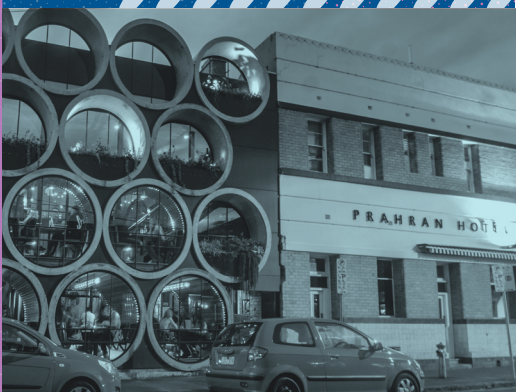


# Agency Iceberg Diversity & Inclusion Workplace Guide





## Introduction

A focus on Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) is becoming increasingly important across Australian workplaces. D&I provides companies with diversity of thought and better innovation, while allowing people to bring their full selves to work. Having a positive, inclusive and supportive work environment can boost employee satisfaction and contribute to improved productivity and a better workplace culture.

The purpose of the Agency Iceberg Diversity & Inclusion Guide is to give Australian workplaces a practical tool to adopt better D&I policies to benefit both businesses and people. Our aim is to drive further awareness through educational insights, practical tips and best practice insights. The guide features helpful quotes from friends of Agency Iceberg and #LeadingLadies (c-suite females profiled in the interview series by Agency Iceberg), and external experts.

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# Cultural Diversity

## Definition:

Cultural diversity refers to the variety of individuals with different cultural backgrounds within a workforce. This includes differences in language, ethnicity, geography, religion, race and values.

## Practical tips/policies to implement:

Australia is a culturally diverse country and [it's important that our workplaces reflect this](#). There are several practical measures that can be taken, including:

### Have an equal opportunity hiring process:

Make it clear in your job advertisements that you are an equal opportunity employer. During the recruitment and selection process, hire on skill-set and consider all applicants, regardless of their cultural background.

### Educate your staff:

Provide staff with educational resources, which explain key issues such as cultural differences and the importance of respecting these differences during the hiring and orientation process. Being specific sets the standard straightaway and clearly communicates your organisational values. It will give them an opportunity to acknowledge, reflect and act according to the outlined policies. Train your staff to be aware of any unconscious bias they may have due to their own cultural background and upbringing.

### Implement strict anti-discrimination policies:

Be proactive about calling out, and acting upon instances of cultural discrimination in the workplace. Having strict policies and enforcing them encourages a workplace that respects and honours the importance of being equal

and fair. It also helps those who are from a different cultural background to feel safe, supported and respected.

## Embrace cultural celebrations and lifestyle differences:

Make note of different cultural celebrations or lifestyle choices and maintain an inclusive attitude. Be flexible and accommodating to staff who may need to take time off for specific cultural days. Accept that each employee comes from a different cultural background and may have different personal needs.

## Best practice examples and further resources:

- [Employsure](#) provides great up-to-date research and insights on promoting diversity in the workplace.
- This [VicHealth](#) guide offers helpful information on how cultural diversity is beneficial for businesses.
- ANZ's [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) is an example of their commitment to increasing cultural diversity and promoting the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Please note that [Indigenous diversity](#) is considered a separate topic.

*"We design employee programs and benefits, strengthen policies and apply business practices that support inclusion and continue to make this a company priority. Our employee benefits are flexible and inclusive for all staff."*

*We are committed to reviewing and updating our policies to ensure we are strengthening our diversity and inclusion policy and providing additional tools and resources for our employees."*

**Gemma Hudson, Managing Director  
of WE Buchan**



# Gender Equality

## Definition:

Gender equality refers to the equal access to rights and opportunities regardless of gender identity.

According to the [Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#), Australian women earn less than men, are less likely to advance as far in their careers, and accumulate less superannuation savings. As of 2018, the wage gap sits at 14.6%. More statistics and a full breakdown of how the wage gap has changed over time can be found [here](#).

