

Media Alert

3 November 2022

DCA Debate: Teams tackle moving on from gender equality

After a two-year break due to COVID-19, Diversity Council Australia (DCA) will hold its Annual Diversity Debate at Sydney Town Hall on 15 November.

Hosted by DCA CEO Lisa Annese and major sponsor MAX, and moderated by Tony Jones, this year gender will be on the agenda as our teams take on the topic *'Is it Time to Move on from Gender Equality?'*

The popular annual #DCADebate will pack out the Sydney Town Hall with guests from across business and industry, representative of DCA's significant membership of more than 1100 organisations employing approximately 20% of the Australian workforce.

DCA CEO, Lisa Annese says she is anticipating a big crowd and a healthy debate bringing diverse perspectives and plenty of opportunities for audience participation:

"The debate is a terrific event for all of us who care about diversity and inclusion at work. And I expect passionate and persuasive offerings from both teams and from the floor. Gender is on the agenda at this debate as we ask *'Is it time to move on from gender equality? Or is there more to do?'*

"Tony Jones will no doubt bring his brilliant moderation and ability to bring the best out of topic, our speakers and audience, as he has done across his career and does at each DCA debate.

"At DCA we take an intersectional approach and work across diversity dimensions, I expect that our debate will reinforce why this is important," Lisa said.

The Affirmative team – It IS time to move on from gender equality:

Deborah Homewood (she/her) is the Managing Director of MAX, a human services business specialising in Health, Training and Employment, and a strong advocate of equal opportunity as a fundamental right.

"Whilst societal and generational perspectives seem more inclusive in 2022, to create meaningful change we have to look at the reality of disadvantage and inequality that still exists in the workforce across all aspects of diversity."

Carly Findlay (she/her) OAM is a writer, speaker and appearance activist. She's published a memoir called 'Say Hello', and edited the highly acclaimed anthology 'Growing Up Disabled in Australia'. Her work has also appeared in Vogue, CNN, The Age and on the ABC website, radio and TV.

“Striving for gender equality alone is not enough. If your feminism is not intersectional, it’s not inclusive and we are missing important voices and ignoring important issues – the gains we make must be for all, across the spectrum of inequality, not just for some, focussing on gender alone is inadequate.”

Sean Choolburra (he/him) is recognised as one of Australia's funniest and most enduring Aboriginal comedians. Born in Townsville, QLD, and one of twelve, his comedy is created from a wide variety of lifetime experiences, stories, and observations.

“You don’t need to go to University to realise that gender is NOT the only diversity!”

The Negative team - It IS NOT time to move on from gender equality

Sami Shah (he/him) is a multi-award winning comedian, writer, journalist and broadcaster.

“My arguments won’t waste time proving gender equality is still an issue, because you don’t need to prove obvious truths. Instead, I will ridicule and belittle anyone and everyone who tries to prove otherwise.”

Mary Wooldridge (she/her) - Mary Wooldridge is the Director of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. She was previously a member of the Victorian Parliament, including serving as Minister for Mental Health, Community Services and Women’s Affairs.

“The Gender Pay Gap is still far too large and progress on reducing it is stagnant. Now is not the time to be moving on – it’s the time to be doubling down on our efforts.”

Zac Cannell (he/they) is a sexual health counsellor and education consultant for SHINE SA, Youth Mental Health First Aid Master Instructor, and public speaker. He’s also a person of trans lived experience.

“I lived the first 24 years of my life being seen and treated as female. From the moment my gender transition reached a point to where I was being correctly perceived as male, I was treated and interacted with differently. Suddenly it seemed people listened and actually heard me, I wasn’t heckled or catcalled anymore and I felt safer walking at night, and my pants had real functional pockets.”

Event details

When: Tuesday, 15 November 2022 **Time:** 6pm

Full details: <https://www.dca.org.au/debate/it-time-move-gender-equality>

A media release inclusive of comments from Lisa Annese, Diversity Council Australia CEO, and highlights from the debate will be distributed shortly following the event. Lisa Annese and debate speakers are available for comment and interview from 8 November.

[Ends]

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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 1100 member organisations. Our member organisations are estimated to employ nearly two million Australians, representing about 20% of the workforce.

MAX

MAX provide employment, training and health services to over 125,000 customers in 150+ locations across every state and territory in Australia.

MAX Employment delivers employment support through programs including Disability Employment Services (DES) and Workforce Australia. As an RTO, MAX Learning delivers vocational training across a range of industries as well as English language and literacy programs. MAX Health provides businesses and individuals with access to professional allied health support and medical expertise through a range of services and programs.

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