DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA

Inclusive Employer Index Year-On-Year Report: 2021–2025

SSSDLN

Contents

About DCA....3
Message From Our CEO....4
A Note on Language....5
What is the Inclusive Employer Index?....7
What is D&I?....8
Snapshot: Diversity in Your Sample....12
How Inclusive Are You?....13
Your Case For Inclusion....17
What is the State Of Exclusion?....24
Where to Go From Here....29
DCA Resources to Access....31
Inclusive Employer Index Methodology....32
Glossary of Terms....33

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

About DCA

Diversity Council Australia (DCA) is the independent not-for-profit peak body leading diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We provide unique research, inspiring events and programs, curated resources and expert advice across all diversity dimensions to a community of member organisations.

We work under these guiding principles:

- Our belief is that diversity and inclusion is good for people and business.
- Our vision is to create a more diverse and inclusive Australia.
- Our mission is to encourage and enable Australian organisations to create diverse and inclusive workplaces.

DCA works in partnership with members to generate ground-breaking, 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.

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

Message From Our CEO

Thank you for participating in Diversity Council Australia's Inclusive Employers Index. We're delighted to share this report with you, detailing the state of diversity and inclusion in your organisation.

The Index allows you to map and track the progress of your organisation's D&I efforts, benchmarked against the Australian workforce and leaders in this space.

It is an opportunity to reflect on your achievements and identify ways to do even better.

We hope the insights you gain from your report and your dashboard will support your organisation's journey and help make Australian workplaces as diverse and inclusive as they can be.

Lisa Annese

Chief Executive Officer, Diversity Council Australia

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

A Note on Language

Language is a powerful tool for building inclusion (or exclusion) at work. The way we speak to each other creates 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.

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.

Diversity of Terms. We recognise that there is no single term 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.

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. For starters, 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. However, we do use it occasionally in this report. Even though we recognise that neither sex nor gender 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 by using the term 'people with disability' but recognise that many people with disability prefer identity-first language (i.e. a disabled person). We also acknowledge that whenever we do not disaggregate the term, we do not reflect the diversity in disabilities and the differences that has on the experiences of people. Furthermore, some specific communities may not define themselves as disabled at all (i.e. Autistic and Deaf communities) but are still considered as such in policy language.

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

A Note on Language

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. 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.

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 continuing to learn from people with lived experience.

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

What is the Inclusive Employer Index?

Diversity Council Australia (DCA) has been tracking the state of inclusion in the Australian workforce and DCA members since 2017 through our Inclusive Employers Index. Now in its fifth iteration, we have again partnered with Cultural Infusion to enable participating organisations to:

1. Measure their progress over time in creating diverse and inclusive workplaces
2. Benchmark their D&I results against the Australian workforce and other participating DCA members

Our aspiration is to:

- encourage Australian organisations to achieve inclusion in their workplaces
- encourage Australians to consider workplace inclusion for a broad set of workers – that is, not just workplace inclusion for men and women (most commonly considered by employers) but also by age, cultural background, caring responsibilities, disability status, Indigeneity, sexual orientation and gender identity, and more.

Who is surveyed?

As part of this project, DCA surveyed:

- A nationally representative sample of 3000 Australian workers about their inclusion experiences and used the survey findings to create a National Index benchmark.
- 1070 respondents from the space, spatial and surveying industry participated in the survey in 2021-2022.
- 984 respondents from the space, spatial and surveying industry participated in the survey in 2024-2025.

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

What is D&I?

What is Diversity?

Diversity is the mix of people in your organisation.

Diversity refers to all the ways in which we differ (e.g., Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, education, gender, profession).

What is Inclusion?

Inclusion is getting this mix to work.

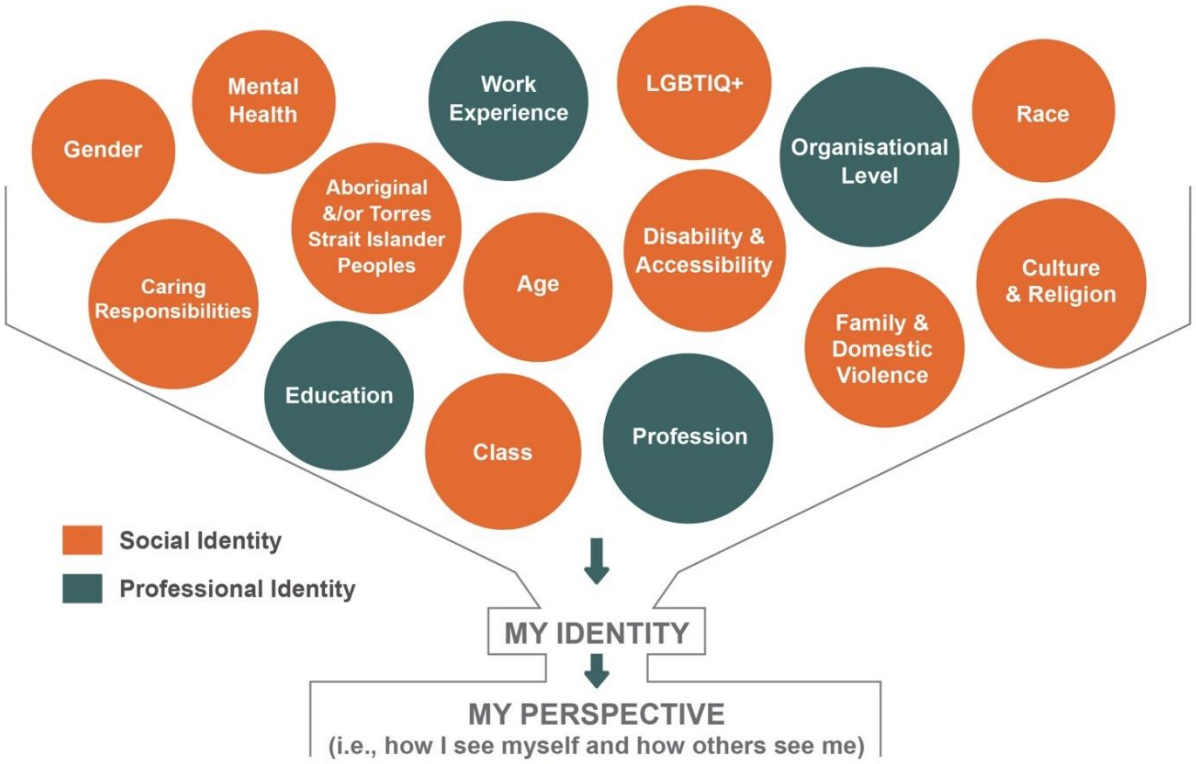
Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people are respected, connected, progressing and contributing to organisational success.

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

What is D&I?

What is Diversity?

Diversity refers to all the differences between people in how they identify in relation to Social Identity, that is their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, caring responsibilities, cultural background, disability, gender, faith/no religion, LGBTIQ+ status, and social class and their Professional Identity, that is their profession, education, work experiences, and organisational role.



© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

What is D&I?

What is Inclusion?

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

- **Respected.** Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people at work feel valued and respected for who they are.
- **Connected.** Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people feel connected to their co-workers and so have a sense of belonging.
- **Progressing.** Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people at work have opportunities to develop their career and progress.
- **Contributing.** Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people can contribute their talents and energies to the organisation.

REMEMBER that different people will experience inclusion differently. For example, being respected at work may look and feel different for a young Anglo-Celtic graduate and an older Chinese-Australian executive. It's important we all learn about each other's identities so we can understand how they influence our views and experiences of inclusion.

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

What is D&I?

What is an Inclusive Team?

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

- are respected and valued team members
- are able to be themselves
- can contribute and progress at work.

What is an Inclusive Manager?

An inclusive manager is someone who creates an inclusive team environment. For this research project, we defined an inclusive manager as someone who:

- values differences
- seeks out and uses a diversity of ideas
- treats everyone fairly
- deals with inappropriate behaviour.

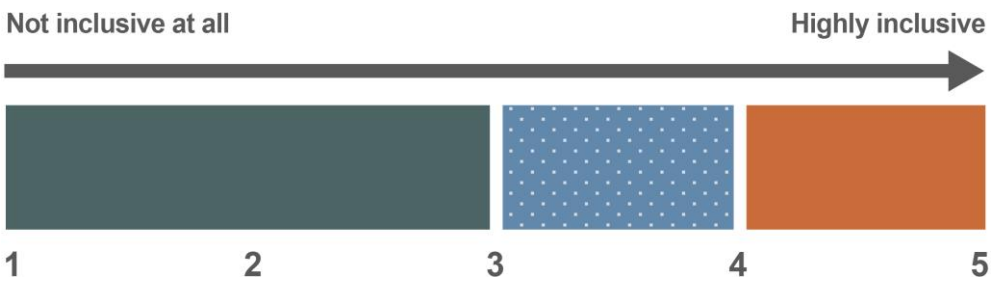
What is an Inclusive Organisation?

For this research project, an inclusive organisation is defined as one in which employees:

- trust they will be treated fairly
- feel diversity is valued and respected
- report that top leaders demonstrate a genuine, visible commitment to diversity and inclusion.

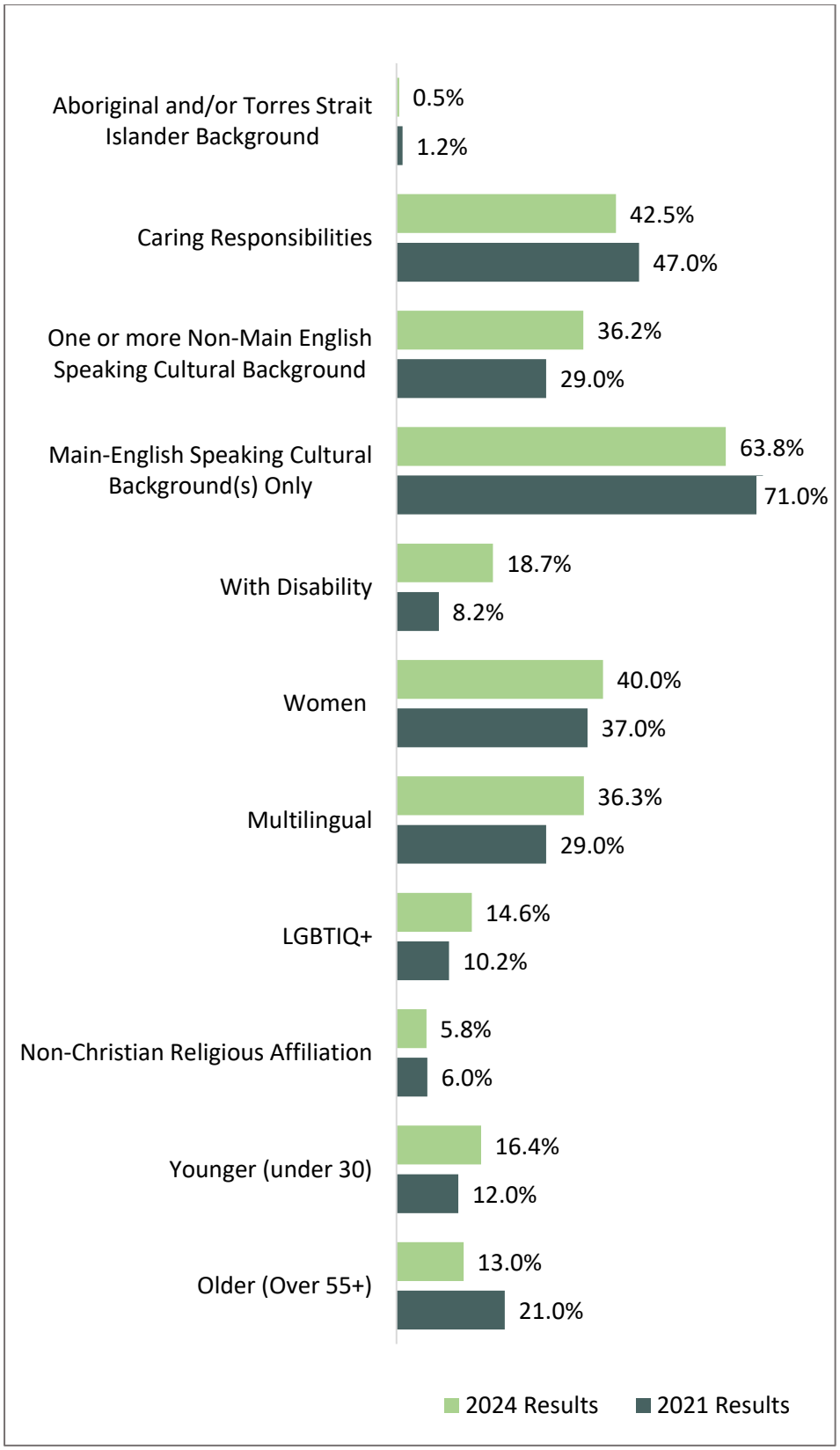
Measuring Inclusion

Respondents were asked a series of questions about how inclusive their team, immediate manager, and organisation was. Based on their answers, an average score out of 5 was calculated.



© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

SNAPSHOT:
Diversity in Your Sample



Changes (2021 to 2024)
-0.7%
-4.5%
+7.2%
-7.2%
+10.5%
+3.0%
+7.3%
+4.4%
-0.2%
+4.4%
-8.0%

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

How Inclusive Are You?

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

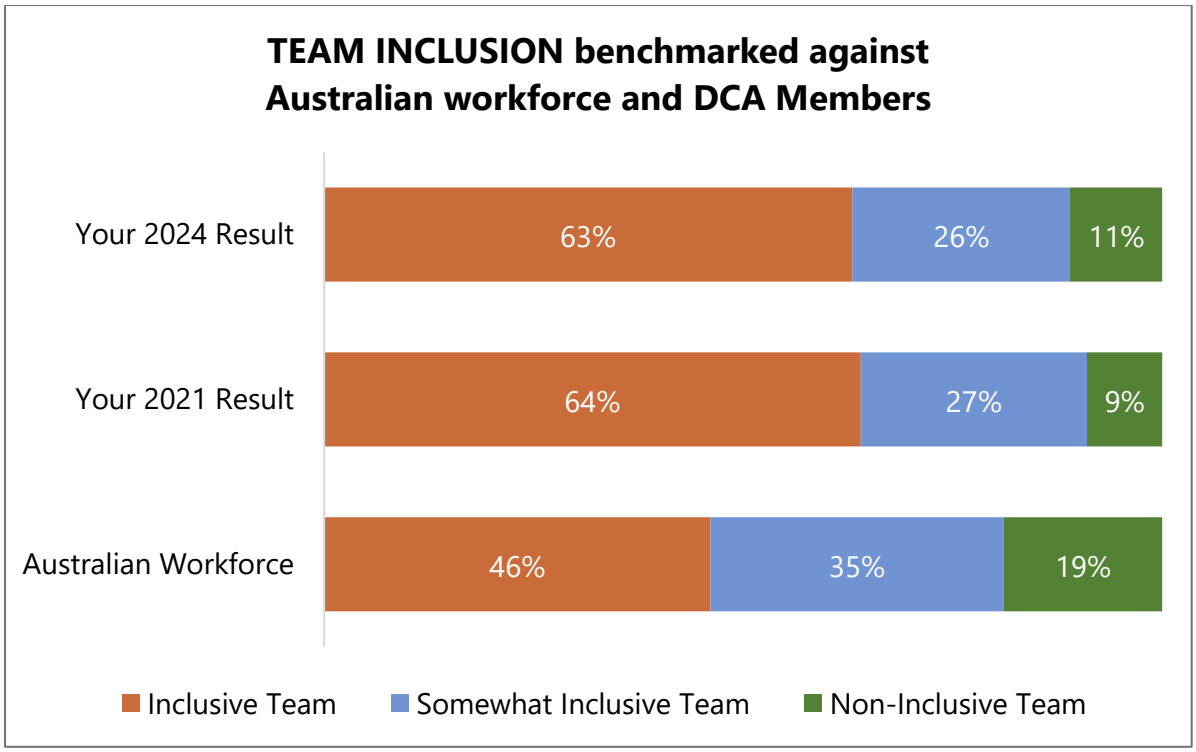
Team Inclusion

How inclusive are your TEAMS?

SSS industry employees answered survey questions regarding their immediate work team (defined as "the people you work with day-to-day to achieve common work goals"). Team inclusion was measured in 4 key domains most consistently referred to in the literature as representing workplace inclusion. These four domains were: respected, connected, contributing, and progressing (see page 9).

A total of 12 questions were used to measure employee experience in these 4 key inclusion domains. Their answers were used to calculate a score out of 5, where 1 = no inclusion and 5 = high inclusion. Employees were classified as being in an **"inclusive"** team when they reported a score of at least 4. Employees were classified as being in a **"somewhat-inclusive"** team if they reported a score between 3 and 4, while **"non-inclusive"** was assigned for those reporting a score of less than 3.

The chart below shows the results of our analysis, benchmarked 2024 results against 2021 results and the Australian Workforce.



Changes (2021 to 2024)	**-1.0%**	**-1.0%**	**+2.0%**

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

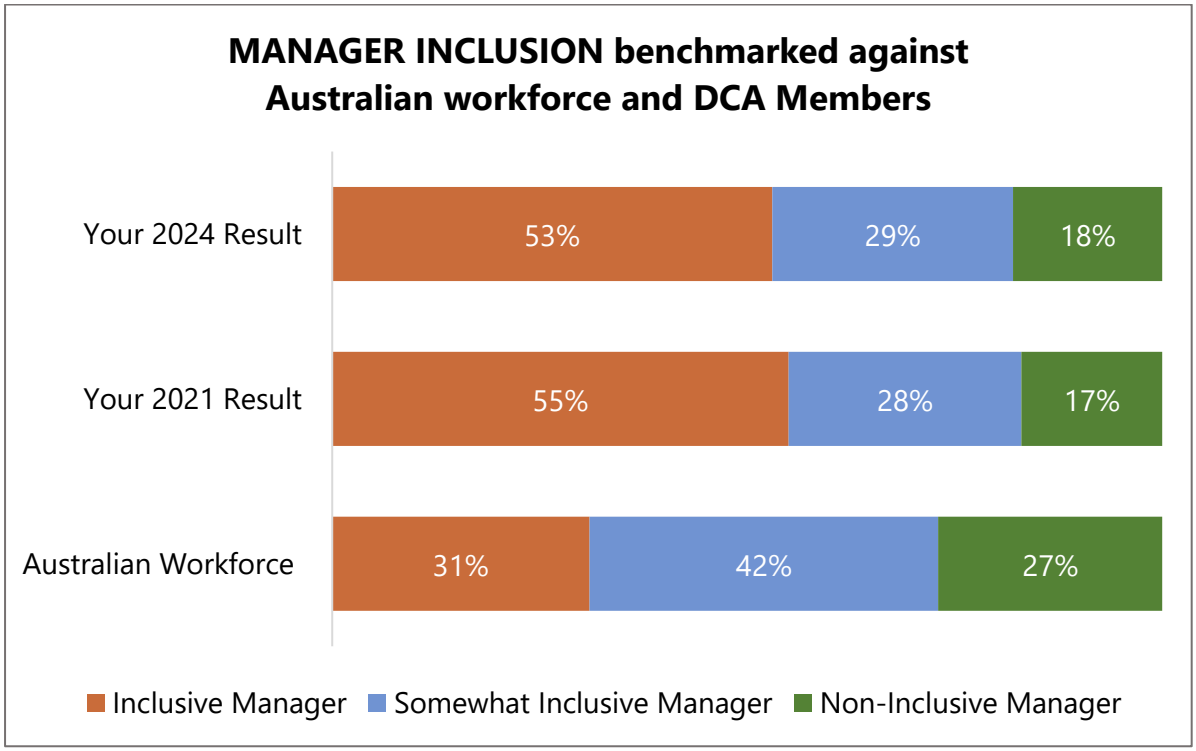
Inclusive Leadership

How inclusive are your MANAGERS?

SSS industry employees answered 5 questions related to inclusive leadership. Employees reported on how they felt their immediate manager values having a diverse and inclusive team, seeks out ideas from all employees, treats everyone fairly, addresses exclusive behaviour, and prefers people who are similar to them.

Each employee's responses were given a score out of 5 with 1= not inclusive and 5 = highly inclusive. We classified managers who got a score of at least 4 out of 5 as **"inclusive".** Managers with a score 3 to 4 were classed as **"somewhat inclusive"** and managers with a score less than 3 were deemed as **"non-inclusive"**.

The chart below shows the results of our analysis, benchmarked 2024 results against 2021 results and the Australian Workforce.



Changes (2021 to 2024)	**-2.0%**	**+1.0%**	**+1.0%**

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

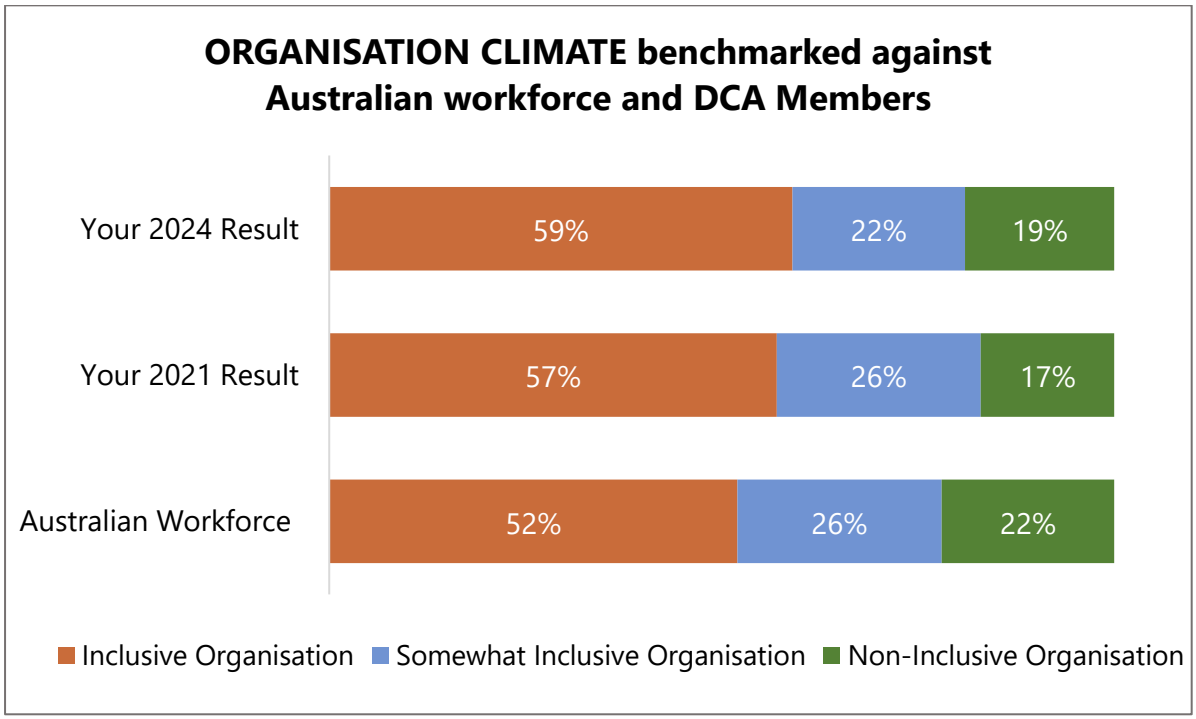
Organisational Climate

How inclusive is your ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE?