## Actions that can be taken to improve gender equality include:

### Hiring and promotion decisions:

- Have clear human resourcing guidelines that specify the importance of hiring based on skills rather than gender or otherwise reduce the risk of bias or gender discrimination.
- Make promotional decisions based on skills and performance. For example, ensuring those going on parental leave are still considered.
- Some organisations also decide to go a step further by implementing female quotas. Whilst there is debate about how effective female [quotas](#) are, they can be a good step in providing a structured hiring framework that emphasises the importance of giving women a seat at the table. It also helps to overcome any unconscious biases there may be in hiring and promotional processes, and prevent the overlooking of women.

## Pay parity:

A big step organisations can take in improving gender equality is by paying women the same as men when they are in the same role. Maintaining equal pay in the workplace shows that your organisation respects the equal work that is being done, regardless of gender.

## Role models and male allies:

- With only [17%](#) of CEOs in Australia being female, it's important for men in leadership positions to lead by example, use their positions of influence to support women in their careers and work to create gender equity.
- Managers can encourage men in the organisation to educate themselves on current gender issues, and create a supportive environment for discussion to ask any questions. Incorporating regular training sessions, educational workshops and attending industry events discussing gender equality are also great initiatives to take.
- Men in the workplace who aren't in leadership positions can additionally play a role in speaking up for gender equality. An example may be if a woman is interrupted in a meeting to pause and ask everyone to listen. Another example is to call out injustices, such as sexist or stereotypical remarks. A more comprehensive guide of what male allies can do to support gender equality can be found [here](#).
- Gender inequality can also exist for men, for instance when it comes to parental leave (see page 10).



**Being aware of gender diverse people:**

- Whilst most people, including transgender individuals, identify as male or female there are **individuals** who do not associate with either category. Rather, they identify with a combination or do not identify with any gender. They may describe themselves as non-binary or bigender. People may also have different gender expressions, which refers to their behavior, mannerisms, and interests.
- It is important to be aware of and accepting of these individuals, and support them in the workplace the same as male or female employees. Practical examples include using the name that the individual asks you to use for them, and asking what pronouns they prefer to describe them.
- Additionally, it is important to not make assumptions or discriminatory comments based on their gender expression, and call it out if this happens.
- Supporting non-binary individuals and their choice on which bathroom they feel safest in is another example of how organisations can support gender equality. For more helpful guidance on managing non-binary employee needs, head [here](#).

**Further information and best practice examples:**

- This [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) report shares insightful statistics on the state of gender equality in the Australian workplace.
- The [Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#) provides a wealth of resources offering employers advice, practical tips and up-to-date education to help improve gender equality. A great place to start is their [article](#) on the benefits of gender equality in the workplace.
- [Johnson & Johnson](#) have a great gender diversity policy, with the company being awarded 2017-2018 'Employer of Choice for Gender Equality' citation from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WEGA). Some initiatives the company has introduced include an enhanced parental leave policy, flexible work practices and paid leave for domestic and family violence victims.

*"Gender equality is not just about advancing women, it's about breaking down gender bias so non-women, non-binary people can be included equally in the workforce through equal opportunities, pay and mentoring."*

**Enya Cai, Oceania Diversity & Inclusion Coordinator**

*"I was once asked to attend a pitch at the last minute with very little context. The reason being was they needed to show gender diversity at the meeting and that I didn't really need to speak, just to show my face."*

**Ange Lin**



# LGBTIQ+

## Definition:

LGBTIQ+ diversity refers to the inclusivity of all gender expressions, identities and sexualities in the workplace. Despite it being illegal to discriminate on the basis of someone's sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status, many LGBTIQ+ employees still experience hostility or harassment.

## Quick statistics from the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#):

- Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are three times more likely to experience depression compared to the wider population.
- Around 60% of gay and gender questioning young people said they experienced verbal abuse because of their sexuality.
- Transgender males and females experience significantly higher rates of non-physical and physical abuse compared with lesbians and gay men.

## To promote a safe and inclusive workplace for LGBTIQ+ employees, there are some practical tips and policies to implement:

### Review your policies

Having clear anti-discrimination policies is a great first step to prevent discrimination and promote an inclusive workplace culture. Review your workplace guidelines and check for gender neutral language. Modify or update them to include anti-discrimination policies, and enforce consequences when they are broken. For example, do not tolerate homophobic behaviours or attitudes, demeaning comments based on sexual orientation or gender identity. An example of a homophobic slur that should not be tolerated includes: "move, faggot" or "shut up homo".

