

2019-2020  
EDITION



DIVERSITY  
COUNCIL  
AUSTRALIA



# INCLUSION@WORK INDEX

MAPPING THE STATE OF INCLUSION IN THE AUSTRALIAN WORKFORCE

SYNOPSIS REPORT

Foundation  
Sponsor:

**SUNCORP**



Supporting  
Sponsor:

 **NOVARTIS**

The full version of this research can be found on the [DCA website](#).

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Diversity Council Australia (DCA) is the only independent, not-for-profit workplace diversity advisor to business in Australia. We offer a unique knowledge bank of research, practice and expertise across diversity dimensions developed over 30 years of operation. In partnership with our members, our mission is to: lead debate on diversity in the public arena; develop and promote the latest diversity research, thinking and practice; and deliver innovative diversity practice resources and services to enable our members to drive business improvement. DCA works in partnership with members to generate groundbreaking high impact diversity research that drives business improvement through providing evidence-based guidance on how to fully leverage the benefits of a diverse talent pool.

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“ In 2017, DCA embarked on Australia’s first nationally representative survey of workplace inclusion. That landmark study provided an undeniable evidence base about the value of inclusion to Australian businesses, and employees.

Two-years on, DCA is proud to present this updated report, which continues to show that *Inclusion@Work* does matter to Australian workers, benefits everyone (not just people from target or minority groups), and boosts employee performance and wellbeing.

Of course, this report also shows that some groups experience much less inclusion and more exclusion than their colleagues.

First Nations People continue to experience higher levels of exclusion than their non-Indigenous colleagues, so too do people with disability and people with an LGBTIQ+ identity or status. This report shows that there is much more to do to imbed inclusion for everyone.

By making this a biennial survey and report, we hope to do more than provide a snapshot of inclusion experiences. We want to learn more about how to build inclusive workplaces for all Australian workers.

What we know so far, is that strong support for D&I action is growing. It is our ambition this evidence base will help Australian organisations shape diversity and inclusion programs that are responsive to the needs of a changing workforce. ”

**LISA ANNESE**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA



“ Suncorp is proud to once again partner with Diversity Council Australia (DCA) to launch the second national index of Australian workplace inclusion.

At Suncorp, we aspire to be one of the most inclusive places to work in Australia and New Zealand, because our people, customers and communities will all benefit from a fairer and more inclusive culture. We want to provide an environment where people can bring their whole selves to work and feel valued, involved and respected for their perspectives and contribution.

The *Inclusion@Work Index* is an important benchmark to gauge the inclusiveness of Australian businesses and highlights the issues that need to be addressed to create a more inclusive workplace culture.

I hope the findings from this valuable research will help all organisations build more inclusive workplaces. Here at Suncorp, we will use the outcomes to build and support a diverse workforce and an inclusive workplace where everyone feels a sense of belonging. ”

**STEVE JOHNSTON**  
SUNCORP GROUP CEO AND MANAGING DIRECTOR

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“ We are at a point in time when inclusion at work is critically important, not only for our employees, but for our company’s commitments to society and even our future competitiveness.

Though its importance is clear, inclusion can be very hard to measure and hard to define. This is why the work of Diversity Council Australia and the *Inclusion@Work Index Report* is so critically important. It gives us insights into where we are right now and how to progress.

At Novartis, we like to say we are ‘celebrating life’ by introducing a best-in-class parental leave policy and other family friendly policies as tools to promote equality. In addition to commitments to balanced gender representation, we are also introducing pay transparency in a drive towards pay equity.

We understand these policies are just a few pieces of a bigger picture, so we look forward to using the findings of this report to guide our future planning. ”

**LAUREN CAREY**  
COUNTRY PRESIDENT AND ONCOLOGY GENERAL MANAGER, NOVARTIS



## WHAT IS THE *INCLUSION@WORK* INDEX?

In 2017 DCA and Suncorp partnered to create a national *Inclusion@Work Index* to track the state of inclusion in Australian workplaces over time. Now in its second iteration, DCA, Suncorp and Novartis have joined forces to once again investigate two questions:

- 1 How inclusive is the Australian workforce for a diversity of employees, and how has this changed over time?
- 2 What impact does inclusion have on performance and wellbeing?



**3,000**  
AUSTRALIAN  
WORKERS

To do this, we surveyed a **nationally representative sample of 3,000 Australian workers**. The survey is repeated biennially to map and track inclusion in the Australian workforce over time.

### OUR ASPIRATION IS TO:

- Encourage Australian organisations to **achieve inclusion** in their workplaces.
- Biennially **track Australia's progress** (or lack of) in creating *Inclusion@Work*.
- Encourage Australians to consider workplace inclusion in relation to **a broad set of workers** – not just men and women, but also people from a range of other key demographic groups (e.g. age, cultural backgrounds, caring responsibilities, disability status, sexual orientation and gender identity etc.).

## STATE-OF-PLAY SNAPSHOT

The *Inclusion@Work Index 2019–2020* revealed growth in strong support for workplace inclusion since the 2017–2018 Index – with this being the most notable of any changes between the two surveys.

This year's Index also found that *Inclusion@Work* continues to matter to the majority of Australian workers, benefits everyone (not just people from target or minority groups), and boosts employee performance and wellbeing.

Despite this, some employees experience notably lower levels of inclusion and higher levels of exclusion than their colleagues – namely, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers, workers with disability, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or queer (LGBTIQ+) workers.<sup>1</sup>



## WHAT IS DIVERSITY?

Diversity is the mix of people in your organisation.

Diversity refers to all the ways in which we differ (e.g., Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, education, gender, profession).

## WHAT IS INCLUSION?

Inclusion is getting this mix to work.

