

# The Case for Inclusion @Work

**Inclusion@Work Index  
2025-2026**



---

## 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.

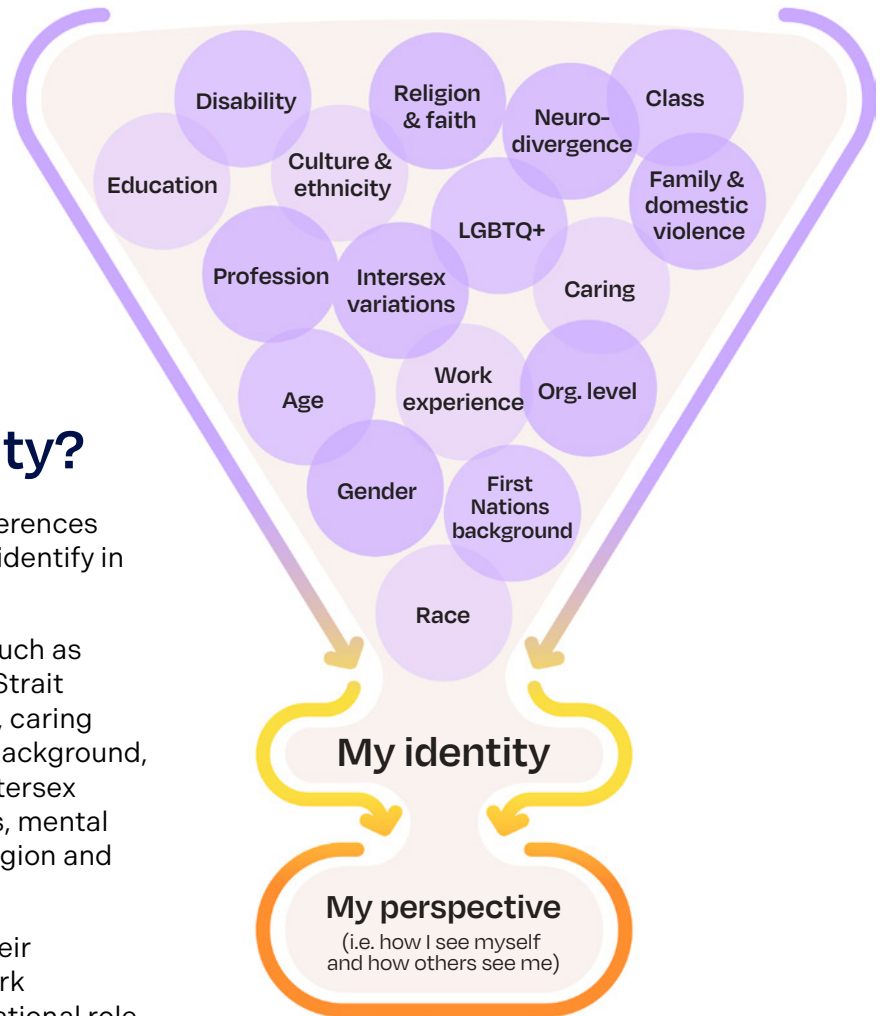
Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people are respected, connected, progressing and contributing to organisational success.



## What is diversity?

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

- **social identity** – factors such as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, caring responsibilities, cultural background, race, disability, gender, intersex variations, LGBTQ+ status, mental health, neurodiversity, religion and faith and social class
- **professional identity** – their profession, education, work experiences, and organisational role.



These aspects come together in a unique way for each individual and shape the way they view and perceive their world and workplace. An individual's social identity can also have an impact on their professional identity, for example, when someone works in a role designed for people from a particular community (known as 'identified roles'), or share their lived experience in a professional context.

Diversity Council Australia's (DCA) diversity definition is identity-based. It recognises that the starting point should be how each of us identifies ourselves rather than how others categorise or label us.

This diversity definition also takes into account multiple **intersecting** diversity dimensions. A person's identity is often influenced by multiple dimensions.

For example, someone may be both culturally and racially marginalised (CARM) and a woman, or a person with disability who is also LGBTQ+. For each individual, these different dimensions come together or 'intersect' to form their particular identity.

# What is inclusion at work?

DCA defines inclusion as occurring when a diversity of people (i.e. from different ages, cultural backgrounds, genders) are **respected, connected, progressing, and contributing** to organisational success.



