# Diversity Council Australia logo

# D&I Data at Work

## Collecting and reporting on diversity data

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## About Diversity Council Australia

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 a spectrum of diversity dimensions to a community of member organisations.

* **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**.**

DCA works in partnership with members to generate groundbreaking, high-impact diversity research that drives business improvement. We provide evidence-based guidance on how to fully leverage the benefits of a diverse talent pool. DCA's research is provided for general information purposes only and is not professional or legal advice.

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## A note on language

Language is a powerful tool for building inclusion (or exclusion) at work. The way we speak to each other can create a culture in which everyone can feel valued, respected and part of the team (included), rather than undervalued, disrespected and out of place (excluded). DCA is committed to language that is respectful, accurate and relevant. See Appendix C: Glossary of terms for more information on the terms we use when referring to D&I data.

We recognise that no single term would capture everyone’s lived experience, and different groups or individuals prefer certain terms. We recognise and respect each person’s right to identify with terms that they feel most comfortable with. Where quoting other organisations or existing research, we have used the terms from those sources.

**Constantly evolving.** Language is socially constructed, dynamic and constantly evolving. As people’s lived experiences change, so too does the language we use to describe ourselves. So, as well as recognising that one label or description may not capture the breadth and depth of the lived realities of a group, we understand that descriptions change over time.

**Lived experiences.** The terminology we have used in this guide is based on advice from peak groups consisting of and representing people with lived experiences.

**Willing to change.** Our intention has always been 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 to continuing to learn from people with lived experience.

#### Specific terms

**Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people(s).** We use the terms “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples”, “Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples” (where the “and/or” recognises that some individuals belong to both groups) or “First Nations”. However, we recognise that this approach is not without contention. These terms do not reflect the diversity of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Moreover, many prefer to be known by their specific group or clan names. We only use the term “Indigenous” when citing work that has used it.

**Binary gender language.** We recognise that some people’s gender experiences and identities cannot be captured by binary language. Occasionally we use binary language in this report. Even though we recognise that gender does not exist in binary categories, these categories have very real effects, and sometimes binary language is necessary to convey the gendered nature and dynamics of our society.

**Disability.** We use person-first language with the term “people with disability” but recognise that people with disability sometimes prefer identity-first language (i.e. “disabled people”). We also recognise that when we use the term “disability” without breaking it down, we do not reflect the diversity in disabilities and how people’s experiences differ as a result. Further, some communities may not define themselves as disabled at all (e.g. Autistic and Deaf communities) but are still considered as such in policy language.

## Why we developed this guide

### Diversity and inclusion (D&I) data is a powerful tool in D&I work

D&I data helps you understand your current state and set a future state for your D&I and business strategies. It can help your organisation in several ways:

* **Understand the mix of employees in your workforce.** For example, if you compare your workforce diversity to Australian workforce or labour market diversity, this can reveal which diversity cohorts are under-represented and over-represented.
* **Know which inclusion areas you should focus on.** For example, data on disability status can indicate the need for workplace adjustments, or data on caring responsibilities can indicate the need for flexible work options.
* **Understand the cultural capabilities of your workforce.** For example, data on the languages spoken by your employees and time spent working in other countries can show your workforce capability to access and serve the markets, clients and communities you service.

“We identified that 100% of certain diverse groups were essentially being shortlisted out of every recruitment process (specifically those who identified as having a disability and those who identified as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander).”

Quote from DCA Inclusive Recruitment at Work consultation survey respondent

### But many organisations don’t capture or use D&I data

**Many do not collect any data.** DCA’s [Change at Work](https://www.dca.org.au/research/change-work) research found close to 1 in 2 D&I practitioners (46%) never, rarely or only sometimes used internal D&I data to understand the need for D&I change. The Australian HR Institute (AHRI) surveyed human resource (HR) professionals and found that 43% of their organisations were not measuring the diversity profile of their workforce.[[1]](#endnote-2)

**Others collect only gender data.** Many organisations only capture or use gender data. For example, AHRI found that while 97% of organisations collecting diversity data were capturing data on gender, only 56% were capturing LGBTIQ+ data and only 7% were considering socio-economic background. [[2]](#endnote-3)

**Leadership pushback and lack of training contribute to this.** Senior leaders may resist capturing D&I data to minimise perceived risks.[[3]](#endnote-4) Many D&I and HR practitioners have also not received training in how to collect, analyse, report on and use D&I data in decision-making. This lack of training and confidence in D&I data collection can make it a “harder sell” to senior leadership.

“Companies today acquire data about virtually everything else, so their failure to track diversity statistics sends a message of indifference—or, worse, may be taken as evidence that the company has allowed bias to flourish.” [[4]](#endnote-5)

### We’re here to help

This guide will help – whether you are collecting D&I data from scratch or updating your existing approach. It includes:

* a 4-step process to help you make the most of D&I data to drive meaningful change
* guiding principles to ensure your D&I data approach is respectful, safe, accurate and effective.

### What is D&I data?

You can use 2 main types of diversity and inclusion (D&I) data to guide your D&I work:

1. **Diversity data** shows the demographic mix of your employees.

This might be data on employees' Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, carer status, culture/ethnicity and race, disability status, gender, sexual orientation, intersex status and social class. Diversity data can be coupled with other HR data to explore D&I focus areas (such as the gender pay gap).

1. **Inclusion data** shows the inclusion and exclusion experiences of your employees.

For example, survey data can show experiences of inclusion in teams and with managers, experiences of discrimination and employee support for D&I work.

## DCA’s 4 steps for D&I data at work

1. **PREPARE**
* Assess your organisation’s readiness to collect D&I data.
* Decide why, when, where and how you will collect D&I data.
* Be proactive about protecting D&I data.
* Choose inclusive questions and response options.
1. **COLLECT**
* Plan how to communicate about D&I data collection.
* Use multiple methods to communicate.
* Make sure your D&I data collection materials are accessible.
* Build employee confidence in data privacy.
1. **ANALYSE**
* Calculate your response rate.
* Analyse and benchmark your diversity data – to understand the diversity of your workforce overall and in different organisational levels and areas.
* Analyse and benchmark your inclusion data – to understand how inclusive your workplace is for different employee cohorts.
1. **REPORT**
* Share D&I data findings internally and externally in a timely way.
* Let employees know what actions you will take to address the findings (so they know you are acting on the data they shared with you).

## Guiding principles for collecting and reporting on D&I data

DCA’s 6 guiding principles will ensure your D&I data approach is respectful, safe, accurate and effective.

**Principle 1: Remember that behind D&I data are people and their lived experiences**

Collecting D&I data may be transactional for employers – just one more data point among many being collected. But for employees, particularly those from marginalised backgrounds, sharing this information is incredibly personal. Your people are at the core of D&I data: how they *see themselves* and their *lived experiences* of being included or excluded at work. This makes it different from other data you might be collecting and reporting on (such as sales or quality control data) and you must approach it differently.

**Principle 2: Self-determination and self-identification are critical for both respect and accuracy**

Your D&I data approach must be based on self-determination and self-identification principles for it to be respectful and accurate:

* Use language, questions and response options developed or co-designed by people who have lived experience of each topic.
* Ask your employees how they see themselves (for example, if they identify as a person with disability, or how they describe their gender).
* Avoid making up your own questions and response options. Instead go to peak bodies representing people with lived experience and follow their recommended approach.

If you don’t use this approach, you risk using questions and response options that are disrespectful, inaccurate and alienating for employees.

**Principle 3: Recognise risk – in both collecting and not collecting D&I data**

Recognise there is risk in whether you collect D&I data or do not:

* When you collect D&I data, you risk holding personal information that could be used to harm employees and the organisation if it’s not adequately stored and protected.
* When you do not collect D&I data, you risk sending a message to employees that diversity and inclusion are not important and that their experiences do not matter. You also risk overlooking important compliance-related data, such as harassment incident levels and effectiveness of grievance processes.