### Provide educational resources for staff

Giving staff access to educational materials can help avoid any confusion and encourage respect and inclusion. For instance, educate staff on using inclusive language, such as inviting 'partners' to social events rather than 'husbands or wives'. To go a step further, suggest workshops, [training videos](#) or attend events as a team to advocate for equality in the workplace.

### Inclusive bathrooms

Allow employees to use bathroom facilities they feel correspond with their identity and they are most comfortable in. Also consider providing gender-neutral bathrooms with single-occupant stalls. Educate other staff to be aware of this.



## Awareness and support for transgender transitioning

To support transgender employees or those that are transitioning, start by having an open discussion with employees about transgender issues. Respect and support an individual's choice without judgment. Promote acceptance and respect by using the pronoun and name a transgender employee prefers. If someone is transitioning, employers should be flexible in accommodating their needs for time off. For additional information, the [Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#) provides in-depth guides on helping employees through transitioning.

## Best practice examples and further resources:

- To discover more about inclusive language surrounding LGBTIQ+ employees, head [here](#).
- For more information about managing employees who are transgender or transitioning, start with this [tool kit](#).
- [EY](#) are leading the way in LGBTIQ+ inclusion through their professional network for LGBTIQ+ professionals and allies Unity, which has over 1,600 members globally.

*"Diversity and inclusion means that everyone is included. It also means developing policy on making the workplace more inclusive for transgender people. This sets a framework, sending a signal to all employees that senior management are committed to diversity and inclusion. Having zero tolerance of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace as well as having mental health providers available also demonstrates that an organisation supports LGBTIQ+ people."*

**Melissa Griffiths, Transgender Authority**



# Flexible work practices

## Definition

Workplace flexibility refers to employees having a certain degree of control over when, where and how their work is done.

## Examples of workplace flexibility include:

- Teleworking (e.g. working from home, a cafe, a different part of your office)
- Flexible hours
- Job sharing

Workplace flexibility is important as it allows time and space for employees to fulfil their commitments outside of work, such as carer or family responsibilities. It helps them maintain a healthy work life balance that works for them. It also builds trust between employer and employee, and can improve staff satisfaction and productivity.

## Other benefits of workplace flexibility:

- Access to a broader talent pool (including those that don't live in the same place as their employer)
- Attracts more quality talent - with workplace flexibility growing in popularity, having a progressive policy can help attract more talent to your organisation
- Higher morale - as employees feel greater control over their work practices, they may feel more valued and respected in their role

## Practical tips / policies to implement:

### Offer flexible working hours and part time positions:

- Allow employees to adjust their working hours for appropriate reasons. For example, allow an employee to leave at 2:30PM to pick up their child from school, and make up the hour either before work or after.
- Offering part time work also accommodates those employees who cannot commit to full time work due to other commitments, such as study or carer duties. It allows you access to a wider pool of talent who can bring diversity to the business.

### Reduce stigma around flexibility for all genders:

Have open discussions with your employees and have flexibility policies that include all individuals, regardless of gender. Men can be impacted by flexibility stigma as it is less common for them to work from home or part time. To combat this, provide equal flexible work policies to all genders and embrace inclusive language within the workplace around the topic. For instance, allow a male employee to adjust their work hours to pick up their child.

### Consider job sharing options:

Job sharing is where two people split the responsibilities of one role. Providing this option can give businesses access to talent with complementary skills and experience, encourage greater problem-solving and continuity of work (if someone leaves, there is still someone there who is experienced in the role).



### Telecommuting: allow employees to work off-site or from home:

Giving employees the freedom to telecommute can help increase productivity, as they may have fewer distractions and do not have to spend time commuting to work. They have less parking or transport demands, and it can also reduce the cost for employer overheads (e.g. 2 employees sharing one desk in the office).

### Lead by example:

Ensure that your leaders are embracing your policies. For instance, encourage senior leaders to be role models in workplace flexibility. An example would be for a senior leader to leave early to pick up their child, and work flexibly from home to make up the time. This creates a ripple effect and shows that it is possible to be a senior leader and work flexibly.

### Best practice examples and further resources:

- Learn more about workplace flexibility in this educational [video](#) from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.
- Educate yourself on making workplace flexibility work for your business in this [Fair Work online course](#).
- [Westpac](#) has a great 'All in Flex' workplace flexibility policy, which sees nearly three out of four employees working flexibly at the company.

