

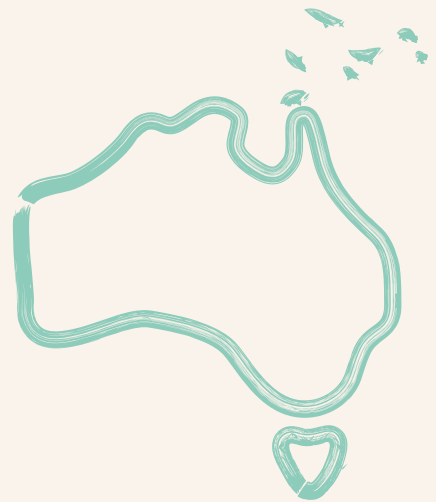
# Intersectionality in the workplace

A starter kit for flexible work and  
talent management



**Our  
Watch**

Preventing violence  
against women



## Acknowledgement of Country

Our Watch acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay respects to Elders past and present and recognise the continuing connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to land, culture, knowledge, and language for over 65,000 years.

As a non-Aboriginal organisation, Our Watch understands that violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is an issue for the whole community. As highlighted in Our Watch's national resource *Changing the picture*, the evidence clearly shows the intersection between racism, sexism, and violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Our Watch has an ongoing commitment to the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, who continue to suffer from violence at a significantly higher rate than non-Aboriginal women. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations who continue to lead the work of sharing knowledge with non-Indigenous people and relentlessly advocate for an equitable, violence-free future in Australia.

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# About this kit

**Creating equal, safe and respectful work environments is key to addressing gender inequality and stopping unwanted workplace behaviours, such as sexual harassment, before they start. In doing so, employers ensure compliance with legal and ethical obligations while contributing to a broader culture of equality and respect.**

The evidence from *[Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women](#)* highlights that while gender inequality drives sexual harassment and other unsafe workplace behaviours it is not the only factor. Gender inequality interacts with other forms and systems of discrimination based on age, race, disability, sexuality, religion and other aspects of a person's identity. This is the concept of intersectionality, and in the workplace it results in some groups being more likely to experience unsafe workplace practices.

*Intersectionality in the workplace: A starter kit for flexible work and talent management* is **a starting point for workplaces to promote inclusive gender equality as a key approach to fostering workplace equality and respect.** Some workplaces may already have diversity, equity and inclusion strategies or initiatives. This kit can strengthen and enhance diversity and inclusion efforts to create a more equitable and empowering workplace for all. While the content in this guide may apply to a range of roles across the workplace, **the primary audience is people and culture teams, diversity, equity and inclusion teams and managers.**



# Using this kit

## This kit provides:



Resources to build an understanding of intersectionality and its importance.



Tools to help you embed an intersectional approach into talent management and flexible work.

## We recommend the following steps:



Build your understanding of intersectionality and its importance.



Review your approach to workforce data collection, analysis and reporting.



Increase senior leadership's understanding of and support for intersectionality.



Use the tools provided to embed an intersectional lens into talent management and flexible work.



Establish and adopt key principles that will guide your work.

>> While you should be able to use this kit without external support, if you need assistance contact [equalityandrespect@ourwatch.org.au](mailto:equalityandrespect@ourwatch.org.au).



# Understand intersectionality and its importance

**In this kit, we focus on supporting workplaces to ensure that their talent management (recruitment and promotions) and flexible work approaches are intersectional.** Recruitment and promotion practices can inadvertently exclude or create barriers for some groups, particularly women. Applying an intersectional approach to these processes can identify and remove these barriers, enabling a workplace to tap into the entire talent pool.

Flexible work has emerged as a key strategy to attract and retain diverse talent as it demonstrates a workplace's willingness to be responsive to the needs of its employees. A one-size-fits-all flexible work policy can mean that, although a policy exists, it's not benefitting all employees. Workplaces there need to tailor flexible work to suit the diverse needs of their workforce. To be effective in applying an intersectional lens, it is important that workplaces first understand what intersectionality means and why it's important.

Evidence shows us that focusing on equity and inclusion leads to more productive and cohesive workplaces that are better positioned to navigate business challenges. Workplaces that are more diverse and inclusive rate highly on metrics related to decision-making, innovation, talent retention, governance and risk management. While equity and inclusion efforts are gaining momentum, a study by the Australian HR Institute<sup>1</sup> found that although many focus on women they do not recognise that not all women are the same. As a result, only some women benefit, and many are left behind.

Many workplaces seek to improve workplace equality with a sequential progression approach. While focusing on one dimension of identity at a time – first gender, then race, then disability, and so forth – may seem sensible and more manageable, it risks leaving people behind. This is where intersectionality comes in. **Adopting an intersectional approach can strengthen your existing equity and inclusion efforts or improve the design of new initiatives** by:

- challenging a one-size-fits-all approach
- amplifying the voices of those who experience multiple forms of discrimination
- identifying and addressing hidden barriers
- enhancing strategies and initiatives to respond to multiple forms of discrimination.

In other words, **an intersectional approach improves the effectiveness of your equity and inclusion policies and practices**, making it more likely that you will achieve the desired outcomes and impact.

An intersectional approach will also help you:

- meet legal obligations to provide a psychologically safe workplace by recognising unique experiences of safety
- design initiatives based on an understanding of how cumulative discrimination affects your workforce
- retain valuable talent and create a fairer workplace
- reduce microaggressions and unconscious bias and increase empathy by building awareness that an employee is much more than one identity



- make a difference to the bottom line. According to a [2020 McKinsey report](#), companies ranked the highest in gender diversity at executive levels are 25% more likely to have above-average profitability than companies with the lowest gender diversity. Companies that ranked highest in cultural and ethnic diversity had 36% higher profitability than businesses that lacked cultural diversity.

## Key concepts

**Intersectionality** is a way to understand how social systems and structures (reflected and replicated in our workplaces) create experiences of privilege and disadvantage.

The checklist below outlines the difference between intersectionality and other concepts related to discrimination and privilege.

### What intersectional practice is

- ✓ Understanding social relations by examining intersecting forms of discrimination
- ✓ Understanding that unique forms of discrimination exist, while focusing on how they inform a person's experience **in combination**
- ✓ Understanding that many forms of discrimination, such as racism, sexism, ableism and ageism, might be present and active at the same time

### What intersectional practice is not

- ✗ Simply acknowledging that one person may have multiple identities
- ✗ Adding up different forms of discrimination and addressing them individually
- ✗ Assessing who is most disadvantaged (or privileged)

#### Explainer

» This [video](#) explains the concept of intersectionality.

#### Explainer

» This [video](#) explains why we need an intersectional lens to stop sexual harassment before it starts and what workplaces can do.

**We cannot talk about intersectionality without also discussing power and privilege. Intersectionality helps us recognise that power and privilege are not equally distributed in our society or our workplaces.**

A simple way to define **power** is to think of it as the capacity of individuals or groups to decide or influence – to determine who gets what, who does what, who decides what and who sets the agenda.<sup>2</sup>

### **Explainer**

In workplaces, this looks like:

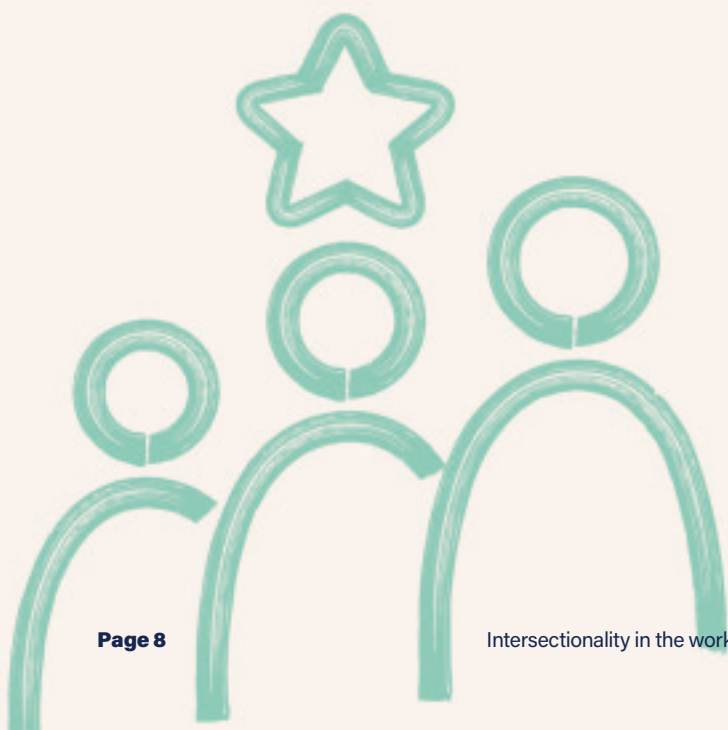
- making governance and risk decisions
- influencing strategic plans, policies and recruitment
- reviewing performance appraisals to decide on career progression
- managing access to employee benefits, such as parental leave or flexible work
- nominating employees to represent the organisation at external events (such as sitting on panels)
- accessing networking opportunities with relative ease for career advancement.

