersectionality in the workplace. Foster open dialogue and listen actively to feedback from employees from diverse backgrounds.

Support Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): Establish and support Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) or affinity groups for employees with intersecting identities. These groups can provide a supportive community, advocacy, and networking opportunities for employees facing similar challenges.

Implement Flexible Work Policies: Recognise that employees with intersecting identities may have unique needs and responsibilities outside of work. Implement flexible work policies that accommodate diverse schedules, caregiving responsibilities, and other commitments.

Address Microaggressions and Discrimination: Take proactive measures to address microaggressions, discrimination, and harassment in the workplace. Provide training on recognising and responding to microaggressions and establish clear procedures for reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination.

Promote Allyship and Advocacy: Encourage employees to act as allies and advocates for colleagues from marginalised groups. Provide resources and guidance on how to support and amplify the voices of individuals facing discrimination or bias.

Measure Progress and Hold Leaders Accountable: Establish metrics and benchmarks for measuring progress on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Hold leaders accountable for creating inclusive environments and advancing diversity goals within their teams and departments.

By implementing these strategies, organisations can create a workplace culture that values and supports employees with intersecting identities, fostering a sense of belonging, equity, and opportunity for all.

Inclusion starts with an I

Creating an inclusive workplace is essential for promoting diversity, equity and employee well-being. An inclusive workplace is one where all employees, regardless of their background, feel valued, safe, respected and able to fully participate and contribute.

Unconscious bias in the workplace

If the overwhelming evidence suggests that diverse and inclusive organisations produce better business results and more innovative teams, why isn't it happening?

The answer may be that we are unknowingly sabotaging our own best efforts. This has been identified as "unconscious bias" or cognitive dissonance.

Many people think that bias is a bad thing. It isn't necessarily, but in a modern knowledge economy it can interfere with effective, data-based decision making. We need to stop demonising the notion and accept that bias is something we can learn to manage.

The human brain processes millions of thoughts a day and we only remember a very small number.

To protect ourselves, the brain has developed subtle shortcuts to identify potential risk in a primal 'freeze, fight or flight' way. They are ways of filtering and filing data, parsing information to prevent overload. Biases facilitate rapid decision-making to help us feel secure. They send signals that certain situations and people are safe, while flagging up others which are potentially harmful.

We are all capable of bias but are equally able to adapt our beliefs and behaviours to make more effective decisions and be fairer to the people around us. We know the barriers created by unconscious bias impact business relationships, inclusion, performance, engagement and, ultimately, innovation.

While we can't eliminate unconscious biases, learning to consciously manage them is a skill we can all acquire.

Biases need management

The first step is to gain a deeper understanding of our own filters that impact our view of situations. This gives us an insight into the patterns we use to evaluate, assess, interact, think and work with other people.

Types of biases

Inclusiveness applies to all management situations and workplace interactions.

It impacts your communication style and how you hire, on-board, promote, develop, compensate, mentor and train your employees. It's integral to the working environment you offer and the work culture you foster.

One way to support this approach is to create a bias-conscious culture. Unconscious bias is embedded in any organisation where there are people. They are even finding biases in algorithms!

Systemic racism

Systemic racism doesn't mean that everyone in the club is racist, as some have tried to say. What it means is that the culture, structures and internal mechanisms aren't effective in facing racism, providing resolution, and creating change. It means that individuals of goodwill can't make the difference they want." Professor Larissa Behrendt and Professor Lindon Coombes

Systemic racism can be more difficult to identify than individual or interpersonal racism, because it is often so entrenched in our societies or institutions that it is perceived as 'normal'. Systemic racism refers to the way that the cultural norms, laws, ideologies, policies and practices of a particular society, organisation or institution result in unequitable treatment, opportunities and outcomes.

However, systemic racism can also happen without specific laws, policies or practices keep it in place. In many cases,

the legacy of those norms, laws, policies and practices continues to reinforce the inequalities they created, long after they have ended. That's why we need laws, policies and practices that are actively anti-racist to address ongoing injustices.

Terms like systemic, institutional and structural racism are often used to refer to similar phenomena, but can also be considered distinct.14

Below are some definitions, but keep in mind that these terms are sometimes used interchangeably:

Institutional racism

Institutional racism exists when racism is established as a normal behaviour within an organisation, institution, or society. It includes the policies and practices that inform the operations of organisations and institutions.

Structural racism

Structural racism is a term often used to describe inequalities and barriers that prevent people from accessing equitable opportunities within a society. It refers to the kinds of racism that operate deep within the social structures of society.

Want more information?

