

Literature Review of the Attraction, Retention, and Inclusion of Diverse Employees

Report for the Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC)

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1.0 Milestone description

The Achievement Criteria for this Milestone 4, in the signed Agreement, is:

Draft and finalise report for Reviews #1 and #2.

Complete GU ethics submission.

Milestone report submitted to, and approved by, AMPC.

The due date for this Milestone is 24th October, 2024.

2.0 Introduction and Overview

2.1 Introduction

This review was conducted as one component of a larger research project for the Australian Meat Processor Corporation (AMPC), which examines how Australian meat processing workplaces can improve attraction, retention and engagement, reduce turnover, and promote psychosocial safety and well-being and cultural safety for diverse employees within the red meat processing industry.

It is proposed that these aims are met through Australian meat processing workplaces developing and implementing inclusive employment practices for their diverse workforces comprising a range of cultures and social groups, including First Nations employees.

- Diversity encompasses differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and other identities.
- Equity involves the fair distribution of resources and opportunities, addressing barriers and biases that affect underrepresented groups.
- Inclusion promotes workplace practices that make all individuals feel welcomed, heard, and empowered.

By understanding these dynamics, the AMPC can help their members better navigate the complexities of workforce attraction and retention. This current review report is therefore a foundational step in the larger research initiative to improve well-being, psychosocial safety and inclusivity within the meat processing industry, along with the separate review that has been completed of academic and grey literature (i.e., government, industry and peak body reports) specific to the Australian meat processing industry.

2.2 Overview

This review presents the summary findings of (a) the relevant legislation and standards and (b) academic research (i.e., peer-reviewed research) about organisational DEI practices, how these relate to employee wellbeing, psychosocial safety, and cultural safety, and the implications for attraction and retention. More specifically, this review intends to provide a practical, evidence-based, and consolidated resource for AMPC regarding the enablers and barriers to attracting and retaining workers, using a DEI lens. This report is structured as follows.

Table 1. The primary structure of the current literature review.

Section	Contents
4.0	<i>Background:</i> This section outlines the significance of understanding diversity and equity in the workplace and the impact on organisational success.
5.0	<i>Methodology:</i> This section includes the approaches to gathering data, criteria for selecting literature, and the analytical methods used to synthesise findings from various sources.
6.0	<i>Legislation Review and Standards:</i> This section highlights critical legislation, standards and Codes supporting diversity initiatives.
7.0	<i>Literature Review of Research:</i> Employee Recruitment, Attraction, and DEI
8.0	<i>Literature Review of Research:</i> Employee Retention, Turnover, and DEI
9.0	<i>Interventions:</i> This section covers interventions discussed in studies for diverse work groups in general, then focuses specifically on practical interventions for creating inclusive workplaces specifically for employees with disabilities, then diverse sexual orientations.

Methodology: A systematic literature review encompassing peer-reviewed studies from 2009 to present was conducted. The search utilised specific critical academic databases: Web of Science, Scopus, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and Google Scholar, with keywords related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). Initially, 1,337 documents were identified; after applying inclusion criteria and removing duplicates, 76 studies were ultimately included in the final analysis. This rigorous methodology ensures a robust foundation for this review.

Main findings: In Australia, several vital legislative instruments form the foundation for DEI in the workplace. These laws collectively aim to prevent discrimination, promote equal opportunities, and protect the rights of individuals in various aspects of life, including employment. These instruments are detailed in section 4.0.

The findings from this review highlight that, overall, employees are more likely to stay with an organisation when their valued needs are met in their job environment (Brough et al., 2022).

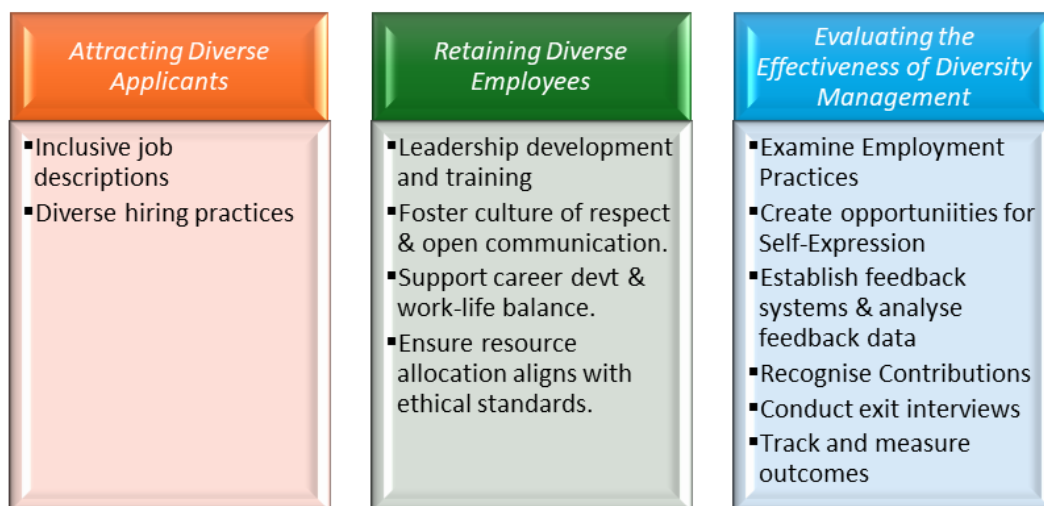
1. Inclusion positively impacts employee recruitment and attraction, with a critical strategy being a recruiting process that effectively promotes and accommodates diversity in recruitment processes. This strategy can improve perceptions of workplace diversity, signalling inclusivity to potential candidates. Several elements can create such a recruitment system including diversity statements, diverse recruitment teams, community engagement, experiential learning, and cultural celebrations.
2. A positive diversity climate significantly enhances employee engagement, satisfaction, well-being, and psychological/ psychosocial safety, reducing turnover intentions.
3. Different personal, organisational, and environmental factors are related to DEI. Personal factors include knowledge, attitudes, and employee voice. At the organisational level, various factors include human resource systems, diversity climate, supportive climate, justice perceptions, leadership, and leader-employee relationships. For example, regarding the importance of leadership, organisations with high leader racial diversity report significantly higher psychological safety for minority and majority groups.

4. Having a positive diversity climate is typically associated with wellbeing advantages including:
 - enhanced positive worker attitudes, i.e., employee engagement, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being.
 - employees with key minority characteristics (gender, age, neurodiversity, disabilities, racial/indigenous) typically experiencing lower psychological stress and higher levels of job satisfaction, work engagement and well-being.
 - faith-friendly organisations reporting higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions among employees of all beliefs.

5. High levels of psychological safety and inclusion reassure employees that they will not face negative consequences for expressing diverse perspectives. A psychologically safe environment facilitates the exchange of information and encourages employees to share their expertise.

Interventions to manage diversity: The literature identifies several practical recommendations for enhancing organisational diversity management practices. These interventions and strategies can be categorised into three main categories.

Figure 1. Main categories of interventions and strategies to create diverse and inclusive workplaces.



The results and implications of this literature review are discussed in more detail within this report.

3.0 Project objectives

Objectives (from page 22 of the Research Agreement)

- To identify evidence-based research literature, theory, and workplace best practices about increasing the attraction and inclusion and reducing turnover of a diverse workforce.
- To identify inclusive workplace practices and issues in Australia focussed on the meat processing sector.
- To examine the current state of diversity, inclusion, psychosocial safety, and cultural safety, in the Australian meat processing industry, including existing metrics, policies, practices, and strategies, and through the lived experiences of employees and leaders/managers regarding their felt inclusion and what this means for their turnover intentions and their wellbeing.
- To identify, in the Australian meat processing industry, current good practice (such as effective management/leadership practices) to point to areas for intervention, and areas for improvement / development.
- To produce AMPC case studies, describing pertinent instances of this good practice.
- To produce a Report providing the information identified and set of evidence-based recommendations to AMPC. This report will specifically include a outcomes-focused road map identifying recommended measures the industry should consider to facilitate the broader inclusion of diverse workers.

4.0 Background – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

4.1. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) definitions

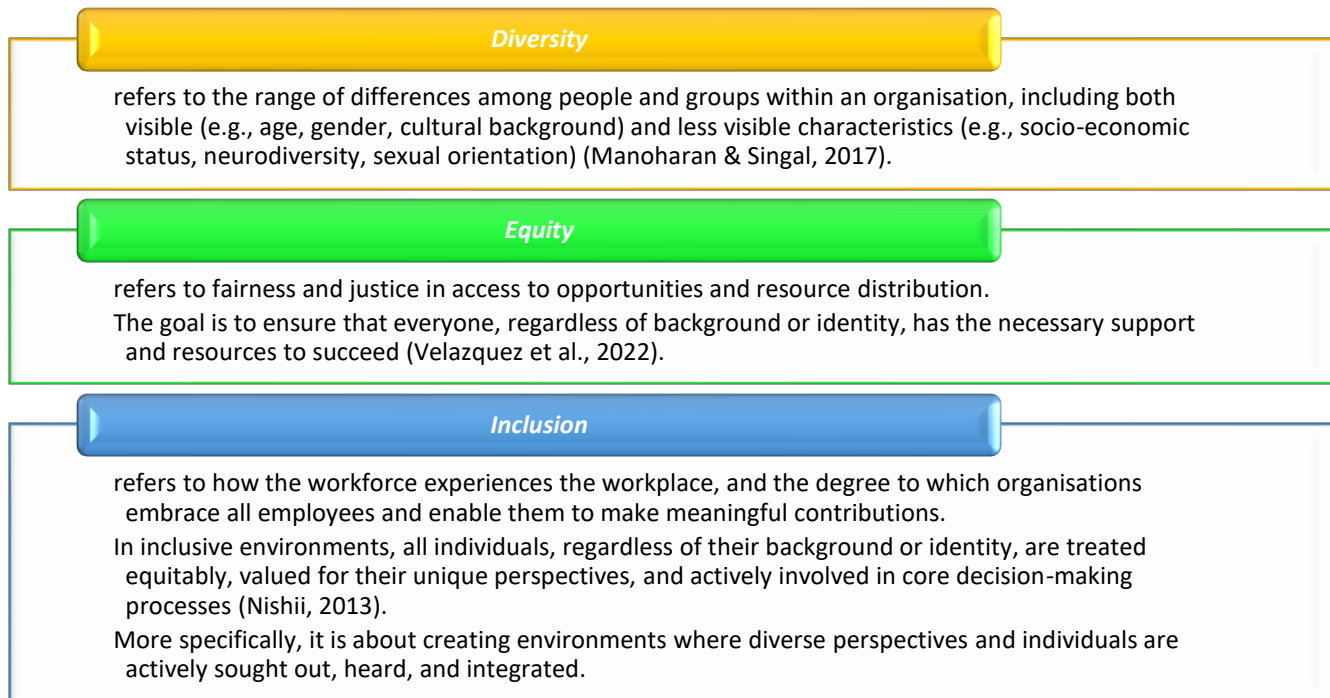


Figure 2. Definitions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

4.2 The Importance of DEI

DEI policies and programs are designed to foster a workplace environment where individuals from various backgrounds are not only represented, but actively included and supported. DEI initiatives aim to build a culture that acknowledges, values and leverages people's differences, enhancing personal and organisational growth (Sreedhar & Nayak, 2024).

A 2023 survey of Australian HR professionals found that a large majority (84%) see DEI as vital to their organisation's future success. However, only half (50%) of the HR professionals reported that their leaders prioritise DEI, and 49% felt their organisations were not focused enough on DEI practices. The survey also highlighted that DEI efforts in Australian workplaces are primarily focused on gender, with less emphasis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other under-represented groups, such as workers with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ employees, and individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Many HR professional respondents noted that these groups remain under-represented (Davies et al., 2023). Beyond fulfilling corporate and social responsibility principles, there is a strong business case for fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce. Key advantages include:

- Diverse organisations are better at attracting and retaining talent, as workplaces prioritising diversity and inclusion appeal more to job seekers, especially younger generations who value these principles.

- Employees are likelier to stay with organisations where they feel respected and valued and have equal opportunities to succeed, regardless of background (Kiradoo, 2022).
- Diverse teams tend to make higher-quality decisions, considering a broader range of factors and driving innovation through varied ideas and problem-solving approaches (Manoharan & Singal, 2017).
- Attracting and retaining diverse talent expands the talent pool, a critical benefit in skills shortages (Walton, 2022).

A supportive diversity climate greatly enhances employee well-being at work, as:

- Organisations that actively value diversity contribute to better emotional and psychological health for employees (Bellotti et al., 2022).
- Exclusion, in contrast, harms both psychological and physical health (Jones et al., 2016).

DEI is essential for fostering psychosocial and cultural safety in the workplace (Carrillo, 2023) as it:

- Creates an environment where employees feel psychologically safe, respected, and free from harassment, discrimination, or undue stress (Loh et al., 2024); and
- Ensures individuals feel respected, acknowledged, and free to express their cultural identity without fear of discrimination (Williams, 1999).

Both psychosocial and cultural safety directly improve mental well-being, engagement, and employees' ability to contribute fully without fear of negative consequences. The following sections will further explore these concepts and the benefits of DEI.

4.3 Benefits of DEI in the workplace

4.3.1. Benefits of Workplace Diversity

Research evidence supports that a diverse workforce enhances creativity and fosters innovation, highlighting its crucial role in driving organisational success (Chaudhry et al., 2021). When people from diverse backgrounds collaborate, they bring different perspectives and ideas, leading to innovative problem-solving strategies (Choi, 2024). Additionally, a diverse workforce helps businesses better understand and serve a wide range of customers, as organisations with diverse teams tend to be more successful in meeting the needs of diverse clientele (Dixit & Bajpai, 2015). This further helps businesses attract new customers, and retain existing ones, by meeting diverse customer needs more effectively (Ohemeng & McGrandle, 2015).

A diverse workforce also performs well in attracting and retaining top talent. Evidence indicates that candidates are drawn to employers who prioritise diversity and inclusion in today's competitive job market, as individuals seek workplaces that align with their principles (Mohanty & Acharya, 2020; Walton, 2022). In reflecting on the benefits that diversity can bring, it is useful to understand three distinct types of diversity:

- diversity as *separation*,
- diversity as *variety*, and
- diversity as *disparity* (Harrison & Klein, 2007).

Table 2 summarises the key differences among these three types of diversity.

Table 2. Meanings and properties of three types of diversity (from Harrison & Klein, 2007).