Privilege refers to the advantages and benefits individuals or groups acquire because of their relative social position and identity. In this sense, privilege is not 'earned' but granted to individuals and groups based on the interaction of their identity/ies with systems of power and hierarchy. Having privilege means accessing systems, opportunities and services with relative ease. It is often invisible to those with it because it is rarely challenged. Think of privilege as having a 'green light' all the way – thresholds that we might pass through automatically or with relative ease because of combinations of our gender, race, social class, age, religion or physical ability. This has been described as 'The Green Light Pathway to Power – where doors open because of attributes like race, gender, education and networks'.<sup>3</sup>

### **Explainer**

We can see privilege in action when a person:

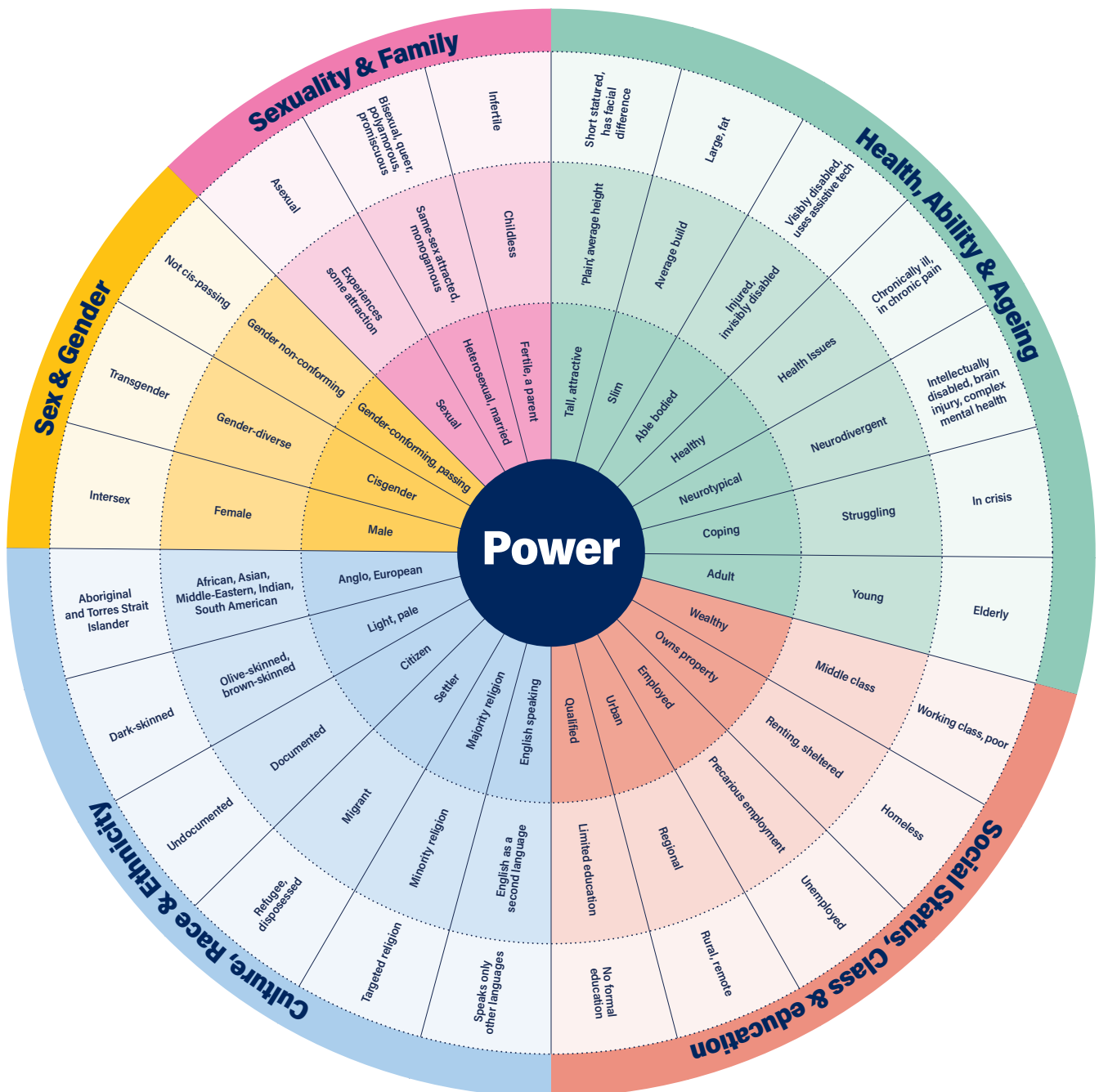
- is more likely to be hired, promoted or paid more for work of equal value
- faces fewer professional consequences for putting less time and money into their appearance
- is far less likely to experience sexual harassment – especially if they are a white heterosexual male and not gender diverse.





## Explainer

This graphic helps us to visualise who holds the most power in our society and workplaces. Those who hold the most power are placed near the centre of the wheel and those with the least power are on the outside of the wheel. The graphic has been adapted from multiple sources including the [Interwine Privilege Wheel Handout](#) and [Sylvia Duckworth Wheel of Power and Privilege](#).



If people find themselves on the outside of the wheel most of the time, then they have more intersecting barriers and are more likely to experience discrimination. The more people find themselves towards the center, the more access they have to power and resources.

Also, **intersectionality is contextual**. The social environment we are in and the systems and people we are engaging with can influence whether or how we might experience privilege or marginalisation. A queer person of colour with a disability may not experience overt discrimination based on sexual orientation within the LGBTIQA+ community but they may experience racism and ableism, as well as assumptions about their sexuality based on race and disability. In a predominantly heterosexual, white and non-disabled workplace, they may experience all 3 forms of intersecting discrimination.

An intersectional approach helps us to unpack power and privilege, revealing how they have become embedded in our worldviews, beliefs and actions. It can show us how this, in turn, contributes to the creation of unspoken blueprints for what kind of institutions we develop. In workplaces, these blueprints may appear as a set of accepted guidelines for recruiting, promoting, training and supporting employees and norms around what behaviours we accept or don't accept. An intersectional approach supports us in identifying and addressing these often invisible forms of discrimination.

Discussing power and privilege can be challenging. Looking inward and reflecting on how some of us have had relatively easier access to power and resources can be confronting. Sometimes, people can get defensive when discussing privilege because it's so confronting: 'I have not had it easy; I have had to work hard to get here' is a widespread response.

### Quick tip

**'Call people in' rather than call them out.** Calling in is about engaging in a deeper discussion, understanding and reflection. Calling out usually involves shaming, and shame rarely leads to change. Asking questions about your own privileges before you ask others is a good starting point.

## Increase senior leadership's understanding of and support for intersectionality

**Bringing an intersectional approach to your existing workplace policies, programs and initiatives is more likely to be successful if there is buy-in from across the organisation, especially from the leadership group.**

The commitments and actions of senior executives are critical to changing attitudes, behaviours and structures throughout the organisation.

Engaging leaders is, therefore, vital for ensuring that efforts to achieve intersectional equality and respect are successful and sustained.

Engaging senior executives helps to:

- create change by engaging those with the ability to mandate that change
- bring others on board through leadership who actively model intersectional equality and respect
- reinforce the workplace's commitment to achieving intersectional equality and respect at the highest levels of the organisation.

# Actions to build senior leadership support for intersectionality

## **Share examples**

of how intersectionality plays out in the workplace

### **Resource**

» [\*Examples of how intersectionality plays out in the workplace\*](#) provide real-life experiences from workplaces.

### **Quick tip**

Build on the above examples. Staff engagement survey questions about safety, equality, respect and inclusion can be disaggregated by one or more dimensions (age, disability, race/ethnicity, religion, etc) to share specific examples of intersectionality in your workplace. You can also engage employee affinity and allyship groups to gain their insights on intersectional experiences.

## **Build a business case**

for taking an intersectional approach

### **Resource**

» [\*Evidence to show intersectionality matters\*](#) builds a business case for an intersectional approach.

### **Quick tip**

Build your organisation's evidence base and add to the examples above. For organisations to understand, track and respond to intersectional barriers in the workplace, having robust data is critical. Collecting broader diversity and inclusion data helps to deepen understanding of intersectional inequalities, improve benchmarking and measurement of progress and strengthen accountability for action across organisations. If you are not doing this already, explore how your existing staff engagement surveys can collect demographic and experience data. When presenting your staff engagement survey results, commit to disaggregating and analysing demographic and experience data on as many of these dimensions as possible: Aboriginality, age, disability, race, ethnicity, gender identity, religion and sexual orientation.

