

# **Inclusive Employer Index<sup>®</sup>**

**Response rates  
and communicating  
about the Index**

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- Citing DCA as a source will suffice where the reference is made in a verbal format.

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## About Diversity Council Australia

Diversity Council Australia (DCA) is the nation's leading independent peak body for diversity and inclusion.

We are a member-based, not-for-profit, with a strong network of over 1,300 member organisations, including some of Australia's largest employers. For over 40 years we have been at the forefront of helping shape more equitable workplaces, contributing to a stronger economy and fairer society.

Our evidence-led approach is centred on lived experience, and our research consistently shows that inclusive organisations are more innovative, productive, and resilient in changing environments.

Through groundbreaking research, practical tools, events, advocacy, education and training, we provide expert guidance and advice across a spectrum of diversity dimensions to employees, leaders, policymakers and the broader community. We equip organisations with the tools and insights they need to champion the undeniable benefits of diversity and inclusion.

Workplace inclusion is achieved when all employees feel they are respected, connected, contributing, and progressing at work. This creates an environment where everyone feels valued and can reach their full potential.

# About response rates

## What is a response rate?

A response rate refers to the percentage of employees who responded to a survey out of the total number of employees invited to participate in the survey.

For example, if 100 employees were invited to participate in a survey and 50 of them completed the survey, the response rate would be 50%.

## What should your final response rate be?

To be assessed as an Inclusive Employer, organisations must receive a response rate of at least 20%.

In recent years, the average response rate for organisations participating in the Inclusive Employer Index is approximately 40%.

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The way you communicate with employees and your subsequent response rate depends on several factors. Thinking about these factors before asking employees to take the Inclusive Employer Index survey can help inform your communications strategy and increase your response rate.

### **The size of your workforce.**

Are you a larger organisation with many departments and employees to reach? Are you a smaller organisation that may need to spend more time talking to employees about how their anonymity is protected?

### **Your industry.**

Are most employees working desk jobs or are they out in the field or away from computers? How can you reach these employees?

### **Communication strategy and methods.**

Will you use a single method and message to share the survey, or use multiple methods and messaging to reach employees?

### **The number of other surveys being run.**

Have you been running regular pulse surveys or other surveys that might create survey fatigue?

### **Buy-in from leaders.**

Will senior leaders and managers encourage employees to take the survey?

### **If a D&I survey has been run before.**

Has your organisation collected D&I data before? Is this new to your employees?

### How do you calculate your response rate?

To calculate your response rate:

- take the number of employees who took the Inclusive Employer Index survey
- divide it by the number of all employees you sent the survey to
- multiply that number by 100

$$\frac{\text{number of respondents who took survey}}{\text{number of respondents survey was sent to}} \times 100 = \text{response rate \%}$$

### Boosting response rates

The best way to boost response rates is to use multiple methods of communication rather than relying on just one approach. Plan for which communication methods will be used and when. This will help to ensure more employees are reached and participate in the Index survey.

Some strategies past participating organisations have found successful include:

- **telling employees the Index survey is coming** - some employees might be concerned a request for diversity information is a phishing scam. Advance notice of the survey before sharing the link can help ease these concerns.
- **working with managers** - ask managers / team leaders to encourage their teams to take the survey by sharing the link in your internal message platforms (e.g. Microsoft Teams).
- **sending texts and using QR codes** - inviting employees to take the survey using text messages and QR codes can help reach your employees who are out in the field or those who are in roles where the use of computers or emails is not regular.
- **updating on results** - communicate halfway through your survey period to update employees with some summary findings (see page 8).

## Sample communications plan

How you plan on communicating about the Index in your organisation will vary based on your context and factors that can influence response rates. We suggest running the survey for 3 weeks, but some organisations also run the survey for 2 weeks. Use or adapt the below sample communications plan when putting together your own plan.

| Survey period                               | Activity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Week prior to rolling out the survey</b> | <p>Let employees know that your organisation is doing the Inclusive Employer Index, including why, when, and what they will need to do. Use or adapt the sample wording on page 7.</p> <p>If possible, have this come from someone senior in the organisation (e.g. CEO or GM) either in an email, intranet platform, or any other communications channel that all employees have access to.</p> |
| <b>1st week of survey period</b>            | <p>Send an email to employees with the survey link and a shortened version of the wording used the week prior.</p> <p>(If using) send out text messages to employees asking them to participate in the survey.</p> <p>(If using) include a QR code in any internal communications you use (e.g. device screen savers, posters, etc.).</p>                                                        |
| <b>2nd week of survey period</b>            | <p>Send out an email and/or internal communications update on findings so far, encouraging employees to take the survey if they haven't already. Use or adapt sample wording on pages 8-9.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>3rd week of survey period</b>            | <p>Send out an email and/or internal communications to employees with the survey link letting them know there is only a few days left to take the survey.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Post survey collection</b>               | <p>Provide employees with an update of findings from the Index (see page 9).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## Sample text to accompany survey link

Try using or adapting the below text when talking to your staff about the Index or sharing the survey link.