SSS industry employees answered 4 questions related to inclusive organisational climate. The questions were created to gauge how SSS industry employees viewed; what extent their organisation had an inclusive culture where diversity is valued, if they could trust their organisation to treat them fairly, and if their top leaders demonstrate visible commitment to diversity and inclusion.

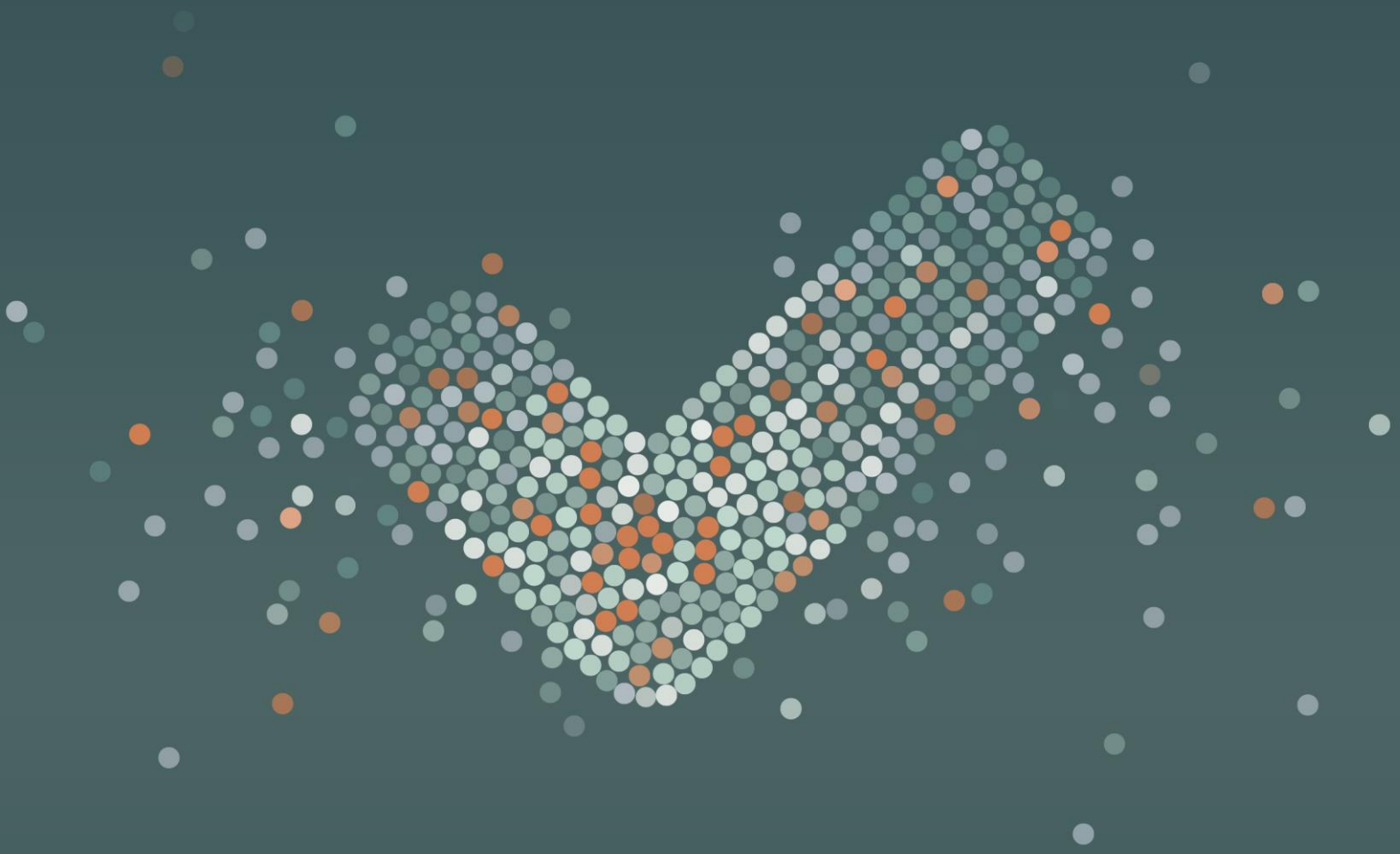
The responses were used to create a score out of 5 (where 1 = not inclusive and 5 = highly inclusive). Employees in **"inclusive"** organisational climates had given a score of at least 4. Employees in **"somewhat inclusive"** organisational climates were those who had a score of between 3 and 4, while employees in **"non-inclusive"** organisational climates were those with a composite score of less than 3.

The chart below shows the results of our analysis, benchmarked 2024 results against 2021 results and the Australian Workforce.



Changes (2021 to 2024)	**+2.0%**	**-4.0%**	**+2.0%**

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024



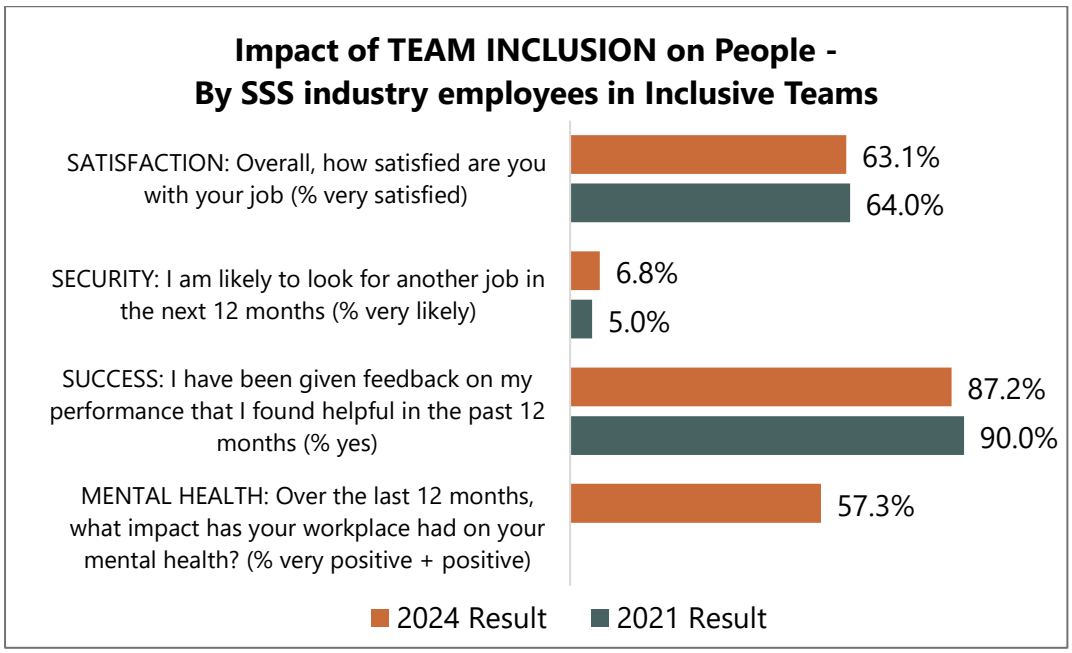
Your Case for Inclusion

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

The impact of inclusion on your people

Each Index we run continues to illustrate the positive impact inclusion has on employee wellbeing. For example, employees in **inclusive teams** consistently report being very satisfied with their job, wanting to stay in their organisation, regularly receiving useful feedback, and feeling work has a positive impact on their mental health.

A comparable trend is evident for inclusive managers and organisations (see next page).



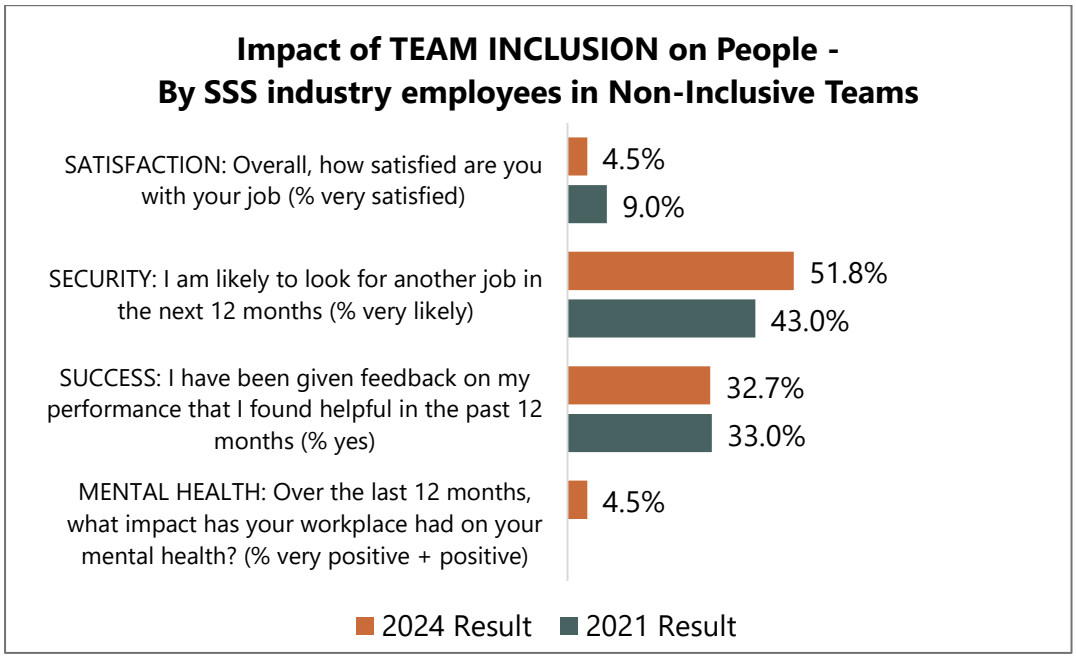
Changes
(2021 to 2024)

-0.9%

+1.8%

-2.8%

N/A
(no data in 2021)