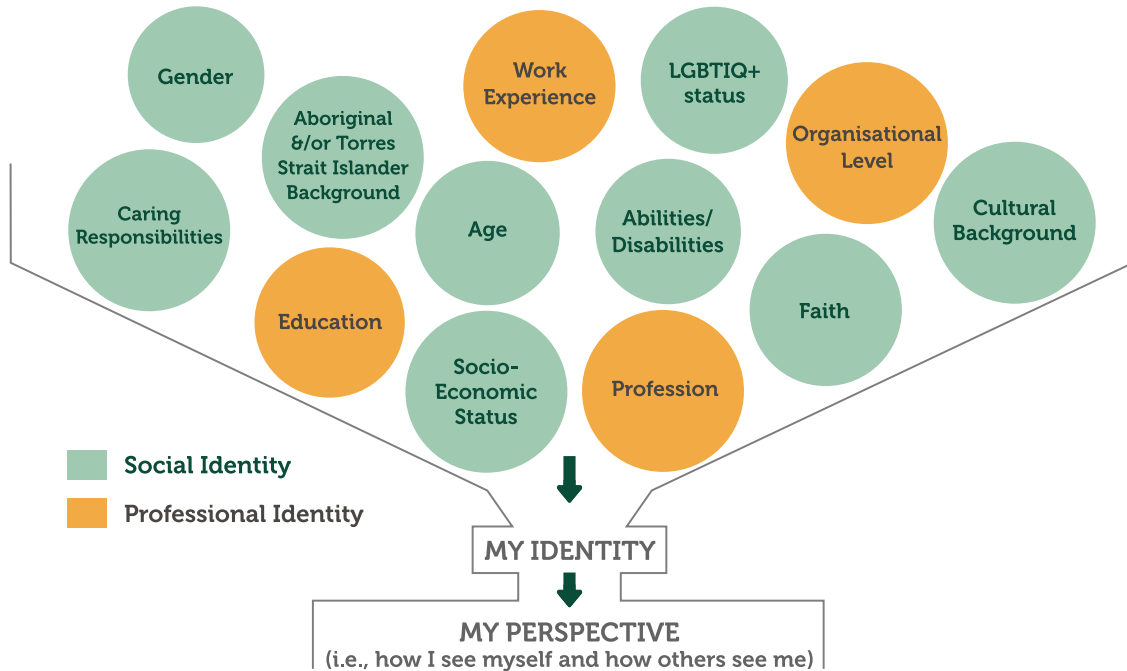
Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people are respected, connected, progressing and contributing to organisational success.



Diversity refers to all the differences between people in how they identify in relation to their:

- **Social identity** such as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, caring responsibilities, cultural background, disability, gender, faith/no-faith, LGBTIQ+ status, and socio-economic background, and
- **Professional identity** such as profession, education, work experiences, and organisational role.

These aspects come together in a unique way for each of us – shaping how we see ourselves and how others see us.



Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people are respected, connected, progressing and contributing to organisational success.

**Respected.** Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people at work feel valued and respected for who they are.

**Connected.** Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people feel connected to their co-workers and so have a sense of belonging.

**Progressing.** Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people at work have opportunities to develop their career and progress.

**Contributing.** Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people can contribute their talents and energies to the organisation.

Remember! Different people will experience inclusion **DIFFERENTLY** – being respected at work may look and feel different for a young Anglo-Celtic graduate and an older Chinese-Australian executive. So it's important to learn about each other's identities (e.g., age, cultural background, gender) and how this may (or may not) influence our view and experience of *Inclusion@Work*.



## WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE TEAM?

An inclusive team is one where a diversity of people (e.g., from different ages, cultural backgrounds, genders) feel that they are respected and valued team members, who are able to be themselves and contribute and progress at work.

.....



## WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE MANAGER?

An inclusive manager is someone who creates an inclusive team environment. For this research project, we measured an inclusive manager as someone who values differences, seeks out and uses a diversity of ideas, treats everyone fairly, and deals with inappropriate behaviour.

.....



## WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION?

For this research project, an inclusive organisation was defined as one in which employees trust their organisation to treat them fairly, feel diversity is valued and respected, and report that top leaders demonstrate a visible genuine commitment to diversity and inclusion.

### MEASURING INCLUSION

Respondents were asked a series of questions about how inclusive their team, immediate manager, and organisation was. Based on their answers, an average score out of 5 was calculated to represent how inclusive their team, immediate manager, and organisation was.



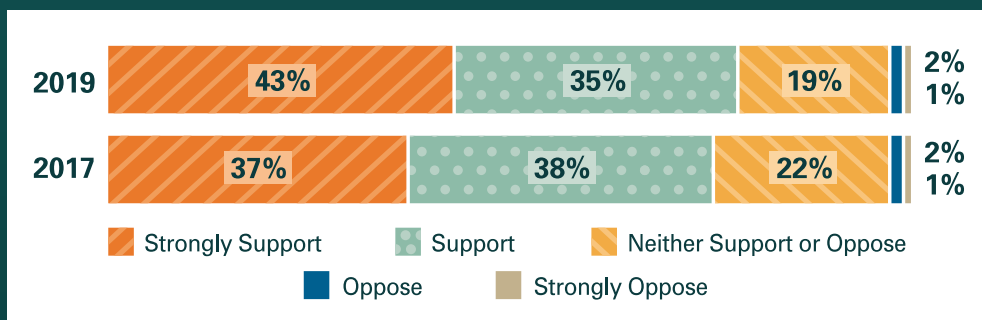


## INCLUSION@WORK CONTINUES TO MATTER TO AUSTRALIANS

Our research shows that Australian workers overwhelmingly support inclusion initiatives.

In 2019, as in 2017, **three out of four Australian workers supported or strongly supported** their organisation taking action to create a workplace which is diverse and inclusive (D&I) – (75% in 2017 and 78% in 2019).

Similarly, in both time periods, **only 3% of Australian workers opposed or strongly opposed** their organisation taking action.





## GROWTH IN STRONG SUPPORT



### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strong Support:**

The greatest increase in worker support has been amongst Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers – their level of strong support for D&I organisational action increased from **39% in 2017** to **53% to 2019**.



### **While Lower, Strong Support from Men Has Also Grown Markedly:**

While male workers had one of the lowest levels of strong support, men's overall support for D&I has increased to 74% (from 69% in 2017) and the proportion of men who **strongly support** D&I has increased significantly to 38% (from 31% in 2017). This shift is important amid wider cultural tensions, where D&I can be seen as *'PC gone mad'*, and men sometimes feel victimised and excluded at the expense of minority groups.

## HIGHER AND LOWER SUPPORT



### **Higher:**

In 2019, support was highest amongst **LGBTIQ+ workers** (59% strongly support), followed by **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers** (53%), younger workers (52%), and **workers with disability** (49%).



### **Lower:**

Support was lower amongst **men** (38% strongly support), **older workers** (41%), and **non-LGBTIQ+ workers** (42%).