Remember that when data is disaggregated by intersectional attributes, the sample size will decrease, which can, in some cases, lead to flawed data analysis, misinterpretation and potentially identifying people. Some organisations restrict access to any reporting that falls below 5 individuals in a single group relating to sensitive personal data (e.g., sexual orientation) to all but a limited number of people.

For more information, see the section in this starter kit on reviewing workforce data collection, analysis and reporting.

## **Debunk common myths**

about what  
intersectionality  
means

### **Resources**

» [Addressing misconceptions](#) lists some common questions you may encounter and how you can respond.

» [Key messages on why intersectionality matters](#) provides some talking points you can use to secure buy-in from your leadership team.

# Establish and adopt key principles to guide the work

**Adopting key principles will help you ensure that your work promotes an intersectional approach to gender equality that is authentic and not tokenistic.**

The following principles provide useful guidelines for effective intersectional equality and respect work:

## **Be inclusive and responsive**

Gender inequality, discrimination and power and privilege are experienced in multiple ways. Equality and respect initiatives need to consider how different forms of discrimination intersect to create unique barriers in the workplace. This may require looking beyond single-issue discrimination policies (such as age or ability). It may also require analysing broad equity and inclusion statements and Reconciliation Action Plans to see how these statements and plans function in practice.

## **Engage in specific and intensive efforts**

Equality and safety for all women can only be achieved by making specific and intensive efforts for those currently experiencing the greatest inequalities. Investing greater effort and resources for communities or groups affected by multiple forms of discrimination is critical.

## **Work in partnership**

Developing relationships with peak bodies or representative organisations is key to effective intersectional equality and respect initiatives. Such organisations bring a breadth of experience and expertise to thinking and planning around diversity, inclusion and intersectionality. As part of this partnership process, it is important to recognise their expertise and time through formal acknowledgement or reimbursement.

## **Develop and maintain reflective practice**

Many workplaces use reflective practice to affirm what works well and identify areas for development or change. Reflecting on personal experiences of power and privilege and recognising who within your workplace does and does not benefit from different types of privilege is key to this work. While critical reflection can sometimes be uncomfortable, it is important to sit with the discomfort and ensure it does not stop you from engaging in it.

## **Resources**

>> [Tipsheet: Build your intersectional practice](#) provides 4 tips that should become habits.

# Review approaches to workforce data collection, analysis and reporting

To support your work in embedding an intersectional approach to gender equality, a good place to start is looking at your workforce data. Without this disaggregated data, you will find it difficult to assess who benefits from gender equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives and which groups remain marginalised and excluded in your workplace.

## Quick tip

When getting buy-in from your leadership team, build into their actions a commitment to embedding intersectional data collection, analysis and reporting into strategic plans.

## Why intersectionality matters in workforce data collection and analysis

- An intersectional approach can improve your understanding of the multifaceted nature of your employees' experiences.
- Applying an intersectional lens to data analysis can help you identify overlapping discrimination and exclusion patterns.
- Adopting an intersectional approach can identify gaps in your data that may indicate other issues. For example, a lack of data on employees who identify as gender diverse could indicate that they don't feel safe disclosing their identity.

## Explainer

There are various benchmarks and surveys you can participate in:

>> [\*Australian Workplace Equality Index\*](#) is a national benchmark on LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion and comprises the largest and only national employee survey designed to gauge the overall impact of inclusion initiatives on organisational culture and the identification and non-identification of employees.

>> The [\*Inclusive Employer Index\*](#), developed by the Diversity Council of Australia, measures employee diversity and inclusion experiences in the workplace.

>> The [\*Access and Inclusion Index\*](#) is a benchmarking tool for the inclusion of people with disability in the workplace.

>> Our Watch's Workplace Equality and Respect survey collects data against 5 Workplace Equality and Respect Priority Areas to help you understand how leadership commitment, conditions, culture, support and core business contribute to or detract from a more respectful, safe and equal workplace. The survey also includes a section that focuses on experiences of sexual harassment and gender-based harm. To access this survey, contact [equalityandrespect@ourwatch.org.au](mailto:equalityandrespect@ourwatch.org.au).



# Six ways to embed intersectionality in data collection, analysis and reporting

## 01

Ensure that your data collection practices recognise diverse demographics, such as age, race/ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identity and disability.

- Consider how you can frame the questions you ask to avoid being stigmatising, pejorative or harmful, and how your approach might need to shift depending on the context of the questions (whether you are doing a survey, focus group, etc.)

## 02

Explore different ways to collect data. While surveys may be easier to administer and provide valuable quantitative data, interviews and focus groups can help you gather deeper information on the lived experiences of your employees.

## 03

Take a deep dive into your data by looking at how different identities interact to influence experiences of equality, safety and respect in the workplace. This will help you uncover hidden patterns and trends. For example, if you are seeing an equal gender balance in promotions, dig deeper into the interactions with age, disability, race or religion. You may find that there are challenges for older female employees in securing promotions, despite the apparent gender balance.

- Share your findings with your Employee Reference Groups/Employee Advisory Groups or subject matter experts to make more sense of your findings.

## 04

Take meaningful actions based on your findings by developing action plans or embedding actions into existing plans.

## 05

Implement regular reviews of your approach. Collecting analysis and reporting is not a one-time activity but an ongoing process. Regularly undertaking a data gap analysis to find out what data is available and what data is needed will help you stay relevant and inclusive.

## 06

Reporting on both your initiatives and the impact these are having (positive or negative) allows you to:

- understand what is really happening in your business
- track trends and changes
- monitor progress
- hold yourself and/or strategy holders accountable.

### Resources

» The Workplace Gender Equality Agency's (WGEA) [\*Guide to consulting employees on gender equality\*](#) has useful tips. Also, WGEA's [\*Gender Equality Reporting program\*](#) is a mandatory program for all non-public sector relevant employers (over 100 employees) under the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (the Act).

» [\*Different approaches to measuring data\*](#) explores different ways to collect data along with the advantages and challenges of these approaches.

# Use an intersectional lens in talent management and flexible work

## Talent management: Recruitment

Recruitment practices can sometimes inadvertently exclude or create barriers for some groups, particularly women, in our community. By applying an intersectional approach to recruitment processes we can identify and remove these barriers, enabling us to tap into the full talent pool.

An intersectional approach will help us ensure that the diversity of our workforce reflects the diversity of the community in which we work and that we serve (workforce mutuality), foster innovation and creativity and ultimately improve business performance and employee wellbeing.

### Resources

>> [A checklist for inclusive recruitment](#) provides some key considerations that will support you in implementing the 3 actions for an intersectional approach to recruitment.

>> [Workforce Mutuality Toolkit](#), developed by HealthWest Partnership, provides a set of 6 standards, examples of good practice and a self-assessment tool.

>> Use the [Gender Decoder](#) to check if your job advertisement is subtly gender-coded.

>> Check out the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's [Inclusive recruitment: Guide for people professionals](#).

### Three actions for an intersectional approach to recruitment

- ✓ 1. Make sure your public platforms demonstrate your commitment to an inclusive, safe and respectful workplace.
- ✓ 2. Determine your needs by being clear about what you are trying to achieve. For example, are you looking to improve overall diversity or looking specifically to hire someone with knowledge or expertise of a particular community (in other words, do you need a designated or identified role)?
- ✓ 3. Review your recruitment process to build an intersectional approach at every stage, from job design to onboarding.

## Talent management: Promotions

Gender biases combined with other biases, such as those related to religion, race, age and disability, affect diverse women's ability to advance within workplaces. For example, evidence shows that representation among women of colour declines as they ascend the leadership pipeline. Women of colour often face challenges in navigating workplace cultures that may not value or fully understand their experiences. As women age, they are less likely to be promoted or considered for leadership positions compared to men of the same age group. This disparity not only affects individual career trajectories but also perpetuates gender inequality at higher organisational levels.<sup>4</sup>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are underrepresented in managerial and executive positions in the workforce.<sup>5</sup> So biases related to religion, race, age and disability layer with other experiences of women in the workplace.

- Women are twice as likely as men to report being told that they needed to display 'more confidence', and 30% more likely to report being told that they needed 'more experience' to be ready for promotion.
- Few women are given the opportunity to gain the experience required or receive clear and specific feedback about what experience they need to be deemed ready for promotion.
- Managers often perceive that women have lower levels of career motivation than men and may seek to 'protect' their female employees from overwork. Such assumptions contribute to women receiving fewer career development opportunities, such as challenging work assignments, training and development and career encouragement.
- Managers perceive that female employees have lower motivation than male employees, irrespective of their seniority, tenure or promotion histories, and there is a strong

correlation between managers' perceptions of employees' career motivation and employees' reports of receiving career development opportunities.