If you are interested in a deeper analysis of these concepts, the Lowitja Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research has produced a scoping paper in which scholars discuss these concepts in detail. **www.lowitja.org.au/resources/**

Examples of everyday biases we may come across

Bias example	What it means	How it can be expressed
Affinity	People who make me comfortable or people who are like me, while feeling uncomfortable around people who are not like me.	"He's too quiet. He won't be a good fit for the team."
Confirmation	People who agree with me.	"I like the way she thinks and deals with clients. I could have trained her myself."
Conformity	Taking cues for thoughts and behaviours in most contexts from the actions of others especially those in authority or senior roles.	"Let's all go cave jumping for the company outing.", "That's a really great idea, boss."
Halo	An impressive credential or attribute impacts your judgement positively.	"She has an MBA from Melbourne University. She will be great."
Horns	A perceived negative attribute impacts your judgement negatively.	"We can't send him into a customer with those tattoos. It won't go down well."
Beauty	Judgements are made in line with your own ideas or those of the dominant culture around attractiveness.	"She is always immaculately turned out and has superb executive presence. The board will love her."
Similarity	A mental shortcut that leads you to the unconscious assumption that others share the same or similar values, thoughts and beliefs based on an unsubstantiated belief.	"She'll be a good worker; she's a Red Cross volunteer."
Contrast	Tendency to promote or demote something in a large grouping after a single comparison with one of its peers.	"He's a bit old; he won't have the energy."
Attribution	Attribute the cause of your own and others' behaviours; however, attributions do not always accurately mirror reality, e.g., All women want children. All men are assertive. All French people are good cooks.	"She has just had a baby. She won't be interested in a job that requires so much pressure."

HOT TIP!

Be wary of making assumptions based on averages because averages hide more than they reveal.

Be sure to include a question to understand if people identify with a particular diverse group, so that the data can be analysed with multiple diversity lenses.

For example, one organisation recently conducted an employee engagement survey which yielded very positive results, but when the data was analysed with a gender lens, the results painted a very different picture. Women's engagement was far lower than men's, but this was initially hidden in the averages.

How do organisations achieve inclusion in the workplace?

Becoming an inclusive organisation is a cultural transformation like any other. It requires the integration of three key organisational elements to stimulate change.

1. Leadership commitment: understanding the business benefits of diversity and inclusion for your business and standing as a role model and ambassador.

2. Systemic change: examining the organisational processes that either accelerate or hamper the achievement of your diversity and inclusion goal.

3. Individual change: recognising how each individual can learn to manage their own biases and behaviours to enhance business success.

Key steps for an inclusive culture

Creating a bias-conscious and inclusive culture within an organisation is an opportunity for everyone.

It is first and foremost a top-down leadership challenge. It involves leaders as role models with an inclusive leadership style, implementing systemic changes and holding others in the organisation accountable.

The more open and transparent leaders are, the more willing employees will be to reciprocate.

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1. Shine a light on your organisation, systems and processes

Analyse the composition of your organisation

Determine the dominant characteristics based on declarable data such as gender, age, nationality, language and educational level. If possible, identify the more invisible characteristics such as personality types, family status, sexual orientation and preferred communication styles that define your culture. Do you favour any group or exclude another?

> ### HOT TIP!
>
> Consider using diversityatlas.io/ to complete an analysis on the cultural and demographic diversity within your organisation.

Assess the perceptions of your employees

Undertake an employee engagement or experience survey. Assess how your organisation is perceived internally and externally. How do you rank against other companies in key areas, especially your competitors? What can you learn from any push back? Do those resistors exhibit non-inclusive behaviours?

Carry out a cultural audit

Most organisations talk about their culture but are unable to define it in practical terms. Organise an assessment of your culture by an external body to examine the key drivers of your organisation. This will include looking at values and mission, communication methods, decision-making styles and many more.

Review your talent management systems to uncover hidden biases

Examine your employer branding, sourcing and hiring processes, including any associated documentation such as job descriptions and job ads.

Check the access of women and other underrepresented groups to learning and development programmes and stretch assignments. Review how you evaluate performance and potential and how you promote employees. Examine the gender pay gap by checking for equal pay and benefits.

Check out the Inclusive Recruitment section for some practical information on how to develop this more.

Examine your communications

Assess your website and other marketing collateral. Do the images and icons reflect the composition of your organisation and target market? Is the language and tone inclusive and does it resonate with different communication and learning styles?

You can also run your ads and other documentation through software to check for non-inclusive language or a "gender-decoder".

> ### HOT TIP!
>
> Here are some specialist organisations who can support your organisation in completing an audit:
>
> - WORK180
> - Diversity Australia
> - Jobsbank

2. Shine a light as a leader

As a leader it is your responsibility is to shine a light on your own leadership values, style and vision. Never underestimate the positive (or negative) impact that you can have as a leader or manager.

Understand the benefits of inclusion

Come together as senior leaders on the business case and benefits of inclusion. Learn how your organisation can enhance its results with an inclusive leadership style, talent management and business practices.

Test yourself

As a leader, take steps to understand your own biases. Gain an understanding of how biases can impact others and your leadership style. Check if you are intentionally including one group and thereby excluding another group.

Train yourself

Follow unconscious bias and inclusive leadership training yourself and organise it for other senior leaders with the goal of working towards a bias-conscious culture.

3. Shine a light on yourself

Do some self-work

Our greatest bias (our blind spot) is to minimise or ignore our own biases but to be mindful of bias in others.