### **Help us understand diversity and inclusion at [INSERT YOUR ORG NAME]**

We are participating in Diversity Council Australia's (DCA) Inclusive Employer Index to better understand diversity and inclusion in our organisation. As part of this, we invite you to complete this anonymous employee survey by following the survey link [ADD YOUR SURVEY LINK].

**What is the Inclusive Employer Index?** The Inclusive Employer Index is a survey we are running to measure and track our progress in creating an inclusive organisation for everyone. It is run by DCA and Diversity Atlas.

**Why are we participating?** We are participating to learn from you about how diverse and inclusive [INSERT YOUR ORG NAME] is, what we are doing well, and what opportunities there are to improve.

**What will I be required to do?** Take the Inclusive Employer Index survey by following the link [ADD YOUR TOKEN LINK]. The survey takes less than 15 to complete. You will be asked close-ended questions about your experiences of inclusion at work, as well as some questions about your demographics.

**What about my privacy?** Measures have been put in place to maintain your anonymity and privacy, including:

- responses from surveys are not linked to any employee – you will not be asked to provide any name, email, or contact details
- data will not be stored on our systems, but with Diversity Atlas
- only combined data will be reported to us once enough employees have taken the survey - we will never be able to see how any single employee answered each question.
- there are 'prefer not to say' responses for demographic questions.

Data will be treated in accordance with **Diversity Atlas's Privacy Policy and Code of Conduct, DCA's Privacy Statement**, [INSERT YOUR ORG NAME] privacy obligations, and any applicable data protection laws.

**Who can I contact if I have questions about participating?** Please contact [INSERT YOUR NAME OR OTHER KEY CONTACT NAME AND EMAIL] if you have any questions about participating in the Inclusive Employer Index.

## Mid-survey updates

Sending a mid-survey update to employees that showcases the current survey results can increase the chances of receiving more responses. It can motivate employees who haven't participated yet to take the survey as well as show that your organisation is actively reviewing the data collected.

We suggest two approaches you can take for this mid-survey update: one that focuses on diversity and one that focuses on inclusion.

- **OPTION 1: Focusing on diversity results.** This approach focuses on reporting diversity in your organisation. Most organisations highlight cultural diversity when using this approach (e.g. number of different cultural and ethnic groups, percentage of employees who are multilingual and country of birth). See below for sample wording to use or adapt.
- **OPTION 2: Focus on inclusion state of play results.** This approach focuses on some inclusion results. Use the sample wording on page 9, or find 3 or 4 inclusion questions that suit your organisation's D&I context.

### Sample halfway emails

#### Option 1: Focusing on diversity

##### Have you filled in our Diversity & Inclusion survey yet?

Help us understand how we can create a more diverse and inclusive workplace by taking our Inclusive Employer Index survey.

Click here [INSERT SURVEY LINK] to take the survey now. It takes less than 15 minutes and is completely anonymous, but your input will have a lasting impact on our organisation.

The survey is only open for X more days, and so far, our initial survey results show:

- We represent x different **cultural backgrounds/ethnicities**
- x% of our workforce are **multilingual** across x **different languages**
- x% of us were **born overseas**

We can't wait to see what other insights we can gather with your help. Thank you for taking the time to participate in our survey.

## **Option 2: Focusing on inclusion state-of-play**

### **Have you filled in our Diversity & Inclusion survey yet?**

Help us understand how we can create a more diverse and inclusive workplace by taking our Inclusive Employer Index survey.

Click here [INSERT SURVEY LINK] to take the survey now. It takes less than 15 minutes and is completely anonymous, but your input will have a lasting impact on our organisation.

The survey is only open for X more days, and so far, our initial survey results show: [INSERT 3 FINDINGS YOU WOULD LIKE TO FOCUS ON, e.g.]

- x% agree we have an inclusive culture where diversity is valued and respected
- x% support [INSERT ORG NAME] taking action to create a workplace which is diverse and inclusive
- x% agree they have the flexibility needed to manage work and other commitments.

## **Reporting back to employees**

After the survey has closed, make sure to follow up with employees to let them know the results and how their feedback will be used to build diversity and inclusion in your workplace. This can show employees their opinions are valued and can encourage them to participate in future surveys.

How you report back depends on the context of your organisation. Given how much data is captured in the Index, it is often more suitable to report back to employees on some select findings rather than all the results.

Examples of ways DCA members have reported their Index results in the past include:

- sharing a 1-page infographic celebrating the diversity of the workforce (see page 10 for example)
- sharing a 2-page infographic celebrating the diversity of the workforce, along with inclusion areas you are doing well and areas of opportunity for your organisation
- sharing more in-depth results with D&I Committees, Employee Resource Groups and networks.

