

I. ABOUT DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA

Who we are

Diversity Council Australia (DCA) is the independent not-for-profit peak body leading diversity and inclusion in Australian workplaces.

About our members

Our 1,300+ member organisations are drawn from the corporate, government and not-for-profit sectors. They vary from small to very large workforces in size.

Founding members include ANZ, AMP, BHP, Boral, Coles, IBM Australia, Myer, Orica, Rio Tinto and Westpac.

DCA's Members are listed on our website here:

[Current DCA members - Diversity Council Australia](#)

Our purpose and vision:

- Our **purpose** is to enable more diverse, inclusive and equitable workplaces for a better Australia.
- Our **vision** is to create a just and equitable Australian society where people in all their diversity can thrive.

What we do

We believe diversity and inclusion is good for people and for business. Our mission is to encourage and enable Australian organisations to create more inclusive and diverse workplaces. We provide unique research, inspiring events and programs, curated resources and expert advice across a range of diversity dimensions to a community of member organisations.

Our charitable purpose is to promote and advance inclusion and diversity through the creation of more diverse and inclusive workplaces for the benefit of individuals, organisations and the broader community, with a focus on individuals that have been historically disadvantaged or underrepresented in the labour market.

DCA is not government funded (with one exception - our landmark project on creating pathways to leadership for culturally and racially marginalised (CARM) women). Our income is generated from membership fees, sponsorships and services to business.



II. QUESTIONS FOR YOUR RESPONSE

1. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people

- a) *Given Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities overwhelmingly voted yes in the Voice referendum, what policies and plans do you have to ensure they are properly consulted on all matters that affect them? (300 words max.)*
- b) *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner has publicly stated that Australia's record in relation to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is sadly lacking. How will your government progress Australia's response to and implementation of the UN declaration on the rights of Indigenous people? (300 words max.)*
- c) *Do you have any policies and plans to support workforce participation and inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and do these include a specific remote employment program? (300 words max.)*
- d) *Jumbunna Institute of Indigenous Education and Research, in partnership with DCA, has conducted [unique research](#) on the workplace experience of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. **Gari Yala – Speak the Truth** surveyed over 1,000 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers across Australia revealing significant workplace racism and exclusion impacting on their wellbeing and job satisfaction. Do you have any policies or plans to address the experience of racism by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people across the country? (300 words max.)*

DCA research (full citations are available in the Appendix):

[Gari Yala \(Speak the Truth\) - Diversity Council Australia](#)

[Gari Yala \(Speak the Truth\) Gendered Insights - Diversity Council](#)

2. Intersectionality

DCA strongly believes that it is critical to take an intersectional approach when designing, delivering and evaluating workforce related policies and strategies. Only then will they be effective in achieving equality for *all people* and, importantly, for those most marginalised.

- a) *How will your party apply an intersectional approach to plans and policies relating to equality at work for all workers? (300 words max.)*

DCA research:

[Centring Marginalised Voices at Work - Diversity Council Australia](#)

[CARM women in leadership - Diversity Council Australia](#)

[Intersections at Work - Diversity Council Australia](#)

3. Gender Equality

Despite some progress on workplace gender equality¹ such as a reduction in the gender pay gap, gender inequality remains entrenched in politics, in the workplace, and in Australian society more broadly. Many argue that progress to achieve gender equality at work is too slow.

- a) *What policies or plans do you have to accelerate progress on workplace gender equality? (300 words max.)*
- b) *What policies or plans do you have to address gender inequality in Parliament? (300 words max.)*
- c) *How will your party apply a gender lens while developing government policy? (300 words max.)*
- d) *How will your party apply an intersectional approach to plans and policies relating to gender equality at work? (300 words max.)*

DCA research:

[She's Price\(d\)less - 2022 update report - Diversity Council Australia](#)

[Centring Marginalised Voices at Work - Diversity Council Australia](#)

[Gari Yala \(Speak the Truth\) Gendered Insights - Diversity Council](#)

[Do We Still Really Need Workplace Gender Equality? - DCA](#)

¹ [Australia's Gender Equality Scorecard 2023-24_V10.pdf](#)

Childcare

Australia has some of the most unaffordable childcare in the world². In 2024 the Productivity Commission released their final report making 56 recommendations to “remove barriers” to access early childhood education and care. DCA has long been advocating for a “universal childcare” system in Australia to ensure every child has access to high-quality early childhood education and care for at least three days a week. Further, early childhood educators receive some of the lowest rates of pay of any industry, contributing to the gender pay gap.