*"Women represent 69% of part-time professionals in Australia. They still need to be paid what they're worth. Yes, employing someone part-time can help with your overall people budget. But, that's where the savings should end — they still need to be paid equally on a pro-rata basis. One of the issues we tackle at Beam is the devaluation of part-time people. When advertising a role, assess the value of the outcomes. Take the rate you'll pay for the value of the output and place the highest value on the best candidate to produce those outcomes — part-time, full-time, gig worker or permanent."*

**Stephanie Reuss and Victoria Stuart, Co-CEO and Co-Founders, Beam Australia**



# Parental family leave

## Definition:

Paid parental or family leave is where an employer provides paid time off for parents when their child is born or adopted. It includes maternity, paternity, foster parenting, surrogacy and adoption leave.

## Practical tips / policies to implement:

### Have inclusive family leave policies:

Keep the business up-to-date with family leave law and follow the appropriate guidelines, such as providing employees with their entitled paid leave. For example, under the Fair Work Act, staff with over 12 months service are entitled to 12 months unpaid parental leave. As part of your family leave policy, be sure to include non-binary parents, and avoid discriminating based on gender or otherwise. Eligible working dads and partners (including same-sex and adopting partners), can receive two weeks of government pay through [Dad and Partner Pay](#) after having a baby or adopting a child.

### Support your employees in returning to work:

Employees are entitled to return to their role after their leave is finished, or a role of similar pay and status. Provide a welcoming transition for your employees, including discussing any changes to their role or working conditions. Maintain open communication and regular check-ins about any new needs or special requests your employee may have. For instance, provide employees with children under school age flexible work options.

## Hire and terminate fairly:

Do not discriminate within the recruitment process based on pregnancy or parenthood. Ensure that you do not make an employee redundant or fire them due to pregnancy or upcoming adoption.

## Learn from companies leading the way:

[Medibank](#) is a great example of a company putting employees first when it comes to parental leave. In 2018 the company announced a new 'FamilyFlex' policy that offers all eligible prospective parents, regardless if they are primary or secondary carers and irrespective of gender, 14 weeks of paid leave within the first 24 months. It also allows both parents to take leave at the same time, making Medibank a leader in '[encouraging equal and shared parenting responsibilities](#)'.

## Keep in touch:

Ensure management are actively keeping in touch with their staff who are on parental leave. Consider paid 'keep in touch' days, where you discuss market trends, what is going on in the business and check in.



**Best practice examples and further resources:**

- Read up on [laws](#) around Australian family leave policies and guidelines.
- Check out this employer [guide](#) to supporting working parents by the Australian government. [Circle In](#) also provide a great range of online materials, tools and consulting services to support those returning to work after parental leave.
- [Beam](#) is a great service that connects qualified and experienced parents with businesses looking to hire. They provide flexible roles only, such as roles with part-time or flexible work hours.
- [Deloitte](#) has a great 20-week return to work program to help employees transition back to work, including training and mentoring.

*"We have many staff who have taken time off for maternity or paternity leave and then returned to work in a part-time and/or work-from-home capacity. In fact, around a quarter of our people are currently employed on flexible work arrangements of various kinds, in order to be able to work around their other life commitments."*

**Sujata Raman, Regional Managing Director,  
Australia & Asia Pacific, Abercrombie & Kent**



# Age

## Definition:

Age diversity refers to an organisation's acceptance and inclusion of people of various age categories. Age diversity in the workplace provides businesses with a wide range of skill sets and a dynamic, multigenerational workforce.

Age discrimination can occur at any age, including young workers just entering the workforce, to those looking to retire and all those in between.

According to the [Diversity Council Australia](#), the ageing population of people aged 65-84 is set to double and there are approximately two million elder Australians who want to work but cannot find employment. There is a growing emphasis on accommodating these mature-age employees and preventing discrimination against them in the workplace.

## Practical tips / policies to implement:

### Have an inclusive recruitment process:

Hire employees based on their skill set and performance, and do not discriminate based on age or otherwise. For example, include mature-age employees in the recruitment process. Similarly, do not rule out young people who are at times not taken seriously or given opportunity due to their young age. Having an open mind and anti-discriminatory recruitment policy can help reduce the risk of unconscious bias.