Sample reporting back to staff

Use or adapt the below infographic in your organisation to report back on diversity findings. A template for this infographic is available on the [Inclusive Employer Index Hub](#).



## Some FAQs from employees

Below are some commonly asked questions participating organisations have received from employees in the past and response options you might like to use to respond if you receive the same or similar questions.

**Q**

“I don't want to take the survey because you will know who I am.”

**A**

The below measures have been put in place to maintain employee anonymity and privacy.

- Participating organisations do not have access to any raw data or data that shows how individual employees answered any particular question.
- Organisations will only be able to review aggregated results. Using disability as an example, the organisation will only see:
  - the percentage of employees who identify as a person with disability
  - how all employees with disability answered a survey question, compared to how all employees without disability answered the question.
- For any charts that compare demographic group results for survey questions (e.g. based on First Nations identity, age, disability status), results will not be shown until at least 10 people from a particular demographic group have responded.
- Responses from surveys are not linked to any employee. Employees are not asked to provide any name, email, or contact details.
- Raw data will not be stored in participating organisations' systems, but with Diversity Atlas
- There are 'prefer not to say' responses for demographic questions.

**Q**

“Why isn't there a question about neurodiversity?”

**A**

DCA includes demographic questions in the Index survey that either come from peak organisations representing a demographic group (e.g. Australian Disability Network, ACON), or questions that DCA developed as a result of extensive consultation with people with lived experience (e.g. Counting Culture). DCA is currently working to develop a question on neurodivergence, with a view to including this in a future Index.

**Q**

“Why isn’t there a question about race?”

**A**

There is currently no standard question and list of response options for measuring race in Australia.

DCA is in the process of undertaking a project for this, which will involve consultation. Once the project is complete, a race question will be included in future Inclusive Employer Index surveys.

**Q**

“I don’t see myself in this question.”

**A**

DCA strives as much as possible to use questions, response options, and language that captures the identity of people accurately and inclusively. However, we recognise that often there is no single term or question that would capture everyone’s lived experience, and there are certain terms that different groups or individuals prefer. We recognise and respect individuals’ right to identify with terms that they feel most comfortable with.

Language is socially constructed, dynamic and constantly evolving. As people’s lived experiences change, so too does the language we use to describe ourselves. Thus, in addition to recognising that one label or description may not capture the breadth and depth of the lived realities of different groups, we also understand that descriptions change over time.

Our intention is always to be inclusive of everyone. We acknowledge that we may not always get it right but commit ourselves to be open to change, to listening and continuing to learn from people with lived experience.

**Q**

“Where do the Index questions come from?”

**A**

The Inclusive Employer Index survey uses questions, response option lists and language from other peak groups (e.g. ACON and the Australian Disability Network) or from our own research (e.g. Counting Culture).

To help organisations benchmark their data, we have also used Standard Classifications from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (e.g. the Standard Classification of Languages).

See the next page for a list of question and response option sources.

| Question                                                                                                                                                                       | Source                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inclusion questions</b> (i.e. inclusive teams, inclusive managers, inclusive organisations, inclusive behaviours, exclusive behaviours, awareness & support for D&I action) | DCA's Inclusion@Work Index survey. Developed through a literature review examining workplace inclusion, feedback from an Expert Panel of academic and industry specialists, and statistically tested in each Inclusion@Work Index (see here for <a href="#">methodology</a> ). |
| <b>Gender equality</b>                                                                                                                                                         | Workplace Gender Equality Agency's (WGEA) <a href="#">Workplace Gender Equality Citation</a> survey.                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Gender</b>                                                                                                                                                                  | Question and response options from ACON's <a href="#">Recommended community indicators for research</a>                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity</b>                                                                                                                       | Question and response options from DCA's <a href="#">Counting Culture</a> measures and <a href="#">Gari Yala</a> survey.                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Cultural background</b>                                                                                                                                                     | Question from DCA's <a href="#">Counting Culture</a> measure. Response options from the ABS's <a href="#">Standard Classification of Cultural and Ethnic Groups</a> .                                                                                                          |
| <b>Country of birth</b>                                                                                                                                                        | Question from DCA's <a href="#">Counting Culture</a> measures. Response options from the ABS's <a href="#">Standard Classification of Countries</a> .                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Caring responsibilities</b>                                                                                                                                                 | DCA's Inclusion@Work Index, adapted from the ABS Census.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Disability status</b>                                                                                                                                                       | Question and response options from <a href="#">Australian Disability Network</a> , using <a href="#">UN CRPD definition</a> of disability.                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>LGBTIQ+</b>                                                                                                                                                                 | Question and response options from DCA's Inclusion@Work Index, adapted from ACON's <a href="#">Recommended community indicators for research</a>                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Religious affiliation</b>                                                                                                                                                   | Question from DCA's <a href="#">Counting Culture</a> measure. Response options from the ABS's <a href="#">Standard Classification of Religious Groups</a> .                                                                                                                    |