Diversity in the workplace

We live in an increasingly diverse society and in turn, our workplaces are celebrating diversity and placing a greater focus on inclusion to create a more harmonious work experience.

Diversity is recognising and respecting the values that make each of us unique including race, ethnicity, age, sex, gender identity, sexuality, religion, disability and other lifestyle characteristics including parental status, marital status, educational background and location.

Inclusion happens when individuals are valued and feel safe in their environment and no matter what their background or characteristics, that they are given equal opportunity and feel a sense of belonging.

Benefits of a diverse workforce

For employees:

1. Makes them feel safe and included

2. Improves mental health and wellbeing

3. Builds resilience

4. Allows workers to be their authentic self at work

For employers:

1. Creates a safe working environment

2. Larger recruitment talent pools

3. Higher employee retention rates

4. Increases positivity, productivity, creativity and engagement

Did you know?

24% of Australia's population have a non-European background however, they only make up **5%** of senior leaders in Australian organisations.
Reference

In 2018, **84%** of the population without a disability were in the labour force, compared to only **53%** of the population with a disability.
Reference

Women make up **47%** of the workforce, but only **17%** of CEO's are female or female-identifying.
Reference

Workers who identify as LGBTQIA+ and have come out to their colleagues at work tend to have higher engagement than those who are out to some or not out at work.
Reference

The employment rate for Indigenous Australians is **49%**, compared to **75%** for non-Indigenous Australians.
Reference

Three tips to create a more diverse workplace

Creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce is at the forefront of many organisational strategies. While significant cultural changes and direction sit with the HR and leadership teams to progress initiatives such as diversity and inclusion policies and reviewing recruitment processes, there are steps we can all take to make our work environment more inclusive.

1 **Use respectful language.** It's easy to miscommunicate so be intentional and aware of your words. This can take many forms:

	Ask for clarity and make an effort to use someone's correct pronouns
	Avoid using gender specific-terms such as 'guys' or 'ladies' – try using 'team' or 'everyone' instead
	Be careful of using mental health terms to convey everyday behaviours – for example, being 'OCD' or 'bipolar' are real mental health conditions so don't use these terms to describe being 'tidy' or 'moody'
	Ask before making an assumption. If you're not sure, ask someone how they identify in a certain context and if you can also refer to them in this way.

2 **Raise concerns.** Change starts small. If you see something that you don't think is right, doesn't fit with the values of the organisation or could be discriminatory – say something. If you feel comfortable, raise your concerns respectfully at the time of the incident so the person(s) understand that their behaviour isn't right. If not, speak with your manager or HR team who can assist in managing situations like this. Sometimes the behaviour may not be intentional and may highlight an opportunity for education.

3 **Training.** Commit to your own education. Many workplaces offer regular conscious inclusion, unconscious bias and other diversity and inclusion training. Take the time to attend this training and put what you learn into practice. If you don't have this provided by your employer or you want to take your learning further, search for training on LinkedIn or find diversity training and resources online or in your local area. There are lots of organisations championing for more diversity and inclusion in all areas that can provide valuable resources.