- a) *What is your party’s view of “universal childcare” and what policies or plans do you have to achieve “universal childcare”? (300 words max.)*
- b) *Do you have any plans or policies to address wages in the childcare sector? (300 words max.)*

Parental Leave

Reforms in 2024 saw the government’s paid parental leave scheme expand by two weeks, working towards 26 weeks in 2026.

- a) *What are your plans for further reforms on Australia’s government-funded paid parental leave system? (300 words max.)*

Women’s Workforce Participation

Despite increasing workforce participation rates for women, gender segregation persists across the economy.

- a) *What are your policies or plans to address inequalities in women’s workforce participation? (300 words max.)*

Minister for Women

- a) *What do you envisage for the role and priorities of the Minister for Women in your government? (300 words max.)*

Gender Pay Gap

Currently, when the remuneration of highly paid, generally masculinised, roles are included in WGEA’s calculations, the gender pay gap is 21.8%.

- a) *What action will you take to address the gender pay gap? (300 words max.)*

² Noble, K. & Hurley, P. *Counting the cost to families: Assessing childcare affordability in Australia*, Mitchell Institute, Victoria University, 2021, accessed at: <https://www.vu.edu.au/mitchell-institute/early-learning/assessing-childcare-affordability-in-australia>.

Workplace Sexual Harassment

In 2024, the last of the 55 recommendations made by the *Respect@Work* report was implemented. DCA has been an active member of the *Respect@Work* Council since it was established by the Australian Human Rights Commission in 2020. However, we are not alone in our concern for continuing levels of sexual harassment experienced at work and very concerning figures from a recent study by Unions NSW³ showing over 51% of migrant women reported experiencing sexual harassment at work. We also know that there is a lot of under-reporting of sexual harassment at work.

- a) *What are your plans in relation to policies and programs to prevent and respond to sexual harassment at work? (300 words max.)*

Industrial Segregation

Australian women are more likely than men to be employed in casual or insecure work. Also, Australian women are much less likely to work full-time than women in many other OECD countries. Insecure work has a negative impact in terms of financial insecurity but also exposes them to greater risk, as workers in insecure employment are more likely to experience workplace sexual harassment.

- a) *Do you have any plans or policies to improve job security for women and to improve protections for insecure workers? (300 words max.)*

Industrial segregation continues to be a key driver of the gender pay gap in Australia, as female-dominated industries are lower paid than male-dominated industries⁴.

- a) *Do you have any plans or policies to increase pay in feminised industries? (300 words max.)*

Domestic and Family Violence and Abuse

DCA research shows that domestic and family violence and abuse is a [critical workplace issue](#).

- b) *What are your plans and policies for addressing domestic and family violence and abuse in Australia? (300 words max.)*
c) *Do you have any plans and policies to support workplaces to tackle domestic and family violence and abuse? (300 words max.)*

³ [Sexual harassment of migrant women revealed in damning report - Unions NSW](#)

⁴ [Australia's Gender Equality Scorecard 2023-24_V10.pdf](#)

4. People with Disability

People with disability are twice as likely to be unemployed than people without disability⁵. Only recently has the labour force participation rates for people with disability started to improve. DCA's research⁶ shows that non-inclusive recruitment as well as higher rates of discrimination and harassment, once people secure employment, are major contributors to these figures. Also, DCA's research on the collection and use of disability status data⁷ reveals that disability data collection is often not prioritised by employers and many employees don't feel safe sharing their disability status.

DCA research:

[Disability Data at Work - Diversity Council Australia](#)

- a) *Given the labour force participation of people with disability has only marginally improved in recent years, what would your government do differently to support labour force participation for Australians with disability? (300 words max.)*
- b) *What policies or programs does your party have to improve the recruitment, workplace accessibility, and leadership opportunities for people with disability? (300 words max.)*
- c)

5. Carers

- a) *What policies do you have to support workers who are also carers (caring for people with disability etc, people with elder care responsibilities)? (300 words max.)*
- b) *Our Inclusion@Work Index⁸ shows that the majority of flex workers are carers. What are your plans to protect workers who need to work from home or work flexibly due to caring responsibilities given the recent trend of organisations calling workers back into offices? (300 words max.)*

⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), People with Disability in Australia, AIHW, 2024.