-4.5%

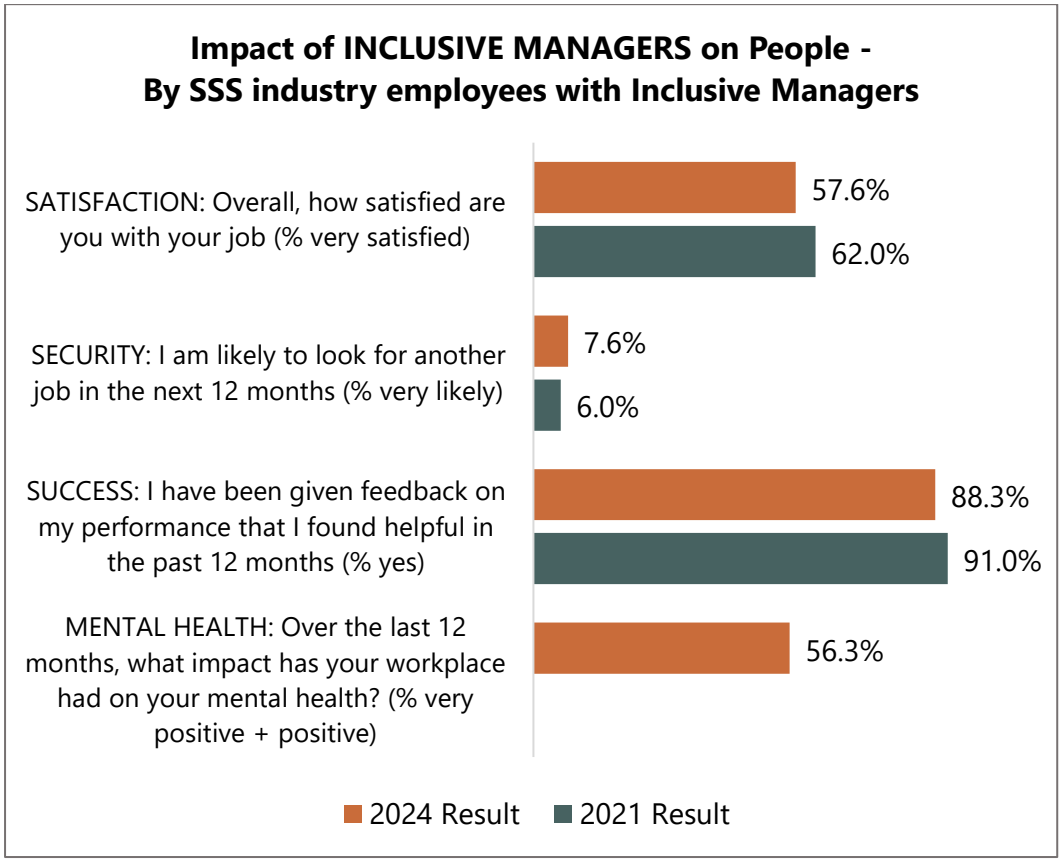
+8.8%

-0.3%

N/A
(no data in 2021)

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

Inclusion is Good for People



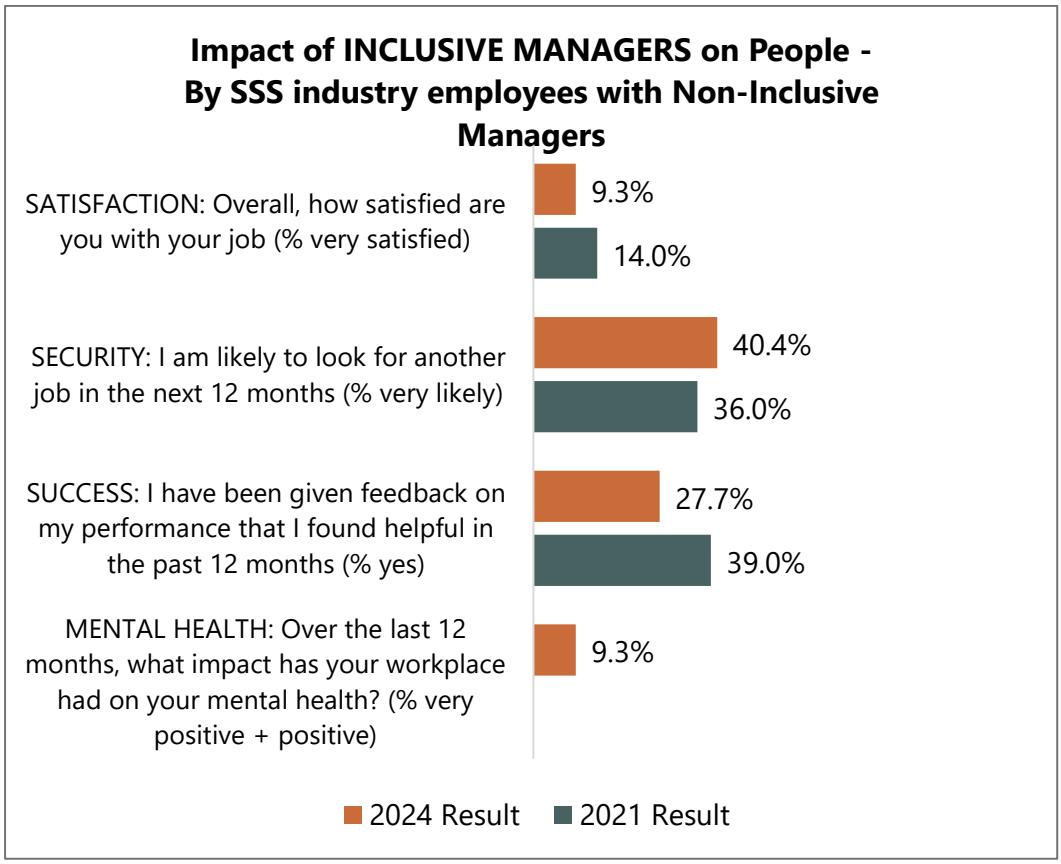
Changes
(2021 to 2024)

-4.4%

+1.6%

-2.7%

N/A
(no data in 2021)



-4.7%

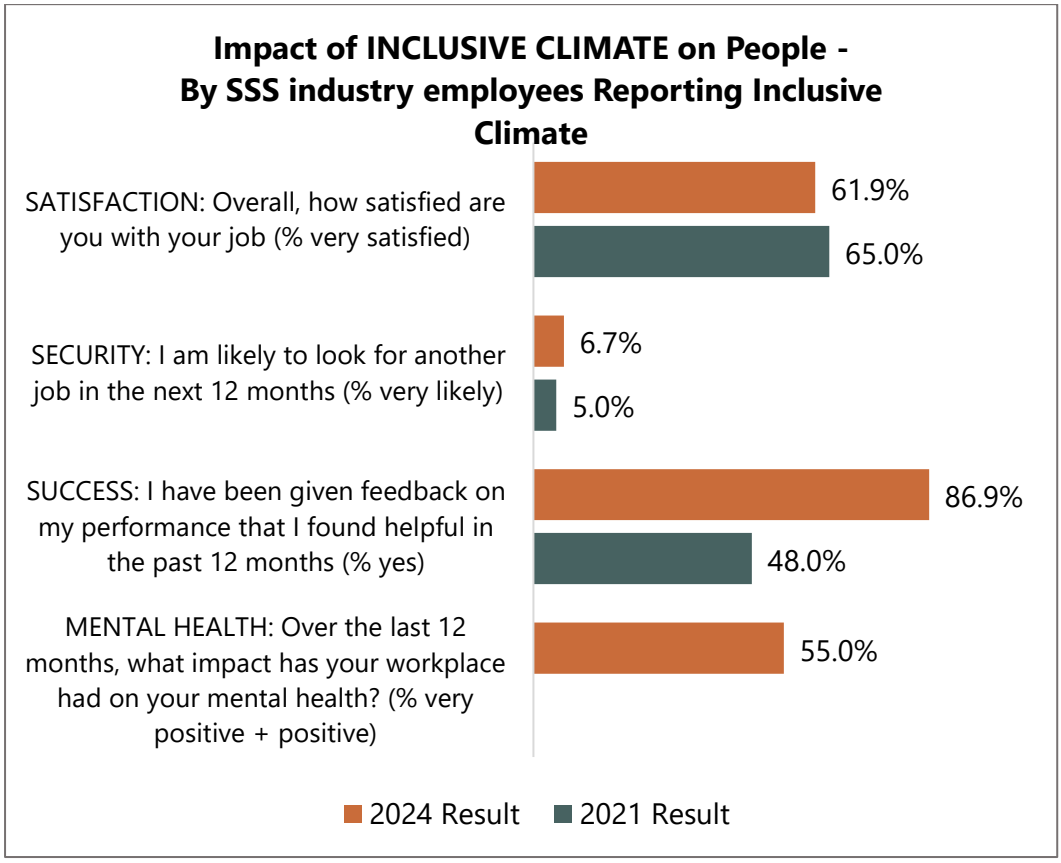
+4.4%

-11.3%

N/A
(no data in 2021)

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

Inclusion is Good for People



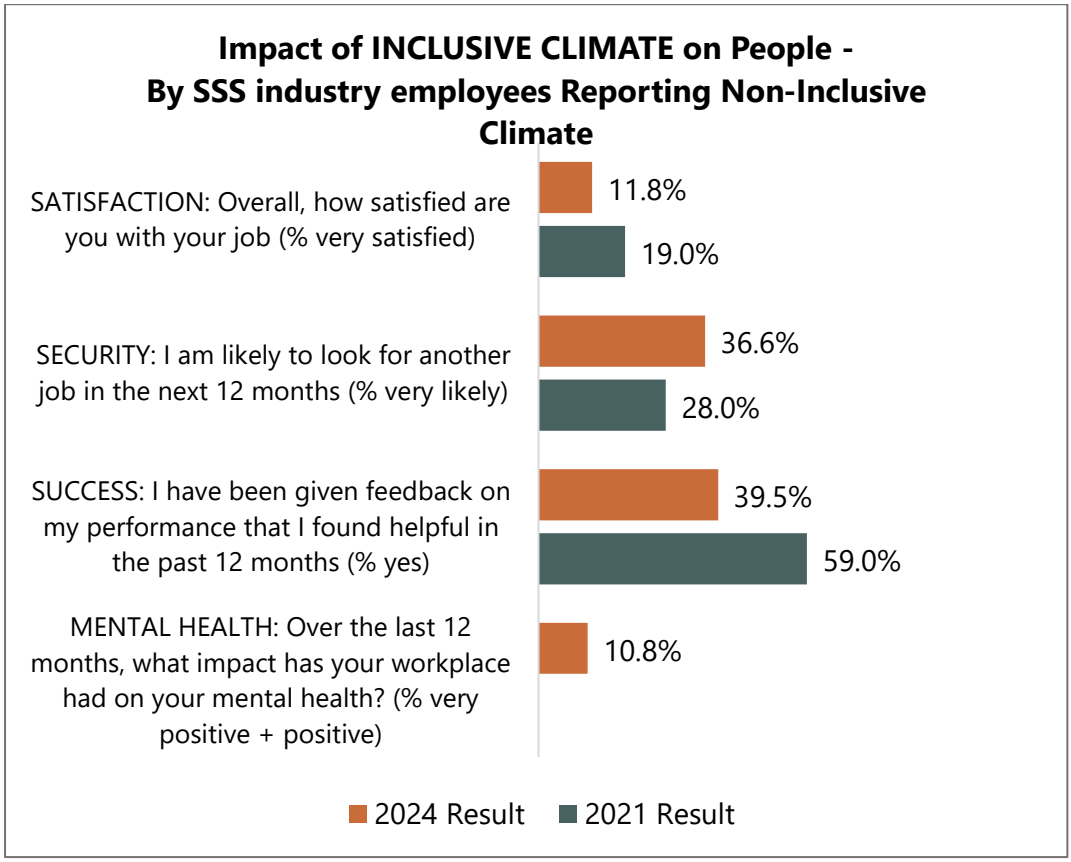
Changes
(2021 to 2024)

-3.1%

+1.7%

+38.9%

N/A
(no data in 2021)