## What is an inclusive team?

An inclusive team is one where a diversity of people feel that they:



are respected and valued team members



are connected to their team



can contribute and progress at work.

## What is an inclusive manager?

An inclusive manager is someone who creates an inclusive team environment.

In our research, we define an inclusive manager as someone who:



values differences



seeks out and uses a diversity of ideas



treats everyone equitably



deals with inappropriate behaviour.

## What is an inclusive organisation?

DCA defines an inclusive organisation as one in which employees:



trust they will be treated fairly



feel diversity is valued and respected



report that top leaders demonstrate a genuine, visible commitment to diversity and inclusion.

# The Case for Inclusion in 2025–2026

Inclusion matters – now more than ever.



# Workers in Australia still want diverse and inclusive workplaces

High support for diversity and inclusion has been consistent amongst workers in Australia since the first Inclusion@Work Index in 2017.

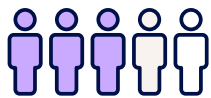


As in previous years, 3 in 4 workers in Australia (76%) **support or strongly support** their organisation taking action to create a workplace that is diverse and inclusive.



While some reports suggest resistance to diversity and inclusion (D&I) in a global context, only 5 per cent of workers in Australia **oppose (3%) or strongly oppose (2%)** their organisation taking action to create a workplace which is diverse and inclusive.

## Australian workplaces are still taking action on D&I



3 in 5 (62%) workers said that their organisation was taking action to create a diverse and inclusive workplace.<sup>1</sup>

Actions to create a diverse and inclusive workplace may look different across organisations, but those making the effort were significantly more likely to experience inclusion at every level – from teams and managers to the organisation as a whole.

Workers in organisations **taking action on D&I** were:



3 times more likely to be in **inclusive teams**<sup>2</sup>



3 times more likely to report having an **inclusive manager**<sup>3</sup>



3 times more likely to report an **inclusive organisation** climate<sup>4</sup>



2 times less likely to experience **discrimination & harassment**


1. In this report, organisations taking action on D&I are those where respondents were aware that action was taking place. "No" and "Don't know" responses were considered to be no action.
2. Workers in inclusive teams gave an average score of at least 4 or above out of 5 on survey questions asking about their immediate team. Workers in non-inclusive teams scored their team on average less than 3 out of 5.
3. Workers with inclusive managers gave an average score of at least 4 or above out of 5 on survey questions asking how inclusive they felt their immediate manager is. Workers with non-inclusive managers scored their manager on average less than 3 out of 5.
4. Workers in inclusive organisations gave an average score of at least 4 or above out of 5 on survey questions asking how inclusive they felt their organisational climate is. Workers in non-inclusive organisations scored their organisation on average less than 3 out of 5.

# Inclusion makes a difference and minimises risk, for workers and for organisations.

## Inclusion is good for wellbeing


Workplace inclusion has a significant impact on employee wellbeing.

This is especially true at a team level, with workers in **inclusive teams** being:

**x9**  9 times more likely to be **very satisfied** than workers in non-inclusive teams

**x6**  6 times more likely to feel that work has a **positive impact on their mental health**

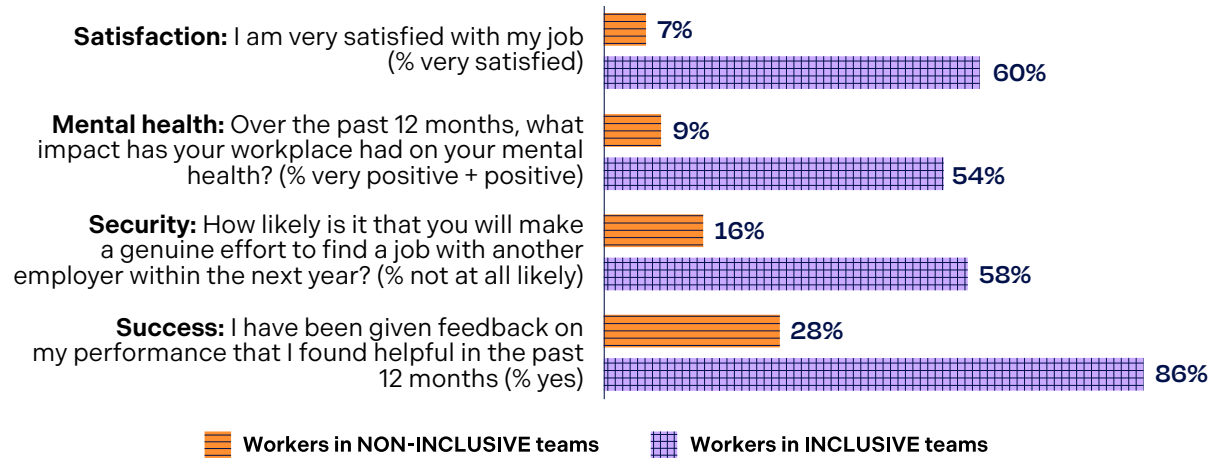
**x4**  4 times less likely to **leave their organisation**