While collecting D&I data might bring risks, these shouldn’t put us off. The risks just mean we need to be proactive and diligent about our data privacy policies and processes.

**Principle 4: Prioritise employee trust in your D&I data collection**

Many employees have privacy concerns about the D&I information they share. These concerns are understandable – data breaches in high-profile companies are commonly mentioned in the media, and marginalised employees report being treated differently because they have shared D&I data.[[5]](#endnote-6) To build trust:

* acknowledge these concerns
* spend time developing your data privacy processes to protect the confidentiality of employees
* be transparent with employees about what, why and how D&I data is being collected, and who will have access to it.

**Principle 5: Be purposeful and genuine with the D&I data you collect**

Avoid collecting D&I data for the sake of having data and then doing nothing with it. You can easily erode employee trust in your D&I data processes if you don’t use or report on the data in a meaningful way. It is also a missed opportunity to inform your D&I organisational change. Instead:

* set objectives from the start on why you are collecting D&I data
* use these objectives to decide what you will collect – and how you will collect and analyse it – to generate insights that support your D&I work
* importantly, be ready to act on what your D&I data tells you.

**Principle 6: Make your approach accessible to all when you collect, communicate and report on your D&I data**

Check the accessibility of the platforms and materials you use to communicate, collect and report on your D&I data. For example:

* employees who use screen readers and other assistive technology often find platforms and materials inaccessible
* employees find it harder to follow surveys and HR information system (HRIS) forms when the language and instructions are unclear.[[6]](#endnote-7)

This can prevent these employees from sharing their diversity information and inclusion experiences. In turn, this means your D&I efforts may miss critical insights and be unable to effectively address their concerns.

## STEP 1: Prepare

Prepare for D&I data collection so your approach is respectful, safe, accurate and effective (that is, it can inform your organisation’s D&I and broader business strategy).

### Assess your organisation’s readiness to collect D&I data

**Why?** Often people jump quickly to capturing and storing D&I data without thinking about whether their organisation is actually ready. By doing so, they risk alienating or excluding employees, breaching employee privacy and underusing the findings.

**How?** To assess how ready your organisation is to collect D&I data, consider these questions:

* **Are your privacy policy and data security systems in order?** D&I data (particularly diversity data) is considered personal information, so it needs to be stored securely with privacy measures in place.
* **Do you know who will (and won't) have access to the data?** Will only certain people in a D&I, HR, recruiting or data team have access to this data? Or will others (e.g. managers or department heads) also have access? Decide who needs to access the data and why – especially when it could accidentally identify individual employees – and formalise this in policy and processes.
* **Are your managers ready to access this data?** Will managers be able to see D&I data on an HR information system or during recruitment that identifies employees or applicants? If yes, are you confident that your managers can see and use demographic data without bias? Have managers received training on how to maintain D&I data privacy and not use D&I data in inappropriate and harmful ways.
* **Do senior leaders support D&I data collection?** Buy-in from senior leadership makes a big difference – it can help build employee confidence and so boost response rates. If senior leadership buy-in is low, build a business case for collecting D&I data at your organisation to gain their support.[[7]](#endnote-8)
* **Is this one of the first times you have asked employees to share D&I information?** If so, explain why you are collecting this data and how it will be stored and used. Not doing this can lead to employees being confused or cynical about your intentions. They will then be less likely to provide the data. Remember that it may take a few “rounds” of successful data collection to build employee trust and confidence.

### Be clear about why you are collecting employee D&I data

**Why?** Being clear about **why** you are collecting D&I data helps you decide **what** data you should collect and **how** you can best do this. This is respectful of respondent time and privacy. Collecting data for the sake of collecting data risks employee cynicism and low response rates.

**How?** Be clear about why you are collecting D&I data – for example, it might be to:

* map the diversity profile of your workforce
* assess how well your workforce reflects the diversity of your client base, Australia’s labour market or the Australian community
* meet reporting requirements (e.g. WGEA’s gender equality reporting)
* monitor your talent pipeline to identify levels and areas where demographic groups are notably over-represented or under-represented
* assess the impact of your D&I initiatives on individuals, teams and your organisation over time
* compare the inclusion experiences of employees from various demographic groups (e.g. First Nations and non-Indigenous employee inclusion experiences)
* identify possible bias and audit recruitment, remuneration, promotion and training practices.

### Decide how you will collect D&I data

**Why?** There are different waysto collect D&I data, and each has its own advantages and disadvantages. The following table sets these out.

**How?** Weigh up the advantages and disadvantages to choose a collection method that suits your organisation and employees.

Below are some advantages and disadvantages for various collection methods.

**Collection method - confidential HR information system (HRIS)**

* **Advantages:** You can identify gapsin recruitment, retention, development, remuneration and promotion outcomes by diversity group (e.g. promotions of First Nations employees and non-Indigenous employees).
* **Disadvantages:** HRIS data is linked to individual employees, so it usually results in a lower response rate than in an anonymous survey.

**Collection method - anonymous survey**

* **Advantages:** Anonymous D&I data collection has higher response rates as employees feel safer answering more truthfully when they know they cannot be identified. This means the data about diversity representation and workplace inclusion can be more accurate.
* **Disadvantages:** While you can explore employee perceptions of inclusion, as the data is anonymous, you cannot identify actual gaps in recruitment, retention, development, remuneration and promotion outcomes by diversity group (e.g. the pay gap between men, women and non-binary employees).

If using anonymous surveys, also weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of surveys developed in-house compared to those developed by an external provider.

Below are some advantages and disadvantages for types of anonymous survey.

**Type of anonymous survey – developed in-house**

* **Advantages:** Cyber security risks may be easier to address internally.
* **Disadvantages:** Employees may worry that the data they share will be identifiable to HR or managers. Internal teams responsible for analysing and interpreting the data must have strong D&I data capabilities.

**Type of anonymous survey – from an external provider**

* **Advantages:** An external provider’s independence means employees feel safer answering more truthfully. An external provider often has subject matter expertise to help interpret the findings.
* **Disadvantages:** This approach may increase cyber security risks, although these can be minimised with appropriate checks and balances.

#### Try combining approaches

As HR information systems and surveys have different limitations, many organisations use both to inform their D&I work. Consider combining methods, such as by:

* regularly encouraging employees to complete or check their demographic data in the HRIS, and
* running an anonymous survey every 12 to 24 months to fill in the gaps.

Over time this approach will build a more comprehensive picture of the D&I state of play in your organisation, as employee trust grows and response rates increase.

#### Have you considered DCA’s Inclusive Employer Index?

For organisations with limited internal resources, tools like DCA’s anonymous survey-based [Inclusive Employer Index](https://www.dca.org.au/services/inclusive-employer-index) are a good solution.

Administered in partnership with Diversity Atlas, our comprehensive survey prioritises data security and removes the work of designing your own. Participation in the Inclusive Employer Index is open to both DCA member and non-member organisations.

#### Leading practice tip: Remember that size matters when it comes to anonymity

**Why?** Smaller organisations (say, up to 100 employees) have a higher risk of employees being accidentally identified in anonymous D&I surveys.

For example, if an organisation only has one First Nations woman in a particular division, her responses could be easily traced in a survey that asks about diversity.

This does not mean smaller organisations cannot collect this data – it just requires a carefully considered approach.

**How?**

Option 1:If your D&I survey functionality allows, set an automatic minimum threshold for diversity cohorts in your D&I survey. For example, only display (or report) data when there are at least 10 or 20 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents, ensuring no one can be identified due to small group sizes.