Becoming mindful of your own blind spots and asking for feedback is vital in the self-awareness process. Include your colleagues, direct reports and peers. How do they receive your communication or opinions? Very often we share our opinions before we ask.

Be present

Work on your listening skills and be present and engaged. Miscommunication occurs when we are not available for the people around us. **Listen to understand, not to respond.**

Develop "also/and" thinking

Rather than an "either/or" approach. The latter is a black and white binary way of looking at situations rather than seeing the areas of grey.

Show empathy

Putting yourself in other people's shoes goes a long way to fostering a culture of inclusion. Understanding that we can all have different experiences of the same workplace situation is a good starting point.

Be open

Achieving diversity and inclusion is not a zero-sum activity but a win-win situation:

- open your mind to possibility and change
- welcome new points of view
- all inputs are valid inputs
- seek to learn and apply
- engage with people you don't know, for example at lunch or in the hallways.

If you find yourself responding with a rapid "no" or "yes," take time to reflect if there are deeper reasons. Slowing down to evaluate all evidence contributes to a more inclusive environment.

Call it out!

Research from the Harvard Business School suggests that 75 per cent of employees witness something that damages business success, but they fail to step up and speak up.

It's important to foster a culture where people feel comfortable in raising issues of concern without fear of judgement and reprisals. Colleagues or direct reports who feel safe, valued and protected are more likely to feel a greater sense of belonging.

You can help foster this culture by:

- developing constructive communication strategies
- contribute to a bias-conscious culture by developing respectful ways to pinpoint and discuss any observed biases with peers and colleagues
- making it ok to call out biases.

Be an ally

Openly state your support of inclusion initiatives and act. Offer support to colleagues during meetings and brainstorming sessions. Sponsor, mentor and encourage a diverse range of reports and colleagues for high-visibility roles, stretch assignments or skill development. If you see someone in difficulty, stage a bystander intervention as described above.

"Excuse me but I am not comfortable with you using that language"

"This type of language is considered quite offensive, please try saying that again."

"These are great examples have you engaged with the various employee reference groups on this proposed initiative/policy?"

Inclusive Language

Inclusive language enables everyone in your organisation to feel valued and respected and able to contribute their talents to drive organisational performance.

Watch: Building cultural inclusion: the power of **#wordsatwork**

If you are interested in viewing the entire WordsAtWork program by Diversity Council of Australia this can be found **here.**

Inclusive recruitment and talent management

In today's globalised and diverse workforce, the significance of inclusive recruitment practices cannot be overstated. The composition of our teams and organisations has a profound impact on not only the success of our businesses but also on the broader social fabric. Inclusive recruitment is not just a "nice-to-have" – it's an imperative for organisations committed to growth, innovation and social responsibility.

Inclusive recruitment is more than a buzzword; it's a fundamental shift in the way we approach talent acquisition. It means recognising that the best teams are those that reflect the rich tapestry of perspectives and backgrounds that make up our world. It's about acknowledging that diversity is not only a matter of fairness but also a source of strength, resilience, and creativity.

At its core, best practice inclusive recruitment is rooted in fairness, equity and opportunity. It is a commitment to ensuring that every individual, regardless of their background, has an equal chance to access and succeed in employment. It means casting a wide net and actively seeking out talent from all walks of life, breaking down barriers that may have historically limited access to certain groups.

Inclusive recruitment is also about reimagining the hiring process. It involves removing bias from job descriptions, interview questions and assessment tools. It means creating interview panels that are diverse themselves, as this diversity helps reduce unconscious biases that can creep into the selection process. It requires continuous education and training for hiring managers and teams to foster awareness and sensitivity.

Conscious and unconscious bias in recruitment

Bias, unconscious bias, discrimination. These are all words that can be used to describe a recruitment exercise gone wrong.

To try and combat this, the next few pages will provide some guidance and innovations supplied by the <u>Diversity Council of Australia</u> in best practice inclusive recruitment.

WATCH: the challenges Talent Acquisition and Recruiters face in the day to day.

Bias can start as soon as a hiring manager decides they need to recruit for their team, either through natural or planned attrition. We naturally gravitate towards what we know and therefore want the same as before, rather than being more creative or fluid. This is because we know it works and the risk is less. This is no exception when it comes to recruitment.


30% of Australian organisations say they **can't find workers** to fill jobs

3,000,000 Australians are **looking for work** or want more work

*Jobs Bank 2023

The **Diversity Council of Australia** suggest the below five key things to consider to help eliminate bias and exclusion upfront when recruiting.

Attraction and advertising

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE
In adverstising and job descriptions

1 — **Remove exclusive language**
Review job advertisments and position descriptions to remove exclusive language e.g. words and phrases that reinforce stereotypical (e.g. male) attributes such as 'determined', 'winner' 'relentless focus', necessary gravitas', 'can own the room', 'able to work with equally ambitious people'. Also remove any jargon.

2 — **Words matter**
Use DCA's **#WordsAtWork** guidelines for each diversity dimension to review the wording of the job advertisment to ensure the tone and wording is inclusive.