**x3**  3 times more likely to have received **feedback they found useful**

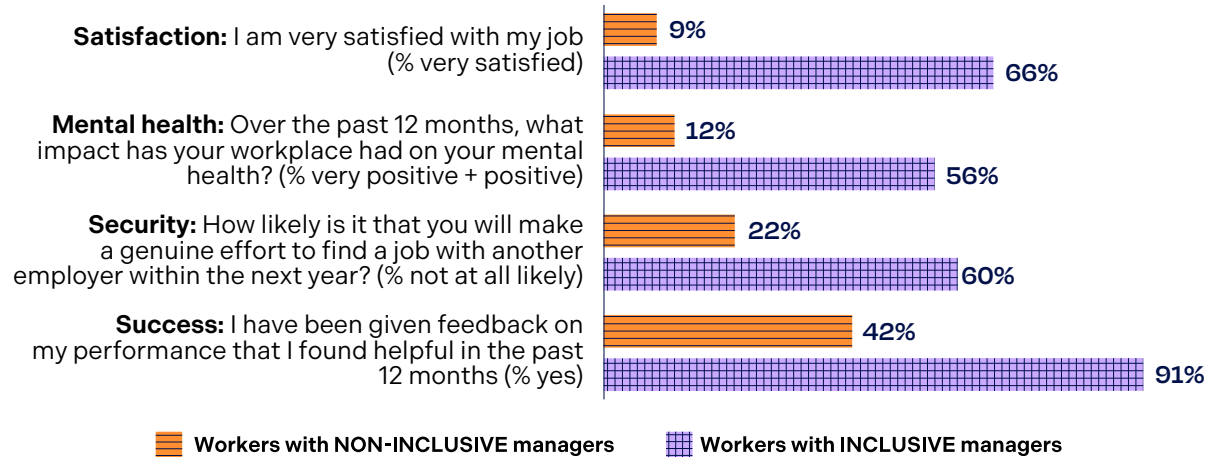
Organisations taking action on D&I were significantly more likely to experience inclusion at every level.