Option 2:Use two separate surveys:

1. Run an anonymous diversity survey focused on diversity data (e.g. “What is your cultural background?”)
2. Also run a separate anonymous survey on inclusion or engagement (e.g. “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? ‘My immediate manager treats all employees with respect’”).

**Remember!** Option 2 means you would not be able to disaggregate and compare the inclusion experiences of different diversity groups (e.g. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees versus non-Indigenous employees). You would only be able to report on overall inclusion experiences, not broken down by diversity group. By taking a more thoughtful approach to data collection, you help protect the privacy of individuals, particularly in smaller organisations where anonymity is harder to maintain.

#### Leading practice tip: Check question functionality with your HRIS provider

**Why?** Some diversity questions should allow employees to select more than one response (known as “multi-select”). This ensures the data is more accurate and inclusive. For example, between 30% and 70% of employees will identify with multiple cultural backgrounds.[[8]](#endnote-9) Yet some HRIS providers do not offer this functionality.

Further, systems might only allow 5 or 6 response options (i.e. they have a limited number of fields). This reduces how meaningful and inclusive your questions and response options can be. For example, employees who have Asian origins do not typically identify as “Asian”. It is much more respectful and inclusive to enable them to select their specific ethnicity (e.g. Chinese, Malay or Japanese).

**How?** If you already have an HRIS, check the functionality of the questions and response options with your provider. If you are sourcing a new provider or looking to change, check with each prospective provider about their system’s functionality.

### Decide when you will collect D&I data

**Why?** Sometimes how an employee responds to diversity questions changes over time as their circumstances shift or their identity develops. Some areas of diversity (such as caring responsibilities and disability status) can change substantially. So, a once-only snapshot of workforce diversity is unlikely to accurately reflect your workforce mix or needs over time.

How employees respond to questions about inclusion and engagement experiences can also change over time, especially if your organisation has invested significant effort into D&I initiatives or has gone through a period of change.

**How?** Collect data at regular intervals (e.g. yearly or two-yearly) so your organisation can track its progress in creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace – at all levels and in all organisational areas.

### Be proactive in protecting D&I data

**Why?** Employees are more likely to share diversity information if they are confident their employer prioritises secure storage and management of their personal information. The increasing occurrence of data breaches and similar incidents also means that employers need to be proactive, vigilant and responsive about data security.

**How?** Develop a formal data management policy and robust processes for storing and protecting personal data. The policy should explain that sharing of data is voluntary as well as:

* what employee information is collected
* why the data is collected
* how the data is used and reported on
* where the data is stored and for how long
* who is authorised to access the data
* what happens if the policy is breached
* what legal obligations apply under the *Privacy Act 1988*.

Also consider these factors if you are using external providers to collect and store data. Make sure you assess and verify their security credentials and practices.

### Choose inclusive questions and response options

**Why?** Self-determination is a key principle in data collection. Ignore it and you risk using questions and response options that are disrespectful, inaccurate and offensive to your employees.

**How?** When putting together questions and response options for a D&I survey or HRIS, remember that it is leading practice to follow self-determination principles. This means:

* using questions and response options that have been developed by people and peak bodies with lived experience of each topic
* asking your employees how they see themselves (e.g. if they identify as a person with disability or how they describe their gender).

For example, DCA follows the questions and response options developed by [ACON](https://www.acon.org.au/what-we-are-here-for/policy-research/#recommended-sexuality-and-gender-indicators) when capturing gender. DCA’s [Counting Culture](https://www.dca.org.au/research/counting-culture-2021) questions were developed after extensive consultation with an expert advisory panel, focus groups, and a pilot with employees (including culturally and racially marginalised employees).

It can also be insightful to test the wording of your questions with key stakeholder groups internally, like your employee resource groups or D&I council. But remember to prioritise the perspectives of people who have lived experience.

For example, when you are deciding what questions and response options you should use to ask about First Nations status, prioritise the perspectives of First Nations employees and peak bodies.

#### How many questions should we be asking? And which ones?

There is no single rule to dictate **how many diversity questions** you should ask in a survey or HRIS.

* Organisations that have never captured D&I data before might start with a few questions, building up how many they ask over time as employee trust in collection and privacy increases. This approach can be particularly useful for capturing D&I data in an HRIS where data is clearly linked to employees.
* Organisations that have been capturing D&I data for longer can increase the number of questions they capture across a range of diversity dimensions, as are organisations using anonymous surveys to capture this data.

Equally, there is no single rule for **which diversity questions** you should ask.

* DCA suggests at a minimum capturing data on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity to recognise the centrality of First Nations inclusion for any D&I work.

Other data you capture would depend on things like your D&I data collection goals, external compliance or reporting requirements, organisational readiness for D&I data, industry, current D&I areas of focus, or internal D&I initiatives (e.g. employee resource groups).

## STEP 2: Collect

Step 2 involves taking a planned approach to collecting your D&I data. This ensures you reach as many employees as possible.

### Plan how to communicate about D&I data collection

**Why?** The way you communicate with employees about D&I surveys or D&I questions in your HR information system (HRIS) influences how willing they will be to participate. For some employees, responding to questions about their identity may feel too personal, risky or intrusive. Respectful and informative communications can help address their concerns and build trust in your data collection.

**How?** Before asking employees to share any D&I information, consider the following factors. These should inform your communications strategy and will help increase engagement.

* **The size and make-up of your workforce.** Does your organisation have a small or large workforce? Smaller organisations usually find it easier logistically to reach all employees. This means their employee response rates are often quite high. Larger organisations typically need to communicate through multiple channels to reach all employees and generate a high response rate. Organisations with a large volunteer workforce also need to diversify how they communicate with volunteers – especially those who don’t have an organisational email address.
* **Your industry.** In your organisation, do most employees work from computers at their desk or out in the field? If most employees use a computer at their desk, you’ll find it easier to get a higher response rate. If your industry requires employees to be out in the field and away from computers, you’ll need to find creative ways to encourage them to take a survey or self-report.
* **The number of other surveys**. Organisations that run many employee surveys may experience lower response rates, particularly if these surveys are time-consuming or come out around the same time.
* **Buy-in from leaders.** Organisations that have a high buy-in from senior leaders on D&I data collection typically receive higher response rates, especially if senior leaders have shown visible support for data collection.
* **Previous D&I surveys.** Response rates are typically lower the first time you run a D&I survey or ask employees to self-report in an HRIS. Over time, organisations will receive higher response rates as they build employee trust in the D&I data collection process.

### Use multiple methods to communicate

**Why?** Relying on one single method to communicate with employees about data collection can limit the response rate. This is because employees will only have that one avenue to hear about and participate in the process.

**How?** Try to use multiple methods of communication rather than just one method. Plan which communication methods will be used and when. This will ensure more employees hear about the data collection and take part.

* **Ahead of time, tell employees a D&I survey or an HRIS self-reporting “drive” is coming.** Some employees might be concerned a request for diversity information is a phishing scam. Giving advance notice before you share the link can help ease concerns.
* **Work with managers.** Ask managers and team leaders to encourage their teams to participate by sharing the link in your internal message platform (e.g. Microsoft Teams) and in team meetings. Prepare your managers with information (e.g. on how the data will be protected and what it will be used for) so that they can answer any employee questions they receive.
* **Work with employee resource groups (ERGs), D&I councils and networks.** These groups and networks can encourage employees, especially those from marginalised backgrounds, to get involved. Prepare ERG, D&I council and network leaders with information on the data collection process so that they can answer any employee questions they receive.
* **Send texts and use QR codes.** Invite employees to participate in data collection using text messages and QR codes. This helps reach employees who are out in the field or don’t regularly use email.
* **Make the most of communal workspaces.** If you have communal workspaces onsite (e.g. employee kitchen or lunch areas), consider loading your D&I survey onto shared tablets and computers for people to use there, or displaying a poster with a QR code.
* **Update on results.** Communicate halfway through your survey period to update employees with some summary findings. This can encourage employees and show them that the data is being collected for a reason.