- Women are more likely than men to believe that 'feminine' leadership styles are undervalued in workplaces. Women also avoid self-promotion because they perceive – often correctly – that such behaviour will reflect poorly on them.<sup>6</sup>

Older or younger women, women from migrant or different ethnic backgrounds, and women with disability can experience compounded exclusion from promotions and leadership opportunities. These women are even less likely to have people who look like, empathise with, and identify like them within current leadership teams. This can mean that not only might a candidate not *look* like a workplace's standard idea of 'management material', but they may not *sound* like it either (for example, they may have an accent). They may not *think* in ways a workplace considers conventional (for example they may be neurodivergent) or *present* themselves in a way that is the unspoken 'norm' of leaders (not in a blue suit with a crisp white shirt and short hair).

**Promoting diverse leaders requires stepping outside our traditional ideas about leadership. This is not to the disregard of merit, but at the expansion of our ideas about where merit lies and the different forms it can take. It is about challenging our biases about what a leader can be, and what they can bring to the table.**

### Resource

>> [\*Guiding questions to review promotions policy\*](#) provides you with a list of questions that will help you audit your policy and action changes to make it more intersectional.

## Flexible work

Flexible work has emerged as a key strategy to attract and retain diverse talent as it demonstrates a workplace's willingness to be responsive to the needs of its employees.

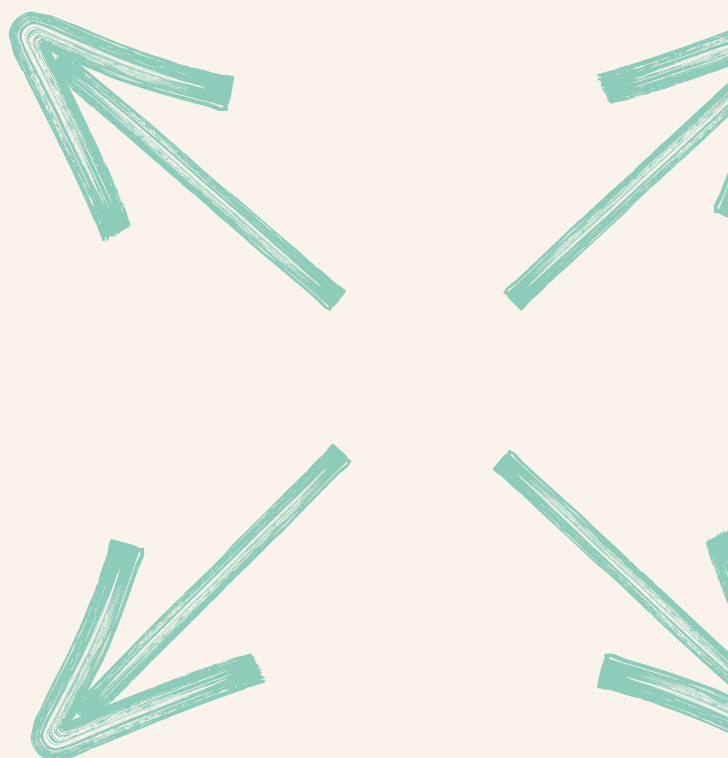
The evidence suggests that:

- women are more likely than men to request to work from home to accommodate the higher burden of unpaid domestic and care responsibilities<sup>7</sup>
- men are more reluctant to request flexibility because of masculine norms and because of the perceived or actual impact on their career progression<sup>8</sup>
- women's transition from parenthood to either full-time work or part-time work or leaving the paid workforce altogether stalls women's career progression<sup>9</sup>
- women who experience intersecting forms of inequality are more likely to leave the workforce after having children. This trend is apparent for migrant and First Nations mothers, as well as mothers with disability, mothers caring for others with disability and young mothers<sup>10</sup>
- Flexible work can form part of a range of workplace responses that enables victim-survivors of family violence to maintain paid employment.<sup>11</sup> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with disability and migrant and refugee women are more likely to experience domestic and family violence. Family violence leave, especially when paid, affords victim-survivors financial security, while allowing them time to access support, attend court appointments, move house, and recover from violence and abuse.<sup>12</sup>

### Explainer

>> Fair Work Australia recognises flexible working arrangements as diverse; they come in many forms depending on the workplace and the type of work performed. See [\*Flexible working arrangements\*](#) for more details.

Anyone can request flexibility, but certain employees have a legal entitlement to request flexible working arrangements under the [\*Fair Work Act 2009\*](#).



## Explainer

**A one-size-fits-all flexible work policy can mean that, although a policy exists, it's not benefitting all employees. Such policies do not consider a growing diverse workforce with multiple intersecting identities and needs. They may not recognise that not all employees have equal access to or benefit from societal resources to support managing the work-life balance.<sup>13</sup>**

Here's an example of why work-from-home policies need to avoid being one-size-fits-all. For some staff, working from home greatly improves efficiency and productivity. Removing the need to commute, make lunch, fill the car and travel from meeting to meeting can allow staff to get on top of home and caring duties quickly, start work earlier or work later, and saves the business the costs associated with office fit-outs and resourcing. It can also benefit employees' mental health by allowing a lot more agency in setting up their workspaces and managing time on and off the computer, including walking during meetings and so forth.

For others, being away from the office can impact their ability to network, be across workplace news and be adequately equipped to work effectively. If they are not the sort of person who connects well by virtual means or if they lack social networks outside the workplace, their mental health and social connections can be adversely affected. For some women, especially those who experience family or domestic violence, the home may not be the safest place and coming to work may be one way for them to access support services.

Another example is **cultural leave**. For instance, a community organisation and social business introduced 3 days of paid Cultural and Wellbeing Leave for all staff and 5 days for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues. The idea was borne out of discussions in line with their reconciliation commitment to provide cultural support for their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues beyond the minimum standard of 10 days' unpaid ceremonial leave. This recognises the importance of providing space and time for people to honour ceremonial and kinship commitments.<sup>14</sup>

**Flexible work policies need to take a people-centred approach. They need to be revisited to consider access needs, preferences for work-life flexibility, work and non-work experiences, and benefits of using flexibility policies. If we don't take this approach then we may be perpetuating growing work-life and job inequality.<sup>15</sup>**



A good place to start is understanding who is and is not using any flexible work options that you are offering. Check your workplace data to understand which of your staff are using flexible work and note who is not accessing forms of workplace support (including leave provisions such as parental and carer's leave). For example, you could analyse:

- what types of roles do or do not access flexible work
- at what levels flexible work is being accessed
- whether there is a relationship between flexibility, seniority and pay.

## Resources

>> For further information on *flexible working arrangements* see Fair Work Australia.

>> *A good practice checklist for flexible work* provides you with key suggestions on ensuring your flexible work options address intersectional barriers.

>> The *Flexibility audit tool* helps you explore who benefits and does not benefit from the flexible work options you are offering.

>> Explore some great ideas for *mainstreaming flexibility by design* developed by the Diversity Council of Australia. Their resource on *Myth Busting Flexibility* draws on research to debunk some of the more common myths and inaccurate assumptions about workplace flexibility.

>> The Workplace Gender Equality Agency offers *flexibility diagnostic tools*.

## Four actions for an intersectional approach to flexible work

1. Make 'all roles flex' by adopting a flexible-by-default or 'if not, why not' approach. This means that all roles are treated as flexible unless there is a genuine business reason for them not to be. Every role should be suitable for some form of flexibility, but not every type of flexibility will work for every role. Genuine business reasons may mean that some types of flexibility cannot be implemented for some roles.
2. Recognise different needs by having open conversations with employees to understand what they are looking for and tailoring flexible work arrangements to meet them. This also helps to set and manage both employee and manager expectations.
3. Create a supportive culture by speaking positively about flexibility and showcase examples of employees using flexible work for a range of reasons. Make sure to ask for an employee's permission before disclosing their circumstances. Get senior leaders and managers to be role models for showing what can work and what's encouraged. This can be a powerful way of demonstrating successful flexible work while enhancing the team's supportive and trust-based culture.
4. Support employees to establish boundaries with clear logoff and check-out times. For example, research indicates those who work remotely are more likely to work overtime and to feel that they must be available 24 hours a day.






# Final words

**This toolkit is a practical way to start implementing an intersectional lens in the workplace. Toolkits are useful for starting projects, fixing things and expanding things. It's valuable to get to know the tools that best fit the job.**

Your focus, effort and intersectional response to talent management and flexible work will help your workplace thrive and your business flourish.

At the same time, you are contributing to making the world a more equitable place for everyone.