-7.2%

+8.6%

-19.5%

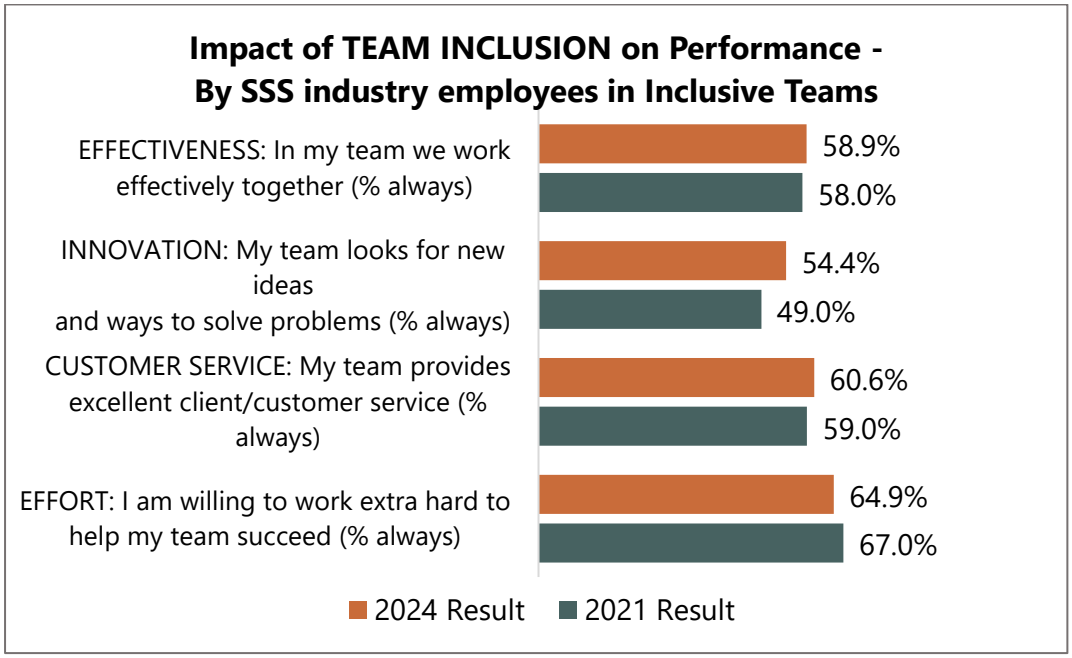
N/A
(no data in 2021)

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

The impact of inclusion on your team performance

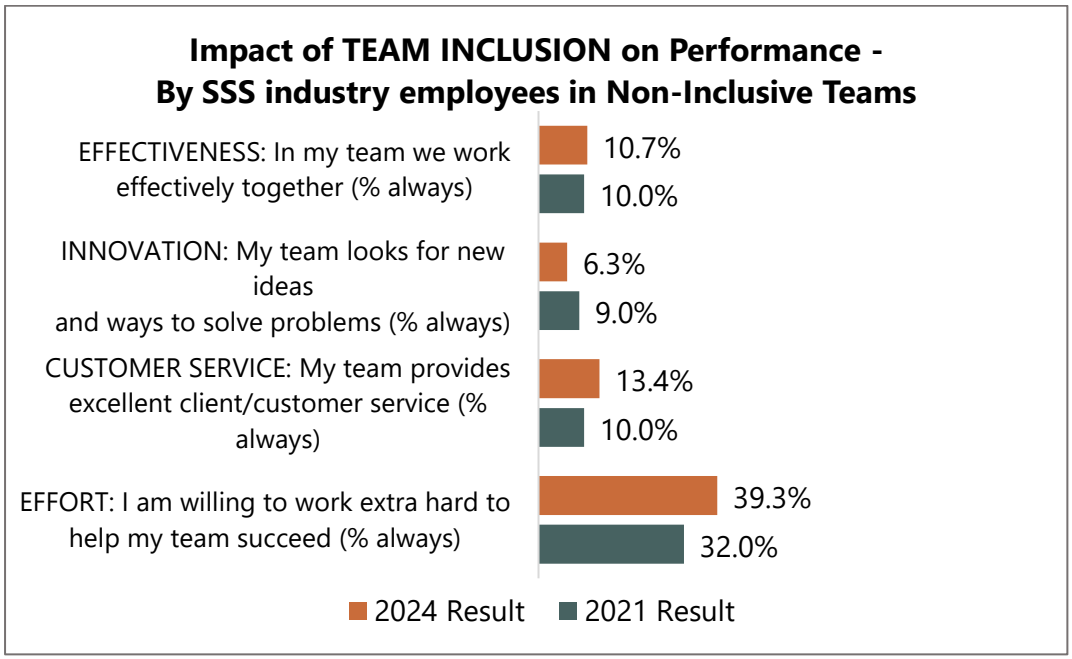
Inclusion is much more than a 'feel good' exercise – it can fuel performance too. For example, workers in **inclusive teams** consistently report their teams are highly effective, innovative, provide excellent customer/client service, and work extra hard.

A comparable trend is evident for inclusive managers and organisations (see next page).



Changes
(2021 to 2024)

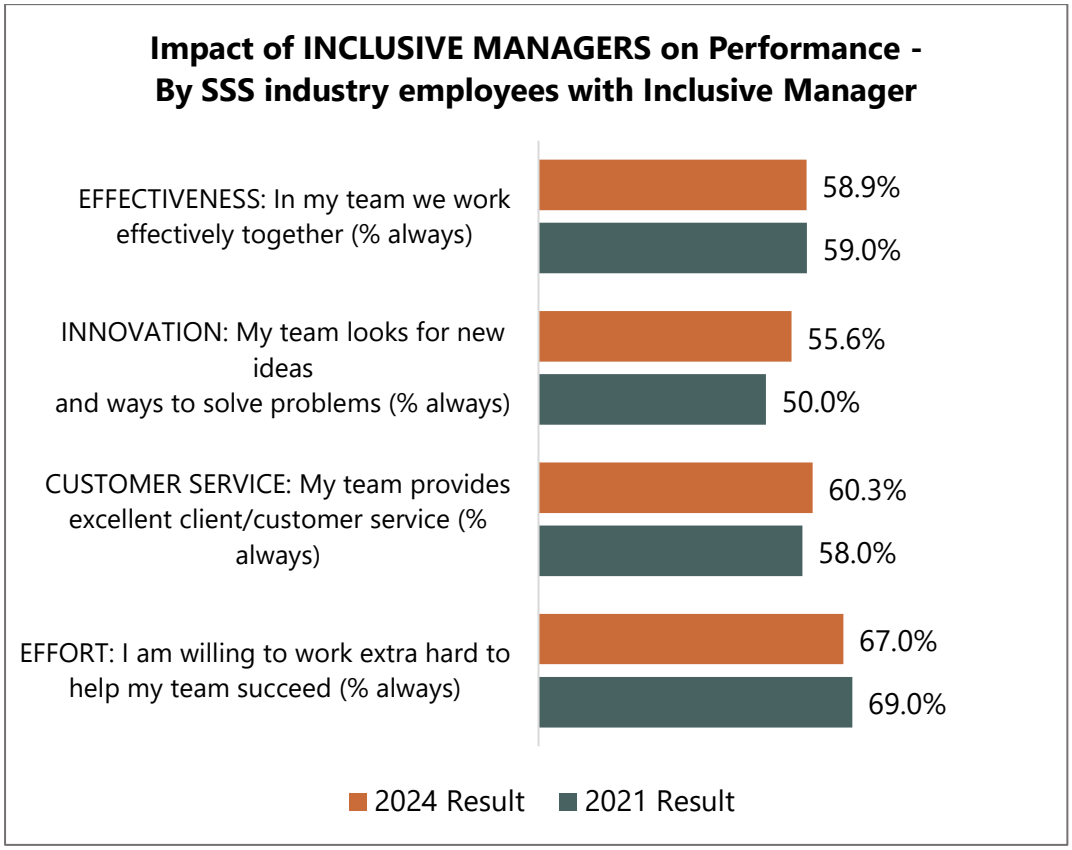
+0.9%
+5.4%
+1.6%
-2.1%



+0.7%
-2.7%
+3.4%
+7.3%

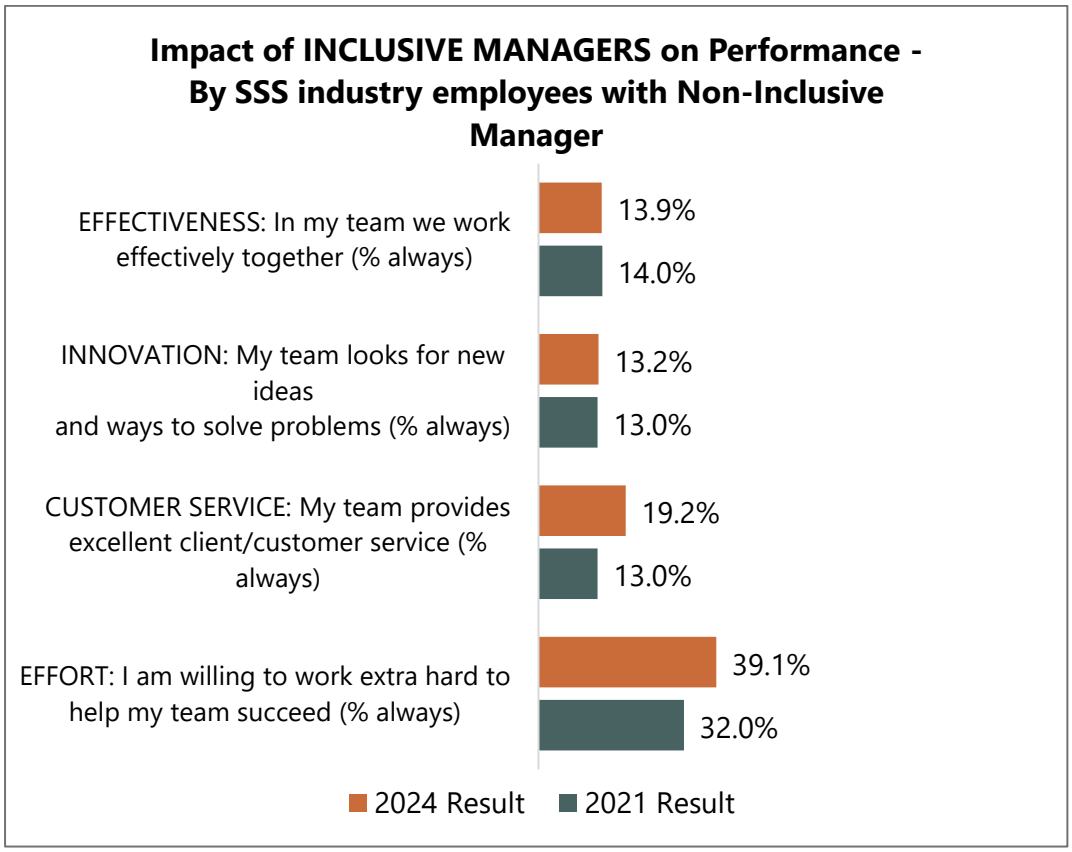
© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

Inclusion is Good for Business



Changes
(2021 to 2024)