Diversity Type	Description	Predicted Outcomes
Separation (S)	Group members have different or opposing opinions, beliefs, values, and attitudes, especially regarding team goals and processes.	Reduced cohesiveness, more interpersonal conflict, distrust, decreased task performance.
Variety (V)	Differences in the kind, source, or category of relevant content knowledge or functional experience among group members; their unique or distinctive information.	Greater creativity, innovation, higher decision quality, more task conflict, increased unit flexibility.
Disparity (D)	Differences in the proportion of socially valued assets or resources – that is, pay, income, prestige, status, decision-making authority, and social power – that are held among group members; inequality or relative concentration.	More within-unit competition, resentful deviance, reduced member input, withdrawal.

‘Diversity as separation’ often highlights the potential for conflict and decreased performance due to dissimilarity. When diversity as separation is at its highest, group members tend to be polarised. ‘Diversity as disparity’ focuses on how resources, such as power, status, or assets, are unevenly distributed within the group. In a group characterised by high diversity as disparity, a few members hold most of these resources, resulting in significant differences among group members. While this form of diversity highlights issues of equity and justice, it often emphasises divisions rather than fostering unity or collaboration.

In contrast, ‘diversity as variety’ emphasises the range of experiences and information within a group, and how this expands its capacity for effective decision-making and creative thinking. In this form, diverse group members are spread across different categories of an attribute, enhancing the group’s overall skillset. This type of diversity is often viewed as the most positive, because it brings many skills, experiences, and perspectives that boost adaptability and problem-solving. Moreover, it fosters collaboration, creativity, and inclusivity, benefiting organisations and communities (Zhang et al., 2021).

4.3.2. Benefits of Workplace Equity

Workplace equity is a fundamental aspect of DEI that ensures all individuals are treated fairly, regardless of their race, gender, age, religion, or other personal characteristics, without discrimination or bias. It fosters a positive work environment characterised by mutual respect, trust, and collaboration, which leads to higher productivity, increased employee satisfaction, and improved profitability (Kiradoo, 2020). Additionally, workplace equity contributes to a positive work culture and enhances psychosocial safety, promoting teamwork, collaboration, and mutual support. When treated with respect and dignity, employees form stronger relationships with colleagues, leading to better communication and cooperation, ultimately boosting engagement, retention, and productivity (Javed, 2024).

4.3.3. Benefits of Workplace Inclusion

Inclusion in the workplace means creating a welcoming and diverse environment where every employee feels valued, respected, and appreciated. It can boost employee morale, increase productivity, and positively affect a company’s success (Gelfand et al., 2007). Achieving workplace inclusion requires actively promoting and supporting DEI initiatives beyond hiring diverse candidates (Kiradoo, 2022). This includes fostering psychological safety to encourage open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect among employees. Ensuring everyone feels

welcome includes providing equal opportunities for success through training and development programs accessible to all employees, regardless of their background or experience level (Kiradoo, 2022).

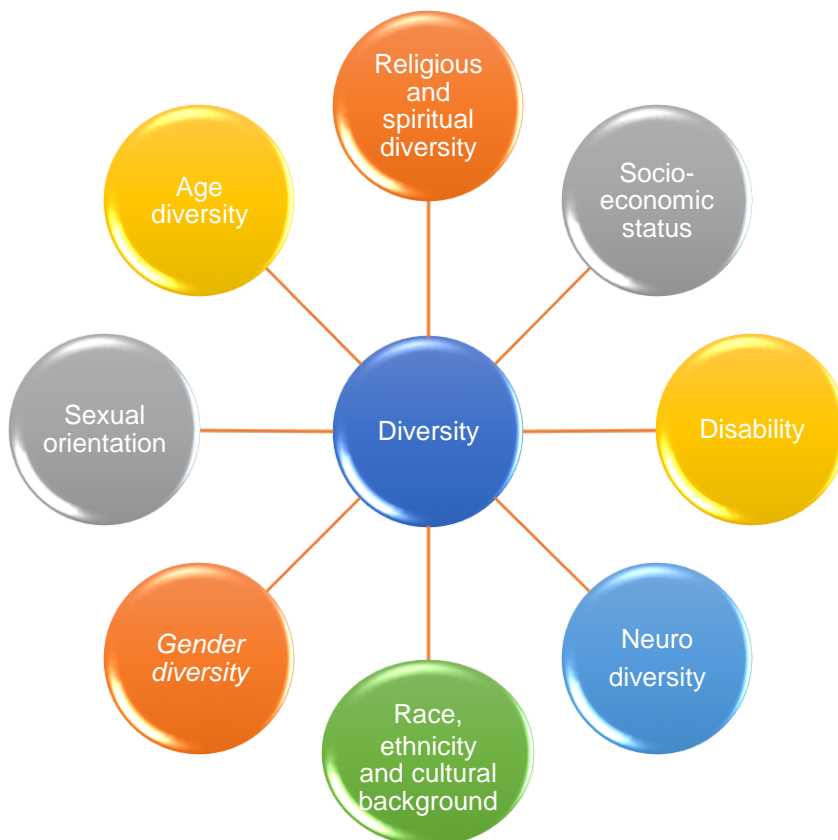
The key benefits of workplace inclusion include improved employee mental health and higher retention rates (O'Loughlin et al., 2022). When employees feel valued and supported, they are more likely to stay with the company long-term, reducing turnover and recruitment costs, which can enhance the organisation's financial performance (Kiradoo, 2022). Employee turnover often stems from prolonged exposure to organisational stressors, which can occur when there is a disconnect between the organisation's DEI policies and their actual implementation. When employees notice a gap between stated DEI values and daily practices, it can lead to dissatisfaction and prompt them to leave (Dopico, 2024). Therefore, to stay competitive and foster a healthy work environment, companies must implement and maintain adequate policies and practices that support inclusion for all backgrounds (Downey et al., 2015).

4.4. Different types of Workplace Diversity

Effectively managing a diverse workforce has become a primary challenge for leaders and managers. Different types of diversity can affect employee outcomes in various ways, making it essential to develop strategies that harness the benefits of diversity while addressing potential issues for organisational success (Van Dijk et al., 2017). However, each type of diversity can also contribute to a more vibrant and dynamic workplace environment (Reiners, 2024).

There are eight common types of diversity - these are illustrated in Figure 3:

Figure 3. Eight Common Types of Diversity.



4.4.1. Race, ethnicity and cultural background

relates to an individual's racial, ethnic and cultural heritage. Workplaces have become increasingly diverse due to heightened migration, globalisation, and the internationalisation of work life, which is expected to continue (Czaika & De Haas, 2014). Ethnic backgrounds and cultural differences can significantly influence the quality of interpersonal relationships at work. For example, research indicates that immigrants, migrants, and ethnic minority members are more likely to experience bullying compared to majority group members, although this may not apply to all groups (Bergbom & Vartia, 2021).

4.4.2. Gender diversity

in the workplace relates to inclusive practices to include various gender identities, with workplaces dominated by a single gender exhibiting low levels of gender diversity, with an imbalance in the representation of genders. Research indicates that higher levels of gender diversity are associated with increased employee satisfaction and decreased turnover intentions (Nielsen & Madsen, 2017). Furthermore, studies suggest that greater board gender diversity, particularly a higher proportion of female directors, is associated with decreased workplace sexual harassment and improved social policies related to employee relations, health and safety, or diversity challenges (Au et al., 2023).

4.4.3. Sexual orientation

pertains to an individual's sexual identity and attraction to different genders. The acronym LGBTIQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, and asexual, with the + reflecting the other sexuality and/or gender self-identifications. The abbreviated acronym LGBT is also used and will be used in this report.

Although workplace inclusion for LGBT employees has improved over time, many still find true inclusion challenging to achieve (Sabharwal et al, 2019). LGBT individuals often encounter significant barriers in the workplace, affecting both their career progression and mental health. Einarsdottir (2014) found that these employees face discrimination and bullying in the workplace at rates more than double those of their non-LGBT counterparts. Other key issues include limited job access, with reports showing that 12.3% of LGBT job applicants experience discouragement or exclusion in hiring processes (Blais et al., 2018); and the unique challenges faced by trans individuals related to disclosing their gender history (Budge et al., 2010). Workplace discrimination is pervasive, with 42.4% experiencing verbal harassment and 38.9% facing inappropriate identity-related questioning (Blais et al., 2018), with trans employees three times more likely to lose jobs than their LGBT peers (Sears & Mallory, 2011).

Additionally, the anticipation of stigma inhibits career advancement, often leading LGBT individuals to settle in "safe" roles at the expense of growth (Ng et al., 2012). Underrepresentation in leadership roles limits mentorship and visibility (Beauregard et al., 2018). Trans individuals, in particular, face challenges in the transitioning process, including workplace bullying, harassment, and misgendering, which harms their mental health (Jones, 2013).

4.4.4. Age diversity

refers to the capacity of an organisation to incorporate individuals from various age groups within its workforce. This diversity manifests as a range of ages represented among employees, necessitating tailored management strategies. Organisations face the increasing challenge of managing an aging workforce while ensuring a productive and balanced employee composition (Wilckens et al., 2021). To maximise the benefits of age diversity, companies must leverage the experience and expertise of older employees alongside the innovation and energy of younger workers. Effectively managing this dynamic can enhance organisational performance and foster a more inclusive workplace culture (Kumar & Singh, 2017).

4.4.5. Disability

is the umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors) (WHO, 2023). Adults with disabilities experience markedly lower rates of labour force participation compared to their non-disabled counterparts. Employment can serve as a crucial source of purpose and social integration for individuals with disabilities, who often face isolation due to physical and environmental barriers (Namkung & Carr, 2019).

4.4.6. Socioeconomic status

is a critical determinant across various domains, influencing access to resources and opportunities within societies (Phelan et al., 2010). Workers in lower socioeconomic positions - defined by income, education, and occupation factors - are more likely to experience adverse working conditions, such as increased physical and psychosocial demands, limited autonomy, and minimal social support, compared to other worker groups (An et al., 2016).

4.4.7. Religious and spiritual diversity

includes employees' potentially many practices and beliefs, encompassing major world religions, indigenous spiritual traditions, and non-religious spiritual practices. Another related term is 'worldview diversity', which refers to differences in religious and spiritual beliefs, political views, and ideologies. Employees bring diverse beliefs and perspectives into the workplace, which can significantly affect the organisational environment (Van Buren III et al., 2020).

Religious life influences interactions in secular settings like workplaces, as employees carry their identities with them. Therefore, organisations need to recognise the impact of religion, as it is deeply rooted in individuals and reflected in their attitudes and behaviours (Van Buren III et al., 2020). Many organisations realise that the focus should be on recognising the whole person, not just introducing faith into the workplace. Research indicates that religion plays a significant role in various workplace decisions, including hiring, promotions, suspensions, and terminations (Bader et al., 2013). For example, in hiring, an applicant's religious affiliation (or lack thereof) may consciously or unconsciously impact a recruiter's choice, particularly if their beliefs align or conflict with the organisation's culture. For promotions, employees who need time off for religious observances may face unspoken biases that hinder their advancement. In cases of suspensions or terminations, misunderstandings about religious practices, like prayer breaks or dress requirements, could lead to unfair disciplinary actions.

4.4.8 Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity refers diversity in cognitive functioning. Neurodiversity includes various neurocognitive developmental conditions, such as autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, and Tourette syndrome (Doyle, 2020). Studies estimate that about 15–20% of the global population is neurodivergent (Doyle, 2020). However, improvements in diagnostic methods, especially for adults, along with efforts to reduce stigma, suggest that the actual rate of neurodivergence may be even higher (Robison & Gassner, 2023).

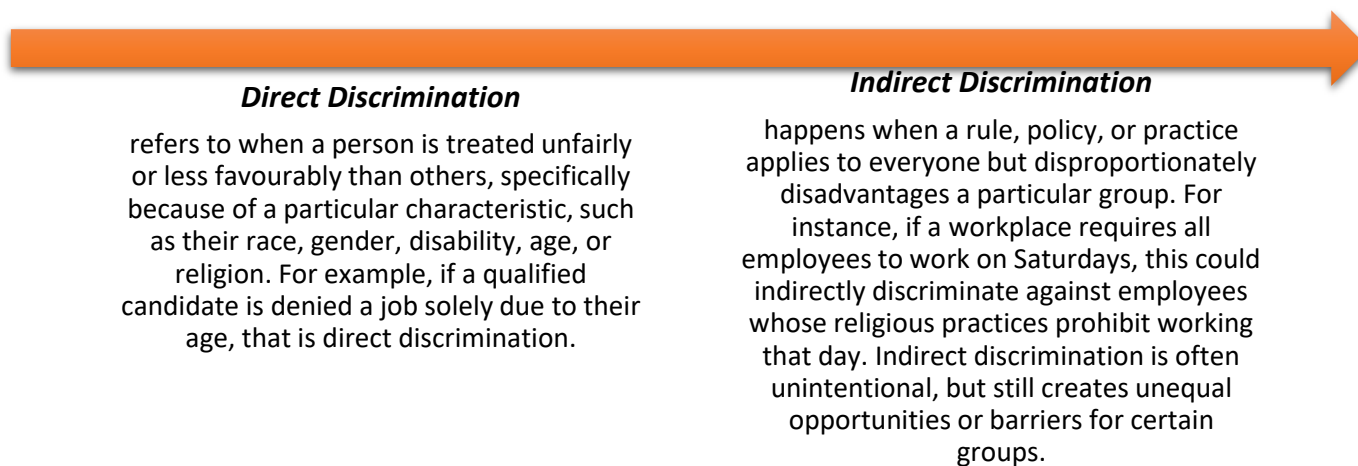
Neurodiverse individuals often excel in complex tasks, pay close attention to details, and possess strong creative problem-solving skills. Neurodiverse employees offer unique skills and perspectives, which can drive innovation and boost productivity. Organisations that adopt inclusive practices for neurodivergent employees have seen measurable improvements in efficiency and creativity (Doyle, 2020).

Neurodiverse individuals can face challenges in workplaces. For example, autistic employees may face social interaction and communication challenges, with exhibiting focused interests and repetitive behaviours (Shah et al, 2014).

4.5. Discrimination

Demographic shifts and growing religious, ethnic, and racial tensions globally are presenting new challenges and opportunities for governments and employers to address issues of discrimination and diversity. Discrimination can be seen as a socially structured phenomenon supported by ideological beliefs and reflected in interactions between individuals and institutions. It can also be seen as maintaining privileges for members of dominant groups while causing deprivation and disadvantage for others (Krieger, 2014). Discrimination can manifest both overtly and covertly, directly, or indirectly.

Figure 4. Definitions of Direct and Indirect Discrimination in the Workplace.