It seems fitting to end this toolkit with a quote from Kimberlé Crenshaw:



**If you don't have a lens that's been trained to look at how various forms of discrimination come together, you're unlikely to develop a set of policies that will be as inclusive as they need to be.**

– Kimberlé Crenshaw



# Endnotes

- 1 Australian HR Institute. (2023). *The state of diversity, equity and inclusion in Australian workplaces.*
- 2 Srilatha Batliwala. (2020). *All about power.*
- 3 Champions of Change Coalition. (2023). *Power to create inclusive gender equality in the workplace.*
- 4 The Workplace Gender Equality Agency. (2019). *Gender equitable recruitment and promotion.*
- 5 UTS Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, the Diversity Council of Australia and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). (2021). *Gari Yala (Speak the truth): Gendered insights report.*
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- 7 A Borgkvist. (2022). *It would be silly to stop now and go part-time: Fathers and flexible working arrangements in Australia.* M Grau Grau et al. (eds) Engaged Fatherhood for Men, Families and Gender Equality. Contributions to Management Science.
- 8 A Borgkvist. (2022). *It would be silly to stop now and go part-time: Fathers and flexible working arrangements in Australia.* M Grau Grau et al. (eds) Engaged Fatherhood for Men, Families and Gender Equality. Contributions to Management Science.
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TOOLKIT

# Intersectionality in the workplace

Resources



**Our  
Watch**

Preventing violence  
against women

# What's included in this toolkit?

## 01

### Increase senior leadership's understanding of and support for intersectionality

#### RESOURCE

Examples of how intersectionality plays out in the workplace

Provides real-life experiences.

#### RESOURCE

Evidence to show intersectionality matters

Builds a business case for taking an intersectional approach.

#### RESOURCE

Addressing misconceptions

Lists some common questions encountered and how you can respond.

#### RESOURCE

Key messages on why intersectionality matters

Provides some talking points to secure buy-in from leadership teams.

## 02

### Establish and adopt key principles that will guide your work

#### TIPSHEET

Build your intersectional practice

Provides 4 tips that should become habits.

## 03

### Review your approach to workforce data collection, analysis and reporting

#### RESOURCE

Different approaches to collecting data

Explores different ways to collect data and the advantages and challenges of these approaches.

## 04

### Use an intersectional lens in talent management and flexible work

#### RESOURCE

A checklist for inclusive recruitment

Provides key considerations that will support the implementation of actions for an intersectional approach to recruitment.

#### RESOURCE

Guiding questions to review promotions policy

Lists questions that will help auditing policy and action changes to make promotions more intersectional.

#### RESOURCE

A good practice checklist for flexible work

Lists some points to consider to ensure flexible work is accessible to all employees.

#### RESOURCE

Flexibility audit tool

Explores who does and does not benefit from the flexible work options being offered.



**RESOURCE**

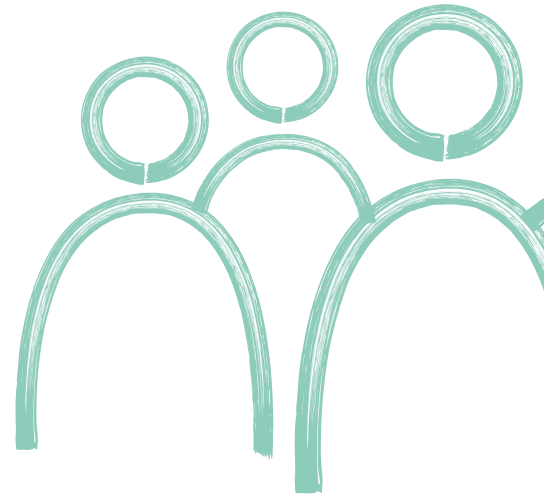
# Examples of how intersectionality plays out in the workplace

Who	Examples of unique experiences of inequality, disadvantage and exclusion (not exhaustive)	How it plays out
<b>Women who are socioeconomically challenged</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women with lower socioeconomic status who are carers may be less able to afford childcare and therefore face additional barriers to engaging in paid work.</li> </ul>	<i>'My boss said I need to work late with her, but she can afford afterhours childcare and I just can't.'</i>
<b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women may experience unique forms of intersecting inequality, including harmful stereotypes suggesting they are lazy and offensive comments such as 'stop ginning around'.</li> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are more likely than non-Indigenous Australians to provide care to children, family and members of their community.</li> <li>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are also less likely than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men to receive support from their workplaces if they encounter racism.</li> </ul>	<i>'There is no understanding of our culture and things like extended family. We are continually questioned when we have to take leave for funerals, for example, because leaders just don't get it, and then they make jokes and bully us about the leave.'</i>
<b>Women with disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women with disability may be less likely to be considered for a job because employers are less willing to provide reasonable adjustments, such as assistive technology or safe access to the workplace.</li> </ul>	<i>'Over the years, I've accepted a lot of mistreatment at work, but what I've learnt is that if you have a disability, you are often seen as "less than", and if you're a woman with disability, they will bully you into keeping quiet or paint you as being "crazy".'</i>
<b>Women who experience cultural and racial marginalisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women who experience cultural and racial marginalisation may experience stereotypical assumptions related to their race, such as being angry or unsuitable for leadership roles. Further, they are often not considered for leadership due to their leadership styles or qualities being less valued than others.</li> <li>Women, particularly young women, from South-East Asian backgrounds can face harmful stereotypes related to hypersexualisation.</li> </ul>	<i>'I have been in the same level for 13 years, no career progression, as Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CARM) women face an impossible cultural glass ceiling. With the women in leadership agenda, I see many women around me get promoted, however, all of them are from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds.'</i>
<b>Age</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older women are more likely than their male counterparts to be perceived as having outdated skills, being too slow to learn new things or being someone who would deliver an unsatisfactory job.</li> </ul>	<i>'When you get older I get, "You're just a silly old woman". That's the attitude I get a lot at work at my age.'</i>
<b>LGBTIQA+ women</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lesbians may experience specific forms of everyday sexism based on both gender and sexuality. This might include comments from colleagues about not finding the right man, exclusion based on not conforming to expected gender roles or assumptions about having a male partner. Transgender women face abuse from colleagues and discrimination from managers, which often results in demotion or termination of employment (particularly those in customer-facing roles) when affirming their identity in a workplace.</li> </ul>	<i>'When I decided to affirm my identity and started transitioning, I was told by my manager that this would confuse customers. I was moved to stacking shelves and receiving stock in the back.'</i>
<b>Women of faith</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faith-based stereotyping is common in the workplace and can lead to inaccurate ideas that women from certain faiths are not leadership material or capable of taking on certain roles.</li> </ul>	<i>'They see a hijab and think I must be subjugated and I'm submissive and passive and therefore not able to lead.'</i>

## RESOURCE

# Evidence to show intersectionality matters

Efforts to advance gender equality have not lifted all women equally. Where data is available, it shows stark gaps in workforce participation and leadership, as well as employee outcomes, for women who experience intersecting inequalities.



## Socioeconomically disadvantaged women

- Women who are socioeconomically disadvantaged (45%) are much more likely than other women (24%-25%) and all men (24%-39%) to report experiencing discrimination at work.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have substantially lower rates of workforce participation (51.5%) than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men (65%) and non-Indigenous women (59.2%), and are paid less, on average, than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, being over-represented in most of the lower weekly income brackets and under-represented in the highest income brackets.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were more likely than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and non-Indigenous women and men to have experienced sexual harassment at work in the last 5 years (59% compared to 53% of Aboriginal men and 41% of women overall).

## Women with disability

- Women with disability have lower levels of workforce participation, with 45.5% of women with disability engaged in the workforce compared to 62.1% of all women.

## Women who experience cultural and racial marginalisation

- In 2022, 90% of all ASX Board Directors were from Anglo-Celtic backgrounds; a survey of Board Members of 232 organisations found only 5.7% of participants identified as culturally diverse women.
- For context, in 2021, 22.8% of people (5.8 million) reported using a language other than English at home, and 27.6% of the population were born overseas.

## Older women

- Older men were more likely to be working (17% of men in the labour force) than older women (10%). Older men were also more likely to be working full time and in higher paying jobs.

## Young women

- 56% of younger women (18-29 years old) experienced sexual harassment at work in the last 5 years, compared to 35% of men in this age group, and far higher than women in any other age bracket.

## LGBTIQ+ women

- LGBTQ+ women are underrepresented at every stage of the management pipeline, considerably worse than LGBTQ+ men. For example, in 2020, 0.6% of LGBTQ+ women were in senior vice president and C-suite roles, compared to 2.9% of LGBTQ+ men.
- 60% of women who identified as lesbian experienced sexual harassment in the last 5 years (compared with 41% of women overall).

### Data sources:

WGEA. (n.d). *Gender equality and intersecting forms of diversity*.