3 — **Make things gender neutral**
Consider using the **Gender Decoder** tool to check whether a job advert includes subtle male language that discourages women applicants.

4 — **What does the candidate actually need to be successful in the role?**
· Separate essential/required and non-essential/desirable qualifications.
· Focus on the core duties or inherent requirements of the job and what is to be achieved rather than how it is to be achieved.

5 — **Avoid being ageist**
Avoid upper age limits or excessively long periods of required experience (e.g. ten years).

Common approaches taken by employers to minimise bias in testing include:

• providing information and coaching and opportunity for practice to candidates

• translating online tests into other languages

• using job-specific online tools rather than generic

• examining the percentage of culturally diverse applicants before and after online testing

Inclusive language in job adverts and position descriptions

Gone are the days of copy-pasting a position description as a job advert and throwing in a few "grabbers". What organisations put out there to the job seeking market is essentially a marketing pamphlet on why a candidate should work for them.

A job advertisement is a marketing tool. Inclusive advertising and marketing acknowledge the diversity of the market and industry by highlighting and celebrating their unique identities.

The Diversity Council of Australia suggests the following to ensure advertisements and job descriptions are inclusive and without bias.

1. **Promote your organisation's diversity objectives in the advertisement or job description.** For example: "We want to increase the diversity of our workforce to better meet the needs of our diverse clients and create equal opportunity employment pathways for our employees."

2. **Include a diversity statement in the advertisement.** Including a diversity statement in the advertisement that encourages people from different backgrounds to apply, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with disabilities. For example: "We are committed to building a diverse workforce and strongly encourage applications from Indigenous Australians, people with disability, people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, mature age workers and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQA+) people."

3. **Promote the aspects of the job and the employer that are likely to attract applicants with diverse backgrounds and abilities.** For example: flexible work, diversity networks, professional development opportunities.

4. **Consider the graphic design of the advertisement.** For example, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artwork may make it more appealing and promote your company as accessible and friendly to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidates.

5. **State that salary is negotiable.** Research shows that explicitly indicating in a job advertisement that salary is negotiable can both close the negotiation gap and the pay gap between genders. Furthermore, not only was the negotiation gap reduced, but the pay gap between men and women was closed by 45 per cent.

6. **Advertise all roles as flexible (part time, full time, hybrid).** Providing flexible workplaces is key to attracting a diverse workforce, achieving high levels of performance and wellbeing.

7. **For marketing and visibility, consider advertising in a wide variety of places to attract a diverse range of applicants.** This includes exploring alternatives to the usual recruitment channels and developing connections with networks and specialist organisations. Building relationships with cultural groups and organisations that work with diverse communities can assist in broadening your recruitment pool.

* Diversity Council Australia (R. DAlmada-Remedios, A. Kaabel, and J. OLeary), *Inclusive Recruitment: How to Tap into Australias Overlooked and Underleveraged Talent,* Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2022

More information on this can be found **here.**

FUN FACT: Women statistically won't apply for a role if they meet 75% of the lengthy requirements written in the advert where a male will apply if they meet 10%.

Candidate assessments

To test or not to test?

There is an overwhelming supply of aptitude and cognitive testing that all claim to help employers find the perfect candidates. These types of testing can include psychometric testing, cognitive testing, numerical and verbal reasoning testing. Something to consider is how inclusive these tests are and how relevant they are to the position.

A heavy reliance on these tests can present an issue with accessibility and cultural and linguistic diversity. In terms of cultural and linguistic diversity, latest research indicates the best strategies to minimise cultural diversity-related bias in these tests are to:

- Use simulations such as assessment centres and work samples or situational judgment tests in which applicants carry out job-related assignments.

- Use logic-based cognitive measurement instruments like Siena Reasoning Test which have a lower 'verbal load' (less need to read, understand and decide very quickly).

- Use statistical procedures in analysing and interpreting the test results – it is worth asking your provider if they have statistically analysed their tool to test its impact on people whose first language isn't English– if they say that they don't need to as it is an objective online tool, then this isn't an adequate answer.

- Testing should be used as a part of a "suite of tools" in the recruitment process – not the deciding factor. You want to ensure that a candidate is not culled on test results alone.

Useful links

Gender Decoder

Words at work

Inclusive interviews

Inclusive interviews represent a structured interview approach aimed at fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within organisations. These interviews are crafted to mitigate biases and cultivate an environment where candidates from all backgrounds feel esteemed and have an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications. The Diversity Council of Australia provides the following recommendations for organisations inclusive interviews:

- Establish a critical mass of minority interviewees - Whenever feasible, aim for a minimum of two minority candidates in the interview pool. Research indicates that this creates a critical mass of minority candidates, challenging biased assumptions that any minority candidate is merely an outsider or token, rather than a genuine contender.

- Set interview targets for diverse candidates.

- Consider the timing of interviews - Bias can be exacerbated when interviewers are fatigued or rushed. Whenever possible, schedule interviews and interview decisions with ample time, avoiding late-day appointments when interviewers may be tired.