⁶ [Disability Data at Work - Diversity Council Australia](#)

⁷ [Disability Data at Work - Diversity Council Australia](#)

⁸ Diversity Council Australia (D'Almada-Remedios, R.) DCA Inclusion@Work Index 2023-2024: Mapping the State of Inclusion in the Australian Workforce, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2024.

6. LGBTQ+ employees

DCA's research has found significant concerns about continued discrimination among Australian LGBTQ+ employees in the workforce and broader society.

- a) *What are your policies to support inclusion for LGBTQ+ people in the workforce? (300 words max.)*
- b) *What are your policies on LGBTQ+ friendly parental leave? (300 words max.)*

DCA research:

[Intersections at Work - Diversity Council Australia](#)

[Out at Work: From Prejudice to Pride - Diversity Council Australia](#)

7. Intersex employees

Whilst there are programs and policies in place aimed at “LGBTIQ+” people at work, most focus on the needs and wellbeing of staff with marginalised sexual orientation or gender identities. ACON's Pride in Diversity program was reframed in 2019 to no longer include intersex people because they recognised that the needs and circumstances of intersex people were not being met in the existing program. Intersex people at work have unique needs which are currently unmet – there is a critical gap of service provision to ensure inclusion and equity for intersex employees. Further information: [InterAction – for Health and Human Rights](#)

- a) *What are your policies to support inclusion for intersex people in the workforce? (300 words max.)*

8. Age Diversity

Older people are the fastest growing age cohort in Australia and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

- a) *What policies or plans do you have to drive workforce participation and retention of mature age workers? (300 words max).*
- b) *What policies or plans do you have to tackle discrimination against mature age workers? (300 words max).*

Global⁹ and Australian Labour Force¹⁰ figures seem to suggest that the youth unemployment rates are slowly recovering from the impact of job losses during the COVID pandemic.

- c) *Do you have any plans or policies to support labour market participation for young people? (300 words max.)*
- d) *Do you have any plans or policies to promote economic mobility for young people who are experiencing disadvantage? (300 words max.)*

9. Culturally and Racially Marginalised Australians

DCA's research¹¹ shows that there is strong support (93%) for organisations to take action to address racism, however, only 27% of survey respondents said that their organisations are proactive in preventing workplace racism.

DCA research:

[Centring Marginalised Voices at Work - Diversity Council Australia](#)

- a) *How will your party address systemic racism in Australian workplaces, including in the government? (300 words max.)*
- b) *Do you have any plans or policies to increase the number of people from culturally and racially marginalised backgrounds in leadership positions within your party and the federal government? (300 words max.)*

10. Social class

DCA's work in this area called for a definition which we developed for our research: Social class means someone's social standing compared to other Australians based on a range of factors including their wealth, income, education, and occupation.

DCA research:

[Class at Work - Diversity Council Australia](#)

All these factors combine to create a person's status, power and/or position – that is, their social standing or social class. We have used this definition of social class as it recognises that our wealth, income, education, and occupation provide each of us with differing levels of economic capital (income and wealth) and social capital (connections and networks) with which to get ahead in the world.

⁹ [Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024 | International Labour Organization](#)

¹⁰ [Labour Force, Australia, December 2024 | Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)

¹¹ [Racism at Work - Diversity Council Australia](#)

DCA's research¹², based on a survey of more than 3,000 workers, showed that, for Australian workers, it is class more than any other diversity demographic investigated in our Inclusion@Work Index¹³ that is the most strongly linked to workers' experience of inclusion at work and one of the most strongly linked to exclusion.

This year, our research will focus on exploring social class inclusion in Australian workplaces to provide practical, evidence-based recommendations for how employers can address class-based exclusion.

- a) *Do you have any plans or policies to support inclusion at work for people of all social classes? (300 words max.)*

11. Mental health

DCA's research¹⁴ found that almost as many Australian workers reported that work had a negative impact on their mental health (31%) as those who reported a positive impact (32%). Inclusion – whether in teams, leaders or organisational culture – is linked to better mental health at work.