Discrimination can occur at various levels in an organisation. At the institutional level, it is embedded in practices, policies, or processes that perpetuate or maintain avoidable inequalities across different groups. At the interpersonal level, it appears in interactions between individuals. Discrimination can also be internalised, where individuals adopt beliefs or attitudes that devalue their group (Williams & Mohammed, 2013). It can take many forms - from physical violence, direct threats and insults to systemic barriers - that limit access to resources like housing, employment, and education (Paradies & Williams, 2008).

Workplace discrimination tends to disproportionately affect a few socially disadvantaged groups, with much attention given to the barriers these individuals face during recruitment and employment. Women and racial or ethnic minorities are among the most impacted groups. Additionally, the studies highlight discrimination based on age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, and, increasingly, the intersection of these characteristics. This underscores the need for more comprehensive approaches to diversity and inclusion and a commitment to creating a fair and inclusive workplace (Bates et al., 2021).

Workplace discrimination can lead to unemployment or the underutilisation of human resources and exacerbate adverse health and well-being (Adams et al., 2020), highlighting the critical need to address and mitigate its adverse effects. Therefore, it is not only essential for organisations to implement programs that control and prevent discrimination in the workplace, but governments must also enforce regulations that require workplaces to provide equal opportunities and benefits to individuals from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Discrimination based on various factors in Australia is prohibited under discrimination legislation. Information about this is set out under section 6.0 of this report.

5.0 Methodology

A thorough academic literature search was conducted across multiple databases starting from 2009. The platforms explored included Web of Science, Scopus, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and Google Scholar (first 5 pages of relevant matches), using the search terms (Table 3).

Table 3. Search Terms used to search the five databases.

Database	Search terms
Web of Science (n = 1166)	(attract* OR recruit* OR select* OR engag* OR retention OR retain* OR turnover OR attrition) AND (diverse OR diversity OR equity OR “equal opportunity” OR inclusion OR inclusive) AND (“psycho* safety” OR wellbeing OR well-being) OR (cultur* OR “cultur* safe*” OR “cultur* engage*”))
Scopus (n = 72)	
EBSCoHost (n = 49)	
ProQuest (n = 13)	
Google Scholar (n = 8)	

This initial phase resulted in the identification of 1,337 documents. After screening for relevance to the research questions and hypotheses and removing duplicates, 1,325 unique records remained. The titles and abstracts were then reviewed, excluding 1,212 documents that did not meet the inclusion criteria. The remaining 132 studies were evaluated, with reasons for exclusion noted where applicable. Ultimately, 76 studies were included in the final review. The study selection process is detailed in the PRISMA chart shown in Figure 5 overleaf.

Critical data were extracted from these studies, including study characteristics, research questions or hypotheses, major findings, and practical applications or interventions. This study reviewed the selected articles to address the following research questions:

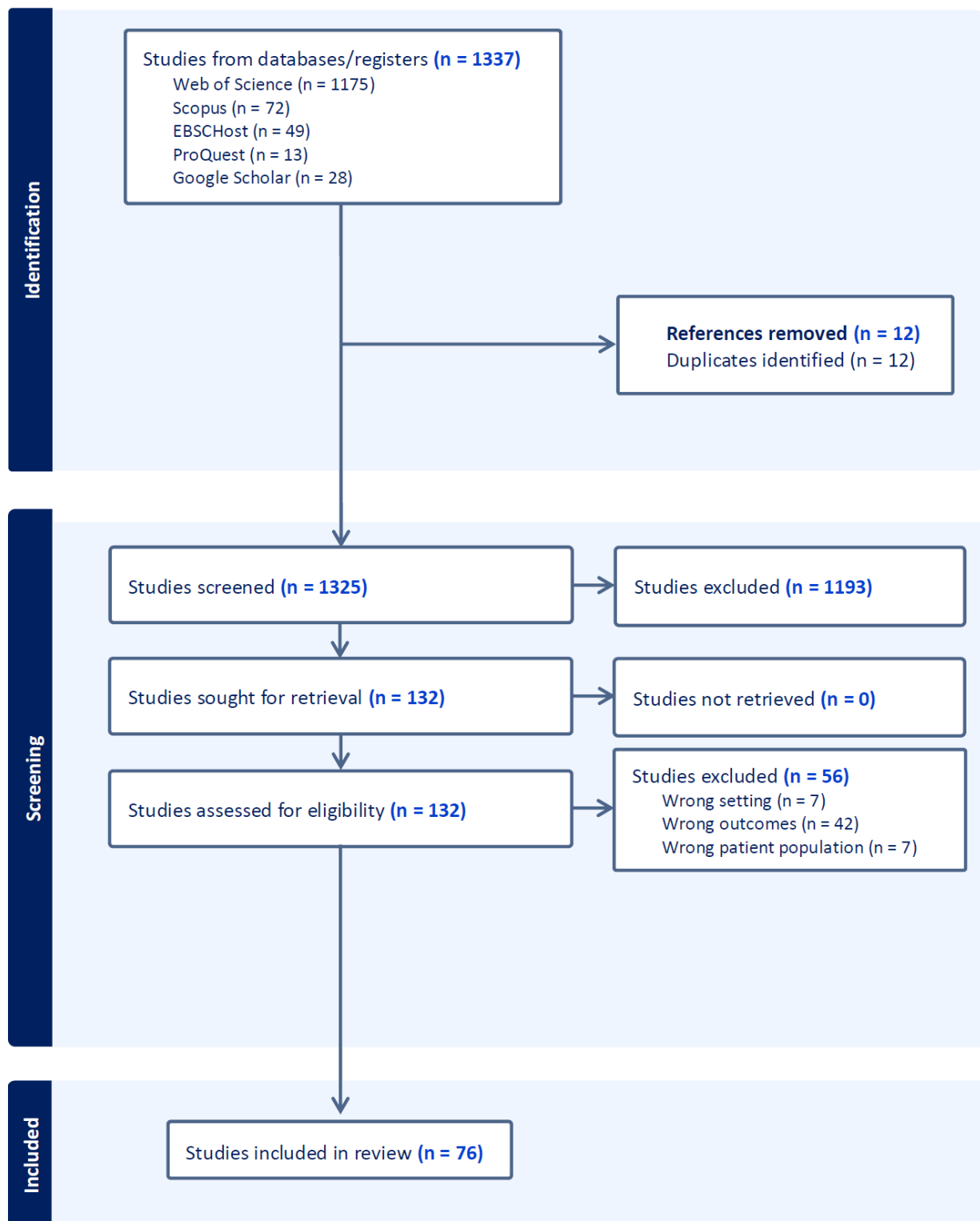
Question 1: What types of international and national legislation exist regarding workplace diversity, and what aspects of diversity are covered by these standards?

Question 2: What are the main effects of DEI on employee recruitment and attraction?

Question 3: How does DEI impact employee well-being, psychosocial and cultural safety, and retention outcomes?

Question 4: What practical interventions or programs have been suggested or implemented in the studies to enhance diversity management in the workplace?

Figure 5. PRISMA flowchart representing the sequential stages of the article search process.



6.0 Legislative Review and Standards

This section presents an overview of key human rights standards, relevant legislation, and key government policies that frame the DEI, psychosocial safety, and cultural safety employment landscape in Australia.

6.1 International Standards for Human Rights, Labor, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

International organisations, such as the United Nations (UN) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), have played pivotal roles in developing frameworks and standards to guide countries in implementing DEI initiatives. These standards often address discrimination, harassment, equal opportunities, and workplace accommodations. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, endorsed in Australia in 2009, are important international human rights standards in Australia, as are resolutions by the ILO. Further, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), endorsed by Australia in 2015, also provide important international standards for promoting and achieving social justice in the government, business, and community sectors. Whilst these standards and agreements are not legally binding, they are guiding principles critical in policy development, and when working with and hiring diverse Australians. Next, examples of these international standards are discussed in more detail.

6.1.1 Relevant United Nations Declarations of Rights (Human Rights, Indigenous Peoples, Women)

Human Rights

Human rights recognise the inherent value of each person, regardless of background, where they live, what they look like, and what they think or believe (Finegan, 2012). The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the primary source of international human rights and provides a fundamental understanding of the rights and freedoms of all. Many of the provisions within the Declaration have been accepted and formalised into domestic Australian law.

Indigenous Peoples

In 2009, Australia endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Since then, in international forums, Australia has committed to take action to implement the declaration. Several provisions within UNDRIP that apply to employment and hiring processes include:

- *Article 2:* Indigenous peoples are free and equal to all others and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, including discrimination based on their Indigenous origin or identity.
- *Article 11:* Indigenous peoples can practice and revitalise their cultural traditions and customs.
- *Article 17:* Indigenous peoples must not be discriminated against in matters connected with employment.

The Australian Government has not yet implemented the UNDRIP into law, policy, and practice. It has been criticised for failing to negotiate with Indigenous peoples on a National Action Plan to implement the UNDRIP and to audit existing laws, policies, and practices for compliance. New legislation introduced into the federal Parliament must have a statement of compatibility with the Human Rights Declaration, but this does not include reference to compliance with the UNDRIP (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2021).

Women

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) aims to eliminate discrimination against women and promote gender equality in all aspects of life, including employment (Liebenberg, 1997). The UN General Assembly adopted the CEDAW on December 18, 1979. CEDAW is a landmark international human rights treaty that defines discrimination against women as:

“Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made based on sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men

and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

CEDAW sets out an agenda for national action to achieve gender equality. States Parties¹ commit to:

- incorporating the principle of gender equality into their legal systems and abolishing discriminatory laws.
- establishing mechanisms to protect women from discrimination.
- eliminating all acts of discrimination against women by individuals, organisations, or enterprises.

By adopting these measures, States Parties aim to ensure women's equal access to and opportunities in all areas of life, including political and public life, education, health, and employment. The CEDAW Committee, an expert body established under the Convention, monitors States Parties' compliance with their obligations.

6.1.2 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of 2030 (SDGs)

The Australian Government has also committed to the UN 2030 SDGs in its initiatives and activities to support sustainability and social justice values. Relevant SDGs for diverse worker inclusion and safety at work include:

- **SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth**
 - *SDG 8.5:* Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including equal pay for work of equal value, benefiting all individuals, including young people and persons with disabilities.
- **SDG 10: Reduced inequalities**
 - *SDG 10.2:* Empower and promote social, economic, and political inclusion for all, regardless of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic status.
 - *SDG 10.3:* Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and actions.
- **SDG 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions.**

6.2 International Labor Organisation (ILO) Conventions

The ILO conventions address various social and labour issues, including fundamental human rights, minimum wages, industrial relations, employment policy, social dialogue, and social security. Since its inception in 1919, the ILO has prioritised gender equality, adopting its first two Conventions on women's rights with Convention No. 3 on maternity protection and Convention No. 4 on night work for women. In the mid-20th century, the focus shifted towards promoting equal employment opportunities for men and women. The ILO has recently recognised the importance of shared family responsibilities between genders. The following two Conventions are directly related to women's employment:

6.2.1. ILO Convention No. 100 Concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value

Adopted in 1951, this convention mandates equal pay for work of equal value, regardless of gender, and requires member states to implement measures to ensure compliance. The Convention focuses on the definition of equal remuneration, the methods for its implementation, and the role of national laws, collective bargaining,

and wage-fixing machinery. Australia ratified ILO Convention No. 100 on December 10, 1974.

6.2.2. ILO Convention No. 111 Concerning Discrimination in Employment and Occupation

Adopted in 1958, ILO Convention No. 111 aims to eliminate discrimination in employment and occupation, promoting equal opportunity and treatment for all workers. It defines discrimination as any distinction, exclusion, or preference based on race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction, or social origin.

¹ States Parties refers to countries or nations formally agreeing to be bound by an international treaty or convention.

To achieve this, the Convention requires countries to establish national policies that guarantee equal treatment and opportunity, including cooperation with worker and employer organisations and promoting educational programs. This convention was ratified in Australia on June 15, 1973.

6.3 Legislative Requirements in Australia

While it is essential to acknowledge the broader international legislative requirements that frame DEI, this section provides an overview of key human rights standards and relevant legislation in Australia. Additionally, it assesses the workplace conditions outlined in these instruments to protect employees from discrimination and other exclusionary practices. Commonwealth and State legislation regulates all workplaces by enforcing anti-discrimination acts, protecting people from being discriminated against due to personal attributes, including their age, disability, race, and sex. Meat Processing facilities are legally required to comply with both State (e.g., *Human Rights Act, 2019* (Qld); *Anti-Discrimination Act, 1991*(Qld) and Commonwealth (e.g., *Racial Discrimination Act, 1975*; *Fair Work Act, 2009*) legislation.

6.3.1. Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986

Human rights are founded on freedom, respect, equality, and dignity. The *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* established the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) with a mandate to promote and protect human rights in Australia. The *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*, in Part II, Division 4, addresses discrimination in employment and occupation. It focuses on preventing unfair treatment based on attributes such as race, sex, religion, and political opinion, ensuring equal opportunities in the workplace. The Act also empowers the Australian Human Rights Commission to investigate employment-related complaints and promote fairness in the workforce.

6.3.2 The Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)

The *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) is an anti-discrimination statute that primarily aims to recognise all individuals' inherent dignity and worth. This Act addresses recruitment and employment and particularly focuses on preventing discrimination and ensuring fair treatment in all workplaces.

6.3.3. Anti-Discrimination Legislation

The *Australian Anti-Discrimination Act* is a legal framework designed to protect individuals from unfair treatment based on various personal characteristics. Enacted in 1984, it prohibits discrimination in areas such as employment, education, and public services. Australia has various instruments aimed at regulating discrimination, that address different types of diversity, as outlined in Table 4.

Table 4. Legislation addressing different types of diversity

Racial Discrimination (enacted 1 July 1975)	This prevents unfair treatment based on race, skin colour, ethnicity, or national origin. It covers areas like employment, housing, and public services, ensuring equal opportunities regardless of racial or ethnic background.
Sex Discrimination (enacted 1 August 1984)	This prohibits discrimination based on gender, including pregnancy, breastfeeding, and marital status. It aims to create gender equality in workplaces and other public areas, ensuring women and men are treated equally.
Disability Discrimination (enacted 1 March 1993)	This protects individuals with physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, or learning disabilities. It ensures they receive equal access to education,

	employment, and services and that reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate their needs.
Age Discrimination (enacted 1 July 2004)	This prevents discrimination based on age in employment, education, and other public areas. It protects older and younger individuals from being unfairly treated due to their age, ensuring equal opportunities across all life stages.
Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Intersex Status (enacted 1 August 2013)	This prohibits discrimination against individuals based on their sexual orientation, gender identity (transgender, non-binary, etc.), or intersex status. This ensures that LGBT individuals are treated fairly and equally, particularly in workplaces, schools, and service access.