### Build employee confidence in data privacy

**Why?** Many employees have privacy concerns about the D&I information they share. These concerns are understandable – data breaches in high-profile companies are commonly reported on. Employees from marginalised backgrounds can be even more hesitant to provide D&I data, particularly if they experienced negative treatment when sharing this information in the past.

**How?** Ensure any communications around D&I data collection build confidence in the privacy of the data. Clearly communicate the following points to your employees and link to your privacy policy:

* Why are you collecting the data? What will it be used for?
* What is the security around the data?
* Who will have access to the data at an individual level? (A common employee fear is not knowing who will be able to see this data, including whether their manager can.)

Also make it clear that:

* disclosing information is voluntary and questions will include “Prefer not to say” response options
* employees can remove their data at any time
* data will only be reported in a way that ensures individual employees are not identified.

### Make sure your D&I data collection materials are accessible

**Why?** Employees who use screen readers and other assistive technology often find platforms and materials inaccessible. Some employees will also find it harder to follow survey and HRIS forms when the language and instructions are unclear.[[9]](#endnote-10) If employees struggle to share their diversity information and inclusion experiences, you will not be able to use these perspectives to inform your D&I work and address their workplace concerns.

**How?** Check for accessibility before asking employees to take a D&I survey or self-report in an HRIS. Use Lever 2: Inclusive Communication of DCA’s [Inclusive Teams at Work Toolkit](https://www.dca.org.au/research/inclusive-teams-toolkit) for more information.

* **Check the accessibility features** **of your data collection platforms.** For example, if you are using SurveyMonkey, check its resources on how to make your survey accessible for screen readers. For an HRIS, check with your provider about the accessibility of their platform.
* **Make your** **communications about taking a survey or self-reporting accessible.** Use in-built accessibility features like [Microsoft’s Accessibility Checker](https://support.microsoft.com/en-au/office/improve-accessibility-with-the-accessibility-checker-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f) for its Office suite and Vision Australia’s [Document Accessibility Toolbar](https://visionaustralia.org/business-consulting/digital-access/resources/document-accessibility-toolbar). Avoid using PDFs as these are often inaccessible with screen reader technology.
* **Write your questions and related materials in plain language.** Check that instructions are easy to follow and suitable for their intended readers. Use tools like [Hemingway Editor](https://hemingwayapp.com/) to help in this.
* **Test for access and understanding.** Where possible, test your data collection platforms materials, ideally with a sample of intended users.

#### Sample wording to communicate with employees: HRIS

Use or adapt this wording to suit your needs when communicating with employees about providing their diversity data in your HRIS.

**Subject line: Help us track progress and support inclusion at <ORGANISATION NAME>**

<ORGANISATION NAME> is committed to fostering workplace diversity and ensuring all our people, from any background, can contribute to their full potential. We want to foster an inclusive workplace that reflects the diversity of our customers and the communities we operate in.

<OR INSERT YOUR ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY>

To help us measure our progress and ensure we’re meeting our diversity and inclusion goals, we’re asking all employees to voluntarily share their <DIVERSITY DATA POINTS YOU ARE REQUESTING>. Your participation will give us important insights, help drive positive change and measure our progress over time.

**What will you need to do?**

Simply follow the link below and complete the questions when prompted: <HYPERLINK AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR HRIS>.

**Is providing this information voluntary?**

Yes, sharing this information is completely voluntary. You are not required to answer any questions you are not comfortable with. There are also “Prefer not to say” responses for any questions you do not want to answer. However, we’d really appreciate your participation if you’re able to share this information.

**What will we use the data for?**

The information you share will be used for statistical purposes only. It will help us understand and track our progress in building a more diverse and inclusive workplace. It will also inform a range of policies and practices to help ensure everyone at <ORGANISATION NAME> has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The data will be compared with national statistics so we can understand how closely our workforce reflects the communities we operate in.

**How will we keep your information confidential?**

Any diversity data you share will be kept strictly confidential in line with our data privacy policy <HYPERLINK TO POLICY>.

Access will be limited to a small number of authorised <ORGANISATION NAME> employees and your line manager will not have access to this information.

When generating reports, all data will be anonymised. The reports will only show combined information, with no personal information or details identifying individual employees.

**Who can you contact if you have questions?**

If you have any questions about sharing your information in our HRIS, please contact <KEY CONTACT NAME AND EMAIL>.

#### Sample wording to communicate with employees: anonymous survey

Use or adapt this wording to suit your organisational needs when communicating with employees about providing their diversity data and inclusion experiences in an anonymous survey.

**Subject line: Help us track progress and support inclusion at <ORGANISATION NAME>**

<ORGANISATION NAME> is committed to fostering workplace diversity and ensuring all our people, from any background, can contribute to their full potential. We want to foster an inclusive workplace that reflects the diversity of our customers and the communities we serve.

<OR INSERT ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY>

We need your help to gain a picture of where we’re at, so we’re running an anonymous survey. This will help us learn more about how diverse and inclusive <ORGANISATION NAME> is, what we are doing well, and where we can improve.

**What will I need to do?**

Take our survey by following this link – <SURVEY HYPERLINK> – and complete it before <SURVEY CLOSE DATE>. It takes less than <SURVEY TIME> to complete. You will be invited to share your experiences of inclusion at work, as along with some optional demographic questions.

**Is taking the survey voluntary?**

Sharing this information is completely voluntary – you don’t have to take part if you don’t want to. However, we encourage you to do so - for any questions you do not wish to answer, you can select “Prefer not to say”. We’d really appreciate your input if you’re comfortable doing so.

**What will we use the data for?**

The survey results will help us track our progress in workforce diversity and guide us in making improvements to ensure everyone can reach their full potential.

We’ll also compare the data will be compared with national statistics to see how closely our workforce reflects the communities we operate in.

**How will your anonymity be protected?**

The survey won’t ask for any identifying information, such as your name, email address, job title or department. Any data you share will be kept confidential in line with our data privacy policy <HYPERLINK TO POLICY>.

Access to survey data will be strictly limited to a small number of authorised <ORGANISATION NAME> employees. Your line manager will not have access.

Survey data will only be reported anonymously. When we report on the results, we’ll only share combined information – no individual data, employee names or other information at an individual level will be included

**Who can you contact about the survey?**

If you have any questions about taking our survey, please contact <KEY CONTACT NAME AND EMAIL>.

## STEP 3: Analyse

Once you’ve collected your D&I data, you’ll need to analyse it to understand where to focus your efforts. Analysis involves exploring and benchmarking your data to identify trends, strengths and pain points (areas of opportunity) when it comes to your D&I work.

For example:

* How diverse is your workforce compared with the diversity of the Australian working population?
* How diverse is your workforce compared with the diversity of your customer base or the Australian community you operate in or serve?
* What are your employees' experiences with inclusion and exclusion?
* How do these experiences compare with national workplace inclusion and exclusion benchmarks?
* Do some demographic groups experience less inclusion and more exclusion than others?

### Calculate your response rate

**Why?** Calculating a response rate gives you an idea of how representative your D&I data is of your whole workforce. Generally, the higher your response rate, the more confident you can be that the findings are representative. There is no widely agreed-on response rate organisations should aim for. Smaller organisations typically receive bigger response rates (e.g. 60–80%), while large organisations receive lower response rates (e.g. 20–50%). When considering your response rate, consider factors like whether you have collected D&I data before, what your industry is and how many channels you used to communicate. See Step 2 on collecting your data for ways you can boost response rates.