## ***INCLUSION@WORK* BENEFITS EVERYONE**

One of the challenges facing organisations seeking to create a more diverse and inclusive (D&I) workplace is addressing the assumption that D&I efforts only benefit people from target or minority groups such as Australians who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, culturally diverse, have a disability, are female, or are LGBTIQ+.

Our findings from 2017 and 2019 challenge this assumption, showing that inclusion is actually *good for everyone* – not just people from target or minority groups.



Using **workers with and without disability** as an example, we found that when organisations take action to create a more diverse and inclusive (D&I) workplace, it benefits both workers with and without disability.

In organisations taking D&I actions, similar proportions of workers with and without disability:



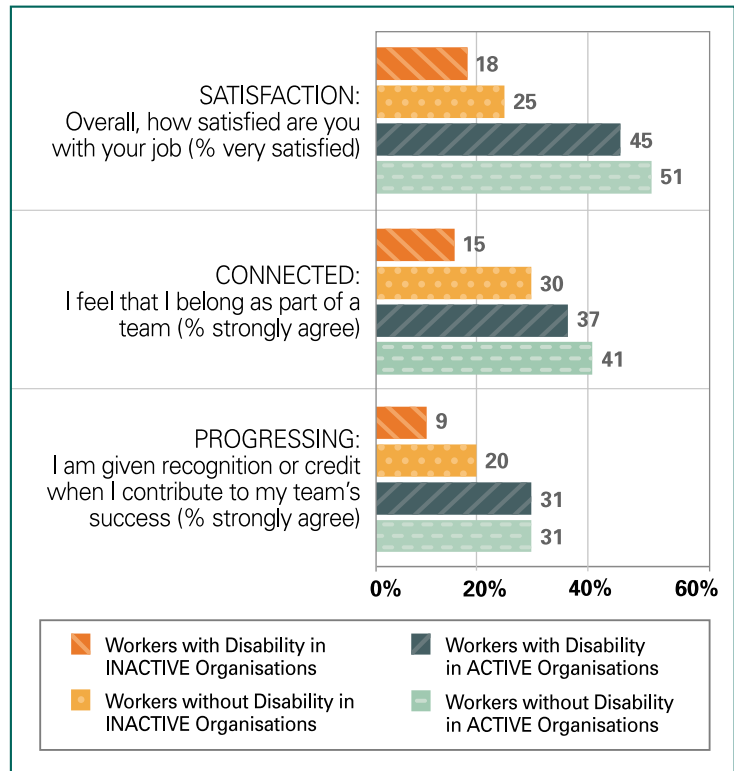
**Were very satisfied with their jobs** and significantly more so than workers in organisations where no action was being taken



**Felt accepted** by people in their team



Had the **same opportunities** of anyone else of their ability



In **both 2017 and 2019**, this was also the case for:

- **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers** and **non-Indigenous** workers
- **Female and male** workers
- **Culturally diverse** and **non-culturally diverse** workers, and
- **LGBTIQ+** and **non-LGBTIQ+** workers.

**Clearly, it's not just people from under-represented groups who are benefitting from D&I organisational efforts!**



## INCLUSION@WORK IS STILL GOOD FOR BUSINESS

In 2019, for the first time, we asked Australians how inclusive their organisational culture was.

We found if you work in an inclusive organisational culture<sup>2</sup> you are:



**5 times more likely to innovate**



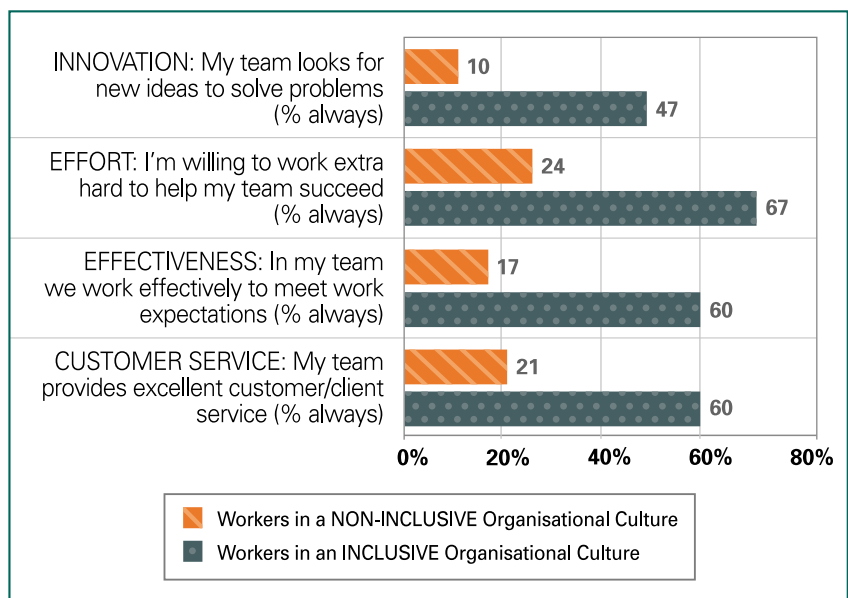
**3 times more likely to work extra hard**



**3 times more likely to be highly effective than workers in non-inclusive organisations<sup>3</sup>**



**3 times more likely to provide excellent customer/client service**





## INCLUSION@WORK IS STILL GOOD FOR EMPLOYEES

In 2019, as in 2017, our *Inclusion@Work* survey findings demonstrate that inclusion not only fuels team performance, it also fosters employee satisfaction, success, and security.