## Employee wellbeing

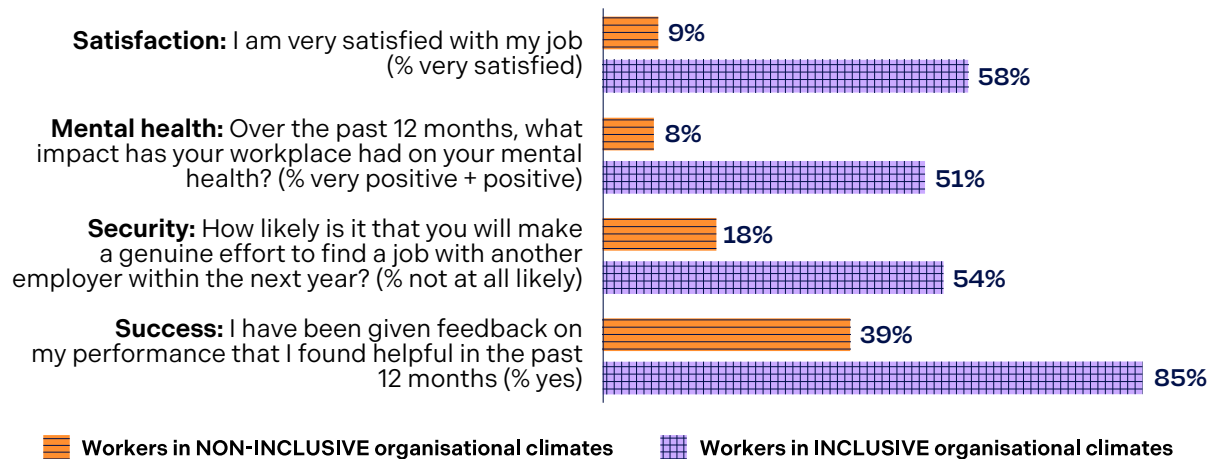
### Inclusive Teams



### Inclusive Managers



### Inclusive Organisational Climates



# Inclusion is good for performance and productivity


The Inclusion@Work Index consistently shows a strong link between inclusion at work and team performance.

For example, workers in inclusive teams are:

**x7**  7 times more likely to be **innovative** than non-inclusive teams

**x8**  8 times more likely to **work effectively together**

**x4**  4 times more likely to provide **excellent customer service**

**x3**  3 times as likely to be **willing to work extra hard** to help their team succeed

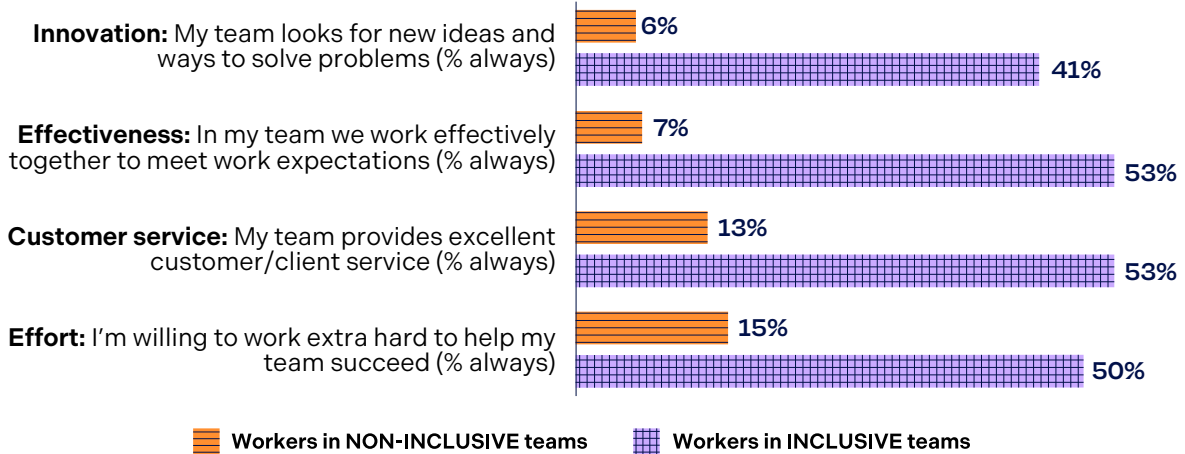
We see this trend reflected among inclusive managers and organisations alike, demonstrating that inclusion at the organisational, leadership, and team levels is good for business.



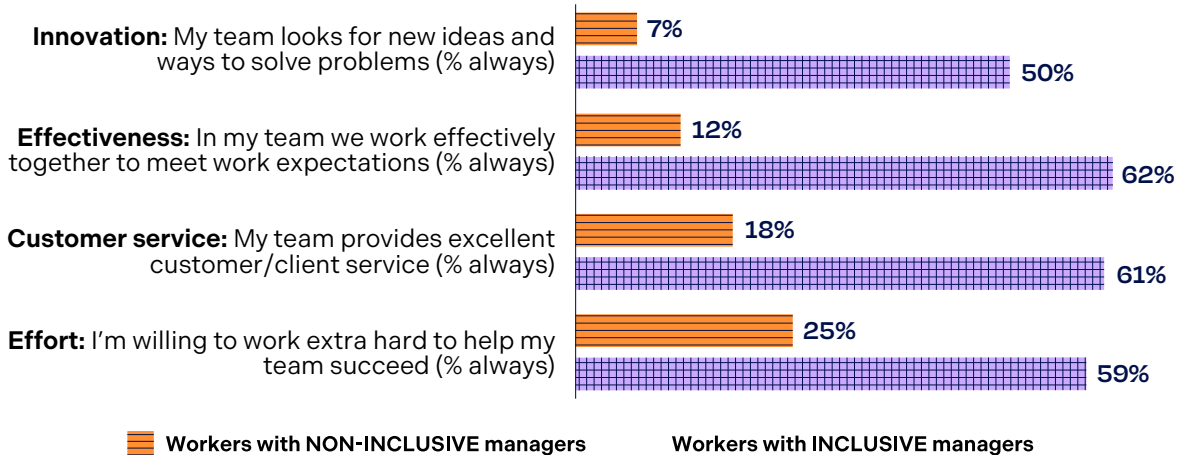
Team inclusion supports innovation, cooperation, customer service and effort.