**How?** Calculate the response rate by dividing the number of employees who responded to your survey by the number of employees you invited to participate. For example, if 100 employees responded and 500 employees were invited to respond, your response rate would be 20% (i.e. 100 divided by 500). This is the same for self-reporting in HR information systems.

### Analyse your diversity data at the overall workforce level

**Why?** Start by analysing your diversity data at a high level. This involves putting your data into simple percentages that are easy to report on (such as 36% of employees are multilingual or 12% of employees are people with disability). Doing so provides you with summary statistics on the diversity of your workforce, which will help you:

* benchmark the diversity of your workforce – against, for example, other organisations in your industry, your customer base, the Australian workforce or the Australian population
* report on your workforce diversity to key stakeholders
* track your workforce diversity over time.

**How?** To get these high-level percentages, you will need to work with both your single and your multi-select question data as follows.

**Single-select questions.** In these questions, employees can only select one response, so the data is easier to analyse.

* Some single-select questions only have “Yes” or “No” response options – for example, “Do you identify as a person with disability, illness or injury?” This means you will not have to group response options as part of your analysis.
* Other single-select questions may require grouping – for example, “Do you identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person?” This would require you to group the percentages of employees who selected “Yes, Aboriginal”, “Yes, Torres Strait Islander” and “Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander” into one overall percentage. This percentage would then show Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander representation in your workforce.

#### Example: Imagine your organisation’s employee survey had these results

* Yes, Aboriginal: 1.7%
* Yes, Torres Strait Islander: 0.8%
* Yes, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander: 0.9%.

Grouping these percentages would result in 3.4% for your organisation’s Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workforce representation.

### Analyse your diversity data at the overall workforce level (continued)

**Multi-select questions.** In these questions, employees can select one or more responses. As a result, percentages for multi-select questions usually total more than 100%. You will need to do more analytical work to create a total percentage of 100%, by subtracting the “No” and “Prefer not to say” percentages from 100%.

#### Example: A question about caring responsibilities may allow employees to select from multiple response options.

* Yes, caring for a child/children with disability: 11%
* Yes, caring for a child/children without disability: 38%
* Yes, caring for an adult/adults with disability: 12%
* Yes, caring for an adult/adults without disability: 14%
* No: 48%
* Prefer not to say: 7%

If your organisation had these results, you could create a total percentage out of 100% by subtracting the “No” responses (48%) and the “Prefer not to say” (7%) responses from 100%. This would give a total percentage of 45% of your workforce having one or more caring responsibilities.

**Do you need more help calculating overall diversity percentages?** Use DCA’s [D&I Data at Work: Questions and Response Options](https://www.dca.org.au/research/data-at-work#infographic) to collect your diversity dataset. Then use the table in Appendix A to calculate your overall workforce diversity statistics. This table covers both single-select and multi-select response options.

#### Leading practice tip: Review your “Prefer not to say” responses

It might be tempting to ignore your results for “Prefer not to say” responses when going through your D&I data. However, these responses can be insightful to gauge how safe employees feel to share:

* their diversity data and inclusion experiences with you in surveys and HR information systems
* this information with other people in the organisation in general.

For example, if your organisation has more employees selecting “Prefer not to say” than “Yes” in a question about disability, this result could indicate low safety in sharing information and even low levels of inclusion for employees with disability.

### Analyse your diversity data at a deeper level

**Why?** While overall workforce diversity numbers are useful, they do not give the full picture of your workforce diversity. For example:

* If 62% of your workforce is multilingual, which languages do they speak?
* If your employees report 45 different cultural backgrounds/ethnicities, are these mainly European or Asian or African or a combination?

**How?** Identify which diversity questions are most meaningful to explore more deeply (using the list that follows). Then review the full results for each one. For example, in a question about languages, review all the languages listed by your employees to understand how many languages are spoken and what the most common are.

* **Age.** You might know the average age of your workforce, but what percentage is approaching retirement (i.e. 60 years and over)? This can help with workforce planning, including succession planning.
* **Caring.** You might know the percentage of employees with caring responsibilities, but how many care for children and how many for adults? These carers might have quite different needs for flexible work arrangements.
* **Cultural background/ethnicity.** You might know the percentage of employees from a main English-speaking background only, but how many different ethnicities are represented in your workforce and what are the most common?
* **Country of birth.** You might know the percentage of employees who were born in Australia, but how many countries of birth are represented in your workforce and what are the most common?
* **LGBTIQ+ status.** You might know the percentage of employees who are LGBTIQ+, but how many are trans employees or intersex employees? Inclusion requirements are often very different for trans employees, intersex employees and LGBQ+ employees.
* **Religious affiliation**. You might know the percentage of employees who have a non-Christian religious affiliation, but which religions are represented and which are the most common?Different religions often have different inclusion and flexibility needs (e.g. prayer breaks, diet, bathroom facilities and uniforms).

### Analyse your diversity data for different organisational levels and areas

**Why?** While overall workforce diversity percentages are useful, they do not give the full picture of your workforce diversity. Often it is useful to find out which employee cohorts are over-represented and under-represented at different organisational levels and in different areas.

* **Organisational levels.** If 62% of all employees are women or non-binary people, what percentage of senior leaders are women or non-binary people? Often women and non-binary people are under-represented at senior leadership level, compared with their representation in the organisation (e.g. in this case, less than 62%).
* **Organisational areas.** If 62% of all employees are women, what percentage of employees in retail organisational areas are women? Often women are over-represented in retail, which tends to have lower paid and less secure roles. What percentage of employees in IT organisational areas are women? Often women are under-represented in IT, which tends to have higher paid, more secure roles.

**How?** Identify which organisational levels and areas are most meaningful to explore more deeply. Then look at the representation of different employee cohorts compared with their representation in your organisation overall. For example, for gender:

* **Organisational levels.** Compare the representation of men with that of women and non-binary employees at different levels of your organisation. At what level does the percentage of women and non-binary people drop off markedly?
* **Organisational areas.** Compare the representation of men with that of women and non-binary employees in different areas of your organisation. Which areas have a good balance of men, women and non-binary employees? In which areas is the gender balance very skewed? Are the areas where women and non-binary employees are under-represented more likely to have well-paid, secure roles?

### Benchmark your diversity data

**Why?** Comparing your diversity results against benchmarks (i.e. national, industry or leading practice averages) can help you understand how your organisation is performing relative to other organisations. For example, you could benchmark your workforce diversity overall by comparing it with the diversity of:

* your industry
* the Australian workforce
* the Australian population.

**How?** Identify which benchmarks are most meaningful to use – leading practice, industry, Australian workforce, or Australian population.

* **Leading practice benchmark.** Use this benchmark if you want to set aspirational targets or understand how your organisation is performing compared with leading employers.
* **Industry benchmark**. Use this benchmark if you want to ensure your workforce and leadership team reflect the ‘average’ industry workforce. This will help you set realistic targets. For example, if 16% of graduate engineers are women, you should be aiming for at least 16% of your graduate intake to be women. You can also use it to understand how your organisation is performing compared with the industry average.
* **Australian workforce**. Use this benchmark if you want to ensure your workforce and leadership team reflect the ‘average’ Australian workforce. For example, 33% of Australian workers are born overseas and 16% are born in Asian countries – how does this compare to your workforce?
* **Australian general population/community**. Use this benchmark if you want to ensure your workforce and leadership team reflect the community your organisation operates in or serves. For example, if 4.5% of Australians are LGBTI+ people,[[10]](#endnote-11) you should be aiming for at least 4.5% of your workforce to be LGBTI+ people. If you operate mainly within one community, state or territory (e.g. Western Sydney or the Northern Territory), you could use that population as your benchmark.