If you work in an inclusive organisation<sup>4</sup> you are:



**5 times more likely** to be **very satisfied** with your job than workers in non-inclusive teams



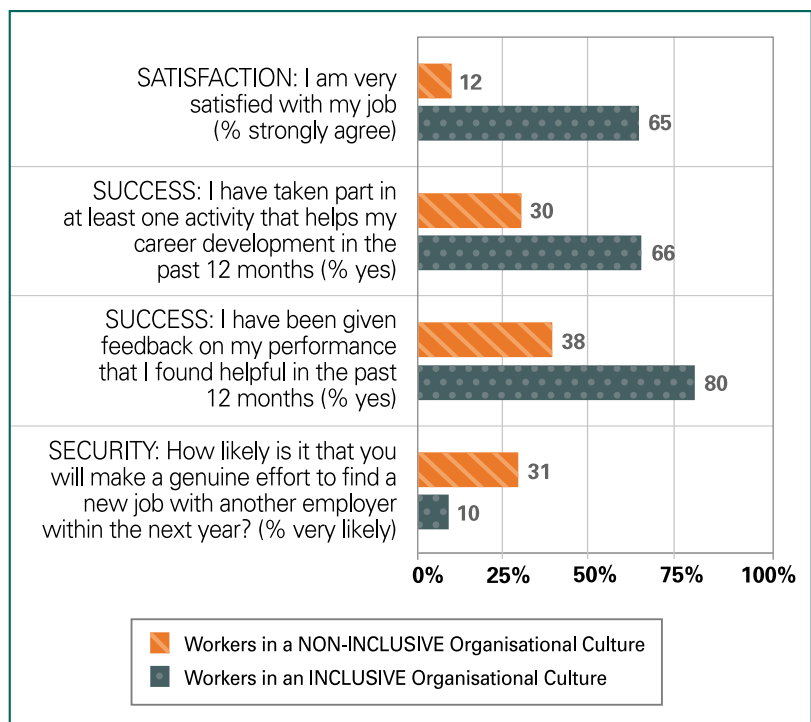
**2 times more likely** to receive regular **career development** opportunities



**2 times more likely** to have been given **constructive performance feedback**



**3 times less likely** to **leave** their current employer





# THE STATE OF INCLUSION FOR AUSTRALIA'S FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

While we found that *Inclusion@Work* continues to matter to Australian workers and benefits everyone, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers we surveyed consistently reported lower levels of inclusion and higher levels of exclusion than their non-Indigenous colleagues.

This is a sobering finding at a time when momentum is growing for Australia to support First Nations peoples' *Uluru Statement from the Heart*.



**Respect.** Unfortunately, 29% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers agreed that they have to hide or change who they are at work to fit in compared to 18% of non-Indigenous workers.



**Progressing and Contributing.** Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were *twice* as likely as non-Indigenous workers to disagree that they had the same opportunities as anyone else of their ability (24% versus 11%).



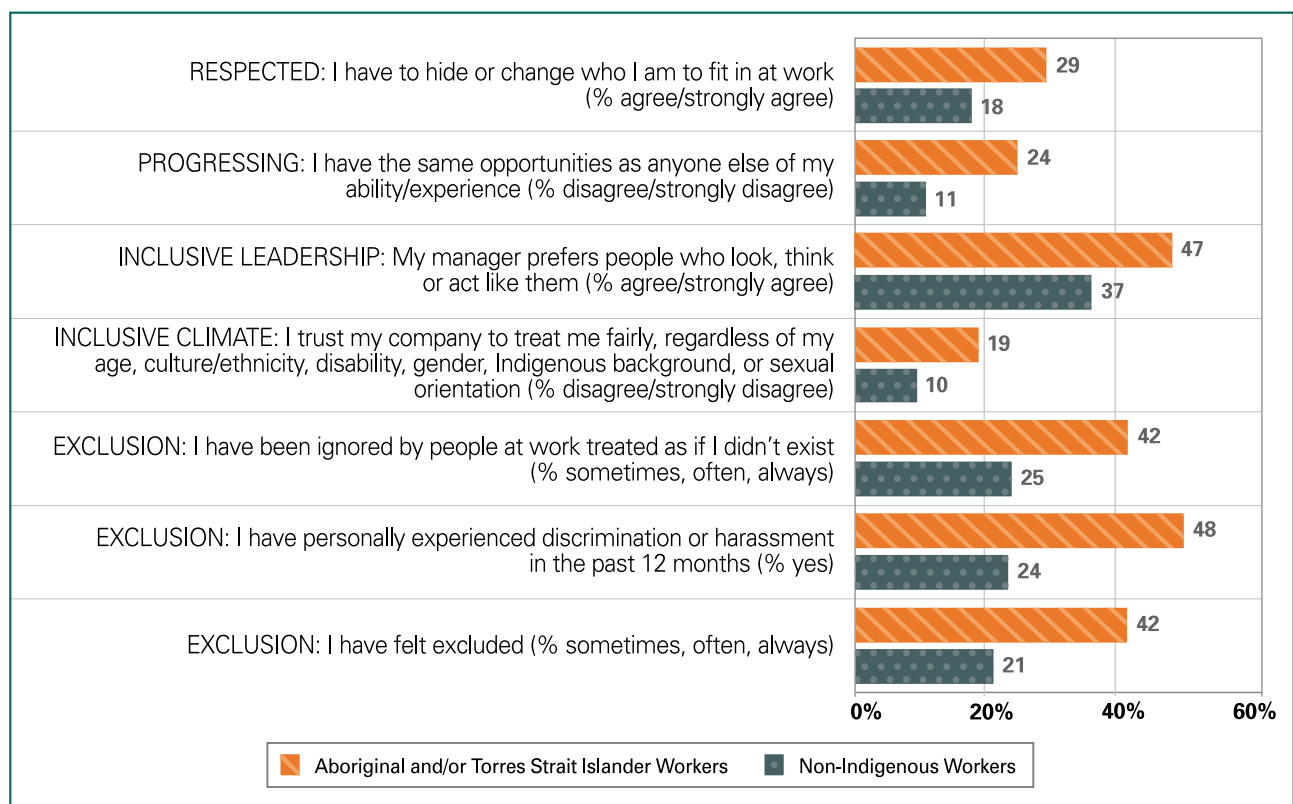
**Inclusive Leadership.** Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were much more likely to agree that their manager prefers people who look, think, or act like them.



**Inclusive Climate.** 19% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers indicated that they did not trust their organisation to treat them fairly, almost *double* the response for non-Indigenous workers.



**Exclusion.** Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers were *twice* as likely as non-Indigenous workers to have experienced discrimination and/or harassment in the past year (48% compared to 24%), and to have felt excluded in the past year (42% versus 21%).



# THE STATE OF INCLUSION FOR WORKERS WITH DISABILITY

For almost two decades, the unemployment rate for people with disability in Australia has been almost twice that of people without disability (9% versus 5%).<sup>5</sup>

With so little improvement in employment opportunities over this time, it is concerning to find that the Australian workers with disability we surveyed consistently reported lower levels of inclusion and higher levels of exclusion than their colleagues without disability.