The **Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)** is an example of how the States have enacted anti-discrimination. It is broader than the Queensland human rights legislation (*Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)*), with wider application for discrimination. For example, Section 7 prohibits discrimination based on race, religious belief, or religious activity. Relevant sections applicable to employment and hiring processes for the meat processing industry include:

- Section 9(1): this prohibits direct discrimination and indirect discrimination.
- Section 14: this provides that a person must not discriminate:
 - in the arrangements made for deciding who should be offered work;
 - in deciding who should be offered work;
 - in failing to offer work; or
 - by denying a person seeking work access to a guidance program, an apprenticeship training program or other occupational training or retraining program or in developing the scope or range of such a program.
- Section 15(1): this provides that, in the work area, a person must not discriminate:
 - in any variation of the terms of work;
 - in denying or limiting access to opportunities for promotion, transfer, training or other benefits to a worker;
 - in dismissing a worker;
 - by denying access to a guidance program, an apprenticeship training program or other occupational training or retraining program; or in developing the scope or range of such a program; or
 - by treating a worker unfavourably in connection with work.

6.3.4. The Fair Work Act 2009

The *Fair Work Act 2009* is national legislation designed to regulate and ensure fair treatment for everyone in the workplace, while providing a balanced framework for workplace relations for all Australians. Section 351 addresses discrimination, stating that an employer must not take adverse action against a person who is an employee or prospective employee due to the person's race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family or carer's responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, national extraction, or social origin.

6.3.5. Work Health and Safety Act, 2011

Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice, 2023

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act) provides a national framework to secure Australian workers' and workplaces' health and safety. The WHS Act was recently amended (1 April 2023) to include the management of hazards and risks to workers' psychological health and safety - psychosocial hazards. This legislation aims to "improve earlier and sustainable return to work"

for injured workers and “reduce serious injuries and harm in workplaces”. The Act stipulates organisations’ responsibilities to foster mentally healthy workplaces by instigating initiatives based on evidence-based practices, including effective return-to-work programs.

As an example of how psychosocial legislative imperatives have been adopted in the states, in Queensland, the Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice commenced on April 1, 2023. It is a practical guide to prevent harm from psychosocial workplace hazards, including psychological and physical harm. As an approved code of practice under the WHS Act, it guides businesses and organisations in identifying, assessing, and controlling psychosocial risks. This Code is a valuable resource for employers, workers, and health and safety professionals to ensure a safe and healthy work environment (Queensland Government, 2023).

7.0 Literature Review: Employee Recruitment / Attraction and DEI

The next two sections of this report describe the reviews of the literature linking DEI approaches and practices to, firstly, recruitment and attraction, and secondly retention and turnover. This first section of the literature review, focussing on Recruitment / Attraction and DEI, contains these five sections:

Table 5.

Contents of Section 7.0 - Employee Recruitment/Attraction and DEI

7.1 Effects of national culture and language diversity on the recruitment of diverse employees
7.2 Effects of existing workplace diversity on attraction and recruitment
7.3 Inclusive Human Resource practices - Recruiting Processes
7.4 Focus on recruitment for Indigenous Australians
7.5 Focus on recruitment for neurodiverse jobseekers

Recruitment is essential for attracting and retaining talent within organisations. It is a structured process for generating a diverse pool of candidates interested in employment, focusing on individuals with the skills, abilities, and attributes needed for open roles. Recruitment goes beyond meeting immediate staffing needs; it shapes the organisation's future and supports sustainable development. Effective recruitment drives operational success and long-term growth by selecting individuals aligned with the organisation's goals and values (Lindgren & Österlind, 2018).

To attract talented candidates from diverse groups - such as women, Indigenous, LGBT community members, and people with disabilities - organisations must prioritise diversity and inclusion in their practices. This requires implementing strong recruitment programs that actively promote a diverse workforce. Diversity-sensitive practices, like increasing the representation of individuals from workplace minorities in leadership, can reduce discrimination and foster a more inclusive environment (Schneider et al., 2023). Creating an inclusive workplace culture begins with ensuring a fair and unbiased recruitment and hiring process. Santos and Reyes (2023) propose several practical strategies for achieving this.

Figure 6. Practical Strategies Focusing on Recruitment (Santos and Reyes (2023)).



This review includes various recommended strategies and programs for enhancing diverse workforce recruitment. Of the 76 articles reviewed, various studies offer practical approaches to promoting workforce diversity during recruitment. The main findings from these studies are presented in the following sections.

7.1 Effects of national culture and language diversity on the recruitment of diverse employees

With the rise of globalisation, human capital has become crucial for a firm's success. The increasing demand for international talent drives companies and institutions to recruit engineers, scientists, managers, nurses, and other essential employees outside their national borders. Australia relies heavily on immigration to provide skills across various sectors. Multinational enterprises risk losing their competitive advantage without the ability to effectively recruit the right talent internationally (Collings et al., 2007).

Skilled migrants are "among Australia's most entrepreneurial, innovative, and risk-taking individuals" (Hugo, 2014, p. 392). However, migrants, particularly skilled migrants from Asia and other non-English-speaking backgrounds, often face vulnerability in the job market, frequently experiencing downward career shifts or lower-status roles after migration (Rajendran et al., 2020). Both language and national culture diversity messages independently influence how job seekers perceive their fit with an organisation. For example, the findings from the study conducted by Phillips et al. (2023) indicate that individuals with higher Other-group orientation (OGO)² perceive a stronger fit with organisations that promote language and cultural diversity. This suggests that job seekers who are more open to diversity, are attracted to employers who communicate these values effectively (Phillips et al., 2023).

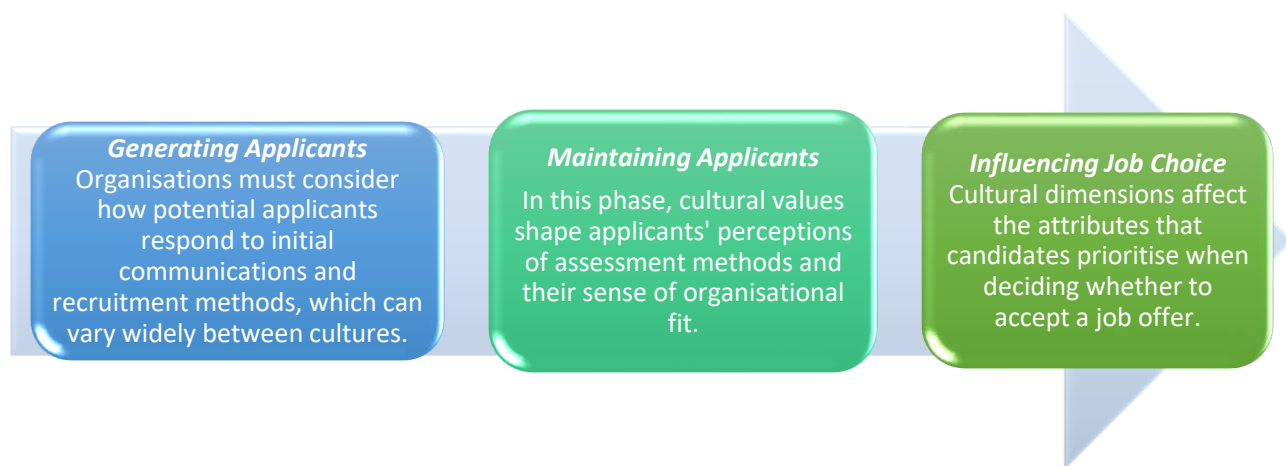
A combined message incorporating language and national cultural diversity has the most significant impact - this dual approach enhancing the perceived fit for individuals with high OGO. It also discourages those with low OGO

² Other-group orientation (OGO) is the tendency to appreciate and engage with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

from applying, effectively filtering out candidates who may not align with the organisation’s diversity goals. By committing to language and national cultural diversity, organisations can attract candidates more likely to thrive in a diverse environment, improving workforce inclusivity (Phillips et al, 2023).

Ma and Allen (2009) identified three key phases of recruitment.

Figure 7. Three Key Phases of Recruitment (Ma and Allen, 2009)



Ma and Allen (2009) explored how Hofstede's five cultural dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, and long-term vs. short-term orientation; Chapman et al, 2005) affected the recruitment practices and influenced applicant behaviour and found that cultural values significantly affected each recruitment phase – see Table 6.

Table 6. Hofstede's five cultural dimensions and impacts on applicant behaviours

Power Distance	People from cultures with high power distance prefer formal and hierarchical recruitment communication, while those with low power distance favour egalitarian and informal approaches.
Uncertainty Avoidance	People from high-uncertainty avoidance cultures prefer structured recruitment processes with clear guidelines, whereas those from low-uncertainty avoidance cultures appreciate more flexible and adaptable methods.
Individualism-Collectivism	People from individualistic cultures emphasise personal achievements in recruitment, while those from collectivist cultures prioritise teamwork and organisational fit.
Masculinity-Femininity	People from 'masculine' cultures respond positively to competitive recruitment messages, while those from feminine cultures are more attracted to messages highlighting work-life balance and employee well-being.
Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation	People from long-term-oriented cultures seek job stability and growth potential, while those from short-term-oriented cultures are more interested in positions that offer immediate benefits.

The study concluded that aligning recruitment practices with people's cultural values can enhance an organisation's ability to attract a diverse global talent pool (Ma & Allen, 2009).

7.2 Effects of existing workplace diversity on attraction and recruitment

Many employers aim to increase workplace diversity, but this goal often proves difficult to achieve. Over the years, equal opportunity initiatives and new business policies have encouraged efforts to hire a more diverse workforce. However, despite these efforts, many organisations still struggle to hire employees from minority backgrounds. In some cases, even well-intentioned diversity initiatives can backfire or lead to negative responses from minority employees (Chang et al., 2019). Existing diversity is a key factor that gives organisations a competitive edge in recruitment and selection. Organisations that manage their diversity effectively enhance their ability to attract top talent (Zenone et al., 2021).

The Phillips et al. (2023) study mentioned earlier showed that individuals with higher Other-Group orientation (OGO) - the tendency to appreciate and engage with individuals from diverse backgrounds - perceive a stronger fit with organisations that promote language and cultural diversity. Other research also shows that individuals more open to and interested in interacting with diverse groups are likelier to pursue jobs at organisations that value diversity. This is because they believe these organisations will affirm and support their personal identities (Avery et al, 2013).

In fact, research indicates that organisations displaying only one type of diversity (either racial/ethnic or gender) receive fewer applications than those diverse in both; and more applications are submitted to organisations with a diverse workforce compared to those with a predominantly homogeneous group of white male employees. This suggests that organisations seeking to recruit minority applicants may need to highlight their broader commitment to diversity and inclusion to compete for talent effectively (Nichols et al., 2023).

7.3 Inclusive Human Resource Practices - Recruiting Processes

Jolly and Self (2020) also highlighted the importance of strategically improving employee perceptions of the diversity climate. They noted that inclusive human resource practices can positively impact these perceptions. By prioritising diversity and inclusion in recruitment, organisations can signal to applicants that they value individuals from diverse backgrounds. This approach fosters social and cultural acceptance, strengthens employees' sense of belonging, and can reduce turnover (Jolly & Self, 2020).

The role of recruitment in this process is essential, with various approaches available for organisations to incorporate diversity into recruitment (Glastonbury et al., 2021). The strategies outlined in the study conducted by Glastonbury et al. (2021) include:

7.3.1. Recruitment Advertisements

Institutional guidelines may restrict the language and detail in recruitment postings, making the job descriptions and advertisements appear uninviting. Hiring departments should choose their terminology carefully to attract a diverse range of applicants. Job postings must avoid discrimination based on sex, race, colour, national origin, religion, or other protected categories. To create a diverse applicant pool, employers should exclude nonessential skills from job ads and focus on core skills and experience. This approach broadens the applicant base, attracting qualified candidates and enhancing team diversity and capability.

Selecting diverse recruitment platforms is also crucial to reach a broad applicant pool. Additionally, recruitment committees should proactively reach out to potential candidates and highlight the organisation's commitment to diversity rather than solely relying on passive advertising (Glastonbury et al., 2021).

7.3.2. Diversity Statements

Organisations could require candidates to submit a diversity statement for their application process. Such statements provide an overview of a candidate's past, present, and planned contributions to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion. Research indicates that mandating such statements can improve hiring individuals dedicated to advancing these principles. Additionally, this requirement communicates to potential candidates the value organisations place on diversity considerations (Glastonbury et al., 2021).

7.3.3. Recruitment Team Composition and Function

In an ideal search, or recruitment and selection, the team should comprise a diverse group to minimise bias in the evaluation process, and to facilitate approaching each candidate from various perspectives. Further, all search or recruitment team members should be encouraged to participate in training on unconscious bias³ and/or DEI (Glastonbury et al., 2021). The recruitment and selection panel chair should also outline the vision for the new position and emphasise the importance of diversity in the recruitment process. Committee members should be urged to recognise their inherent biases when identifying potential candidates, evaluating application materials, and conducting interviews. Creating a sense of safety within the committee is crucial, allowing all members to voice their concerns or preferences regarding candidates and the overall process. Members' opinions must be valued and considered (Glastonbury et al., 2021).

7.3.4. Evaluation and Selection of Applicants

Each team member should independently rate the candidates who meet the selection criteria. These ratings should be anonymised and presented for discussion at the second team meeting. The team can then develop a shortlist of applicants recommended to the manager for interviews (Glastonbury et al., 2021).

7.4 Focus on recruitment for Indigenous Australians

Morven and Cunningham (2020) summarised key experiences that can inform Indigenous job applicants' recruitment and selection processes to foster a more diverse and inclusive culture. These experiences encompass a range of perspectives, from the macro (organisational) to the micro (individual). The authors reported that these approaches can enhance diversity in the recruitment process if people at various levels actively engage - upper management at the organisational level, middle management at the team level, lower management at the group level, and individuals.

Pearson and Daff (2011) studied the Arnhem Learning Education Regional Training (ALERT) program in Nhulunbuy, Northern Territory, Australia. This program was designed to help Indigenous Yolngu people prepare for mainstream jobs in mining or other industries. A key challenge was that many Indigenous applicants had limited English literacy and numeracy skills. To address this, the ALERT program introduced the Discovery Session. This unique assessment tool evaluated applicants' potential without relying on traditional academic measures. The Discovery Session was designed to:

- Assess applicants' suitability for training and employment.
- Overcome language barriers and cultural differences.
- Provide insights into their potential job performance.