- Avoid scheduling a full day of interviews - Bias tends to escalate when interviews are conducted back-to-back. Interview teams may become fatigued and lose focus.

- Ensure gender-balanced interview panels - The Workplace Gender Equality Agency emphasises the significance of gender diversity on interview panels. Establishing a balanced mix of genders and experience levels within the "hiring team" from the outset of the recruitment process ensures diverse perspectives throughout, including onboarding and induction.

- Consider diversity in interview panels beyond gender - It is advisable for any selection committee or interview panel to encompass a diverse array of backgrounds and experiences, extending beyond gender.

Innovations to consider

Recruitment and talent acquisition is the perfect space to get creative when it comes to finding the best talent. Your teams could consider some of the following:

1. Move away from the traditional behavioural interview style.

Alternatives to traditional models include online soft skills assessments, video interviews, casual setting interviews, peer interviews and job tryouts.

2. Anonymous recruitment.

Anonymous recruitment, also known as blind recruitment or de-identified recruitment, is a practice aimed at reducing bias in the hiring process by removing personally identifiable information from job applications. The goal is to focus solely on candidates' qualifications, skills, and experience, rather than factors such as name, gender, age, or ethnicity that may lead to unconscious biases.

Key features of anonymous recruitment include:

- Removing identifying information
- Using standardised application forms
- Blind screening
- Structured interviews
- Training for recruiters
- Evaluation based on performance tasks

Anonymous recruitment can help organisations build more diverse and inclusive teams by providing equal opportunities for candidates from different backgrounds.

By focusing on candidates' qualifications and skills, rather than demographic factors, employers can make more objective hiring decisions and create a more inclusive workplace culture.

Building an inclusive onboarding and induction experience

You know the term "you can walk the walk, but can you talk the talk?". This applies to onboarding and inducting new employees into an organisation.

An inclusive onboarding experience refers to the process of integrating new employees into a company or organisation in a way that values and respects their diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and identities. The goal is to create an environment where every new team member feels welcomed, included and supported from the very beginning.

The onboarding process holds particular significance in instilling a sense of inclusion from the very beginning of an employee's tenure. It serves as a critical juncture that establishes the foundation for a person's understanding and experience within the company. Consequently, constructing an inclusive onboarding experience is essential for cultivating an inclusive company culture.

How to create an inclusive onboarding experience

1. Let new hires know that inclusion matters

An easy way to let new hires know that inclusion matters to your organisation is to embed diversity and inclusion throughout the employee's onboarding journey. This could be by providing detail at interview stage around the internal initiatives and policies that are in place or providing a diversity and inclusion handbook as part of the onboarding paperwork.

2. Paint the big picture

For onboarding to feel inclusive, new hires need to feel like they're "in the know." As a manager or team member, it's easy to forget what it feels like to be new since you have so much institutional knowledge. When onboarding a new employee, approach it with empathy for your new teammates and appreciation for that feeling of not knowing what you don't know.

A simple way of doing this could be to share your team's current Plan on a Page or strategic objectives.

3. Prepare your team

Adding a new member to your team will inevitably change its dynamics. Preparing your team for how the new hire will fit in is key: What are their responsibilities? Who will they be working with or reporting to? Are they taking on any work from other team members? What does that handover process look like? A nice little add on would be to invite the new joiner to meet the team prior to starting or a short introductory email.

4. Help them speak your language

Every company has their own unique company language—whether it's acronyms or specific terms they use. It's important to help all new hires feel like they're speaking the same language as their colleagues, so provide them with the resources to help them get up to speed with your company-specific vernacular.

5. Context is everything

Context is everything when a new hire starts. Making sure they're equipped with the information they need to succeed is easier than it might sound. One easy step is to establish a buddy system, where every new hire is paired with a longer-tenured employee to show them the ropes. Their buddy is there to welcome them on the first day, answer questions and be a dedicated resource through their first few months.

Batching start days is also a way to contextualise the new hire experience; doing so allows every new hire to start with a peer group. This creates bonds and shared experiences between new hires that last long beyond the first few weeks of work.

Another easy step to provide context for new hires is to set up one-on-one lunches and meetings in their first few weeks with people who can help welcome and integrate them. This can be individuals who share their interests or previous professional experience, or people on different teams with whom the new hire will be collaborating.

Helping a new hire connect with people across the company lets them build meaningful relationships starting on their first day, and as they go through onboarding, they'll feel more comfortable seeing some newly familiar faces.

6. Give space for settling in

Part of creating an inclusive onboarding experience is recognising that not everyone takes in information the same way. Giving each new hire the time and space to hear and digest all the new information about their role and the company is one of the best ways you can make someone feel welcome.

7. Add a personal touch

Adding a personal touch to the onboarding experience can really make an employee feel like they've found a home at your company; it especially helps with feelings of inclusion. Whether they're discovering allies at an Employee Resource Group or reconnecting with their recruiter over coffee, taking things offline makes the onboarding experience that much more inclusive.