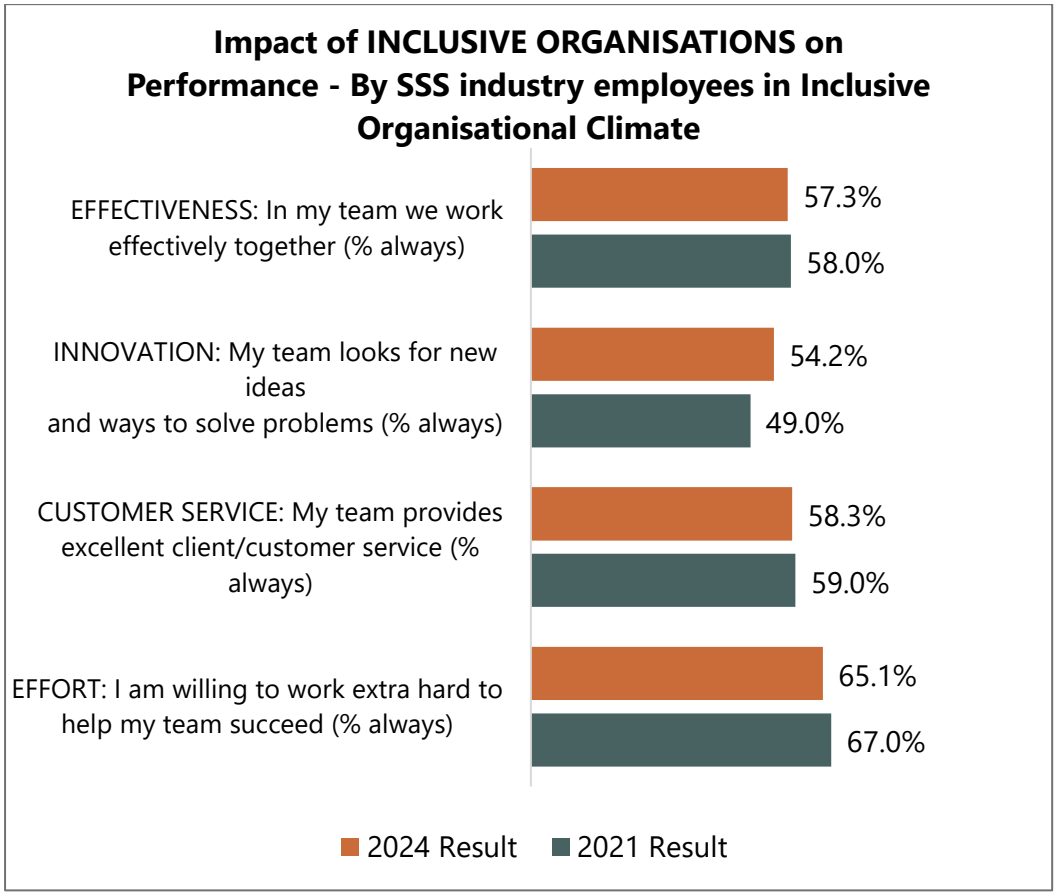
-0.1%
+5.6%
+2.3%
-2.0%

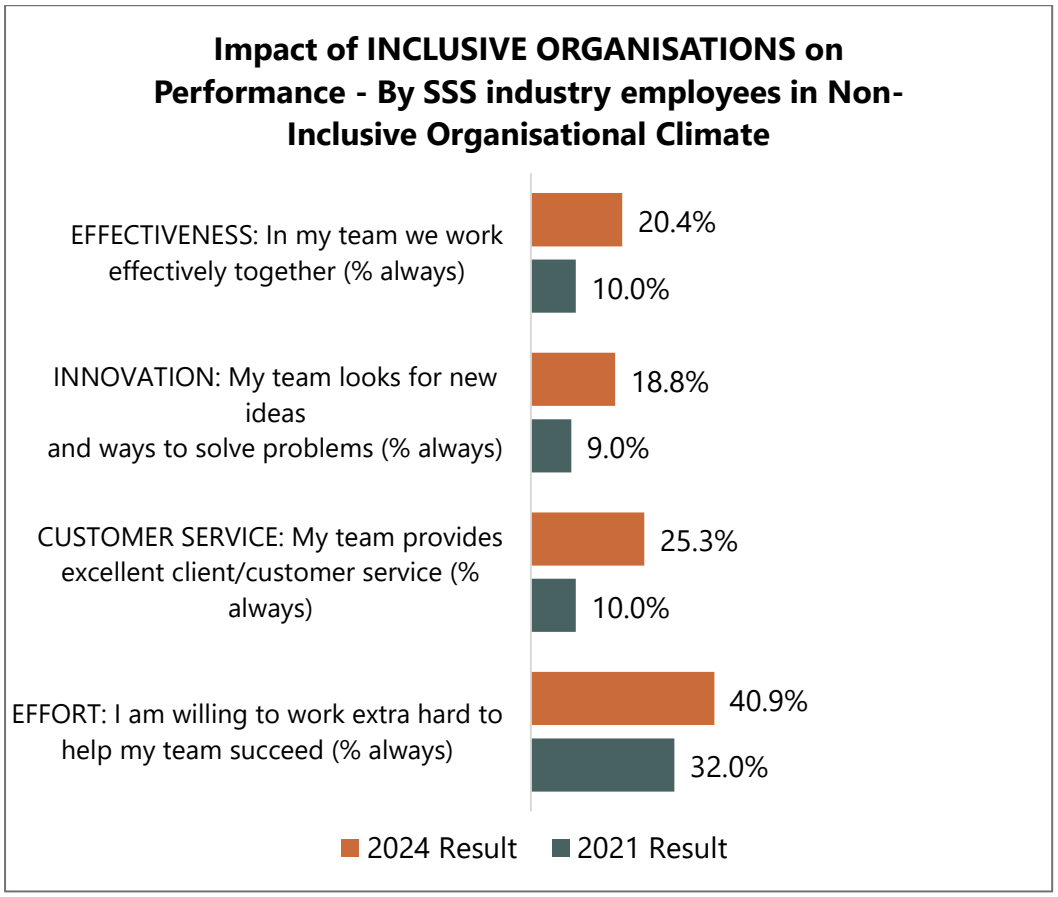


-0.1%
+0.2%
+6.2%
+7.1%

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

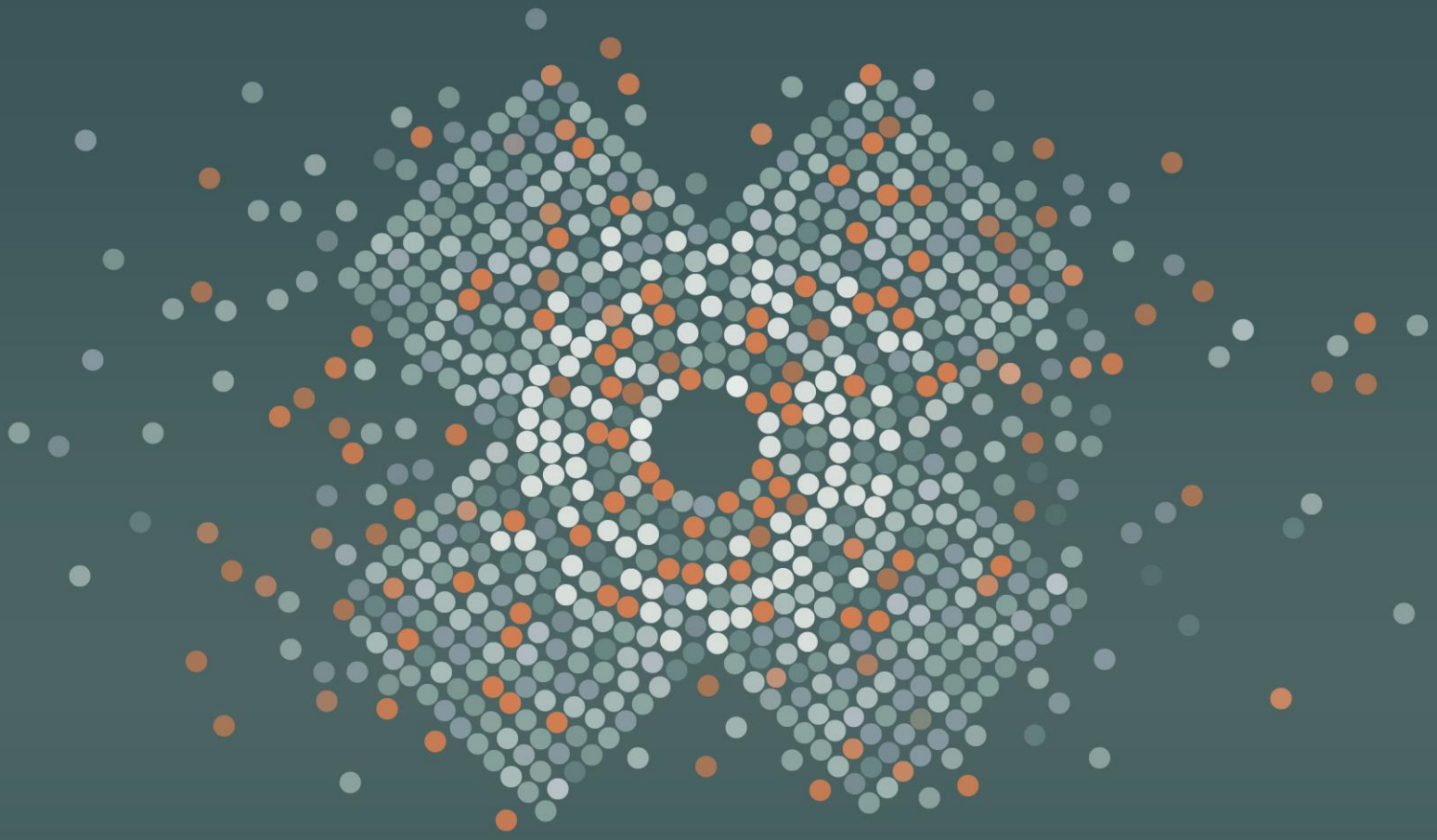
Inclusion is Good for Business





Changes (2021 to 2024)
-0.7%
+5.2%
-0.7%
-1.9%
+10.4%
+9.8%
+15.3%
+8.9%

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024



What is The State of Exclusion?