³ Unconscious bias refers to implicit or hidden biases that individuals hold without being consciously aware of them. These biases can influence our thoughts, decisions, and behaviours, often leading to unintentional discrimination. They are formed over time through exposure to societal stereotypes, personal experiences, and cultural influences.

By using the Discovery Session, the ALERT program has:

- Improved the recruitment process for Indigenous candidates.
- Challenged traditional HRM practices.
- Demonstrated the importance of cultural sensitivity in recruitment.

Overall, the ALERT program and the Discovery Session offer valuable lessons for organisations seeking to recruit and retain Indigenous employees (Pearson & Daff, 2011).

7.5 Focus on recruitment for neurodiverse jobseekers

Goldberg and Willham (2024) examined the effects of autism-related stereotypes (known as meta-stereotypes) and recruitment practices aimed at attracting autistic job seekers. Meta-stereotypes are beliefs about how others view one's group. For autistic individuals, this includes their perceptions of how non-autistic people might see them, either positively or negatively. These beliefs impact their expectations of how they will be treated during job applications and can lead to feelings of threat or challenge.

Goldberg and Willham (2024) found that these stereotypes, combined with organisational signals, influence how candidates perceive their fit with the organisation, affecting their interest in pursuing jobs. The study discusses "combined signals" as two types of organisational messages to attract autistic job seekers: (a) *expressed signal*, being statements that clearly show an organisation's commitment to inclusivity and support for autistic individuals; and (b) *evidence-based signals*, which include practical supports, such as remote work options and accommodations, that create an autism-friendly workplace. Combining these signals reassured candidates that the organisation values diversity and is committed to inclusivity, boosting job pursuit intentions (Goldberg & Willham, 2024).

8.0 Literature Review: Employee Retention / Turnover and DEI

The second section of this literature review, is structured into these eight sections:

Table 7. Contents of Section 8.0 - Employee Retention/Turnover and DEI

8.1 Personal, person-environment, organisational, and leadership factors
8.2 Discrimination as a factor
8.3 Wellbeing, health, and psychological effects
8.4 Psychological safety, psychosocial safety, and cultural intelligence
8.5 Leadership, management, and DEI
8.6 Turnover intention, actual turnover, and DEI factors
8.7 Focus on factors affecting the retention of neurodiverse employees
8.8 Focus on factors affecting the retention of Indigenous employees

Even if recruiting a workforce is straightforward, retention becomes challenging when diverse employees feel excluded or unsafe. Due to differences in their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or role, individuals assess whether they experience equity and opportunity at work. This perception affects the emotional effort and commitment they are willing to invest in and influences their decision to remain with the organisation. Drawing on these points, this section examines the included review articles to determine how DEI impacts various work aspects, ultimately influencing employee retention. It concludes with a discussion of the interventions proposed or implemented in the reviewed articles, along with an analysis of the key facilitators and barriers.

8.1 Personal, person-environment, organisational, and leadership factors

An organisation's diversity climate can influence various factors, directly or indirectly, that impact employee equity, diversity and inclusion in the workplace (McKay & Avery, 2015), and employee commitment, engagement and retention. These factors can be grouped into four categories: personal, person-environment, organisational, and leadership. Table 4 provides a brief overview of these factors, and the research exploring how these factors contribute to workplace diversity is then discussed in more detail.

Table 8. Overview of Personal, Person-Environment, Organisational, and Leadership Factors and their Relationship with DEI and Retention

Main Factor	Assessed Factor	Main Findings	Study
Personal	8.1.1 Knowledge and Attitudes	Diverse employees with a strong understanding of organisational goals and positive work attitudes are more committed to remaining and contributing to organisational objectives.	Wahyanto et al., 2020
Personal	8.1.2 Employee Voice	Empowering diverse groups to express their ideas fosters innovation and lowers turnover intentions by enhancing engagement and commitment.	Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013
Person-Environment	8.1.3 Person-Environment Fit	Diverse groups are more likely to stay with an organisation when their valued needs are met in their job environment.	Groeneveld, 2011
Organisational	8.1.4 Human Resources System	Effective HR practices, such as training and career progression, enhance diverse workgroup engagement and promote equity, which is vital for organisational growth.	Wahyanto et al., 2020
Organisational	8.1.5 Diversity Climate	A positive diversity climate boosts employee engagement by providing resources and reducing demands, leading to higher job satisfaction and lower burnout risks. An inclusive climate fosters diverse employees' satisfaction and commitment, reducing turnover. Visible role models and effective communication are crucial for creating this environment.	Sliter et al., 2014 Downey et al., 2015 Sharma & Sharma, 2015 Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013 Hwang & Hopkins, 2012 Chen & Tang, 2018
Organisational	8.1.6 Justice Perceptions	Positive perceptions of distributive and procedural justice are linked to lower turnover intentions, especially among Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) employees.	Chordiya, 2022 Roberson & Scott, 2024
Leadership	8.1.7 Leader-Employee Relationship	Strong leader-employee relationships encourage risk-taking and innovation when diverse employees feel psychologically safe to express their ideas without fear of negative consequences.	Javed et al., 2019

8.1.1 Personal Factors – Knowledge and Attitudes

Research indicates that certain individual factors, such as a strong knowledge and understanding of organisational and service objectives and positive attitudes toward work, are likelier to predict an employee's commitment to work. Employee commitment is a crucial behavioural indicator that reflects the likelihood of employees remaining with an organisation, and their

willingness to contribute toward achieving organisational objectives (Wahyanto et al., 2020), which may include diversity and inclusion goals.

8.1.2 Personal Factors – Employee Voice

Diverse groups bring fresh perspectives that enhance creativity, innovation, and decision-making, improving organisational effectiveness. When employees feel free to share their unique ideas, they feel empowered to make impactful decisions and create innovative solutions, strengthening their connection to the organisation. A supportive climate for diversity boosts this effect, as employees are more likely to feel that their ideas are valued, leading to increased engagement and commitment and, ultimately, lower turnover (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013).

8.1.3 Person-Environment Factors - Person-Environment (PE) Fit

Groeneveld (2011) examined how turnover and turnover intentions differ by gender and ethnicity, using the Person-Environment (PE) fit theory. This theory suggests that employees are likelier to stay with an organisation when their job meets their key values. Certain work environment factors, known as "push factors," can be associated with reasons to quit. Since individual values vary, push factors also differ, especially for a diverse workforce. The six main factors are:

- Management of the organisation
- Content of the job
- Career development opportunities
- Leadership style of direct supervisor
- Performance orientation of the organisation
- Amount of autonomy and responsibility in one's job.

When employees see these factors met, such as through genuine diversity management, they are less likely to leave (Groeneveld, 2011).

8.1.4 Organisational factors – Human Resources System

Organisational factors are essential for promoting equity and a positive diversity climate. Key elements include the Human Resources (HR) system, which includes the training, development, rewards, and career growth for employees. These contribute to a framework termed by Wahyanto et al., (2020) as 'People Equity', representing Alignment, Capability, and Engagement. Employee engagement is increasingly important as it relates to satisfaction, and engaged employees contribute directly to organisational growth and have a higher intention to stay (Wahyanto et al., 2020).

8.1.5 Organisational factors – Diversity Climate; Supportive Climate

A positive diversity climate boosts engagement by providing resources to and reducing demands on diverse employees (Sliter et al., 2014). Building a supportive, inclusive climate for a diverse workforce is essential to boost employee satisfaction and commitment, helping to lower turnover. This climate is shaped by policies promoting equity, representation, and open communication. Such diversity practices help build trust, positively linked to engagement (Downey et al., 2015). For example, gender diversity perception, combined with an employee's internal sense of control, has been shown to boost engagement, which increases job and life satisfaction and reduces burnout. When employees see others with similar backgrounds thriving, they are more likely to feel they can succeed and stay with the company (Sharma & Sharma, 2015).

However, some factors can hinder this climate. A lack of role models, poor communication, or a culture that does not prioritise inclusion, can affect employees' confidence in their own potential. Studies show that perceptions of diversity climate and organisational commitment influence turnover intentions across various groups (Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013). Organisational commitment is key to connecting inclusion with lower turnover (Hwang & Hopkins, 2012). When employees feel genuinely included, they are more likely to feel valued, which strengthens their commitment and improves job performance and engagement in innovation (Chen & Tang, 2018).

8.1.6 Organisational Factors - Justice Perceptions

Promoting justice in diverse workgroups is crucial for effective human resource management. Research highlights that different types of workplace justice - distributive justice (fairness in outcomes like pay and promotions) and procedural justice (fairness

in organisational processes) - are linked to lower turnover intentions, especially for 'Black, Indigenous, and Employees of Color' (BIPOC) employees compared to White employees (Chordiya, 2022). Roberson and Scott (2024) examined contributive justice, defined as "the fairness of opportunities to contribute to core work processes in workgroups and organizations". This type of justice supports inclusion by enabling all employees, regardless of their background, opportunities to use their talents and perspectives meaningfully, ensuring they feel valued and included.

8.1.7 Leadership Factors – Leader-Employee Relationship

Employees are more likely to engage in innovative activities when they feel it is safe to express their thoughts and ideas without fear of negative consequences and have a quality relationship with their leaders. A strong leader-employee relationship encourages

employees to take independent risks by generating new ideas and promoting and implementing those ideas. This motivation to take risks is heightened when employees perceive a sense of psychological safety, which indicates that their environment supports interpersonal risk-taking (Javed et al., 2019). See more detailed information about leadership in engaging and retaining diverse employees in section 6.5.

8.2 Discrimination as a factor

Discrimination mainly arises from diversity as disparity (see earlier explanation at section 2.2.1), where group members have unequal access to socially valued resources and assets. This resource inequality creates imbalances that lead to discrimination (Triana et al., 2021). In the reviewed articles that addressed discrimination and diversity in the workplace, two primary factors impacted by or related to discrimination among diverse work groups were identified: individual mental health, and six work-related factors. Four of these work-related factors have already been identified and discussed as important for employee retention and engagement in section 6.1:

- Employee Voice (see 6.1.2)
- Person-Environment Fit (see 6.1.3)
- Organisational Climate (see 6.1.5), and
- Justice Perceptions (see 6.1.6).

Table 9 summarises the main findings related to individual mental health, and the additional two work-related factors of commitment and leadership; and the following sections discuss these in more detail.

Table 9. Individual and two work-related factors associated with discrimination

Factors	Main Summarised Findings	References
Individual Mental Health	Discrimination in diverse workplaces negatively impacts mental health and job satisfaction and increases stress levels for both witnesses and victims. Language barriers exacerbate work stress, leading to higher Effort-Reward Imbalance and associated health disorders. Organisational interventions can help address these issues.	Schneider et al., 2023 Siegrist, 2016 Atterbury & Rowe, 2017
Work-Related Factor: Employee Commitment	Employee commitment is crucial for retention. Age discrimination reduces commitment and increases turnover intentions. Modern racial discrimination is linked to higher turnover intentions among marginalised groups. Leadership plays a significant role in fostering an inclusive environment.	Saputra & Mahaputra, 2022 Chordiya, 2022 Adams et al., 2020
Work-Related Factor: Inclusive Leadership	Quality leader-employee relationships foster innovation by encouraging risk-taking in a psychologically safe environment. Employees are more likely to engage in innovative activities when they feel safe expressing their ideas without fear of negative consequences.	Javed et al., 2019

8.2.1. Individual mental health

Discrimination in diverse workplaces can affect individuals as witnesses or victims (Schneider et al., 2023). Both witnessing and experiencing discrimination due to specific personal characteristics are linked to lower job satisfaction, worse mental health, and higher work stress levels (Schneider et al., 2023). Employees facing or observing discrimination often report added challenges from language barriers, particularly where there is a lack of interpreter services, leading to an Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI) at work (Schneider et al., 2023). The ERI model identifies the health risks of stressful work situations, suggesting that ongoing high effort with low reward increases job stress, raising the risk of stress-related health issues like depression and coronary heart disease (Siegrist, 2016).

Schneider et al. (2023) proposed organisational and individual interventions to address workplace discrimination. Organisational changes could include expanding interpreter services and establishing trusted contacts for employees facing discrimination. Cultural competence training can help employees interact effectively with colleagues and customers from diverse backgrounds. Addressing the needs of a diverse workforce and fostering a non-discriminatory environment is essential for retaining skilled staff and attracting younger talent. Atterbury and Rowe (2017) emphasised the ‘common good’, stating that mental health improves when everyone, regardless of background, has access to fundamental rights and is supported in participating actively in community life.

8.2.2. Work-related factors

This section focusses on the work-related factors of Employee Commitment, and Inclusive Leadership.

As previously noted, **employee commitment** reflects an employee's willingness to stay with the organisation and work towards its goals, and employees are more motivated when the organisation meets their needs. Where,

however, employees perceive discrimination, this can lead to psychological distress, and they tend to have lower commitment, which is associated with a greater intention to leave the organisation. Chordiya (2022) examined modern racial discrimination⁴ in diverse workgroups and found that it is linked to higher turnover intentions among employees of colour compared to White employees. Such increased turnover of historically marginalised groups is in effect a barrier to career advancement that can limit diversity in upper leadership positions (Chordiya, 2022).

This is of significance, as the characteristics of an organisation's **leadership** can shape its policies and practices. For example, Saputra & Mahaputra (2022) found that the age of managers significantly affects age management practices within organisations. The positive perceptions and actions of leaders can make discrimination less acceptable. Organisational leaders can implement effective pro-diversity management programs to lower turnover intentions among diverse employees, and promote fairness in pay and promotions, and ensure procedural justice, particularly for racially marginalised staff (Chordiya, 2022).

Overall, leadership plays a crucial role in addressing discrimination, and in today's diverse organisations, leaders must focus on reducing discrimination and promoting inclusion (Adams et al., 2020). One effective strategy is to adopt authentic, respectful, and inclusive leadership. To maximise the advantages of a diverse workforce, organisations require "new types" of leaders who are inclusive, flexible, self-aware, mindful, and capable of building trust. Adams et al. (2020) found that respectful, inclusive, and authentic leadership styles, emphasising a relational approach focused on others, contribute positively to inclusion and reduce discrimination. Leaders who demonstrate these positive behaviours influence their team members, encouraging them to adopt similar behaviours, thus fostering inclusion and reducing discrimination. Authentic leadership emphasises the leader's self-perception and alignment with that view, which is important for promoting tolerance and inclusion among team members.