**Do you want to compare your workforce diversity to Australia’s workforce diversity?** If so, compare your overall workforce diversity percentages against the percentages in the table in Appendix B. For example, compare the percentage of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees in your workforce against the related benchmark in the appendix.

### Analyse and benchmark your inclusion data overall

**Why?** Diversity data can tell you how well you are **recruiting** a diversity of talent. But your inclusion data can tell you how well you are **including and** **retaining** that talent – in particular, where the pain points are in your employee lifecycle (through development, promotion, remuneration and resignation/turnover). This helps you identify strengths and opportunities for building inclusion and addressing exclusion in your workplace.

**How?** Start by analysing the inclusion experiences of your workforce overall. Which questions were answered less positively or more negatively than others?

Consider if some types of questions when grouped together indicate an area you should focus on. For example:

* Employees might answer **inclusive leadership** questions more negatively than other questions, indicating a need to build the inclusive leadership capabilities of your managers.
* Employees might report having low **support for D&I**, indicating a need to be clearer and more compelling in your communications around the case for D&I change.

Explore some of these factors:

* **Priority D&I areas.** What areas have you been doing a lot of work in, and is this work showing in your results? For example, if you have been doing work on employee engagement with D&I, have these results changed over time?
* **Trends over time.** What trends can you see in your employee experiences with inclusion when you compare current and past inclusion data? Are experiences with inclusion increasing, decreasing or being static?
* **Pain points.** For example,do employees report that they are not comfortable raising D&I concerns? This indicates a need to build employee confidence in your grievance procedures and managers’ capability to use these procedures for a fair process and fair outcome.
* **Organisational areas.** Are any departments, business units, divisions or regions less inclusive than your organisation overall?

Benchmark your overall inclusion results by comparing them with any other inclusion results you have access to.

Consider participating in DCA’s [Inclusive Employer Index](https://www.dca.org.au/services/inclusive-employer-index). The index benchmarks your employees’ inclusion and exclusion experiences against the Australian workforce, DCA members, and (where possible) your industry.

#### Have you considered participating in DCA’s Inclusive Employer Index?

Organisations can compare their inclusion results against a **National Workplace Benchmark** (derived from a nationally representative survey of 3,000 Australian workers), a **Leading Practice Benchmark** (derived from DCA member organisations that participate in the Index), and (where possible) an **Industry Benchmark**.

### Analyse employee inclusion experiences by diversity

**Why?** Analysing employee inclusion experiences by diversity helps you prioritise D&I areas to focus on. For example, your results might show that:

* Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employees experience more harassment than non-Indigenous employees
* LGBTIQ+ employees are less likely to be treated with respect at work than non-LGBTIQ+ employees
* employees with disability are less likely to receive regular development opportunities than employees without disability.

**How?** You can analyse employee inclusion experiences by diversity if you:

* run a D&I survey with both diversity questions and inclusion questions or an engagement or climate survey with diversity questions
* use this dataset to compare the inclusion experiences of marginalised employees and non-marginalised employees (e.g. employees with disability and employees without disability).

**Find a data specialist.** DCA recommends collaborating with employees who have data analysis expertise (including the capacity to identify statistically significant percentage differences) – if you have them. This is the most effective and efficient way of analysing D&I data, as you will have people with both data analysis expertise and D&I subject matter expertise.

**Check your survey platform functionality.** If you do not have employees with data analysis expertise, you can still explore your inclusion experience data by diversity. Some survey providers (e.g. SurveyMonkey) have built this type of “cross tabulation” analysis and reporting functionality into their platform.

**Look for notable patterns: big differences.** If your survey platform does not have this functionality, look for large differences in how different employee cohorts have answered inclusion-related questions. A big differencecould be 10%+ for larger responses. Big differences are typically more present across your “Strongly agree + Agree” responses.

For example, in the following chart, 27% of all LGBTIQ+ respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they felt valued and respected, compared with 65% of all non-LGBTIQ+ respondents. This is a very big difference and means that LGBTIQ+ employees are much less likely to feel valued and respected at work than LGBTIQ+ employees. So this organisation needs to focus on building LGBTIQ+ inclusion, specifically around respect.

#### Chart description

Title: I am treated as a valued and respected team member.

* Disagree/Strongly disagree: 41% of all LGBTIQ+ respondents versus 21% of all non-LGBTIQ+ respondents.
* Neither agree or disagree: 32% of all LGBTIQ+ respondents versus 14% of all non-LGBTIQ+ respondents.
* Agree/Strongly agree: 27% of all LGBTIQ+ respondents versus 65% of all non-LGBTIQ+ respondents.

### Analyse employee inclusion experiences by diversity (continued)

**Look for notable patterns: lots of small differences.** Sometimes a notable pattern can be many smaller differences across multiple questions. A smaller difference(e.g. 5%) is also notable if it appears on many questions. Smaller differences are usually more common in the “Strongly disagree + Disagree” responses. For example, are employees with disability consistently reporting 5% less agreement than employees with disability across many questions?

**Remember that sample size matters!** DCA suggests having at least 20 respondents in a particular diversity group to enable meaningful and accurate interpretation of data. For example, if you want to compare Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander employee responses with non-Indigenous employee responses you will need at least 20 respondents in each of these employee cohorts.

### Analyse your HR information system data by diversity

**Why?** If you capture diversity data in your HRIS, you can analysis employee data (i.e. parental leave return rates, remuneration or training opportunities) by diversity cohort. This can help you prioritise D&I areas to focus on. For example, your results might show that:

* graduates that are men are more likely to be appointed at a higher pay point than equally qualified and experienced women and non-binary graduates
* CARM employees are offered fewer development opportunities than non-CARM employees.

**How?** Choose which HRIS data point(s) you want to understand. The following table lists examples of different types of employee lifecycle and diversity data. Not all organisations will have all of these, so choose the data points you have available. Then analyse by diversity group to identify any notable differences. For example, you might find that:

* employees with caring responsibilities are less likely to be promoted than employees without caring responsibilities
* LGBTIQ+ employees are leaving the organisation at a higher rate than non-LGBTIQ+ employees.

Below are examples of HRIS areas and their corresponding data points.

* Recruitment – recruitment rates
* Development and promotion – promotion rates, succession plans, and nomination for and participation in professional development and sponsorship/mentoring
* Flexibility – parental leave return rate, leave rates (cultural, sick, absenteeism, family violence leave), employment status (casual, part-time, full-time) and work location (work from home, hybrid, office, field)
* Respect – discrimination and harassment complaints
* Termination – turnover/retention data, exit interview data.

Below are diversity groups to use for analysis.

* Aboriginality
* Age
* Caring responsibilities
* Cultural background
* Disability
* Gender
* Language
* LGBTIQ+ status
* Race
* Religion

## STEP 4: Report

### Share and report on your findings

**Why?** Employees have higher confidence in D&I data collection when they can see that their information is being used to improve diversity and inclusion outcomes and that their privacy is protected. Timely and meaningful reporting can also lead to higher response rates in future. If we don’t report D&I data findings effectively, we might instead face employee cynicism about surveys, low self-reporting in HR information systems, low engagement in D&I initiatives, and reluctance to participate in future initiatives.

**How?** Report on D&I data findings to employees in a timely fashion and let them know what actions you will take to respond to the information they provided. Remember to always report at the overall (aggregated) level – the diversity of your workforce overall. Never report on individual employees or on teams when doing so might breach employee confidentiality.