8. Celebrate small wins

As the employer, it's important to strike a balance between enabling a new employee to contribute immediately and feel included. Focusing too much on one area can lead to an employee feeling like they aren't making an impact or feel like they don't belong.

Instead, create space for small wins so that new employees can gain confidence early on (like working on small projects).

Workplace policies and initiatives

Workplace policies for inclusion are crucial for creating a positive and equitable work environment. Below are some initiatives and policies to consider and adopt.

Reasonable adjustments

Accommodation policies for employees with disabilities underscore an organisation's commitment to creating an inclusive and accessible workplace where every individual can thrive. Recognising the diverse needs of a workforce and providing reasonable accommodations help ensure equal opportunities for all employees.

Please refer to Chapter 5: People with disability for further guidance.

Flexibility in the workplace

Workplace flexibility supports diversity and inclusion by accommodating the diverse needs of employees. For example, it can help individuals with caregiving responsibilities, people with disabilities or those with unique scheduling needs to participate fully in the workforce.

Helpful resource:
The WGEA has designed a Flexibility in the Workplace Diagnostic Tool that you can access here.

Sorry business

An Aboriginal custom, Sorry Business is a period of cultural practices that take place after someone's death. Out on community when someone passes away, the whole community comes together to share that sorrow through a process called Sorry Business.

Sorry Business includes ceremonies held around the bereavement and/or funerals for a deceased person. Sorry Business may also be conducted to mark the experience of grief or loss in other circumstances, such as mourning the loss of land or land degradation. Some communities feel the loss of connection to culture or land as painfully as they would feel the loss of a person. This shows the deep connection our communities have with the land.

If Sorry Business is not already included under an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA), an employer may choose to provide additional leave to allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People to attend Sorry Business in addition to the Compassionate and Bereavement Leave entitlements under Fairwork Australia.

Public holiday leave swap

A public holiday leave swap policy allows employees to swap out public holidays for days that are culturally or religiously significant for them. For example, people who are Muslim might choose to swap the Easter public holidays for Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr.

Significant cultural and religious events

Recognising and embracing diversity in the workplace helps staff feel valued for their unique qualities, ideas and perspectives and extends to recognising that staff may wish to celebrate culturally important or religious days and events throughout the year. Some examples of cultural or religious holidays include:

- Lunar New Year
- Diwali
- Ramadan
- NAIDOC Week.

Parental Leave

Please refer to the WGEA for guidance on developing a parental leave policy:

https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/WGEA-Leading-Practice-Parental-Leave-Policy-Guide.pdf

This provides guidance for both birthing mother and birthing partner.

Menopause leave

When we consider that women can enter perimenopause from the age of 40, implementing a menopause leave policy is a progressive and compassionate step towards fostering a workplace that prioritises the well-being of female employees.

Recognising menopause as a significant life stage, this policy acknowledges the unique physical and emotional challenges that individuals may face during this transition.

A menopause leave policy aims to provide support by offering flexibility in work arrangements, additional leave days or alternative work arrangements for employees experiencing symptoms that may impact their ability to perform at their best.

By normalising conversations around menopause and addressing the associated challenges openly, organisations contribute to a more inclusive and understanding work environment, where employees feel valued and supported throughout every stage of their professional and personal lives.

This policy not only reflects a commitment to gender equality, but also enhances employee morale and productivity by promoting a workplace culture that genuinely cares for the holistic well-being of its female employees.

An example of a leave policy could be to offer an additional five days leave per year with a medical professional's certificate.

Jean Hailes for Womens Health has some **useful resources** which can be found on their website.

> ### HOT TIP!
>
> Access the **Jean Hailes for Women's Health menopause information page**, including definitions and the management of symptoms.

Monitoring and measuring success in your workplace

This section focuses on the crucial aspect of monitoring and measuring progress toward fostering an inclusive workplace. Tracking our efforts allows us to identify successes, address challenges, and continually refine our strategies for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Establishing Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are measurable goals that help quantify our progress in creating an inclusive work environment. KPIs can include:

- representation metrics: track the diversity of our workforce at various levels and departments
- employee engagement surveys: regularly assess employee satisfaction and feelings of inclusion
- promotion and retention rates: monitor the advancement and retention of employees from underrepresented groups.

Conducting regular diversity audits

Diversity audits help us assess the effectiveness of our inclusion efforts by examining current demographics, policies, and practices. These can include:

- workforce composition: analyse the diversity of team members at all levels
- policy review: evaluate existing policies for inclusivity and identify areas for improvement
- feedback mechanisms: establish safe and anonymous channels for employees to provide feedback on inclusivity.

Employee Resource Group impact assessments

Impact assessments evaluate the effectiveness and impact of Employee Resource Groups (ERG) in promoting inclusion. Assessments can include:

- participation rates: monitor the number of employees involved in ERGs
- event attendance: assess attendance at ERG-sponsored events and activities
- feedback surveys: gather employee feedback on the value and impact of ERG initiatives.
- application of learning: evaluate how employees apply diversity and inclusion principles in their roles.