8.3 Wellbeing, health and psychological effects

Wellbeing is a critical concern for individuals, particularly those in diverse workgroups. Research indicates that over two in five Australians aged 16 to 85 years (43.7% or 8.6 million people) have experienced a mental disorder at some point in their lives. Anxiety disorders are the most prevalent category of long-term mental health issues, affecting 16.8% of the population (3.3 million people). In 2020-2021, approximately 3.4 million Australians aged 16 to 85 years (around 17% of the population) sought professional support for mental health concerns.

Rates of mental illness are higher among women and younger individuals, with one in five Australians aged 16 to 34 years reporting high or very high levels of psychological distress (Bowen & Driscoll, 2022). Table 6 illustrates the main findings of the included studies, based on the different types of diversity or equity.

Table 10. The Main Findings on Wellbeing, Health, and Psychological Effects and DEI

Type of Diversity or Equity	Main Summarised Findings	References
8.3.1 Gender Diversity	Female employees experience lower psychological well-being and higher job-related stress compared to males.	Gómez-Baya et al., 2018
	Non-manual work, and professional roles, enhance women's work well-being.	Haile, 2012 Matud et al., 2019 Tay et al., 2014 Shatila, 2023

⁴ Modern racial discrimination is often unconscious and characterized by subtle, low-intensity behaviours that can segregate or hinder those perceived as "others." While often nonverbal, it can manifest through verbal and para-verbal cues (e.g., intonation, volume) (Marchiondo et al., 2018).

	Positive perceptions of gender diversity can lead to improved performance and reduced stress levels for all employees.	Mousa et al., 2020
8.3.2 Gender Equity	Perceived gender equity in recruitment, training, and career advancement correlates with improved employee well-being, optimism, and job satisfaction. Addressing structural barriers enhances women's career advancement and overall organisational performance.	Sharma & Sharma, 2015
8.3.3 Age Diversity	A supportive age diversity climate improves employee job-related well-being. Older workers report higher job satisfaction as they prioritise fulfilling work. Age-diverse friendships foster a sense of belonging, enhancing job satisfaction and reducing turnover.	Bellotti et al., 2022 Wegge & Schmidt, 2009 Fasbender & Drury, 2022
8.3.4 Faith Diversity	Managing religious diversity is increasingly important. Faith-friendly organisations show higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions among employees. The Faith and Work Organisational Framework guides the effective management of workplace spirituality.	Miller & Ewest, 2015 Park & Martinez, 2022
8.3.5 Racial-Ethnic Minority	Racial-ethnic minorities face poorer health outcomes and higher stress levels compared to White employees. Perceived inclusion is linked to negative health outcomes for minorities, highlighting the need for inclusive environments to improve health and reduce turnover intentions.	Alvidrez & Barksdale, 2022 Sternthal et al., 2011 Ehrhart & Chung, 2024
8.3.6 Disability	Disabled employees experience stress from limited career growth, minimal workloads, and mismatched tasks, leading to feelings of injustice and discrimination. Inclusive practices enhance job satisfaction, boost positive emotions, and reduce workplace stress and anxiety. Supportive leadership and a focus on diversity and accessibility are essential for fostering an inclusive workplace.	Coli & Rissotto, 2014 Santuzzi et al., 2022
8.3.7 Sexual orientation	LGBTQ+ individuals frequently face informal workplace discrimination, leading to poorer employment outcomes like higher unemployment,	Waite, 2021, Drydakis, 2022, Shannon, 2022, Santos & Reyes, 2023

turnover, lower wages, and reduced job satisfaction compared to cisgender heterosexual employees. Discrimination impacts LGBTQ+ employees' well-being both short- and long-term, causing stress, anxiety, physical symptoms, and reduced productivity. Long-term effects include depression, missed career opportunities, and disillusionment. Well-being varies significantly among LGBTQ+ subgroups, with gender and identity-based differences.

Lloren & Parini, 2017,
Donaghy & Perales,
2024

8.3.1 Gender Diversity

Studies have found that there are gender differences with respect to well-being and diversity. Female employees generally experience lower psychological well-being and more health issues than their male counterparts (Gómez-Baya et al., 2018; Haile, 2012). Matud et al. (2019) reports lower levels of self-acceptance and autonomy for women compared to men in the workplace. While gender does not inherently determine job satisfaction, women often face higher rates of negative health effects and job-related stress, suggesting that they may encounter emotional challenges even if they are satisfied with their jobs (Tay et al., 2014). Matud et al. (2019) suggest that certain factors improve women's well-being with work-related factors including non-manual work and holding professional positions.

Perceiving gender diversity in the workplace enhances feelings including empowerment and overall well-being, positively impacting employee performance. Employees who feel treated fairly at work are likelier to perform well and experience lower stress than those who do not (Shatila, 2023). Female employees generally perceive diversity management policies more positively than their male counterparts. Employees with a favourable view of diversity initiatives are more likely to feel content in their work environment, which can lead to greater engagement, such as evidenced in organisational citizenship behaviours (Mousa et al., 2020). To boost workplace happiness among women, Annabi & Lebovitz (2018) proposed that managers should focus on building personal relationships, promoting work-life balance, encouraging open communication, and organising social events.

8.3.2 Gender equity

Perceived gender equity refers to employees' positive perceptions of equal opportunities in recruitment, training, compensation, and career advancement (McKay & Avery, 2015). This perception plays a crucial role in creating a supportive workplace environment, as higher levels of perceived gender equity are associated with improved employee well-being, including greater optimism, higher job satisfaction, and reduced executive burnout (Sharma & Sharma, 2015). Addressing structural and cultural barriers, such as socio-economic obstacles, discrimination, and the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles that impede women's career advancement in the workplace, can significantly improve employee well-being and organisational performance (Sharma & Sharma, 2015).

8.3.3 Age diversity

When organisations actively promote and value age diversity, employees experience better emotional and psychological health at work (Bellotti et al., 2022); though challenges have been noted with teams with a wide age range with poor communication and lower job satisfaction. However, conversely, age-diverse friendships can foster a sense of "perceived oneness," where individuals feel a shared identity with colleagues of different ages. This idea suggests that close relationships enable people to incorporate qualities from others into their own identity, promoting personal growth and stronger social bonds (Fasbender & Drury, 2022). Interestingly, older workers generally report higher job satisfaction than younger workers. Individuals become more proactive in seeking fulfilling work and prioritising emotionally meaningful activities as they age. This shift in perception leads older workers to pursue jobs that bring them satisfaction (Wegge & Schmidt, 2009).

Bellotti et al. (2022) recommend that organisations implement Human Resource Management strategies that cultivate a positive age diversity climate to further support age diversity. This includes ensuring fair treatment across age groups and actively recruiting and retaining employees of all ages, which can enhance employee satisfaction and reduce turnover.

8.3.4 Faith Diversity

Managing religious diversity in the workplace is expected to become increasingly important in the coming decades due to the growing diversity of religious practices and the rising expectation that employees can express their beliefs authentically at work. In this context, Miller and Ewest (2015) proposed the Faith and Work Organisational Framework, which outlines four approaches to managing workplace spirituality based on corporate actions and attitudes:

- faith-avoiding⁵,
- faith-based⁶,
- faith-safe⁷, and
- faith-friendly⁸ (Miller & Ewest, 2015).

This framework can guide how organisations can navigate faith diversity in ways that respect individual expression and organisational needs. Employees in faith-friendly organisations exhibit significantly higher job satisfaction levels than those in faith-safe, faith-based, or faith-avoiding organisations; and faith-friendly practices can benefit employees of all religious and spiritual affiliations and those who do not identify with any faith. Perceived organisational support, a critical factor influencing employee morale and engagement, is notably higher in faith-friendly settings. Moreover, turnover intentions are significantly lower among employees in faith-friendly environments, suggesting that supportive practices related to faith diversity can effectively enhance employee retention (Park & Martinez, 2022).

8.3.5 Racial-Ethnic Minority

Racial-ethnic minority workgroups are among the most vulnerable populations within organisations, with racial disparities in health outcomes. Despite Australia being a highly developed nation, there remains a significant disparity between the health and welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians, with Aboriginal peoples facing greater disadvantage across all social determinants of health compared to non-Aboriginal Australians (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2015). Other non-Australian research has found that Black and Hispanic individuals often faced poorer health than White individuals (Alvidrez & Barksdale (2022). Sternthal et al. (2011) also found that Black and Hispanic employees reported significantly higher stress levels compared to their White counterparts. This disparity is especially concerning due to the established links between chronic stress and negative health outcomes, including physical and mental health issues, as well as a higher likelihood of turnover (Sternthal et al., 2011). For racial-ethnic minorities, perceived exclusion is linked to worse health outcomes. This indicates that being a minority in a workgroup may amplify the harmful health effects of exclusion (Ehrhart & Chung, 2024).

Organisations are encouraged to foster inclusive work environments that promote a sense of belonging and recognition of individuality among all employees, especially those from racial-ethnic minority backgrounds (Shore et

⁵ These organisations actively discourage expressions of faith in the workplace. This can create a hostile environment for employees who wish to discuss or express their religious beliefs, negatively impacting job satisfaction and perceived support.

⁶ Rooted in a specific religious tradition, these organisations may inadvertently marginalise employees who do not adhere to that faith. This can lead to lower employee satisfaction and a sense of exclusion.

⁷ These organisations comply with legal anti-discrimination laws but do not actively promote or support religious expression. This neutral stance can result in moderate levels of employee satisfaction and support.

⁸ These organisations actively embrace and support various faith identities. They prioritise inclusivity and provide a supportive environment for employees of all faiths. This often leads to high employee satisfaction and loyalty.

al, 2018). This approach can improve employee health, reduce turnover intentions, and enhance organisational performance.

8.3.6 Disability

People with disabilities often face multiple challenges in the workplace, affecting all stages of their careers, from recruitment and employment to professional development. These challenges are often directly linked to employers' attitudes, opinions, and behaviours toward disability and colleagues' support (or lack thereof). Many disabled employees report feeling undervalued, and experience stress due to limited career advancement opportunities and minimal workloads. Stress also arises from being assigned tasks that do not match their skills, leading to a sense of injustice and discrimination. Additionally, some disabled employees feel excluded from team activities and decision-making processes, further contributing to feeling undervalued (Coli & Rissotto, 2014).

Research clearly indicates that workplace inclusion is essential for the well-being, job satisfaction, and emotional health of employees with disabilities. Inclusive practices in the workplace directly improve job satisfaction, promote positive emotions, and reduce negative emotions among disabled employees. When organisations actively foster an inclusive environment, employees with disabilities typically experience workplace stress and anxiety, increasing retention rates. To create an inclusive workplace, organisations should prioritise inclusive practices and supportive leadership that value diversity and accessibility (Santuzzi et al, 2022).

8.3.7 Sexual orientation

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and other minority (LGBTQ+ or LGBT) individuals often face informal workplace discrimination, exclusion, and harassment (Waite, 2021). As a result, LGBT employees generally experience poorer employment outcomes than cisgender heterosexual employees, including higher rates of unemployment and turnover, lower wages, reduced job satisfaction, diminished well-being, and slower career advancement (Drydakis, 2022; Shannon, 2022). Discrimination in the workplace can significantly impact LGBT employees' well-being, both in the short and long-term. In the short-term, they may experience increased stress, anxiety, physical symptoms (e.g., headaches, fatigue), and feelings of isolation. Discrimination also negatively affects mental health, leading to depression, low self-esteem, and decreased productivity. Long-term effects include a sense of disillusionment, missed career advancement opportunities, reduced job satisfaction, and an overall decline in well-being, which impacts both the individual and the organisation (Santos & Reyes, 2023).

Among LGBT employees, there are gender differences in perceptions of workplace discrimination, with women being more likely than men to report experiencing discriminatory practices at work (Lloren & Parini, 2017). Furthermore, workplace well-being among LGBT employees varies significantly across different identity groups, with certain subgroups reporting poorer outcomes than others. Gay and lesbian employees, as well as cisgender men, generally report higher levels of well-being compared to other LGBT subgroups. Pluri-sexual employees, such as those with bisexual or pansexual identities, report lower workplace well-being than monosexual (gay/lesbian) employees. Gender non-conforming employees, including those who are non-binary or agender, also experience poorer well-being than cisgender LGBT individuals. Additionally, smaller, less visible LGBT groups, such as asexual, pansexual, and agender employees, often report the lowest workplace well-being outcomes. Transgender employees face notably lower levels of well-being in the workplace compared to their cisgender LGBT counterparts. Within sexual identity groups, gender differences also emerge, with lesbian women and bisexual women often reporting better outcomes than their gay and bisexual male peers (Donaghy & Perales, 2024).

8.4 Psychological safety, psychosocial safety, and cultural intelligence

8.4.1 Psychosocial safety

Psychosocial safety is an organisational concept concerned with protecting workers' mental health through policies, practices, and procedures that support psychological well-being. Robak and

Kwiatek (2019) reported that a well-developed diversity management strategy grounded in a company's value system significantly influences employee psychosocial safety. However, it is important to note that procedures and programs alone can only guarantee workplace safety if a diversity-inclusive organisational culture supports them. This highlights the crucial role of diversity management in creating a safe and healthy work environment, underscoring the urgency for HR professionals to implement effective diversity strategies (Robak & Kwiatek, 2019).

8.4.2 Psychological safety

Psychological safety is a concept focused on creating an environment where individuals feel comfortable expressing themselves and taking risks without fear of negative consequences.

Psychological safety and a sense of inclusion reassure organisational members that they will not face negative consequences for expressing diverse perspectives. Therefore, inclusion helps explain how knowledge diversity can be harnessed to improve employee well-being and job satisfaction. Inclusion fosters a comfortable and trusting environment, facilitating the smooth exchange of information and encouraging employees to share their expertise (Jaiswal & Dyaram, 2020).

Other studies focusing on psychological safety in relation to diversity have examined how workplace leaders can enhance psychological safety among diverse workgroups. Kafka (2023) found that in organisations with low racial diversity among leaders, Black, Hispanic, and Latinx (BHL) participants reported significantly lower psychological safety compared to White participants. In contrast, BHL and White participants felt much safer psychologically in organisations with high leader racial diversity. Positive changes to an inclusive organisational culture should benefit everyone, regardless of race. However, organisational leadership must identify specific practices, activities, policies, and training programs that positively impact the diversity climate (Kafka, 2023).

Research highlights the crucial role of leadership in promoting psychological safety in the workplace. Studies suggest that female executives working under CEOs who value diversity tend to experience higher psychological safety levels than male executives in similar positions. Additionally, psychological safety has been shown to influence female executive turnover rates. Therefore, inclusive leadership is essential for fostering psychological safety (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

Research indicates that inclusive leadership positively affects innovative work behaviour, with psychological safety as a key mediating factor. Specifically, inclusive leadership creates an environment that values diverse perspectives, encouraging team members to share new ideas without fear of judgment or negative consequences. This sense of psychological safety allows individuals to take creative risks and collaborate more effectively, enhancing the overall innovative capabilities of the team (Javed et al., 2019).