## Team performance

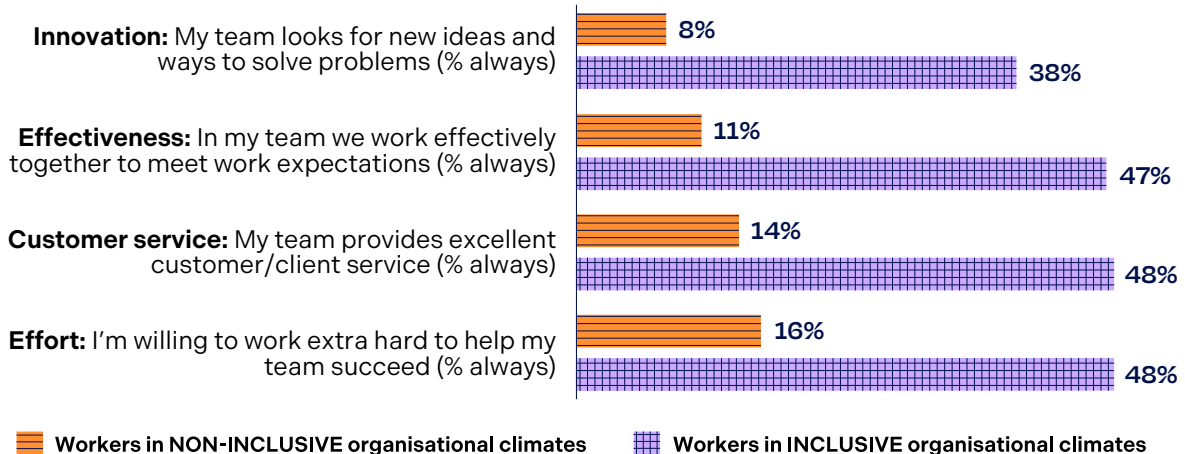
### Inclusive Teams



### Inclusive Managers



### Inclusive Organisational Climates



# Inclusion minimises risk

Exclusion at work is a significant risk for employees and organisations alike.

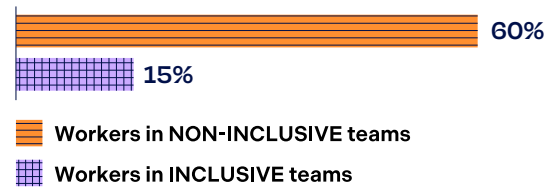
Beyond potential legal implications for organisations, discrimination and harassment is a significant workplace hazard for employees, harming their wellbeing and impacting performance. However, inclusion appears to help reduce the risk of discrimination and harassment.

Specifically, workers:



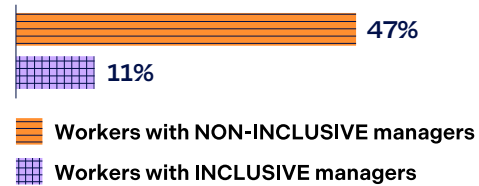
**in non-inclusive teams** are 4 times more likely to experience discrimination or harassment at work, compared to those in inclusive teams.

Experienced discrimination and/or harassment (% yes)



**with non-inclusive managers** are 4 times more likely to experience discrimination and/or harassment at work, compared to those with inclusive managers.

Experienced discrimination and/or harassment (% yes)



**in non-inclusive organisations** are 3 times more likely to experience discrimination and/or harassment at work, compared to those in inclusive organisations.