The McKell Institute (2022) *Women in work: A story of exclusion*; 2016 ABS Census.

Women's Agenda (2019). *Religious inclusion: why it's important and how to get it*; DCA (2017) *Cracking the glass cultural ceiling*.

Human Rights Commission. (2021). *Safety and security for older women*; ABS census data.

DCA. (2020). *Class at work*.

WGEA. (2020.). *Gender equality and intersecting forms of diversity*; McKinsey & Co (2020) *How the LGBTQ+ community fares in the workplace*.



## RESOURCE

# Addressing misconceptions

Below are some common questions you may encounter and how you can respond.

What you might hear	What people are concerned about	Clarifying the misconception
<b>The concept of intersectionality is too broad, complex and hard to implement. I don't even know where to start.</b>	By focussing on intersectional inequalities, we might alienate those who are even struggling to understand the case for gender equality. By focussing on one group of women who experience marginalisation, we may get questions about why we're not prioritising other groups.	Intersectionality is not a rigid or static concept, but rather a lens or framework through which we can understand why some people experience marginalisation while others are advantaged. It requires challenging the usual assumptions and thinking beyond separate diversity groups. By ignoring or deferring intersectionality, we are inadvertently making some women's experiences invisible, reinforcing privilege for some and one dominant world view, and missing out on the benefits of truly inclusive efforts to advance gender equality. Intersectionality doesn't mean addressing all aspects of inequality all at once. It is a commitment to understanding how intersecting inequalities are playing out in our workplaces and taking specific actions. It is fine to focus on one group as part of your broader commitment to advance gender equality.
<b>Looking at multiple dimensions of difference is divisive. Isn't it just identity politics on steroids?</b>	By bringing to the fore the differences between peoples' experiences rather than commonalities, intersectionality is divisive. Separating people into groups undermines cohesion.	Aspects of identity are not in competition with one another. Creating spaces where everyone feels safe to be themselves and has a sense of belonging – rather than conforming to the norm – is critical for connectedness and inclusion.
<b>How is intersectionality relevant to gender? Doesn't it undermine our gender equality objectives by dividing our attention?</b>	By emphasising differences between women we will detract attention from the common issues and dilute the agenda.	A one-size-fits-all approach to gender equality makes invisible the diverse experiences amongst women and doesn't account for the barriers faced by different women. This inadvertently benefits women from more privileged backgrounds. For example, a woman from a culturally diverse background will experience both compounded and unique forms of exclusion based on gender and race. Unless both are intentionally addressed, she will not benefit from gender equality strategies.
<b>Won't progress on gender equality eventually trickle down to all women? We have diverse women in our organisation, isn't that enough?</b>	There is no need to focus on particular groups of women as all women will automatically benefit. Having diverse women in our organisation is enough.	Gender equality efforts focus on the shared and the common experiences of inequality and exclusion based on gender. However, without an intentional focus on diversity among women, the particular experiences of exclusion and inequality for women who experience intersecting inequalities remain hidden. There is often overt bias towards women from more privileged backgrounds as they are perceived to 'fit in'. Adopting an 'add and stir' approach for each diversity group is not an intersectional approach and will not result in equality for all. Diverse representation is important, but adding people who experience marginalisation to the table can be tokenistic without also addressing the structures of power that produce inequality in the first place.
<b>Isn't it going to be a never-ending list of issues? Where does it end? Isn't there always a risk of leaving some people out anyway?</b>	By looking at intersectionality we are creating an endless list of 'identities' to deal with, and competition between different groups. Some people will be left out anyway as there are too many groups to cover.	Intersectionality is not about a 'list of issues' or groups of people. Intersectionality is about the systemic, structural and institutionalised patterns of power and privilege that result in compounded and unique inequalities for those at the intersections of marginalised identities. Common markers of privilege or marginalisation identified by international human rights norms and commitments are gender, race, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, Indigeneity, other cultural and linguistic diversity, disability and socioeconomic status. There are many other factors that can amplify exclusion, such as geographical location, carer status or immigration status.
<b>Why should some groups get special treatment?</b>	By taking an intersectional approach we are treating some groups more favourably than others, which is unfair. People should be treated as individuals, not as members of a group.	Intersectionality is not about special treatment for certain groups, but about levelling the playing field for all. An intersectional approach recognises that some groups of people have not historically had equal access to opportunities, resources and power due to structural barriers, and seeks to redress this disadvantage.

## RESOURCE

# Key messages on why intersectionality matters



In this resource we provide some messages that you can tailor to bring your leadership group onboard.

Workplaces that are more diverse and inclusive rate highly on metrics related to decision-making, innovation, talent retention, governance and risk management.

Leaders who want to retain valuable diverse talent need to be aware of how intersectionality affects their workforce and the implications of cumulative discrimination. Understanding the challenges your employees are grappling with to get ahead in their careers helps you design initiatives that create a fairer workplace.

A workplace that is inclusive, safe, equal and respectful allows employees to bring their whole authentic selves to work, enhancing belonging and productivity.

When employees feel valued, they're more likely to collaborate effectively and bring their unique perspectives to the table. This mix of ideas can lead to better problem-solving, decision-making and innovation, which will ultimately help the organisation get ahead of the competition.

Some of the by-products of taking an intersectional lens in the workplace include reducing aggression and conflicts and increasing empathy.

Understanding and building awareness that an employee is much more than one identity can play a role in reducing microaggressions and unconscious bias. This leads to greater employee solidarity and collegiality, contributing to a psychologically safer and thriving workplace.

An intersectional approach makes a difference to the bottom line. Companies that are ranked the highest in gender diversity at executive levels are 25% more likely to have above-average profitability than companies with the lowest gender diversity, [according to a 2020 McKinsey report](#). Companies that ranked highest in cultural and ethnic diversity had 36% higher profitability than businesses that lacked cultural diversity.

With the relaunch of the Model Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work (April 2023), there are harsher penalties and stricter guidelines for workplaces to adhere to. Creating a psychologically safe workplace requires a recognition of unique experiences of safety based on identity and lived experience. Creating safe, equal and respectful workplaces requires acknowledging that the risks and impacts of unlawful conduct are shaped and compounded by systemic issues and factors that include race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and disability.

## TIPSHEET

# Build your intersectional practice

This tipsheet provides some considerations on how to build your intersectional practice.

## 01

### Check yourself (self-reflect)

Examine your own biases, beliefs, judgements and practices and how they influence the way you work and engage with others. Here are some common biases that may influence how we engage or make decisions:

- Confirmation bias involves favouring or focusing on information that confirms your existing beliefs and preconceptions.
- Halo effect involves the way you think or feel about a person being shaped by one characteristic and assigning positive attributes to them.
- Horn effect is the opposite of the halo effect and involves the way you think or feel about a person being shaped by one characteristic and assigning negative attributes to them.
- Affinity bias refers to the unconscious preference of people who share qualities with you or are similar to you.
- Actor-observer bias involves attributing behaviour to internal causes, such as being lazy, incompetence, lack of intelligence.

The first step is acknowledging that we are all part of social, economic and political institutions that create systems of power and exclusion. We can use our power and advantage strategically to make a change. This will require us to take responsibility and be accountable for unlearning patterns of racism, sexism, ableism and other forms of exclusion that we accept as 'it is what it is'.

We need to uncover and interrupt our own biases. We can do this by listening to others and being conscious of how our position/status may

inhibit others from speaking up. This is not a one-off exercise – we need to keep checking ourselves and challenging our assumptions at every step.

1. *Do I reflect on how my biases, attitudes and beliefs influence my opinions and actions?*
2. *How does my position/status directly or indirectly disadvantage others?*
3. *What can I do to address this?*
4. *How can we reduce bias and disadvantage through our organisational policies, processes and systems?*
5. *Do we have structures in place in our organisation that reduce the possibility of bias or discrimination in our recruitment, promotion and other workplace processes?*

## 02

### Listen and learn

At its very core, intersectionality is about learning and understanding the views of others. We need to consciously pay attention to how we treat and respect those around us. We can do this by actively listening and learning from people with diverse forms of knowledge who are typically excluded from 'expert' roles.

- *Who shares their perspectives, and who doesn't?*
- *Who has or has not been involved in our decisions as an organisation?*
- *Have I created a safe space where all people can challenge inequality or potential bias without adverse consequences?*
- *How can I meaningfully engage and support diverse communities in helping us design and implement inclusive work practices?*

- *Have I asked people what they need to participate?*
- *Have I allocated resources to ensure meaningful participation?*

## 03

### Ensure messaging is inclusive

We need to consider if our images, messages and actions include positive representations of different people within the workplace and stakeholder groups, such as people with a disability, people of different ages, people from different cultural backgrounds and gender diverse people. Being inclusive also means that different people and groups must be involved in designing, planning and implementing equality and respect initiatives. Learning from each other is one of the best ways to practice intersectionality.

