

## Media Release

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**Embargoed March 7, 5am AEDT**

### **DCA shines a light on the experiences of Culturally and Racially Marginalised Women at work this International Women's Day.**

Today, in the lead up to International Women's Day, Diversity Council Australia is launching ground-breaking research examining the state of play for culturally and racially marginalised (CARM) women in leadership.

The research, conducted by a team of CARM women, focuses on how the intersections of two key marginalising characteristics - race and gender - are operating in workplaces.

Five years on from DCA's release of [Cracking the Glass-Cultural Ceiling](#) today's research and resulting report, [Culturally and racially marginalised women in leadership: A framework for \(intersectional\) action](#) shows the representation of CARM women in leadership in Australia remains scarce.

DCA conducted surveys and focus groups with more than 370 CARM women, as well as a review of industry and academic research, to gain insights into the challenges faced by these women in the workplace.

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*CARM women are ambitious, capable and resilient:*

- 97% of CARM women we surveyed said they had valuable contributions to make to their organisation
- 78% wanted to advance to senior leadership

*CARM women experience compounding impacts of both sexism and racism at work:*

- 66% of the women said they felt they had to "act white" to get ahead.
  - 75% reported that others assumed they worked in a lower status job than they did and treated them as such.
  - 85% felt they had to work twice as hard as employees who weren't CARM women to get the same treatment or evaluation.
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CARM women reported high levels of negative workplace experiences like being underestimated, ignored, harassed, and excluded from networks that help people get ahead.

The report outlines an evidence-based framework for organisations, identifying the locks and the keys for CARM women and leadership and offers employers ways to be more inclusive of CARM women and diversify leadership teams.

### **Quotes attributable to Lisa Annese, CEO, Diversity Council Australia**

"On International Women's Day, we often talk about women at work but too often miss the voices of women whose lived experience has been marginalised, as a result of their social class, their sexual orientation or gender identity, disability, their identity as a First Nations woman or because they are from a racially or culturally marginalised group. This research



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explains intersectionality and why intersectional approaches to gender equity strategies are essential.

“Often, inadvertently, workplace gender equity initiatives fail to consider the different life experiences and needs of women – and so end up improving gender equity mainly for white, middle class, able-bodied, heterosexual, cisgendered women.

“Two-thirds of our respondents, culturally and racially marginalised women, report they feel they need to act white to get ahead at work. Code-switching in this way is unacceptable – it is harmful to the women and to our organisations.

“We have deliberately shifted away from using the term ‘culturally and linguistically diverse’ in this research, instead using the term ‘culturally and racially marginalised’ (CARM) which recognises the significance of race and racism in the lives of the women we spoke to. We know this will be challenging for some people.

“But we also know that if we want to effectively address issues of racism in workplaces, we have to use language that specifically addresses it.

“These findings and our recommendations offer a great opportunity for employers across our country and economy to check how they are embracing and including all women and how we can be better – for the benefit of all.”

**[Ends]**

The report will be available [here](#) from March 7 2023.

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**ABOUT DCA:** [Diversity Council Australia](#) is the independent not-for-profit peak body leading diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We provide unique research, inspiring events and programs, curated resources and expert advice across all diversity dimensions to a community of 1,200 member organisations. Our member organisations are estimated to employ nearly two million Australians, representing up to 20% of the workforce.