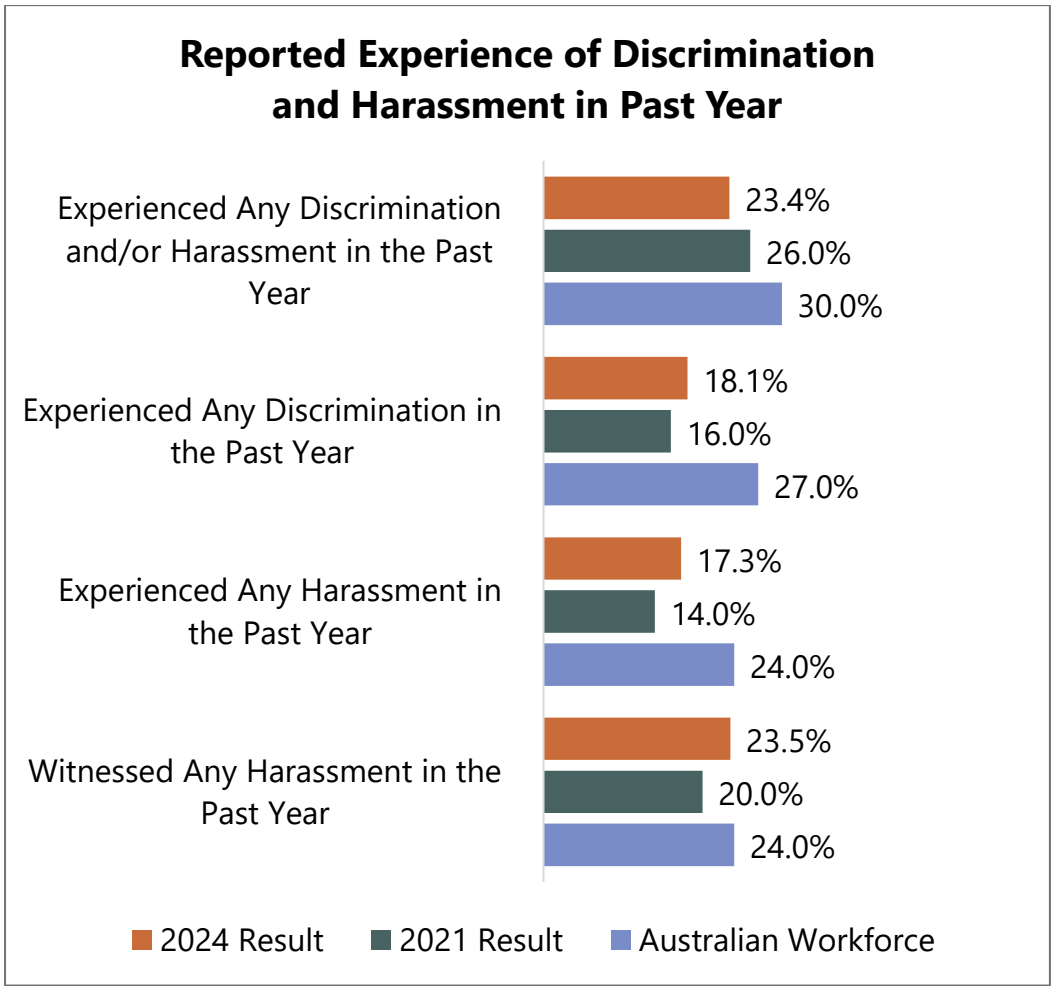
© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

How Common is Discrimination and Harassment?

SSS industry employees were asked about their personal experience with discrimination, harassment, and witnessing harassment while at work.

- **Discrimination** was defined as unfair treatment because of a person's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, culture/ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity in the 12 months prior to taking the survey.
- **Harassment** was defined as unwelcome comments, slurs, jokes, images or physical touch based on a person's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, age, culture/ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity in the 12 months prior to taking the survey.

This chart shows how common reported experiences of discrimination and harassment in your organisation in 2024 are relative to the 2021 results and Australian Workforce.



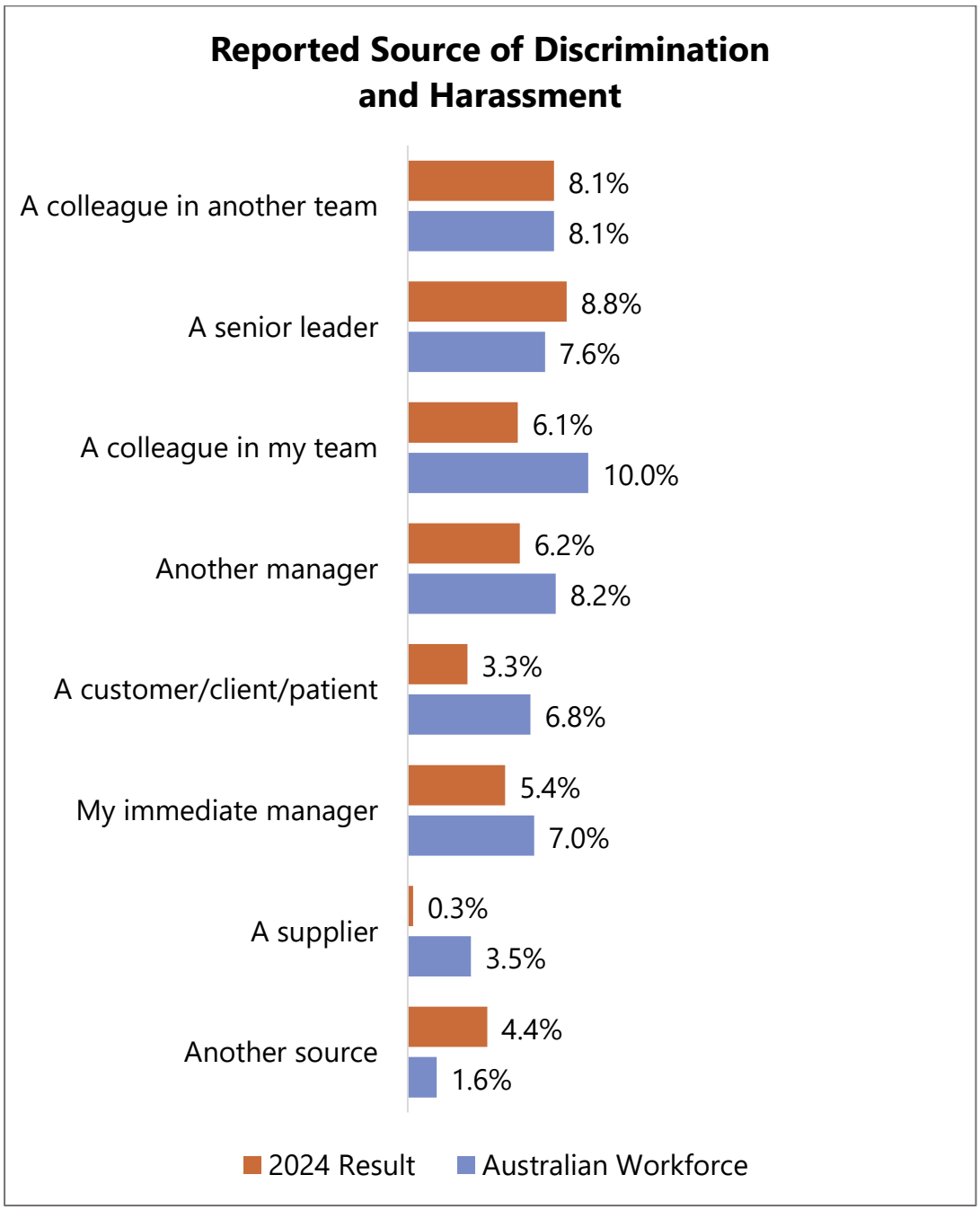
Changes (2021 to 2024)
-2.6%
+2.1%
+3.3%
+3.5%

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

Where is Exclusion Coming From?

What is the source of discrimination and harassment in your organisation?

For the first time, this year's Inclusive Employer Index asked SSS industry employees about the source of their personal experience with discrimination and harassment while at work. This chart shows from whom SSS industry employees experience discrimination and harassment in the workplace.



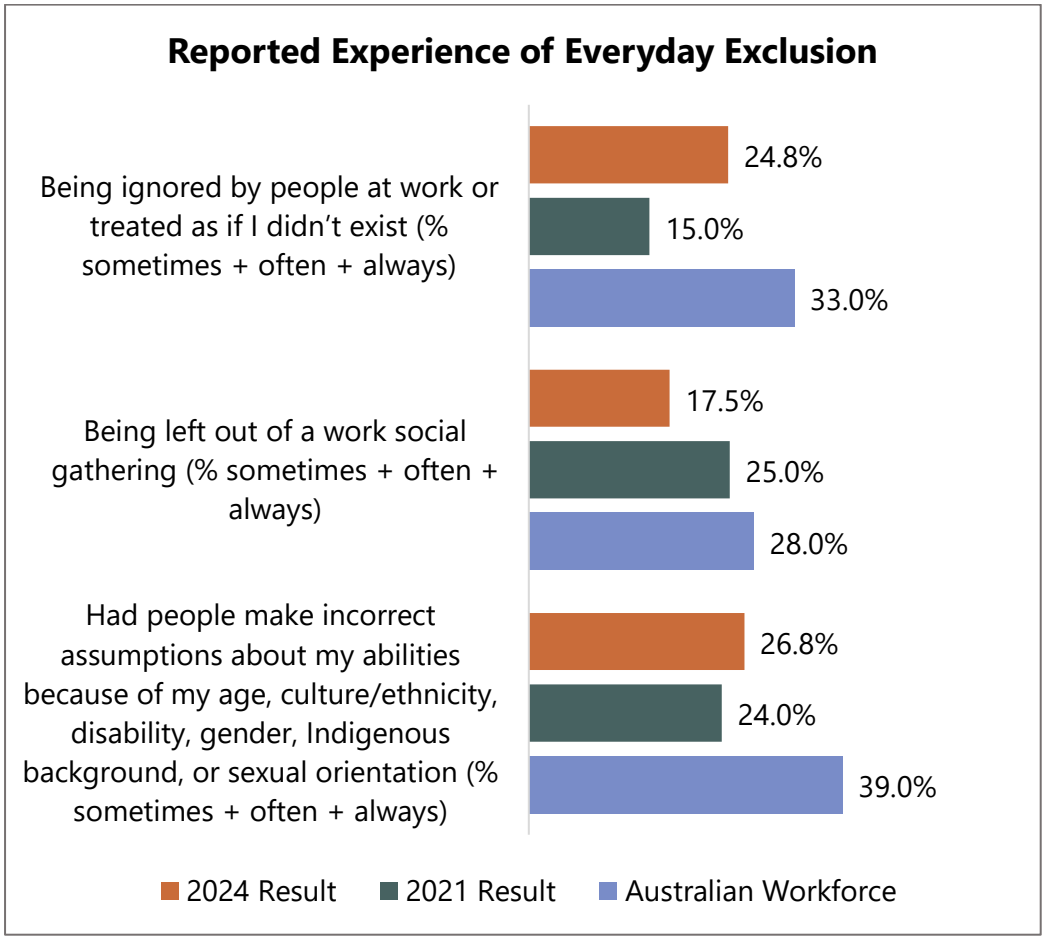
Changes (2021 to 2024)
N/A (no data in 2021)
N/A (no data in 2021)
N/A (no data in 2021)
N/A (no data in 2021)
N/A (no data in 2021)
N/A (no data in 2021)
N/A (no data in 2021)
N/A (no data in 2021)

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

How Common is Everyday Exclusion?

Exclusion does not only have to look like personal experience of discrimination or harassment in the workplace – more indirect behaviours can be just as exclusionary. Everyday exclusion tends to be more subtle and common than discrimination and harassment, including behaviours like being ignored or treated as if you do not exist, being left out of work social gatherings, and having people make assumptions about your abilities based on your identity.

This chart shows the proportion of employees in your organisation reporting they sometimes, often or always experience everyday exclusionary behaviours in 2024, relative to the 2021 results and Australian Workforce.