Diversity in leadership positions

Set a goal to achieve diversity at all levels, including leadership roles. These can be evaluated by looking at:

- leadership demographics: assess the diversity of leadership teams
- succession planning: monitor efforts to develop and promote diverse talent into leadership positions
- inclusive leadership training: measure participation and impact of training programs for leaders.

Workplace Culture Surveys

Gauge the overall inclusivity and perception of the workplace culture by using:

- inclusion index: use a standardised index to measure overall inclusivity
- qualitative feedback: collect anecdotes and stories to understand the lived experiences of employees
- comparative analysis: compare survey results over time to identify trends and areas for improvement.

By establishing clear KPIs, conducting regular audits and assessing the impact of various initiatives, we commit to the ongoing process of creating an inclusive workplace.

Monitoring and measuring progress are essential components of our journey toward fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment where every employee can thrive.

Definitions of key terms related to diversity, inclusion and equality

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This glossary is not exhaustive, as language and concepts related to diversity and inclusion continue to evolve. However, it provides a foundation for understanding key terms in this important field.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Aboriginality: Being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

Black cladding: Supply Nation considers 'black cladding' the practice of a non-Indigenous business entity or individual taking unfair advantage of an Indigenous business entity or individual for the purpose of gaining access to otherwise inaccessible Indigenous procurement policies or contracts.

Cultural load: According to Diversity Council Australia, cultural load is the (often invisible) additional workload borne by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the workplace, where they are either the only Indigenous person or one of a small number of Indigenous people.

Self-determination: The right Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have to take control and power over their own lives and affairs. This includes making decisions affecting their community and cultural practices, empowering them with freedom and dignity. Recognised as a human right by the United Nations, self-determination involves acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Nations with their own decision-making and knowledge systems.

For more information, please see the Self-Determination Reform Framework

Disability

Ableism: Ableism is a form of discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities, both visible and invisible. It involves the belief that people with disabilities are inferior to those without disabilities, or it can manifest as actions or policies that exclude, marginalise or discriminate against people with disabilities.

Accessibility: The design of products, services, or environments that can be used by people with disabilities. It aims to remove barriers and ensure equal access for all.

Accommodation: A change in the environment or in the way things are customarily done that enables an individual with a disability to have equal opportunity, access and participation.

Disability: There are at two official definitions of disability; the contemporary social definition provided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the national legal definition provided by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

Both definitions aim to protect against discrimination and help all people to understand their rights and responsibilities.

Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that defines disability as: Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) definition: The DDA legislation that protects Australians against discrimination based on disability provides a broad definition of disability including these eight types:

- **Immunological disability:** Impact due to the presence of organisms causing disease in the body
- **Intellectual disability:** Impacts ability to learn or process information
- **Learning disability:** Impacts acquisition, organisation, retention, and understanding of information
- **Physical disability:** Impacts mobility or dexterity
- **Physical disfigurement:** Impacts physical appearance
- **Neurodiversity or variations:** These differences can include Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyscalculia, Autistic Spectrum, and Tourette Syndrome.
- **Neurological disability:** Impacts the brain and central nervous system
- **Sensory disability:** Impacts the ability to hear or see.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) terminology

Affirmative action: A set of policies and practices designed to increase opportunities for historically underrepresented or disadvantaged groups in education, employment, or other areas.

Allyship: The act of supporting and advocating for members of marginalised groups, even if one does not belong to those groups. Allies work to promote equity and inclusion.

Bias: A preference or prejudice in favour of or against a person or group that is not based on rational or objective reasoning. Bias can be conscious (explicit) or unconscious (implicit).

Cultural competence: The ability to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. It involves understanding and respecting cultural differences and adapting one's behaviour and communication style accordingly.

Cultural sensitivity: Being aware of and respectful toward the cultural differences and norms of others, while avoiding stereotypes or biases.

Culturally safe workplace: A culturally safe workplace has a defined set of values and principles, and demonstrates behaviours, attitudes, policies, and structures that enable all workers to work effectively cross-culturally. In a culturally safe workplace all workers feel comfortable, supported and respected.

Diversity: The presence of a wide range of human differences, including but not limited to: race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, socioeconomic status and cultural backgrounds, within a group, organisation or community.

ERG (Employee Resource Group): A group within an organisation responsible for promoting diversity and inclusion initiatives, policies, and programs.

Diversity recruitment: The process of actively seeking and attracting candidates from diverse backgrounds to ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce.

EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity): A legal framework that prohibits discrimination in employment based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, disability and religion.

Equity: The concept of fairness and justice in the distribution of resources, opportunities and benefits. It involves addressing historical and systemic disadvantages to ensure that everyone has an equal chance to succeed.

Implicit bias training: Training programs designed to raise awareness of unconscious biases and provide strategies for mitigating their impact on decision-making and behaviour.

Inclusion: The practice of creating an environment in which all individuals feel valued, respected and included, regardless of their differences. It involves actively striving to ensure that all voices are heard, and all perspectives are considered.