Organisations that have participated in DCA’s Inclusive Employer Index have reported their index results in several ways:

* **Sharing a 1-page diversity infographic** to all employees showing the diversity of the workforce, including how this compares with diversity in the working population or in the community (see example on next page).
* **Sharing a 2-page D&I infographic** to all employees showing the diversity of the workforce, along with inclusion areas where you are doing well and inclusion areas that are opportunities to focus on.
* **Creating a briefing paper** with the results, strengths and areas of opportunity, to share with management, D&I council members and employee network groups.
* **Publicly sharing your workforce diversity demographics** through, for example, the intranet, the website and annual reports.

#### Leading practice: Reporting on your diversity publicly.

DCA has been collecting and publicly reporting data on the diversity of our workforce for several years. See examples of how we report about our workforce diversity on our [Work with Us](https://www.dca.org.au/about-dca/work-with-us) page and in our most recent [Annual Report](https://www.dca.org.au/annual-report).

#### Leading practice example: Our diversity – what you told us

Staff Diversity 2024

* Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander: 4% of our team identify as being an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
* Non-Main English-speaking background: 67% of our team report having one or more non-English speaking cultural backgrounds
* Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CARM)\*: 36% of our team are a person from a culturally and racially marginalised group
* Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)\*\*: 33% of our team are a culturally and linguistically diverse person.
* Multilingual: 56% of our team are multilingual
* Born overseas: 33% of our team were born overseas
* Non-Christian religion: 26% of our team have a non-Christian religious affiliation
* Christian religion: 19% of our team have a Christian religious affiliation
* Caring responsibilities: 48% of our team have caring responsibilities
* With disability: 26% of our team have a disability
* Younger workers: 11% of our team are under 30
* Older workers: 19% of our team are over 55
* LGBTIQ+: 33% of our team describe themselves as LGBTIQ+
* Women: 81% of our team describe their gender as a woman
* Men: 11% of our team describe their gender as a man
* Non-binary: 4% of our team describe their gender as non-binary.

\*Culturally and racially marginalised (CARM) people in Australia are people who are typically racialised as Black, Brown, Asian, or any non-white group, who face discrimination or marginalisation due to their race and/or racialised religion.

\*\*Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) is a much broader category than CARM, as it includes people who are typically racialised as white, are from a non-Anglo Celtic cultural background, and may not use English as their main language (themselves, their parents, or ancestors). For example, a Ukrainian migrant or someone who is born in Australia from Ukrainian parents.

### Report on your diversity dimensions

#### Reporting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity

Organisations usually report on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity as a combined percentage, such as “3.2% of our workforce are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander”. Before you report internally or externally, make sure the way you are reporting does not enable individual employees to be identified. This can be psychologically and culturally unsafe.

#### Reporting on age

Organisations typically report on workforce representation across younger and older age groups or the median age of their workforce. For example, you might report that “22% of our workforce is under 30 and 18% is over 55” or “the average age in our workforce is 46”.

#### Reporting on caring responsibilities

Most organisations report on the representation of employees with caring responsibilities combined, such as “52% of our employees have caring responsibilities”. Larger organisations may also provide more detail about caring, such as “34% of us are caring for children without disability, 12% are caring for children with disability, 18% are caring for adults without disability, and 7% are caring for adults with disability”.

##### Reporting on cultural diversity

DCA defines cultural diversity as the mix of people from different cultural backgrounds. It can include differences in cultural/ethnic identity (how we identify ourselves and how others identify us), language, country of birth, religion, heritage/ancestry, national origin and race.[[11]](#endnote-12) Accordingly, our [Counting Culture](https://www.dca.org.au/research/counting-culture-2021) research recommends that, where possible, organisations collect data and report on more than one area to measure cultural diversity.

* **Cultural background.** Organisations can report on how many cultural backgrounds are represented in their workforce, such as “Our employees represent 45 different cultural backgrounds”. Some organisations might also report on how many of their employees have one or more non-main English-speaking backgrounds – for example, “67% of our team members have one or more non-English-speaking cultural backgrounds”.
* **Languages.** Using the Counting Culture approach, organisations can report on the percentage of their workforce that is multilingual, as well as how many languages their employees are multilingual in – for example, “62% of us are multilingual across 42 languages”. Some organisations also list the most common languages spoken in their workforce, such as “the 5 most common languages we speak in addition to English are Mandarin, Arabic, Vietnamese, Cantonese and Punjabi”.
* **Country of birth.** At the broadest level, organisations can report on the percentage of their employees born overseas, such as “42% of us were born overseas”. Some organisations also list the most common countries of birth – for example, “the 5 most common countries of birth reported were England, India, China, New Zealand and the Philippines”.
* **Religious affiliation.** Using the Counting Culture approach, organisations can use the broadest level of workforce representation by reporting the percentages of employees who have a Christian religious affiliation, a non-Christian religious affiliation and no religion. For example, you might say “33% of our employees have a Christian religious affiliation, 14% have a non-Christian religious affiliation, and 53% do not have a religious affiliation. The most common religious affiliations after Christianity are Hinduism and Sikhism”.

#### Reporting on disability

Report on the percentage of your employees who identify as a person with disability – for example, “9% of us identify as a person with disability.” Avoid reporting on disability representation using a medical approach (i.e. reporting on types of disability).

#### Reporting on sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation

Most organisations report on 2 indicators of sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation: gender and LGBTIQ+ identity.

* **Gender:** organisations report on the percentages of employees describing their gender as woman, man and non-binary. For example, you might say “81% of our team members describe their gender as woman, 11% describe their gender as man, and 4% describe their gender as non-binary”.
* **LGBTIQ+:** organisations report on the percentage of employees who describe themselves as LGBTIQ+, such as “18% of our team members describe themselves as LGBTIQ+”.

Some organisations may also want to consider reporting on the percentages of intersex employees (employees with innate variation of sex characteristics) and LGBTQ+ employees. This is because intersex variation is not related to sexual orientation or gender. It should only be reported if individual employees are not identifiable from the data.

#### Reporting on social class

Social class is an emerging area for reporting in Australia. DCA’s [Class at Work](https://www.dca.org.au/research/class-at-work) report collected class-related data using the subjective social status survey measure. In this approach, organisations can report on the percentage of employees who self-rate their position as, for example, lower class, middle class or higher class. For example, you might say “35% of our employees self-rated their position as lower class”.

## Appendix A: Calculating overall workforce diversity statistics

This table outlines how to calculate your overall workforce diversity statistics when using the diversity questions and response options in DCA’s [D&I Data at Work: Questions and Response Options Guide](https://www.dca.org.au/research/data-at-work#infographic).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Demographic | Multi- or single-select question | Calculation of high-level summary  |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background | Single-select  | * **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander** = % Yes, Aboriginal + % Yes, Torres Strait Islander + % Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
* **Non-Indigenous** = % No
 |
| Age | Single-select  | * **Younger** = % ages 29 and under combined
* **Mid-career** = % ages 30 to 54 combined
* **Older** = % ages 55 and above combined
 |
| Caring responsibilities | Multi-select  | * **Caring responsibilities** = 100% – % No – % Prefer not to say
* **No caring responsibilities** = % No
 |
| Cultural background  | Multi-select  | * **Main English-speaking background(s) only** = % English-speaking backgrounds only
* **One or more non-main English-speaking background(s)** = % one or more non-main English-speaking backgrounds