### Provide flexible work arrangements:

Mature age employees may request flexible work arrangements including telecommuting or flexible hours, whether that be for health or carer commitments. Those who have just become parents may also ask for greater workplace flexibility to take care of their family. Be sure to accommodate these requests. It's also important to encourage younger employees to utilise flexible work. It's important to offer flexible work to all employees, not just for parents, but those who are young, old and in between.

### Provide regular training and upskilling opportunities:

Keep employees up to date with their skills by offering on-the-job or off-the-job training, including workshops, videos or online resources. For example, ensure mature workers are using technology effectively in the workplace and if not, provide them with the appropriate training to do so.

### Encourage an inclusive and respectful culture:

Be open with employees about the importance of age diversity and respecting individuals regardless of their age. Encourage intergenerational communication and collaboration, including mentoring and teamwork. Call out any negative or discriminatory comments and behaviour, based on age or otherwise.



**Best practice examples:**

- Discover how to attract, engage, and retain workers of all ages via the [Diversity Council Australia](#).
- Learn about age discrimination and how to protect yourself or others via the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#).
- The [Australian Financial Review](#) lists Australia Post and Westpac as companies promoting age diversity through their respective policies, including those that focus on supporting employees who are transitioning into retirement.

*"It's time to celebrate older workers. We bring wisdom, experience and bucket loads of emotional intelligence. We're humble, curious and we're on a quest to learn and evolve. As more of us stay in the workforce for longer, we want to feel appreciated. While management fads and certain skills come and go, it's important for younger staff and management teams to recognise that sound judgement, deep knowledge and our ability to coach is priceless and timeless."*

**Amanda Place, Head of Corporate Communications and Media at the Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health**



# Ability

## Definition:

Ability diversity refers to organisations including people with disability in all aspects of business. More than [four million](#) people, or one in five, have some form of disability in Australia. Mental health issues can intersect with this category.

## Practical tips / policies to implement:

### Accommodate for environmental / physical needs:

Where possible, make environmental adjustments that allow for people with different accessibility requirements to work. This may include installing a ramp, having wide or clear hallways without obstruction, providing technical assistance or providing a quiet room in the office where staff can work.

### Foster a positive and inclusive workplace culture:

Emphasise the importance of diversity and inclusion with your staff. Celebrate events including R U OK day, International Day of People with Disability and Carers Week to encourage understanding and acceptance of those with disability. Encourage open discussions about disability diversity and offer access to educational information, such as brochures or videos.

### Promote diversity in the hiring process:

Encourage those with disabilities to apply for roles within your business, and reach out to groups or organisations that work with placing those with disabilities into the workforce. Be explicit about your business' willingness to adjust accessibility requirements.

## Best practice examples:

- Discover more information about the state of ability diversity in the workplace via the [Australian Government](#).
- Learn more about how to welcome people with disability into the workforce via the [Australian Network on Disability](#), including this factsheet on inclusive [language](#) or their guide to [interviewing people with disability](#).
- Accenture is an example of a company leading the way, with their focus on [enablement](#). They are also a member of the [Diversity Council of Australia](#) and gold member of [Australian Network on Disability](#). This signals their commitment to creating an accessible and inclusive workplace culture.

*"Employing people with disability contributes to the organisation's overall diversity. It enhances the company's image among its staff, customers and community with positive benefits to the employer brand."*

**Australian Government, [Job Access](#)**



## Thank you

Thank you for downloading the Agency Iceberg Diversity and Inclusion Workplace Guide. We hope you are now able to take practical steps to improve diversity within your organisation..

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For more information, please get in touch with Agency Iceberg Founder, Anna O'Dea at: [anna@agencyiceberg.com.au](mailto:anna@agencyiceberg.com.au) or 0409 354 256.

Alternatively, you can see our recommended resources and references.

## Resources and References

- Australian HR Institute: [Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- Australian Human Rights Commission: [Toolkits, guidelines and other resources](#)
- Victoria State Government Health and Human Services: [Delivering for diversity - Cultural diversity plan 2016-2019](#)
- Anti discrimination commission Queensland, [Workplace Champion's guide: diversity](#)
- Ideal, Diversity And Inclusion: [A Beginner's Guide For HR Professionals](#)
- Heads up, [Building inclusive workplaces for a diverse workforce](#)