- *Have taken the time to educate myself (for example, cultural competency training)?*
- *Have I consulted different people on the design and messaging?*
- *Have I inadvertently resorted to stereotypical images and statements?*
- *Have I allocated sufficient resources for a consultation?*
- *Have I ensured there are different ways to provide feedback?*

## 04

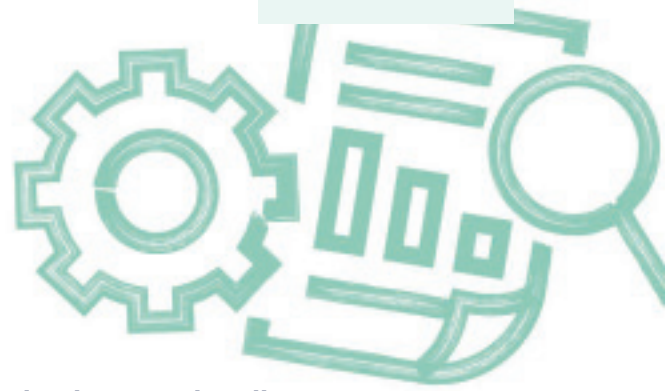
### Practice self-care

There will be times when we won't always get it right. It's important to take care of yourself and seek support when it's needed.

If this work was easy, it would already be done, and it would be mainstream. What we uncover about our systems, ways of working, processes, and indeed ourselves can be confronting, and this makes for challenging work.

You can look into supports for vicarious trauma (the impact of hearing/seeing/processing stories of abuse or violence) as well as self-care. We often get told self-care is bubble baths and forms of indulgence, but true self-care (as opposed to 'after-care' which is what we need to do to recover from an incident) can look more like:

- putting in clear boundaries around work times, topics and tasks
- reaching out to an EAP or trusted friends for debriefs
- ensuring time and resources to eat well, move your body and get adequate rest and time away from devices
- having support in real time with other colleagues engaged and sharing the load
- taking regular breaks and getting outside into sunshine and fresh air
- reading articles and blogs on self-care and radical self-compassion. Consider these links as a non-exhaustive list:
  - Wellbeing: <https://lifeinmind.org.au/suicide-prevention/approaches/wellbeing/self-care>
  - Mental health self-care: <https://toolkit.lifeline.org.au/articles/techniques/self-care-for-mental-health-and-wellbeing>
  - Self-care planning: <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Importance-of-selfcare-planning.pdf>
  - Radical self-compassion: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/finding-true-refuge/202001/radical-self-compassion>
  - Self-compassion with Dr Kristin Neff: <https://self-compassion.org/>
- unpacking your thoughts about the day or a particular event – for example, by journalling, voice recording, writing an email you'll never send or talking it out with a trusted person
- accessing mental health and/or medical supports when you feel that they could assist.

**RESOURCE**


# Different approaches to collecting data

This resource explores key considerations prior to measuring intersectionality.

- What steps have you taken as an organisation to understand and progress conversations on intersectionality? How well is the concept understood?
- How have those with lived experience of marginalisation been involved in co-designing and defining your approaches to measurement?
- How are you articulating why you are collecting data on intersectional identities, and why this matters for your organisation?

Approach	Advantages	Challenges
<b>Human resource and people management systems</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Involves collecting diversity data in employee pre-onboarding or recruitment forms, which can then be entered into the HR system.</li> <li>▪ Some data fields may be mandatory (for example, gender, age) and other data fields may be optional (for example, cultural background, disability).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The broad and comprehensive capture across the workforce.</li> <li>▪ Capacity to analyse the data by role, function etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People may feel reluctant to share demographic data beyond limited areas because it is identified and not anonymous.</li> <li>▪ Generally the fields of demographic data collected through people management systems are limited.</li> </ul>
<b>Inclusion and engagement surveys</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Involves collecting a broad range of demographic data through pulse, engagement and inclusion surveys. For example, a platform called Culture Amp collects both demographic and employee experience data in a de-identified way. This enables organisations to filter the data by demographics, including by intersectional identities. This data can then be cross referenced with responses to experience questions, including questions designed specifically to understand the experiences of inclusion or exclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is anonymous so is likely to have a higher response rate, particularly when the purpose of the data collection is well explained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Because the data is not identified, there are limitations to the analysis that can be done, for example around other pay gaps, promotion and access to learning and development opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>Self-identification surveys</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some organisations have a regular self-identification survey, which enables employees to self-identify with a number of demographic groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enables organisations to build a snapshot of the demographic mix of the respondent pool. With sufficient sample size this data can also enable the analysis of belonging and inclusion metrics from other surveys.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data collection is voluntary, so the key challenge is achieving a high completion rate and representative data set.</li> </ul>



## RESOURCE

# A checklist for inclusive recruitment

**Signal commitment by making sure that public platforms demonstrate commitment to an inclusive, safe and respectful workplace.**

- ☐ Our website and communications have an inclusion statement.
- ☐ Our values and strategic plans are accessible on our website and emphasise the importance of diversity and inclusion and our commitment to intersectional gender equality.
- ☐ We have an Acknowledgement of Country on our website.
- ☐ The images we use on our website and in our communications reflect the diversity of our workforce.
- ☐ We are committed to and focus on cultural safety.

**Determine your needs by being clear about what you are trying to achieve.**

- ☐ We are clear about our organisational needs as they relate to recruitment.
- ☐ If we are hiring for a designated/identified role the position description is clear about the specific skills and knowledge needed.
- ☐ We engage in ongoing and proactive analysis of future needs.
- ☐ We continually evaluate the potential talent pool.

**Review your recruitment process from job design to onboarding.**

## Job design and advertisement

- ☐ We focus on reshaping or reclassifying roles for greater inclusivity.
- ☐ We consider the inherent requirements of the role. Inherent requirements are the skills and responsibilities that the role cannot be performed without.
- ☐ We focus on transferable skills rather than technical skills, qualifications or specific experience.
- ☐ We focus on skills-based recruiting without degree prerequisites. This approach opens opportunities for motivated and skilled talent from non-traditional backgrounds who may lack formal credentials.
- ☐ We design the job to be flexible. We offer:
  - ☐ job sharing
  - ☐ part-time hours
  - ☐ flexible start, finish- or split shift times
  - ☐ remote or hybrid work
  - ☐ rosters that allow for school/ childcare pick up and/or drop off
  - ☐ compressed hours
- ☐ We analyse the composition of the current team and identify lived expertise that might be missing, for example, people from certain age groups, backgrounds, education levels or fields.
- ☐ We analyse the job advertisement to ensure the language and requirements are inclusive. We avoid gender-coded words and ensure that the qualifications listed are essential for the role, not just nice-to-haves that could inadvertently exclude qualified candidates. We ensure that the images used in the advertisement reflect the diversity of people we would like to join our team/organisation.



- ☐ In our outreach and recruitment strategy, we explore partnerships with organisations and platforms that cater to diverse groups.
- ☐ We assess where we advertise and explore recruitment pages dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, disability or LGBTIQA+ communities. We look at where we can advertise that might get our role in front of talent that is missing in our organisation.
- ☐ Our job advertisements include remuneration details (even if it's just a possible range).
- ☐ Our job advertisements are clear about accessibility options, leave provisions and other workplace accommodations and benefits available for employees. This includes provisions like cultural leave, parental leave and flexible work.

### Application process

- ☐ We have a register of employees who can be mentored or prepared with a succession plan for different roles in the organisation.
- ☐ We make the application process as accessible as possible. This may include things like limiting selection criteria to the inherent requirements, just asking for a resume/CV and cover letter, having options to submit online to an email or via an application form and allow enough time for applicants to apply.
- ☐ We encourage applicants to submit 'anonymised or deidentified resumes' – this means applications without photos, graduate years, postcodes, date of births or gender.

### Selection process

- ☐ We have a 'de-identified hiring approach' where potentially biasing information is removed from CVs, cover letters and resumes at the initial screening stage.
- ☐ We have targets for both the long-list and short-list of applications that consider gender alongside other identity factors so we can address the diversity gaps within our organisation.

- ☐ We have more than one person review and select the long- and short-lists (ensuring that there are men and women represented on the decision-making team). Ideally, we have a panel of representative employees who can assess applications for both accountability and to ensure the best outcome.
- ☐ Our selection instruction for decision makers makes it clear that we are recruiting for the best person for the job based on their skills or skills they can develop, what they will contribute to the workplace culture, and what insights and perspectives they can bring to the team (not 'cultural fit' or who has the highest qualification).
- ☐ The interview panel completes an implicit bias quiz and considers their scores before doing the interviews. They are supported to explore how bias might play out in the recruitment process and how to mitigate against it.
- ☐ We have a policy to not look up an applicant's social media accounts as part of avoiding non-work-related bias influencing decision-making.