8.4.3 Cultural Intelligence

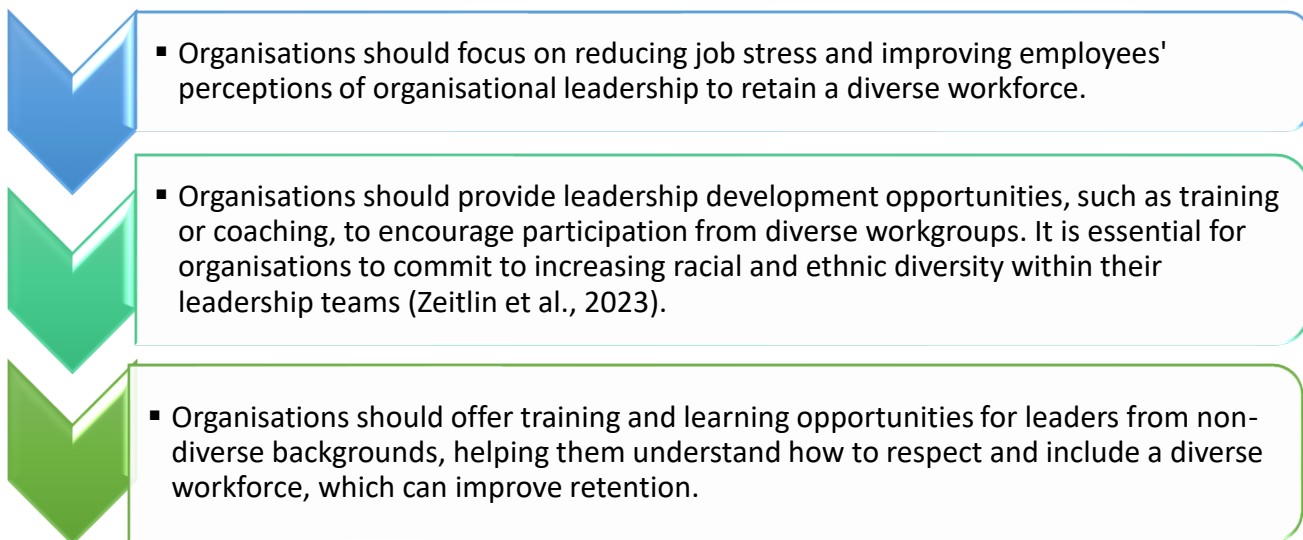
Cultural intelligence (CQ) is recognised as a vital competency for navigating multicultural work environments. CQ refers to intercultural skills that enable individuals to function effectively in

diverse settings and engage in cross-cultural interactions (Earley & Ang, 2003). It is recommended that leaders actively develop their CQ alongside implementing fair human resources practices and formal organisational structures. This development can lead to a stronger climate of inclusion, reduced discrimination, and increased levels of psychological safety for diverse employees (Fujimoto & Presbitero, 2022).

8.5. Leadership, management and DEI

The increasing diversity of the workforce has brought new expectations for effective leadership. Modern leaders must create environments where individuals from diverse backgrounds can collaborate, learn from one another, and inspire each other. Zeitlin et al (2023) recommend three critical organisational practices to foster this environment:

Figure 8: Three Critical Organizational Practices to Create a Diversity Climate (Zeitlin et al., 2023)



The reviewed studies identified four key leadership practices or styles that can effectively foster a diversity climate supportive of retaining talented and diverse workgroups, that organisations can adopt based on their strategic objectives:

Figure 9. Four Key Leadership Styles Fostering a Diversity Climate



8.5.1 Positive Leadership

Adams et al. (2020) examined three leadership styles—authentic, inclusive, and respectful—which were found to load onto a common latent factor termed "positive leadership". According to the study, authentic leadership involves leaders who "know, accept, and remain true to oneself." Inclusive leadership focuses on building high-quality relationships with followers by

demonstrating "openness, accessibility, and availability." These leaders treat others with respect, seek input from others, and respond to their questions, ideas, and needs. Respectful leadership entails directing respect toward subordinates by acknowledging and treating them as equals, worthy of attention and appreciation.

The authors suggest positive leadership behaviours can enhance employee well-being and collaboration, particularly in diverse teams. These leadership styles are especially relevant for managing diverse workforces, as they emphasise building high-quality relationships with followers and appreciating individual differences. Positive leadership was found to influence employees' perceptions of their status within the group and how they are viewed by other members, affecting feelings of inclusion and experiences of discrimination. Overall, positive leadership enhances employee well-being and collaboration, particularly in diverse teams. It influences employees' perceptions of their status and feelings of inclusion, reducing experiences of discrimination.

8.5.2 Inclusive Leadership

This leadership focuses on promoting a culture of inclusion by valuing diverse perspectives and ensuring equitable participation in decision-making. Inclusive leadership is increasingly seen as essential for advancing DEI within organisations (Javed et al., 2019). This leadership approach improves workplace culture and enhances overall organisational effectiveness. Inclusive leaders actively promote a culture of inclusion within their teams by recognising and valuing diverse perspectives, creating an environment where all team members feel respected, and ensuring equitable participation in decision-making (King et al., 2024).

Nishii and Mayer (2009) emphasise that by building strong relationships within diverse teams, leaders can foster collaboration and innovation and lower turnover rates. By establishing strong Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) relationships, leaders can promote norms of equality and inclusion, which are vital for effective team functioning. They suggest that organisations seeking to leverage the benefits of diversity must prioritise inclusive leadership practices, including training leaders to develop high-quality relationships with all team members and cultivating an inclusive culture that addresses potential diversity challenges. King et al. (2024) reported that successful strategies are primarily based on understanding diverse perspectives, encouraging interprofessional engagement, using data-driven decision-making, and emphasising accountability. Additionally, organisations should implement educational programs focused on bias, racism, and microaggressions to raise staff self-awareness. These initiatives help individuals recognise discriminatory behaviours and provide tools to address them effectively.

8.5.3 Spiritual Leadership

Spiritual leadership emphasises a sense of vocation and the interconnectedness among followers. It is an inclusive approach that can enhance practices, promoting a supportive climate. This leadership style is linked to the broader concepts of workplace spirituality and transcendental leadership. Spiritual leadership promotes a shared vision of service to various stakeholders, nurtures the community, respects individuality, and ensures equal dignity for all employees. According to Gotsis and Grimani (2017), it utilises spiritual values to encourage inclusive behaviours and practices, thereby enhancing followers' capabilities, integrating diverse identity groups, and harmonising intersecting and marginalised identities.

Although Gotsis and Grimani (2017) did not explicitly outline how to develop spiritual leadership in the workplace, their study offers valuable insights. Organisations can cultivate spiritual leadership by fostering a culture of purpose, interconnectedness, and inclusivity. Leaders should promote a shared vision that transcends financial goals, prioritising service to employees, customers, and the community. Key practices include encouraging open communication, recognising individual contributions, and fostering mutual respect to strengthen community ties. Integrating spiritual values such as empathy, integrity, and respect into daily decision-making can help leaders build trust and create a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

8.5.4 Responsible Leadership

Responsible leadership is well-suited for effective diversity management and enhancing employee engagement. Responsible

leaders who effectively manage diversity possess key characteristics such as strong self-awareness and approachability, adaptability and a growth mindset, relational intelligence, and the ability to inspire others through a clear vision (Obuobisa-Darko et al., 2023).

Responsible leaders are more likely to be culturally competent, allowing them to relate well to diverse subordinates, be willing to learn about different cultures and manage diversity effectively. This effective diversity management fosters an environment where employees feel valued and supported, perceive equal opportunities for success, and demonstrate improved behaviours, attitudes, and performance. Key characteristics and behaviours that organisations can cultivate in responsible leaders include (Obuobisa-Darko et al, 2023):

- *Internal Assuredness and Attractiveness:* Confidence and connecting with followers.
- *Adaptability and Willingness to Learn:* Flexibility in new situations and a desire to gain new knowledge.
- *Relational Thinking:* Recognising their role in a larger community and understanding their interdependence with stakeholders.
- *Clear Purpose and Inspirational Ability:* Being proactive, focused, and able to motivate others toward common goals.
- *Cultural Competence:* A commitment to understanding and respecting diverse cultures.
- *Ethical Behaviour:* Promoting positive relationships and serving as ethical role models.
- *Sustainability Focus:* Considering long-term impacts and balancing social, environmental, and economic outcomes.
- *Trust-building:* Developing strong relationships with stakeholders.
- *Supportive Leadership:* Serving, supporting, and caring for team members.
- *Collaborative Goal setting:* Involving employees as partners in achieving organisational objectives.

8.6. Turnover intention, actual turnover, and DEI factors

Turnover intention, or intention to quit, is the cognitive process of thinking about quitting, planning to leave a job, and desiring to leave the job (Shore et al, 2018). Turnover intention is a significant outcome variable, as it is considered an immediate precursor to and a strong predictor of actual turnover (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Turnover is distinct from turnover intention and refers to employees who leave an organisation. The turnover rate is the percentage of the workforce that leaves over a specified period (Shore et al, 2018). The literature confirms that a range of DEI factors can influence turnover intention and turnover, including:

Figure 10. DEI Factors from research that can influence turnover intention and turnover

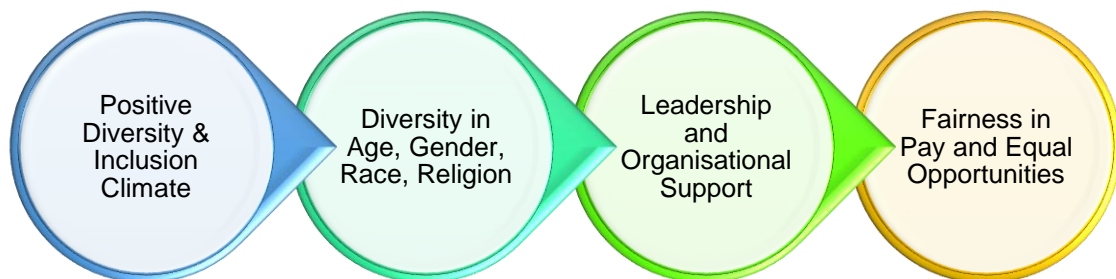


Table 11. The Effects of DEI Factors on Turnover Intention and Turnover

Main Factor	Brief Findings	References
8.6.1 Positive Diversity and Inclusion Climate	<p>Employees who perceive a positive and inclusive diversity climate are less likely to consider leaving their jobs.</p> <p>A strong diversity climate enhances commitment, job satisfaction, communication, and performance for all employees, not just minority groups.</p>	<p>Bellotti et al., 2022</p> <p>Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013</p> <p>Kaplan et al., 2011</p> <p>Lee et al., 2021</p> <p>Stewart et al., 2011</p>
8.6.2 Diversity in Age, Gender, Race, Religion	<p>Due to intragroup polarisation and reduced cohesion, demographic diversity can lead to higher turnover.</p> <p>Age-diverse friendships foster cooperation and reduce turnover.</p> <p>Intrinsic factors influence women's turnover, while extrinsic factors drive men's.</p> <p>Racial minorities face discrimination, leading to feelings of exclusion and higher turnover rates.</p>	<p>Nishii & Mayer, 2009</p> <p>Fasbender & Drury, 2022</p> <p>Groeneveld, 2011</p> <p>Ehrhart & Chung, 2024</p> <p>Park & Martinez, 2022</p>
8.6.3 Leadership and Organisational Support	<p>Effective leadership fosters inclusion and reduces turnover by building quality relationships with team members.</p> <p>High-quality Leader-Member Exchange relationships can mitigate the negative effects of demographic diversity on turnover intentions.</p> <p>Leaders who provide growth opportunities positively influence retention.</p>	<p>Nishii & Mayer, 2009</p> <p>Kaplan et al., 2011</p>
8.6.4 Fairness in Pay and Equal Opportunities	<p>Perceptions of fairness in pay and promotions are negatively associated with turnover intentions.</p> <p>Employees who perceive unfairness are more likely to leave.</p> <p>Satisfaction with pay influences the relationship between diversity climate perceptions and attachment to the organisation, impacting retention rates.</p>	<p>Chordiya, 2022</p> <p>Kaplan et al., 2011</p>

8.6.1. Positive diversity and inclusion climate

Studies show that when employees perceive their organisation as having a positive and inclusive diversity climate, they are less likely to think about leaving their jobs (Bellotti et al., 2022; Chrobot-Mason & Aramovich, 2013; Kaplan et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2021; Stewart et al., 2011). Organisations that manage diversity well and promote inclusion can significantly enhance employees' commitment, job satisfaction, communication, problem-solving skills, and motivation while reducing conflicts and improving performance (Peretz et al., 2015; Roberson, 2019). Employees feel committed to their employer, reducing their intention to leave (Lee et al., 2021).

A positive diversity climate also benefits all employees, not just minority groups, including White men or those without a specific religious affiliation (Kaplan et al., 2011; Klomjit & Charpavang, 2022). Workplaces that embrace

diversity create environments where employees feel comfortable being themselves, without hiding or changing parts of their identities, to earn respect and appreciation from their colleagues and managers (Neault & Mondair, 2011).

8.6.2. Age, gender, race and religion

Demographic diversity, encompassing differences in race, gender, and age, can, under certain circumstances, contribute to higher turnover rates. When not effectively managed, greater demographic differences within teams can lead to intragroup polarisation, favouritism, diminished positive emotions, and decreased cohesion, which can increase turnover (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). Conversely, as noted earlier, friendships among employees of different ages can create a sense of shared identity, fostering cooperation. When employees feel a sense of unity with colleagues of different ages, they are more motivated to work together, ultimately reducing turnover rates (Fasbender & Drury, 2022).

Regarding gender diversity, women's turnover decisions are often influenced by intrinsic factors such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, opportunities for growth and development, and a sense of belonging within the organisation. In contrast, men's turnover is more frequently influenced by extrinsic factors like salary, benefits, job security, and opportunities for advancement (Groeneveld, 2011).

Racial and ethnic minorities often face discrimination and poorer health outcomes compared to majority groups, which can lead to feelings of exclusion and negatively impact their well-being. When these individuals feel excluded, they may experience adverse health outcomes and increased isolation, contributing to higher turnover rates (Ehrhart & Chung, 2024).