Changes
(2021 to 2024)

+9.8%

-7.5%

+2.8%

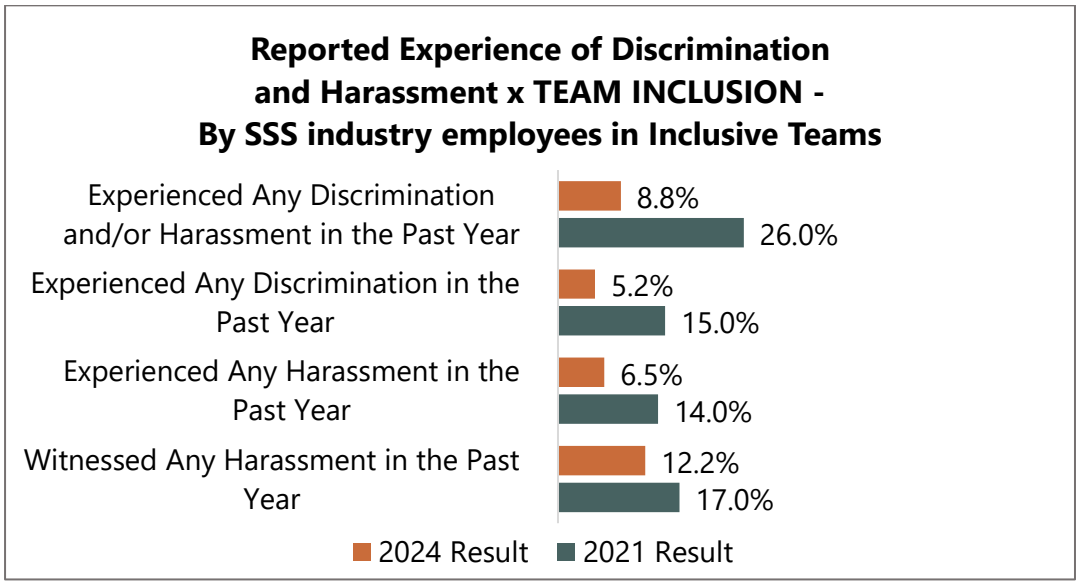
© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

Does Inclusion Reduce Exclusion?

Inclusion isn't just good for boosting wellbeing and performance – it also reduces the risk of discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

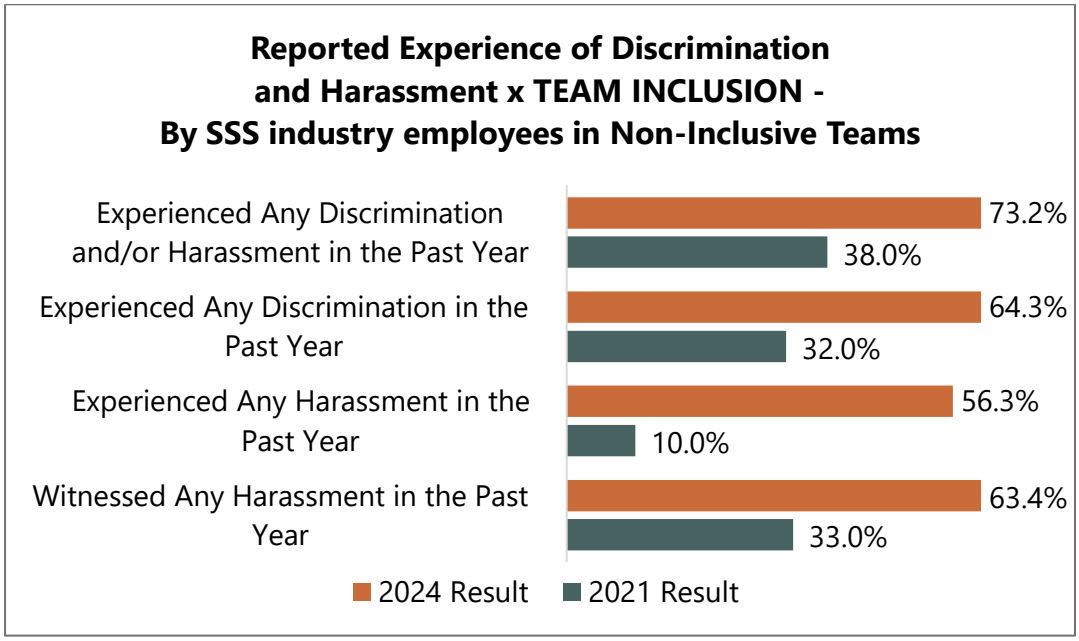
In contrast, working in non-inclusive teams, with non-inclusive managers, and in non-inclusive organisations significantly increases your risk of experiencing discrimination and/or harassment while at work. For employees, this can harm wellbeing and mental health. For organisations, this can risk costly lawsuits and loss of organisational reputation.

The following chart shows the impact of team inclusion on your respondent's reported experience with discrimination, harassment, and witnessing harassment.



Changes
(2021 to 2024)

-17.2%
-9.8%
-7.5%
-4.8%



+35.2%
+32.3%
+46.3%
+30.4%

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

Where to Go From Here

Where to go after reading this report

1. **Go through the data on your dashboard to take a deeper dive into your results.** The dashboard shows your results across all questions and at different levels of analysis, including:
    - your diversity profile, benchmarked against the Australian workforce
    - how your employees responded to each inclusion question, benchmarked against the Australian workforce and DCA members
    - how your employees responded to each inclusion question based on their diversity (i.e. based on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, caring status, cultural background, disability, gender, multilingual ability, LGBTIQ+ identity, and religious affiliation).

Use the "How to Explore the Data on Your Dashboard" report for more guidance on making the most of exploring your data.

2. **Report back some of your findings to your employees, executive teams, and your Board.** People can be more engaged with future D&I surveys and initiatives when some results are reported back to them. 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
    - sharing a 2-page infographic celebrating the diversity of the workforce, along with inclusion areas you are doing well and inclusion areas of opportunity
    - sharing results and this PDF report with D&I Committees, Employee Resource Groups and networks.

3. **Determine areas for D&I focus.** After going through your data, determine the areas you need to focus D&I attention on. Pending on your results, this can include:
    - focusing on general inclusion areas (e.g. increasing workforce diversity to reflect the Australian workforce, building inclusive leadership capabilities, building employee awareness on D&I action, etc.)
    - focusing on specific diversity areas (e.g. focusing on building disability inclusion if your results show low inclusion for employees with disability).

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

Where to go From Here

4. **Access DCA resources to guide your D&I work.** DCA has a range of resources available to guide the D&I initiatives and focus areas identified in your Index results. This includes our:
    - research and guides (see the next page for examples of research you might access following exploring your data).
    - catalogue of past and upcoming events covering a wide range of D&I areas
    - dedicated resources across several diversity topics
    - perspective pieces, including blog posts, opinion pieces, case studies and more
    - podcast, The Art of Inclusion.

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

DCA Resources to Access

DCA research reports

- Change At Work: Designing Diversity and Inclusion Differently to Achieve Organisational Change
- Inclusive Recruitment: How to Tap into Australia's Overlooked and Underleveraged Talent
- Building Inclusion: An Evidence-Based Model of Inclusive Leadership
- Gari Yala (Speak the Truth): Centring the Work Experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Australians
- Culturally and Racially Marginalised Women in Leadership: A Framework For (Intersectional) Organisational Action
- Racism at Work: How Organisations Can Stand Up to and End Workplace Racism
- Cracking the Cultural Ceiling
- Cracking the Glass-Cultural Ceiling: Future Proofing Your Business in the 21st Century
- Creating Inclusive Multi-Faith Workplaces
- Future-Flex: Mainstreaming Flexibility by Team Design
- Men Make a Difference: Engaging Men on Gender Equality
- WordsAtWork – Building Inclusion Through the Power of Language
- Out At Work: From Prejudice to Pride
- Myth Busting Sexual Harassment at Work
- DCA Inclusion@Work Index: Mapping the State of Inclusion and Mental Health in the Australian Workforce

Other resources

- See our section of D&I Topics for information on key definitions, key issues, and leading practice principles.
- See our catalogue of upcoming and past D&I events here.
- See our News & Media section for our blog, opinion pieces, Art of Inclusion podcast and more.

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

Inclusive Employer Index Methodology

The 2024–2025 Inclusive Employer Index was developed over 7 key stages:

1. **Review of literature.** DCA conducted an in-depth review of industry and academic research in 2016 and 2017, investigating how to define and measure workplace inclusion.
2. **Development of 2017–2018 Draft Survey.** DCA enlisted the feedback of an Expert Panel consisting of academic and practitioner members to inform development of a first draft of the Index survey based on the literature review. The first draft contained 70 questions with questions focusing on measuring team inclusion team and individual outcomes and diversity-related demographics.
3. **Pilot of 2017–2018 Draft Survey.** The draft survey was piloted in a DCA member organisation. Statistical analysis of the pilot data set was conducted to assist with reducing the survey length and confirming questions grouped together across inclusion dimensions.
4. **Finalisation of 2017–2018 Survey.** Pilot findings were used to finalise a 50-question survey. Survey questions were chosen based on their ability to generate findings academically rigorous, be of practical use to organisations, and to cover key inclusion-related themes.
5. **Review of 2019–2020 Survey.** The Expert Panel was once again consulted to seek feedback, along with DCA members that had participated in the 2017 Index. Statistical analyses were conducted to reduce the survey in some areas to ensure it did not adversely affect its ability to measure inclusion.
6. **Review of 2021–2022 Survey.** To help track results against the prior 2 Indexes, changes to the 2021–2022 survey were minimal, involving the removal of 4 survey questions where prior results had demonstrated limitations in the ability to capture meaningful data.
7. **Review of 2023–2024 Survey.** Changes to the 2023-2024 Index were again minimal, including removing one everyday exclusion question and positively wording 3 previously negatively worded questions. Two questions were also added: one on source of discrimination/harassment, and one on impact of work on mental health.

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

Glossary of Terms

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Refers to those who selected having an Aboriginal background, Torres Strait Islander background, or both an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

Age. 'Younger' refers to those aged 29 and below. 'Mid' refers to those aged between 30 and 54 years of age. 'Older' refers to those aged 55 years and above.

Australian Workforce Benchmark. Also referred to as the "National Index". A national average benchmark derived from a nationally representative survey of 3,000 Australian workers conducted in May 2023.

Caring responsibilities. Those with caring responsibilities reported caring for a child or children and/or adult(s) in the two weeks leading up to taking the survey.

DCA Member Benchmark. A benchmark derived from all employees of participating DCA members taking the survey in 2023.

Discrimination. Defined as unfair treatment because of a person's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, culture/ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity in the 12 months prior to taking the survey.

Disability. Refers to those who self-reported an impairment or condition that impacts daily activities, communication and/or mobility, and has lasted or is likely to last 6 months or more.

Flexible Workers. Refers to those who selected they had accessed one or more forms of flexible work options in the 12 months prior to taking the survey.

Harassment. Defined as unwelcome comments, slurs, jokes, images or physical touch based on a person's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, age, culture/ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity in the 12 months prior to taking the survey.

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

Glossary of Terms

LGBTIQ+. We use the acronym LGBTIQ+ – 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.

Main English-Speaking Background (MESB). Derived from the ABS's "Main English-Speaking Country of Birth" (MESC) category, which includes the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland), Republic of Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, United States of America, and South Africa. The list of main English-speaking countries (MESC) is not an attempt to classify countries on the basis of whether or not English is the predominant or official language of each country. 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. See DCA's Counting Culture report for more information on this.

MESB, Non-MESB, Both. 'MESB' refers to those who selected main-English speaking backgrounds only. 'Non-MESB' refers to those who selected non-main-English speaking backgrounds only. 'Both' refers to those who selected a main-English speaking background and a non-main-English speaking background.

Multilingual. 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. Refers to those who identified as having a religious affiliation that was not a Christian denomination (e.g., Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism). Non-Christian religious background does not include those who indicated they have no religious affiliation.

© DIVERSITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA 2024

© 2024 Diversity Council Australia Ltd

Hub Customs House, Level 3 & 4, Alfred Street Sydney NSW 2000

Phone: (02) 8014 4300 Email: admin@dca.org.au

www.dca.org.au