**Respect and Connection.** Unfortunately, workers with disability were less likely to feel that they belonged in their team (68% agreed compared to 80% of workers without disability), and that they were treated with respect (69% versus 80%).



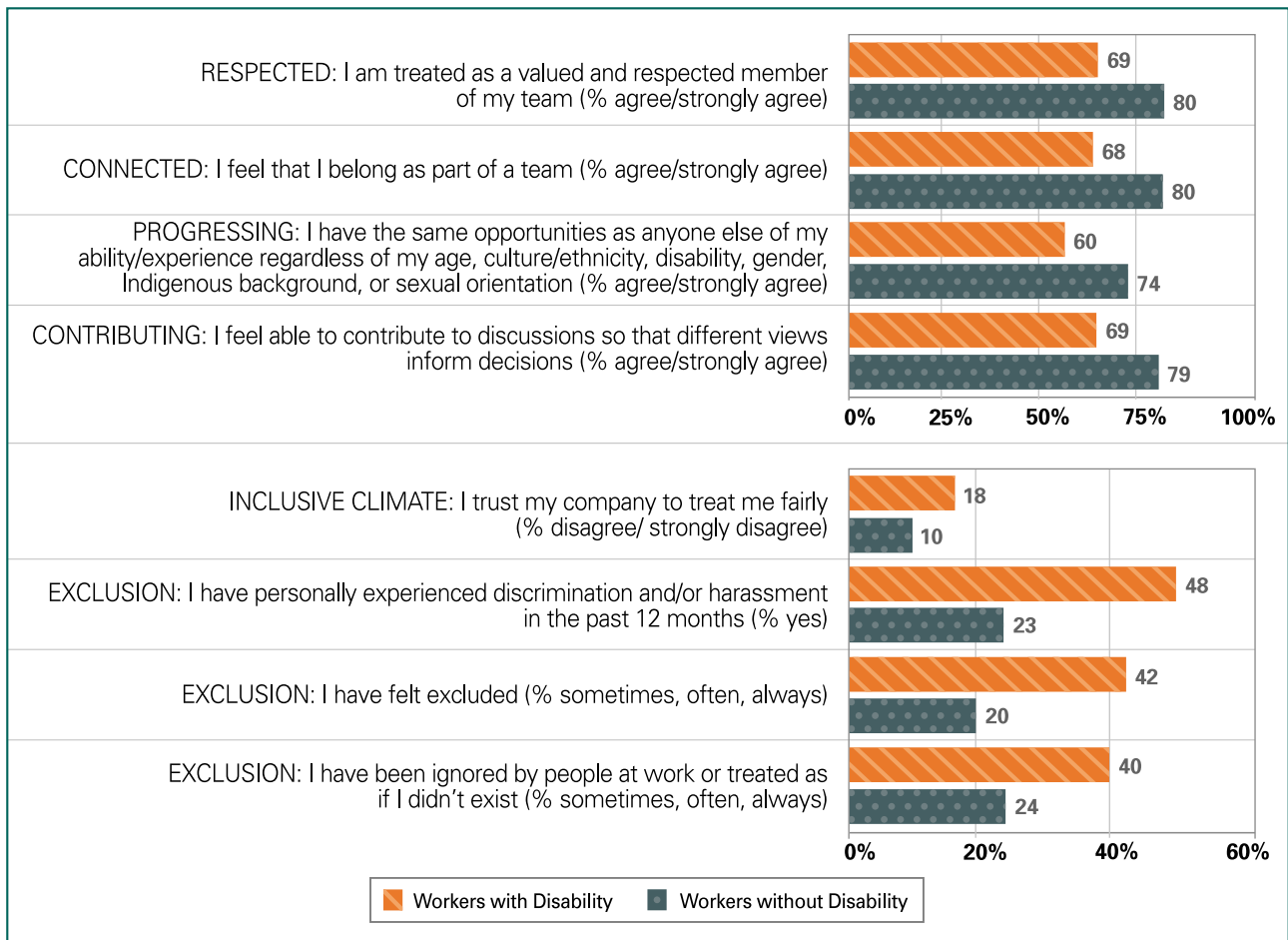
**Progressing and Contributing.** Workers with disability were less likely to agree that they had the same opportunities as anyone else with the same abilities/experience (60% agreed compared to 74% of workers without disability), and that they were able to contribute to discussions (69% compared to 79%).



**Inclusive Climate.** Workers with disability were almost *twice* as likely as workers without disability to disagree that they trusted their organisation to treat them fairly (18% versus 10%).



**Exclusion.** Workers with disability were *twice* as likely as workers without disability to have experienced discrimination and/or harassment, and to have felt excluded in the past year.



# THE STATE OF INCLUSION FOR LGBTIQ+ WORKERS

With marriage equality for LGBTIQ+ Australians becoming a reality in December 2017 (after the first *Inclusion@Work Index*), we had anticipated that inclusion for LGBTIQ+ workers may have improved and exclusion decreased.

Unfortunately, 2019 results indicate this is not the case, with the Australian LGBTIQ+ workers we surveyed reporting lower levels of inclusion and higher levels of exclusion than their non-LGBTIQ+ colleagues.



**Respect.** Unfortunately, LGBTIQ+ workers were much less likely to be respected at work – they were almost twice as likely as non-LGBTIQ+ workers to agree that they had to hide or change who they are at work to fit in (35% compared to 18%).