Inclusive language: Language that avoids exclusion or bias based on characteristics such as gender, race, or disability. It promotes respect and inclusivity.

Inclusive leadership: Leadership that actively promotes diversity and inclusion within an organisation. Inclusive leaders value and leverage the diverse perspectives and backgrounds of their team members.

Intersectionality: The idea that individuals can experience multiple forms of discrimination or disadvantage simultaneously, often due to the intersection of their various identities (e.g., race, gender, sexuality or disability).

Micro affirmation: A microaffirmation is a small gesture of inclusion, caring or kindness. They include listening, providing comfort and support, being an ally and explicitly valuing the contributions and presence of all. It is particularly helpful for those with greater power or seniority to "model" affirming behaviour.

Microaggression: Subtle, often unintentional, verbal or non-verbal actions or comments that convey discriminatory or derogatory messages to individuals based on their race, gender or other attributes. Microaggressions can undermine an individual's sense of belonging and well-being.

Privilege: An unearned, sustained advantage that comes from race, gender, sexuality, ability, socioeconomic status, age and other differences.

Racism: A belief that racial differences produce or are associated with inherent superiority or inferiority. Racially based prejudice, discrimination, hostility or hatred. Institutionalised racism, also known as systemic racism, refers to forms of racism that are engrained in society or organisations. It is when entire racial groups are discriminated against, or consistently disadvantaged, by larger social systems, practices, choices, or policies.

Stereotype: A widely held but oversimplified and generalised belief or idea about a particular group of people. Stereotypes can be based on race, gender, religion or other characteristics and can lead to unfair assumptions.

Systemic trauma: Practices and procedures implemented by institutions or their leaders that directly or indirectly cause psychological, emotional, economic, spiritual, physical or sexual harm to particular individuals or specific groups of people.

Unconscious bias: Implicit biases that affect decision-making and behaviour without conscious awareness. These biases can be mitigated through awareness and training.

LGBTIQA+

Aromantic: a person who does not experience romantic attraction.

Asexual: someone who does not experience sexual attraction.

Bisexual: Someone attracted to people of the same gender or opposite gender. We have used the term 'bisexual' in this report, but we include in this group people who would also self-describe as pansexual.

Cisgender: A term used to describe people who identify their gender as the same as what was assigned to them at birth (male or female). 'Cis' is a Latin term meaning 'on the same side as'.

Gay: A man sexually attracted to other men.

Gender: The term 'gender' refers to the way in which a person identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics. Gender is generally understood as a social and cultural construction. A person's gender identity or gender expression is not always exclusively male or female and may or may not correspond to their sex.

Gender identity: The term 'gender identity' refers to a person's deeply held internal and individual sense of gender.

Gender expression: The term 'gender expression' refers to the way in which a person externally expresses their gender or how they are perceived by others.

Heteronormativity: a world view that promotes heterosexuality as the 'normal' or preferred sexual orientation rather than one of many possibilities. Often in combination with heterosexism (which can be defined as prejudiced attitudes or discriminatory practices against homosexuals by heterosexuals). Heteronormative worldviews also usually ascribe fixed gender roles to men and women, and view gender as binary.

Intersex: Intersex is a term for people born with atypical physical sex characteristics. There are many different intersex traits or variations including genetic, hormonal or physical characteristics which are not exclusively 'male' or 'female'. Intersex people may identify as either men, women or non-binary.

Lesbian: A woman sexually attracted to other women.

Non-binary: Someone who does not identify as a man or a woman, or solely as one of those two genders. **(See Teen Vogue, 12 Things People Get Wrong About Being Nonbinary).**

Pansexual: someone attracted to people of diverse genders, and gender identities.

Plus +: + refers to people who fall within the broad identities described above, but don't identify with these labels. We understand that language is often contentious, and that there are some people we have not included. We acknowledge that any one "label" or description cannot adequately define the rich diversity within our community. Our intention is to be as succinct as we can with our words, but inclusive of all.

Queer: a term used to describe a range of sexual orientations and gender identities. Although once used as a derogatory term, the term queer now encapsulates political ideas of resistance to heteronormativity and homonormativity and is often used as an umbrella term to describe the full range of LGBTIQA+ identities.

Sex: The term 'sex' refers to a person's biological characteristics. A person's sex is usually described as being male or female. Some people may not be exclusively male or female. Some people identify as neither male nor female.

Transgender / Trans / Gender Diverse: These are umbrella terms that describe people who identify their gender as different to what was assigned to them at birth. Some trans people position 'being trans' as a history or experience, rather than an identity, and consider their gender identity as simply being female, male or a non-binary identity. Some connect strongly with their trans experience. The processes of transition may or may not be part of a trans or gender diverse person's life.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental illness: Impacts thinking processes

For more information please visit
bigbuild.vic.gov.au/jobs/training-programs/training-for-the-future

VIDA
VICTORIAN INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY AUTHORITY

VICTORIA State Government | Department of Transport and Planning

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