See Measure 1 of DCA’s [Counting Culture](https://www.dca.org.au/research/counting-culture-2021) on background groupings.  |
| Country of birth  | Single-select  | * **Born in Australia** = % Australia
* **Born overseas** = 100% – % Australia – % Unsure – % Prefer not to say
 |
| Disability | Single-select  | * **With disability** = % Yes
* **Without disability** = % No
 |
| Gender | Single-select  | * **Men** = % Man or male
* **Women** = % Woman or female
* **Non-binary** = % Non-binary
* **Using a different term** = % I use a different term (please specify)
 |
| LGBTIQ+ | Multi-select  | * **LGBTIQ+** = 100% – % No – % Prefer not to say
* **Non-LGBTIQ+** = % No
 |
| Multilingual | Multi-select  | * **Non-multilingual** = % Speak English only
* **Multilingua**l = 100% – % Speak English only – % Prefer not to say
 |
| Religious affiliation  | Single-select  | * **Christian religious affiliation** = % Christian denominations combined
* **Non-Christian religious affiliation** = % non-Christian religious affiliations combined
* **Non-religious** = % No religion + % other responses grouped as non-religious

See the [ABS Standard Classification of Religious Groups](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/australian-standard-classification-religious-groups/latest-release) for information on these groupings. |
| Subjective social class (using the MacArthur Scale) | Single-select  | Based on other studies, DCA’s [Class at Work](https://www.dca.org.au/research/class-at-work) report took the following approach: • **Lower class respondents** = % reporting their position on the 11-point scale as between 0 and 4 • **Middle class respondents** = % reporting a position between 5 and 7 • **Higher class respondents** = % reporting a position between 8 and 10 |

## Appendix B: Diversity of the Australian workforce

The following percentages are based on the ABS 2021 Census data of employed Australians aged 18 and older (extracted using the ABS TableBuilder, unless marked as collected elsewhere).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| DEMOGRAPHIC | %  |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander |  |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander | 2.1 |
| Age  |  |
| 18–24 years | 12.2 |
| 25–34 years | 23.3 |
| 35–44 years | 22.9 |
| 45–54 years  | 20.9 |
| 55–64 years | 15.7 |
| 65+ years | 5.0 |
| Sex[[12]](#footnote-2) |  |
| Female | 48.4 |
| Male | 51.6 |
| Disability[[13]](#footnote-3)  |  |
| With disability  | 9.4 |
| LGBTI+[[14]](#footnote-4) |  |
| LGBTI+ | 4.5 |
| Caring[[15]](#footnote-5) |  |
| Unpaid care for child/children  | 34.0 |
| Unpaid assistance to a person with disability, with a health condition or due to old age  | 20.7 |
| Country of birth (broad)  |  |
| Australian born | 66.6 |
| Born overseas | 33.4 |
| Country of birth by region  |  |
| Oceania and Antarctica (including Australia) | 70.2 |
| North-east Asian born | 3.9 |
| Southern and Central Asian born  | 6.5 |
| South-East Asian born  | 5.2 |
| North-west European born | 6.3 |
| Southern and Eastern Europe born  | 2.0 |
| North Africa and the Middle East born | 1.5 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa born | 2.0 |
| Americas born | 1.8 |
| Other (Supplementary codes and not stated)  | 0.6 |
| Religious affiliation  |  |
| Buddhism | 2.7 |
| Christianity | 43.8 |
| Hinduism | 3.4 |
| Islam | 2.4 |
| Judaism | 0.4 |
| No religion | 43.8 |
| Other not listed  | 1.4 |
| Prefer not to say & Inadequately described  | 2.1 |

## Appendix C: Glossary of terms

**Aggregated / disaggregated.** Aggregated data refers to the total dataset (e.g. all employee responses). Disaggregated data refers to data that has been broken down into detailed sub-categories – such as by gender (e.g. responses from men versus responses from women and non-binary people) or age (e.g. people under 30 versus people 55 and over). This makes it possible to compare inclusion experiences by diversity and to identify patterns or disparities that may be hidden in larger datasets.

**Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.** This refers to those who have responded to the survey question “Do you identify as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person?” by selecting they have an Aboriginal background, Torres Strait Islander background, or both.

**Bias.** Bias is a preference for or against someone based on stereotypes about their age, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, social class, sexual orientation or disability status, rather than actual knowledge of the person and their circumstances.

**Caring responsibilities.** This refers to those who have responded to the survey question, “In the last two weeks, did you spend time providing unpaid care, help or assistance for family members or others?” by reporting they cared for a child or children and/or an adult or adults.

**Culturally and racially marginalised (CARM).** We use the term culturally and racially marginalised (CARM) to refer to people who are not white. Research indicates that it is this group who experiences racial marginalisation. This group includes people who are Black, Brown, Asian or any other non-white group who face marginalisation due to their race.[[16]](#endnote-13)

**Centring voice / lived experience**. Centring voice or lived experience means we listen to and prioritise what people from marginalised backgrounds are telling us about the systemic barriers they face. These perspectives are the foundation for D&I initiatives that are focused on them.[[17]](#endnote-14)

**Disability.** DCA follows the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which Australia is a signatory. According to the convention, “persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.

**LGBTIQ+.** We are intentional with our use of language and use the acronym LGBTIQ+ where it applies to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/gender diverse, intersex variation, and queer. The “+” recognises that LGBTIQ doesn’t describe a range of other terms that people identify with. We have used the term LGBTIQ+ in this document as it is widely used by organisations and in policy, but we recognise that this is not always the terminology preferred by individual communities. In particular, we recognise that many intersex people do not see themselves represented within the acronym, which refers mainly to sexuality and gender identity. Where possible, we now aim to collect data using the ABS [*Standard for sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation variables*](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/standard-sex-gender-variations-sex-characteristics-and-sexual-orientation-variables), which presents these variables as separate.

**Main English-speaking background**. DCA uses the demographic category MESB, which is derived from the ABS’s “Main English-speaking country of birth” category. The category includes the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland), Republic of Ireland, Aotearoa New Zealand, Canada, United States of America and South Africa. This list is not an attempt to classify countries based on whether or not English is the predominant or official language. It is a list of the main countries from which Australia receives, or has received, significant numbers of overseas settlers who are likely to speak English.**Marginalisation / marginalised**. We use this word when a group of people are systemically excluded from opportunities, resources, leadership and decision-making (i.e. they have less power). When people are excluded like this, it means they can’t have a say in or influence important matters that affect them – matters like employment, education, health, laws and government. People from marginalised backgrounds experience disadvantage that others do not. Being marginalised is not due to anything they have done (or not done) and is simply because of who they happen to be. It can play out at the interpersonal level (between people) and at the systemic level (in organisational policies, practices and structures).[[18]](#endnote-15) People can be both marginalised and privileged for many reasons – for example, men may experience privilege because of their gender but they may be marginalised if they have a disability.

**Multilingual.** This word refers to those who reported being able to have a conversation about a lot of everyday things in one or more languages other than English.

**Non-Christian religious background.** This term refers to those who identified as having a religious affiliation that was not a Christian denomination (e.g. Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism or Sikhism). The term does not include those who have no religious affiliation.

**Older employees.** This termrefers to people aged 55+. DCA takes this approach as research by the Australian Human Rights Commission[[19]](#endnote-16) shows that age discrimination is most prevalent in the 55–64 age group.

**Privilege**. People who have privilege experience advantages that others do not. People who are privileged did not earn their privilege; it is simply because of who they happen to be. Privilege can play out at the interpersonal level (between people) and at the systemic level (in organisational policies, practices and structures).[[20]](#endnote-17) People can be both privileged and marginalised for many reasons – for example, white people experience privilege because of their race but they may be marginalised because of their gender.

**Systemic barriers.** Systemic barriers are the unfair organisational policies, procedures and practices that discriminate, exclude or disadvantage marginalised people, hindering their development, progression and retention in an organisation. They can be subtle because they are built into organisations in ways we often take for granted.

**Younger employees.** This term refers to people aged under 30. Our definition aligns with the approach taken by the International Labour Organization, who describe young employees as those aged 15 to 29.

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