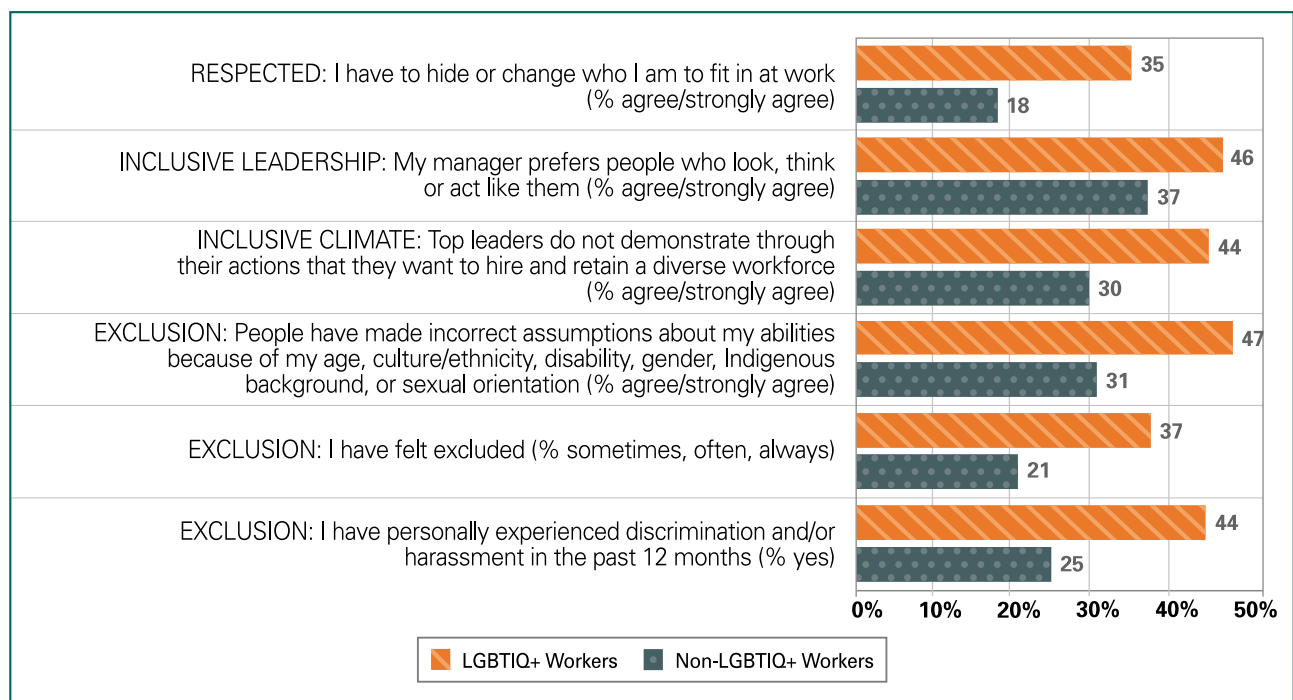
**Inclusive Leadership.** LGBTIQ+ workers were more likely than non-LGBTIQ+ workers to agree that their manager preferred people who looked, thought, or acted like them (46% compared to 37%).



**Inclusive Climate.** Despite a number of high profile leaders publically supporting LGBTIQ+ inclusion,<sup>6</sup> LGBTIQ+ workers were much more likely than non-LGBTIQ+ workers to report that their organisation’s top leaders did not demonstrate they wanted to hire and retain a diverse workforce (44% agreed versus 30%).



**Exclusion.** A concerning 44% of LGBTIQ+ workers had personally experienced discrimination and/or harassment the past 12 months compared to 25% of non-LGBTIQ+ workers.





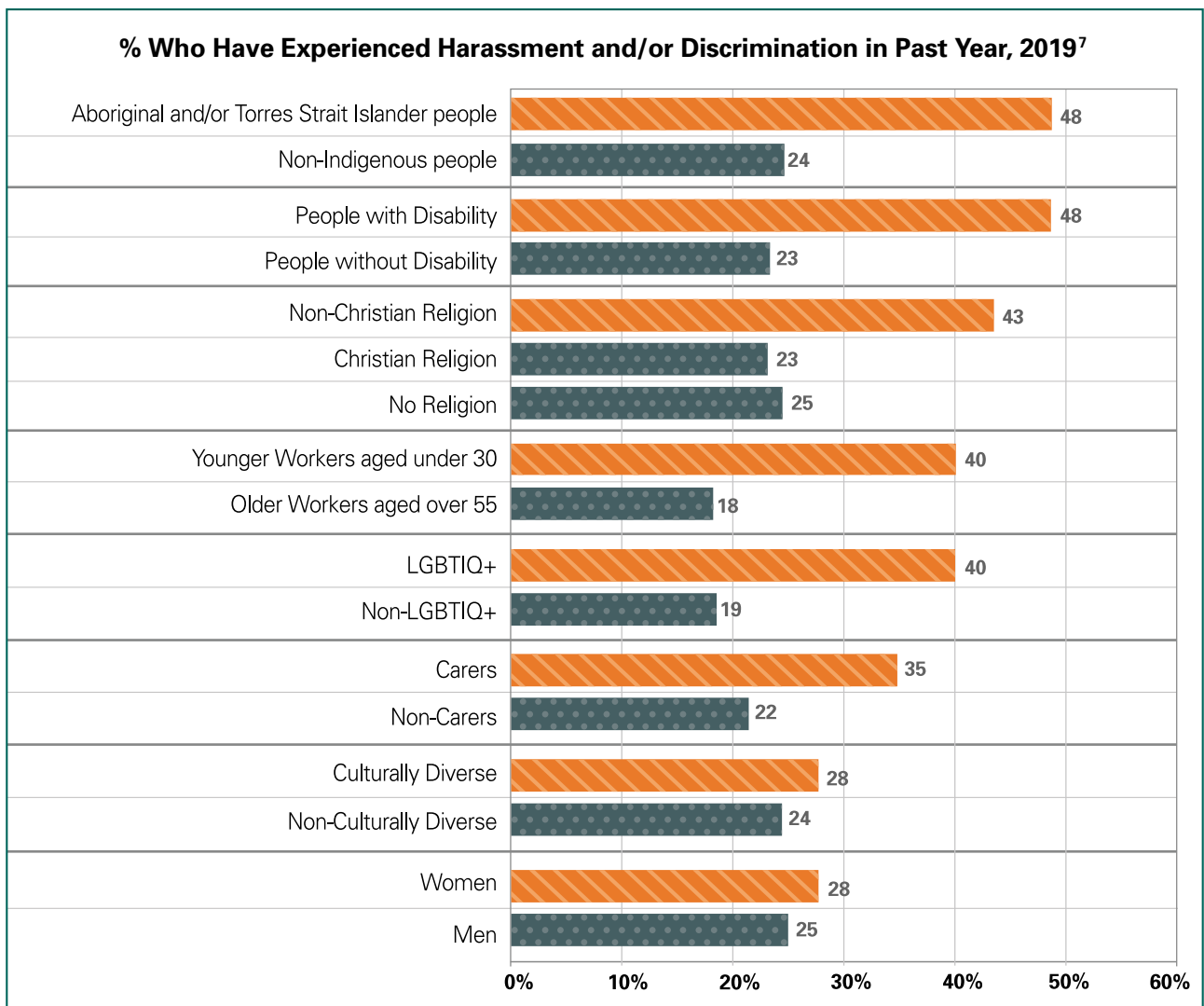
## THE STATE OF EXCLUSION

Australian organisations need to do more to combat harassment and discrimination, particularly of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers, and workers with disability.