### Interviews

- ☐ Prior to the interview we ask candidates if they have any accessibility needs for the interview and ensure they are addressed. These needs may be things required of the physical space, the panel of interviewers or the process.
- ☐ We send through interview questions ahead of the interview. This allows for considered responses, particularly from candidates who may need additional time to prepare, such as people who are neurodiverse or people with English as an additional language. We are not only recruiting those who can think on their feet or under pressure.
- ☐ We offer several different channels for an interview (in person, via video, via the phone). For someone who cannot afford to get to a face-to-face interview, a video interview is a cheaper alternative.

- ☐ The venue where we conduct interviews is accessible and welcoming and we consider if:
  - it has an accessible and suitable entry
  - it has free parking nearby or we can offer to pay for/waive parking fees
  - there is significant travel involved and how this can be avoided
  - there is clear signage on the way to the venue and in the right locations within the building
  - there are any signs of inclusion (braille signs, pride stickers, etc.) at the entrance that can put visitors at ease.
- ☐ We put together interview panels that are gender balanced and do not have too many panel members (no more than 3).
- ☐ We make sure we are pronouncing people's names correctly before the interview begins and we apologise if we get it wrong.
- ☐ We do not assume that everyone has perfect sight. We avoid this assumption in the way we conduct the interview and introduce ourselves and we ensure there is large, readable font on any documents.
- ☐ We eliminate jargon and acronyms from the interview discussion.
- ☐ Our interview sessions open with a heartfelt Acknowledgement of Country or where appropriate a Welcome to Country as per our business's Reconciliation Action Plan.
- ☐ We offer more than one interview time slot if possible and consider whether the particular time of day selected for interviews will be accessible. For example, 9am or 3pm will not be accessible for someone caring for school-aged children.

## Interview follow-ups

- ☐ Once the position is filled, we approach successful and non-successful candidates for feedback on the recruitment process. We ask questions such as:
  - Did you feel you were treated fairly and with respect?
  - Did you notice any bias in the questions?
  - Was the interview accessible? For example, time of day, venue, access to online space, signs to the venue, car parking and travel.
  - Was the recruitment documentation and information easy for you to understand?
  - Were the people welcoming?
  - Was the place welcoming? Did you feel you belonged?
  - Was the information sent out beforehand useful? Did it give you a sense that you might belong here?
  - Could our workplace be more inclusive in this hiring process?
  - What would you like to see changed?

## Onboarding

- ☐ We have mentors and sponsors to help those starting a new role or taking on a new career challenge.
- ☐ We have a checklist of activities for new employees to 'tick off' on their first day, first week and first 90 days. This includes encouraging them to make contact with a list of people who will be critical to their learning and success on the job.
- ☐ We have a buddy system for new employees.
  - ☐ We formally acknowledge the 'buddy' role and support the buddy to allocate time to fulfil these duties.

## RESOURCE

# Guiding questions to review promotions policy

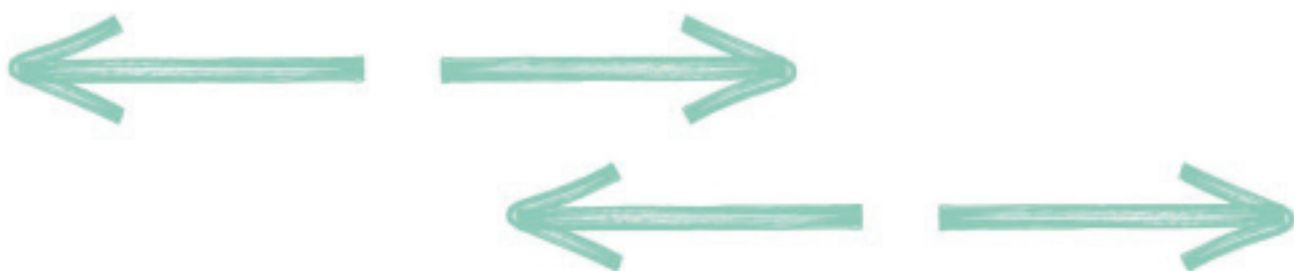


- ☐ Do we have a promotion policy or framework? Or have we never considered how we promote and who we promote and why we do it this way?
- ☐ Do we comprehensively address all barriers, and embed inclusion in all talent/recruitment processes and decision-making systems?
- ☐ Does our policy have recruitment systems that include people who experience the most marginalisation? For example, if our leadership positions require leaders to work or travel out of hours, do we consider the barriers for carers? Is there any other way this leadership position can be done? Can we adjust it to be more inclusive?
- ☐ Does our promotions policy development or review process require the participation of employees or potential employees who experience marginalisation? People don't notice barriers they don't face. Those that face them are best qualified to design the barrier-free future of work.
- ☐ Is our promotional process focused on personality, charisma and charm? Autistic people or those from culturally diverse backgrounds are often overlooked when leadership is equated with charisma or extreme extraversion. Do people have to perform tasks in interviews that best suit extroverts? Is the system, like most, set up to cater to the dominant neurotype?
- ☐ Does our policy consider ALL forms of intersectional systems/structures and barriers? (Revisit the intersectional definitions.)
- ☐ Does our policy consider promotion pathways and ensure networking groups are accessible to employees or potential employees who experience marginalisation, and not just a select few?
- ☐ Are our promotions based on the way someone presents and looks? For example, the NSW Police Force Body Art & Modification Policy stipulates what is and isn't acceptable in terms of body art on a case-by-case basis. This allows them to avoid the pitfalls of some policies that do not consider things like cultural tattooing. Tāmoko tattooing, for example, is worn on the face and body, but the protocols for facial tattoos differ according to gender. A policy that doesn't consider these cultural factors can contribute to a workplace in which people don't progress because they don't look 'mainstream' or like other leaders in the past.
- ☐ Does our policy have a specific section on mentoring and leadership programs for employees who are underrepresented and encourage and support them to take up these opportunities? Does it promote access to mentoring, programs and sponsorship opportunities, and specifically focus on targeting those with the most intersecting barriers?
- ☐ Does our promotion policy stipulate and give examples of inclusive language that is to be used by leaders and others in the organisation?
- ☐ Does our policy outline a provision for leaders to 'sponsor' high potential under-represented talent and give them guidance on how to do this effectively?
- ☐ Is our policy reviewed regularly and is the data analysed from an intersectional perspective? For example, if the data shows that we have underperformed in meeting diversity targets for the last 3 years, what are we missing? Is it time to change what we are doing to be better performers and more innovative in our leadership of the business?

## RESOURCE

# A good practice checklist for flexible work

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> We have a policy to ensure a consistent and fair approach to flexible working arrangements.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Our policy makes 'all roles flex' by adopting a flexible-by-default or 'if not, why not' approach</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Our policy recognises different needs for flexibility and supports tailoring flexible work arrangements to meet them.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We have a communication plan/strategy to support the implementation of our flexible policy.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We have communicated our commitment to flexible work through multiple channels.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Our employees know how to apply for flexible work.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Our clients and stakeholders know that our team works flexibly so as to manage expectations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We regularly communicate our commitment to addressing intersectional barriers by showcasing examples of employees who have benefitted from using flexible work.</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Our leadership team and managers are supported to role model the use of flexible work. Managers have been trained in:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> discussing requests for flexible working arrangements to better understand employees circumstances and what they need</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> speaking positively about flexible work</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> supporting employees to set clear boundaries around logging off and checking out</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> supporting other employees to adjust to the changes in the workplace and be aware of any extra demands that their colleagues' flexible working arrangements create.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We invest in technology to help employees with their flexible work.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> We regularly schedule reviews on flexible work arrangements to ensure they are meeting employee needs.</p> |
|---|---|



**RESOURCE**


# Flexibility audit tool

Flexible working arrangement	Do we offer this? (Y/N)	Who does it support?	Are we offering this to all employees? If not, why not?	What actions do we need to take to make this option available to as many employees as possible? What are the intersecting barriers to consider?
Flexible start and finish times				
Compressed hours				
Changing from full-time to part-time or casual				
Job sharing				
Flexible rostering				
Working from home or other locations				
Purchasing paid leave				
Unpaid leave				
Taking rostered days off as 2 half days				
Time off in lieu				
Flexitime				
Gradual increase or decrease in hours				
An opportunity to take cultural days as leave if appropriate				
An opportunity to have additional leave day/s for community events that promote equity				
Mental health days as extra leave days				



**[ourwatch.org.au](https://ourwatch.org.au)**

**Our  
Watch**



Preventing violence  
against women