Experienced discrimination and/or harassment (% yes)



**Workers in inclusive teams, with inclusive managers, and in inclusive organisational climates are far less likely to experience discrimination and harassment at work.**



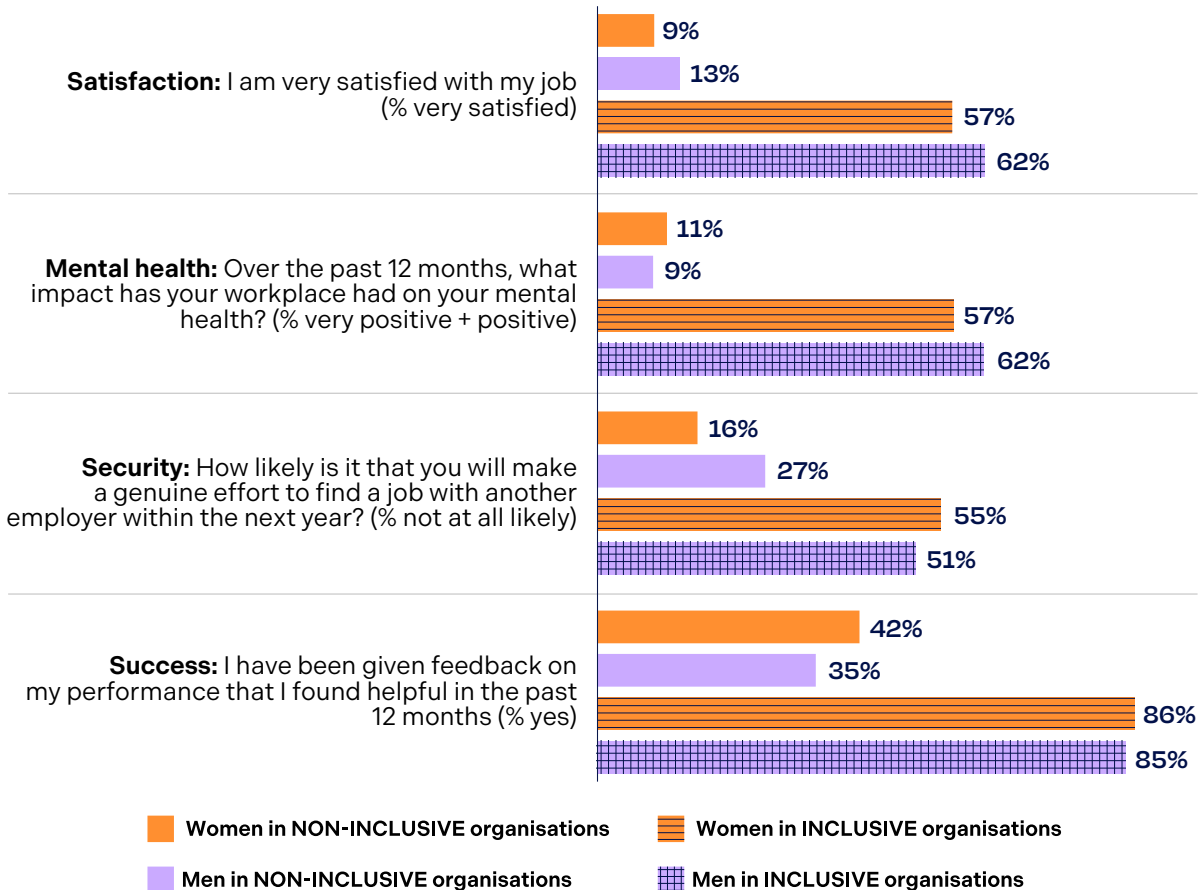
Women and men experience similar wellbeing benefits when working in an inclusive organisational climate.

## Inclusion is good for everyone

All workers benefit from workplaces with an inclusive organisational climate – that is, organisations where employees trust they will be treated fairly, where diversity is valued and respected, and top leaders demonstrate a genuine, visible commitment to diversity and inclusion.

This is evident when comparing the experiences of women and men in Australian workplaces. Across our employee wellbeing indicators, women and men experience similar benefits when working in inclusive organisations.<sup>5</sup>

Employee wellbeing: inclusive organisations x gender



5. Note: the sample size of non-binary workers was too small to enable comparison here.



**Hub Customs House**  
Level 3 & 4, 31 Alfred St  
Sydney NSW 2000

P: (02) 8014 4300  
E: [admin@dca.org.au](mailto:admin@dca.org.au)  
**[dca.org.au](http://dca.org.au)**