In 2019, as in 2017, these workers (along with workers with disability) experienced the highest rates of workplace discrimination and harassment of any demographic group.



- Almost **one in two (48%) of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers and workers with disability** had personally experienced at least one incident of harassment and/or discrimination in the past 12 months – compared to 24% of non-Indigenous workers and 23% of workers without disability.
- Workers from a **non-Christian religious background, younger workers** (aged under 30), and **LGBTIQ+ workers** experienced the next highest rates of harassing and discriminatory behaviour at work.





## LEADING AND LAGGING INDUSTRY SECTORS

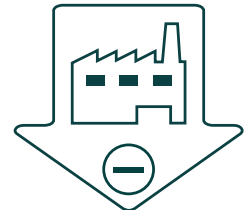
In both 2017 and 2019, workers in Financial and Insurance Services were significantly more likely to experience *Inclusion@Work*, while workers in Manufacturing were significantly less likely to.

Financial and Insurance Services workers had the highest level of reported organisational D&I activity and employee support for this, and some of the highest percentage of employees working in inclusive teams and organisations and with inclusive leaders.

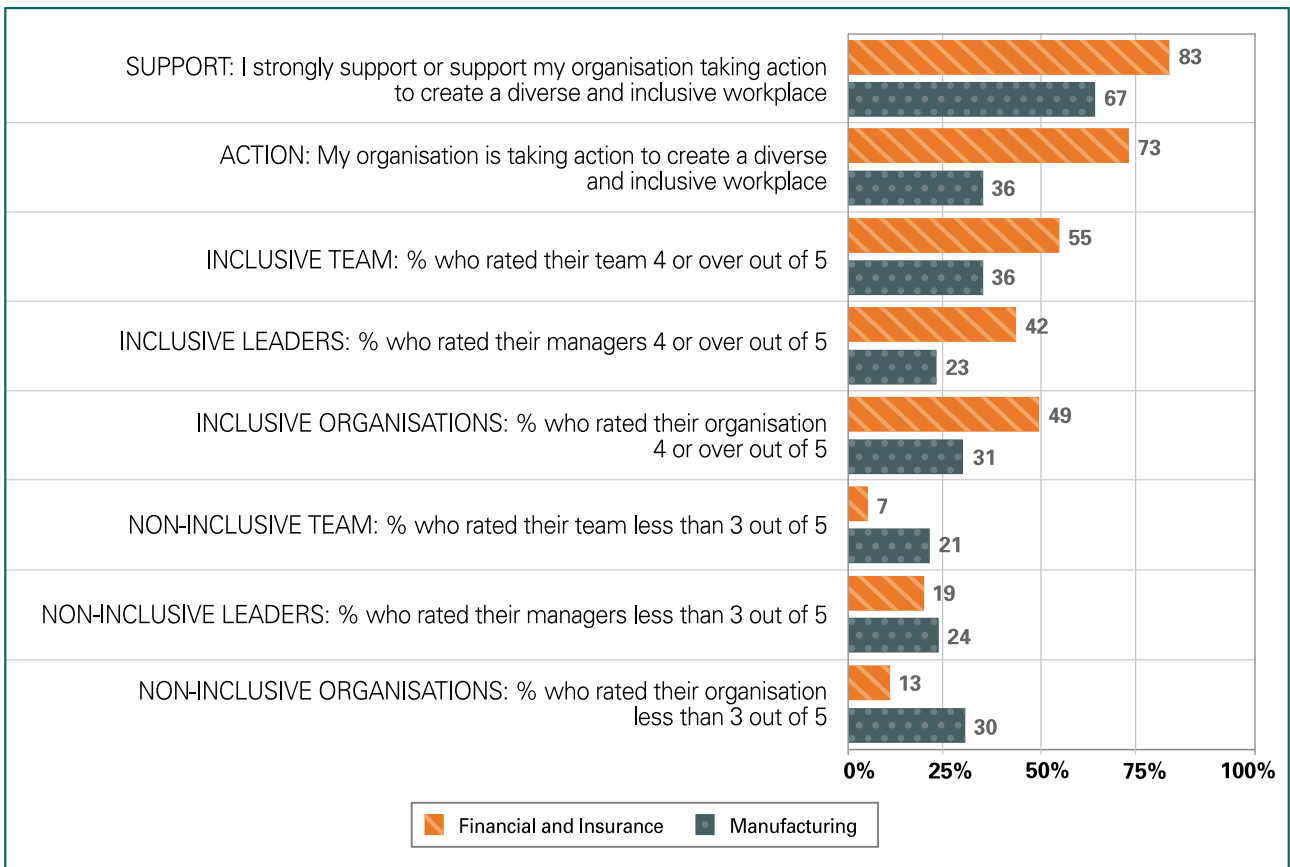


**Financial and Insurance Services**

Finance and Insurance Services was the industry sector in which workers were most likely to report that their organisation was taking action to create a diverse and inclusive workplace, and that they supported this. While Manufacturing had the lowest level of reported organisational activity and support for organisational D&I action.



**Manufacturing**





## OUR METHODOLOGY

The methodology was developed and implemented on the basis of ongoing consultation with and feedback from the project's Expert Panel.

It consisted of the following key steps:

- In-depth review of industry and academic research to investigate how to define and measure workplace inclusion.
- Development of a draft survey of 70 questions with questions focusing on measuring team inclusion, team and individual outcomes, and diversity-related demographics.
- Pilot of draft survey in a large organisation and subsequent statistical analysis of the pilot sample data set to select final 50 survey questions on the basis of their ability to generate findings that were academically rigorous, of practical use to industry/organisations, and covered key inclusion-related themes (i.e. Respected, Connected, Contributing, Progressing) and key demographics (i.e. socio-demographics, job and organisational demographics).
- Administration of 2017 survey by Polity Research to a nationally representative sample of 3,000 Australian workers (through a research-only survey panel).
- Review of 2017 survey to refine for its second iteration. An Expert Panel of leading academics and practitioners was once again consulted to seek feedback and advice, along with the DCA members that had participated in the *Inclusion@YourWork* member Index in 2017. Consultations focused on testing how helpful and appropriate each of the 2017–2018 survey areas were for measuring inclusion as well as which key demographic areas the survey should include.
- Administration of 2019 survey by Polity Research to a nationally representative sample of 3,000 Australian workers (through a research-only survey panel).