DCA research:

[The state of inclusion and mental health - Diversity Council](#)

- a) *Do you have any plans or policies to promote and support mentally healthy workplaces? (300 words max.)*

12. Legislative Reform

The Racial Discrimination Act 1975 currently lacks a contemporary definition of racism. DCA's research suggests that workplaces in Australia are struggling to address the incidence, commonplace nature and complexity of racism. Our research tells us that there are many factors at play that keep racism in place in organisations, however a key issue is the lack of a clear, agreed on, contemporary definition of racism and regulatory/policy framework, which includes consideration of race-based societal power.

DCA research:

[Racism at Work - Diversity Council Australia](#)

- a) *Do you have any plans for reforming relevant legislation, particularly the Racial Discrimination Act 1975? (300 words max.)*

¹² [Class at Work - Diversity Council Australia](#)

¹³ [Inclusion@Work Index 2023-2024 - Diversity Council Australia](#)

¹⁴ [The state of inclusion and mental health - Diversity Council](#)

DCA, like many others, has been supporting a call for national human rights legislation. We believe that Australia lacks a holistic approach to human rights issues and those most vulnerable often fall through the gaps.

b) Do you have any plans for introducing a national human rights Act in Australia? (300 words max.)

APPENDIX

DCA RESEARCH CITED IN THIS SURVEY – FULL CITATIONS IN THE ORDER THEY APPEAR IN THE SURVEY

1. [Diversity Council Australia/Jumbunna Institute \(Brown, C., DAlmada-Remedios, R., Gilbert, J. OLeary, J. and Young, N.\) Gari Yala \(Speak the Truth\): Centreing the Work Experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Australians, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia/Jumbunna Institute, 2020.](#)
2. [Evans, Olivia \(2021\). Gari Yala \(Speak the Truth\): gendered insights, WGEA Commissioned Research Report in partnership with the Jumbunna Institute of Education and Research and Diversity Council Australia, Sydney, Australia](#)
3. [Diversity Council Australia \(Mapedzahama, V., Ojinnaka, A., Deo, S. and O'Leary, J.\) Centring Marginalised Voices at Work: Lessons from DCA's Culturally and Racially Marginalised \(CARM\) Women in Leadership Research, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2024.](#)
4. [Diversity Council Australia \(V. Mapedzahama, F. Laffernis, A. Barhoum, and J. O'Leary\). Culturally and racially marginalised women in leadership: A framework for \(intersectional\) organisational action, Diversity Council Australia, 2023.](#)
5. [Diversity Council Australia/Pride in Diversity, Intersections at Work: Understanding the Experiences of Culturally Diverse LGBTIQ+ Talent, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia/Pride in Diversity, 2020.](#)
6. [KPMG, Shes Price\(d\)less: The Economics of the Gender Pay Gap, Prepared with Diversity Council Australia \(DCA\) and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency \(WGEA\), Sydney, KPMG, 2022.](#)
7. [Diversity Council Australia, In 2020 Do We Still Need Workplace Gender Equality?, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2020.](#)
8. [Diversity Council Australia \(DCA\) & Australian Disability Network, Inclusion@Work Index: Disability Data at Work – How Organisations Can Capture Disability Data Safely and Respectfully, DCA, 2024.](#)
9. [Diversity Council Australia \(Brown, C., OLeary, J., Trau, R., Legg, A.\) Out At Work: From Prejudice to Pride, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2018](#)
10. [Diversity Council Australia \(Brown, C., DAlmada-Remedios, R., Dunbar, K., OLeary, J., Evans, O., and Rubin, M.\) Class at Work: Does Social Class Make a Difference in the Land of the ~Fair Go?, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2020](#)
11. [Diversity Council Australia \(DAlmada-Remedios, R., Kaabel, A. and OLeary, J.\) DCA Inclusion@Work Index: Mapping the State of Inclusion and Mental Health in the Australian Workforce, Sydney, Diversity Council Australia, 2022](#)
12. [Diversity Council Australia \(P. Anderson, V. Mapedzahama, A. Kaabel, and J. O'Leary\) Racism at Work: How organisations can stand up to and end workplace racism, Diversity Council Australia, 2022.](#)