- Survey data were weighted to ensure the achieved respondent profile aligned with ABS demographic indicators in terms of age, gender, degree qualification, country of birth (broad regions, Asian and other culturally diverse communities), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity, disability, and State.
- Analyses conducted on the overall sample (e.g., percentage of Australian workers in inclusive, somewhat inclusive and non-inclusive teams) were run on the weighted sample to ensure these findings were representative of the Australian workforce.
- Cross-tab analyses comparing the inclusion and exclusion experiences of different demographic groups were run on the unweighted sample to benefit from the oversampling of key demographic groups including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers, while avoiding loss of statistical power that can accompany weighting. These cross tab outputs did not appear to differ substantially from their weighted counterparts.
- SPSS software was used to run a series of cross-tabs (contingency tables) to identify possible differences in responses. For each contingency table, a chi-squared statistic was calculated to determine whether there was an association between the two variables at the 95% confidence level. For contingency tables considered statistically significant, adjusted standardised residuals greater (in absolute size) than  $\pm 1.96$  were examined to determine what was driving the association.

*For the full methodology please refer to the full version of this report available at [www.dca.org.au](http://www.dca.org.au).*

## OUR THANKS

We thank and acknowledge the project's Expert Panel. The project has benefited immensely from Panellists generously sharing their expertise and insights.

Jonny Ayres, *Head of Data Privacy, Novartis*

Dr Hugh Bainbridge, *Senior Lecturer, School of Management, UNSW*

Catherina Behan, *Diversity and Inclusion Manager, People Experience, Suncorp*

Janin Bredehoeft, *Research and Analytics Executive Manager, Workplace Gender Equality Agency*

Cathy Brown, *Policy and Research Manager, DCA*

Elise Brown, *People and Culture Communication Lead, Novartis*

Bernadette Chehine, *(former) Executive Manager, Human Resources, Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA)*

Sarah Coombs, *Strategy Lead & Company Secretary, Choice*

Dr Olivia Evans, *School of Psychology, University of Newcastle*

Brigid Furlong, *People Experience Advisor – Diversity & Inclusion, Suncorp*

Associate Professor Dimitria Groutsis, *Business School, University of Sydney*

Dr Beni Halvorsen, *Lecturer, School of Management, RMIT*

Kim Johnson, *Head of Organisation Development – Pacific, AON*

Professor Keith McVilly, *School of Social and Political Sciences, Melbourne University*

Dr Darryl Nelson, *Managing Director, Polity Research & Consulting*

Associate Professor Mark Rubin, *School of Psychology, University of Newcastle*

Emma Schwebel, *Human Resources Business Partner, Genworth*

Dr Graeme Russell, *Expert Consultant*

Professor Phil Taylor, *Australian Retirement Research Institute, Federation Business School, Federal University Australia-Monash University*

Dr Raymond Trau, *Senior Lecturer, Department of Management, Macquarie University*

Lauren Uhlmann, *People Experience Advisor, Suncorp*

Professor Nareen Young, *Indigenous Policy (Indigenous Workforce Diversity), Jumbunna Institute, UTS*

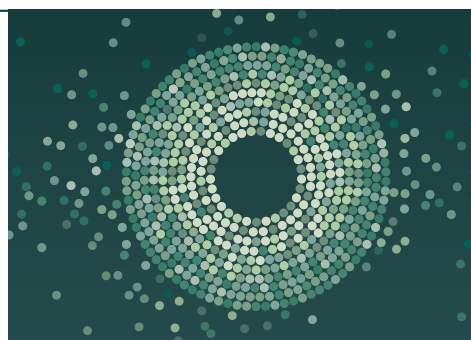
## ENDNOTES

1. For this report we use the acronym LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/ gender diverse, intersex variation, and queer – the '+' recognises that LGBTI doesn't include a range of other terms that people identify with, including terms like trans, gender diverse, and queer.
2. Workers in Inclusive Organisations scored their team on average at least 4 or above out of 5 on survey questions asking how included they felt in their organisation (where 5 = very included, 3 = neither included or not included, and 1 = not included at all). Workers in Non-Inclusive Organisations scored their team on average less than 3 out of 5.
3. Where we have indicated that inclusive organisations were "X times more likely" than non-inclusive organisations to be effective, innovative, work hard etc. for ease of reading we have rounded up or down the original number to be a whole number (i.e., 3.5 has been rounded down to 3 times, 4.7 has been rounded up to 5, and 2.9 and 2.8 times have been rounded up to 3 times).
4. Workers in Inclusive Organisations scored their team on average at least 4 or above out of 5 on survey questions asking how included they felt in their organisation (where 5 = very included, 3 = neither included or not included, and 1 = not included at all). Workers in Non-Inclusive Organisations scored their team on average less than 3 out of 5.
5. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Disability and Labour Force Participation*, Cat. 4433.0.55.006, Canberra, ABS, 2012.  
Australian Human Rights Commission, *National Inquiry into Employment and Disability: Issues Paper 1*, AHRC, Sydney, 2005.
6. See for instance, <https://www.prideinclusionprograms.com.au/news/qantas-ceo-becomes-patron-of-lgbti-workplace-inclusion-program/> and <http://www.starobserver.com.au/news/national-news/victoria-news/victorian-sporting-ceos-to-make-pledge-of-pride-for-lgbti-inclusion/177727>
7. Please note, as the question was asked differently in 2017, it is not possible to meaningfully directly compare the percentages of workers who experienced discrimination and/or harassment in 2017 and 2019 as we changed the available response options in 2019.

### FIND OUT MORE...

DCA members can access the Full Report by logging into the Members Only area of the DCA website.

The Full Report includes more detailed information on these and other findings, the research methodology, and all research references.





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