Organisations that adopt a faith-friendly approach tend to have higher employee satisfaction and better perceptions of support from supervisors and the organisation. As a result, employees in these environments are less likely to want to leave their jobs, while those in faith-avoiding or strictly faith-based organisations show higher intentions to leave (Park & Martinez, 2022).

8.6.3. Leadership and support from organisations

Leadership plays a vital role in fostering inclusion within diverse teams. By building high-quality relationships with team members from various backgrounds, leaders can establish norms of equality and improve group performance, which helps reduce turnover (Nishii & Mayer, 2009). Furthermore, effective supervisors can improve employees' perceptions of future growth opportunities, positively influencing retention (Kaplan et al., 2011). High-quality Leader-Member Exchange relationships can also weaken the link between demographic diversity and turnover, indicating that inclusive leadership can help mitigate turnover in diverse teams (Nishii & Mayer, 2009).

8.6.4. Fair Pay and Equal Opportunities

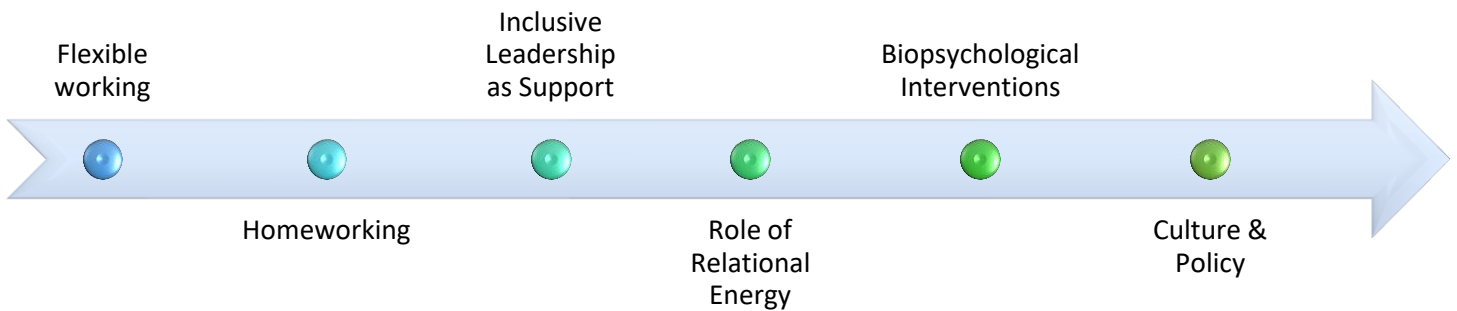
Perceptions of fairness in pay, promotions, and organisational processes are negatively associated with turnover intentions. Employees who perceive decision-making procedures as fair and feel equitably compensated and promoted are less likely to express a desire to leave their jobs (Chordiya, 2022). Satisfaction with pay also influences the relationship between diversity climate perceptions and calculative attachment. Calculative attachment is the rational assessment of future value and opportunities associated with continued employment. Employees who are satisfied with their pay are more likely to recognise future opportunities within the organisation. Those with higher calculative attachment are less likely to leave the organisation due to perceived future benefits (Kaplan et al., 2011).

8.7 Focus on factors affecting the retention of neurodiverse employees

Branicki et al. (2024) emphasised the need for organisations to develop HR policies for working arrangements that address the diverse needs of neurodivergent individuals to create truly inclusive workplaces and have positive

effects on employment outcomes for neurodivergent employees. Lindsay et al. (2021) noted that, since many autistic employees prefer not to disclose their condition at work, managers and policymakers should focus on creating autism-friendly workplaces without requiring disclosure (Lindsay et al, 2021).

Figure 11: Factors affecting the retention of neurodiverse employees



8.7.1 Flexible working

Flexible working, especially options like flexitime, helps neurodivergent individuals manage their jobs better. This reduces underemployment and allows them to work at their preferred pace without disclosing their neurodivergent conditions. While flexible arrangements improve job stability for those with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), results are mixed for other neurodivergent groups, indicating that flexibility needs to be tailored for different conditions (Branicki et al., 2024).

8.7.2 Homeworking

Working from home helps reduce challenges such as sensory overload and commuting stress, which are common for neurodivergent employees. This arrangement can decrease underemployment for neurodivergent individuals, often bringing their job stability closer to neurotypical employees (Branicki et al., 2024).

8.7.3 Inclusive Leadership as Support

Inclusive leaders create a welcoming and empathetic environment, which helps reduce avoidance behaviours among neurodivergent employees. Iqbal et al. (2024) found that inclusive leadership, high relational energy, and self-control skills can significantly reduce workplace avoidance behaviours among neurodivergent employees. This highlights the importance of personalised leadership and resources in effectively supporting neurodiverse workforces.

8.7.4 Role of Relational Energy

By fostering acceptance, inclusive leaders build relational energy that encourages participation. High relational energy enhances feelings of belonging, trust, and engagement, leading to fewer avoidance behaviours. Employees who experience strong relational energy are more motivated to engage actively in their work. In environments with low relational energy, employees may avoid participation due to strained relationships and unresolved conflicts. Higher self-control and the ability to resist distractions further enhance the positive effects of relational energy, leading to reduced avoidance behaviours (Iqbal et al., 2024).

8.7.5 Biopsychosocial Interventions for Neurodiversity and Inclusivity

Hutson and Hutson (2023) described how biopsychosocial interventions can provide a competitive advantage for neurodiversity in the workplace. The benefits of a biopsychosocial

approach are that addressing biological, psychological, and social factors can create a supportive environment for neurodivergent employees, leading to better retention, productivity, and job satisfaction. This approach meets specific needs including sensory accommodations, clear communication, and structured work settings.

8.7.6 Importance of Culture and Policy

Inclusive hiring and ongoing support are essential to employ neurodiverse people successfully. Training managers and staff on neurodiversity helps foster a positive work environment, reducing turnover and creating a sustainable advantage by enhancing

workplace culture. These findings recommend flexible work options, sensory-friendly office designs, clear communication, and structured onboarding programs. These practices can enable neurodivergent employees to thrive, ultimately benefiting the organisation by creating a more dynamic and resilient workforce (Hutson & Hutson, 2023).

8.8 Focus on factors affecting the retention of Indigenous employees

To support Indigenous employees in the workplace, various studies have identified key facilitators that can help these employees feel safe and remain in their positions within organisations. Biles et al. (2021) assessed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce support initiatives, and found mentoring programs provided essential cultural support and a safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. The study demonstrated that defined support roles and Aboriginal-led projects can create broader impacts by fostering organisational connections and enhancing feelings of cultural respect among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. The program effectively promoted five main areas: cultural safety, motivation, relationships, learning, and support among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees (Biles et al., 2021).

Similarly, Caron et al. (2019) described how leadership and organisational integration measures can promote Indigenous employees' perceived insider status (PIS), thereby fulfilling psychological contract obligations. The main findings of this study included:

- **PIS** is positively associated with well-being, job satisfaction, performance, organisational citizenship behaviours, and employee retention.
- Four leadership integration measures were identified: recruiting qualified leaders, understanding cultural nuances, incorporating diverse contributions, and welcoming questions and challenges.
- Nine organisational integration measures were highlighted, including achieving a critical mass of Indigenous employees, promoting equity and participation, fostering skill development, and supporting positive work relationships.
- Support from the community was recognised as a unique integration measure for collectivist Indigenous cultures.
- Variability in leader-member exchange quality can create conflict and negatively impact employee satisfaction and performance.
- Leaders should differentiate their treatment of employees based on clear criteria and encourage transparent, ongoing communication.
- Multicultural or diversity committees can facilitate the adoption of pro-diversity practices, promoting a positive workplace climate for Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees (Caron et al., 2019).

Deroy and Schütze (2019) also reviewed literature to identify organisational factors that support the retention of Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing staff in Aboriginal Health Services. They identified five critical themes:

- A culturally safe and secure workplace environment.
- Teamwork and collaboration.

- Strong supervisory and managerial support, along with peer support for debriefing, reflection, emotional support, and strengthened coping mechanisms.
- Opportunities for professional development, including skill enhancement and career progression.
- Recognition of workload, work quality, autonomy, and remuneration reflective of the high-pressure nature of the role.

The authors also submitted that State and Federal Governments should consider formally recognising the substantial cultural knowledge that Aboriginal staff bring to their roles. Such recognition could also pave the way to review remuneration and implement support mechanisms to improve retention, reduce stress, and prevent burnout among Aboriginal staff (Deroy & Schütze, 2019).

Access to sustainable employment and productive training were two strategies suggested by Ewing et al. (2017) for Indigenous employees. They found that traditional recruitment procedures can pose barriers for Indigenous Australians due to systemic socio-economic disadvantage. They concluded that:

- Indigenous employees are drawn to organisations offering career opportunities, culturally safe environments, and pathways to enhance life opportunities.
- Training and skill development programs organisations and private providers provide are vital to Indigenous employees.
- Full-time employment and on-the-job training improve Indigenous employees' job security and quality of life (Ewing et al., 2017).

Similarly, Lai et al. (2018) conducted a literature review to identify various organisational, individual, and systemic factors and barriers to retention among Indigenous employees in the health sector. These are summarised in Table 12.

Table 12. Key Factors Influencing the Retention of Indigenous Australians (Lai et al., 2018)

Category	Subcategory	Elements
Organisational Factors	Supportive Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally safe and secure workplace • Supportive management structure • Respect from colleagues
	Teamwork and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development • Access to training and educational opportunities • Clear career pathways • Opportunities for skill development and role progression
	Supervision and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to clinical and cultural supervision • Mentoring programs, especially from senior Indigenous staff • Peer support networks
	Job Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly documented roles, scope of practice, and responsibilities • Job security and permanent positions • Adequate remuneration reflecting the demands of the role • Flexible working arrangements
Individual Factors		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sense of making a difference in Indigenous health • Feeling trusted to work autonomously • Recognition of workload and quality of work

Systemic Factors

- Increased funding for Indigenous health programs and positions
- Recognition of Indigenous health professional roles
- Addressing systemic racism

Barriers to Retention

- Heavy workloads and demands
 - Lack of support from management
 - Limited organisational funding
 - Proximity to community (can be both positive and negative)
 - Stress and burnout
-

9.0 Interventions to create diverse and inclusive workplaces

Up to this point, the discussion has addressed DEI and the various factors that DEI considerations may influence or influence. A pressing question is: *How can organisations establish an effective and robust diversity management system?* The studies reviewed in this report provide numerous insights, but the following practical recommendations are particularly beneficial for enhancing organisational diversity management practices.

This section is divided into two main categories. Sections 7.1 to 7.3 describe interventions for diverse work groups. These are summarised in Table 13 and illustrated in Figure 12. Sections 7.4 and 7.5 focus on practical interventions for creating inclusive workplaces specifically for employees with disabilities, and diverse sexual orientations (LGBT), respectively.

Figure 12: Interventions and strategies to create diverse and inclusive workplaces



Table 13. Main Interventions and Strategies to Improve Diversity Management Practices

Main Interventions	Subcategory	Key Summarised Findings
Attracting Diverse Applicants During Recruitment	Inclusive job descriptions	<p>Creating inclusive job descriptions and advertising on platforms that reach underrepresented groups can attract diverse applicants.</p> <p>Active recruitment strategies and bias-free hiring practices enhance fairness in the recruitment process.</p>
	Diverse hiring practices	<p>Blind recruitment processes minimise bias, while selective hiring and extensive training enhance new employee competence.</p> <p>HR professionals should receive training on promoting diversity and inclusion.</p>
Retaining Diverse Employees Through Diversity Management Practices	Leadership Development and Training	Leadership training focusing on inclusive leadership styles improves employee well-being and collaboration.
	Cultivating a Culture of Respect and Open Communication	Increasing minority representation in leadership roles signals a commitment to diversity.
	Supporting Career Development and Work-Life Balance	Fostering a culture of respect and open communication enhances inclusivity.
	Resource Allocation and Ethical Standards	DEI training promotes understanding while empowering employees in decision-making and increases their commitment to the organisation.
Evaluating the Effectiveness of Diversity Management Systems	Examine Employment Practices	Regular evaluations of employment practices ensure fairness and equity, removing barriers for underrepresented groups.
	Create Opportunities for Self-Expression	Encouraging employees to contribute their unique perspectives and experiences, to support them to feel valued and respected.
	Establish Regular Feedback Systems and Analyse Feedback Data	Establishing regular feedback mechanisms allows employees to express their experiences, contributing to improvements in diversity initiatives.
	Recognise Contributions	Acknowledging employee contributions fosters a sense of value and belonging, enhancing overall organisational engagement.
	Conduct Exit Interviews	Conducting exit interviews helps identify reasons for employee departures related to diversity and inclusion issues, providing insights for improvement.

9.1 Attracting Diverse Applicants During Recruitment

Attracting diverse applicants requires creating inclusive job descriptions, advertising on platforms that reach underrepresented groups, and highlighting the organisation's commitment to diversity. Organisations can foster diversity by emphasising equal opportunities and ensuring a bias-free recruitment process. The main strategies to attract diverse applicants during recruitment include:

- Adoption of active recruitment and retention strategies to create a supportive environment for employees from all backgrounds.
- Implementing diverse hiring practices, such as blind recruitment processes, to help minimise bias and ensure fair consideration of candidates.
- Selective hiring processes, coupled with extensive initial training, can enhance the competence of new employees, ensuring they have the skills and knowledge required for success.
- Human resource professionals involved in recruitment should receive training on the promotion of diversity and inclusion.
- Including diverse workforce policies in job descriptions, creating inclusive advertisements, and implementing other practical measures to encourage minority groups and diverse talents to apply for open positions.

9.2 Retaining Diverse Employees Through Diversity Management Practices

Retaining diverse employees involves fostering an inclusive work environment through effective diversity management practices. Organisations should promote a culture of respect, fairness, and open communication while providing all employees training on DEI. We list below the most practical recommendations from the reviewed studies for retaining a diverse workforce through key management practices:

9.2.1. Leadership Development and Training

Leadership development and training have been widely studied as critical factors in enhancing organisational performance.

- Leaders and managers must have the necessary skills to cultivate positive leadership behaviours. Therefore, organisations are encouraged to hold training programs focusing on authentic, inclusive, and respectful leadership styles, which can improve employee well-being and promote collaboration within diverse teams.
- Developing leadership styles such as transformational and authentic leadership is essential, as these approaches foster psychological safety and empower employees.
- Additionally, fostering high-quality leader-member relationships is critical. Leaders should build strong relationships with subordinates to create an environment where employees feel valued and included.
- Increasing the representation of minorities in leadership positions is also important. By promoting diversity in leadership roles, organisations signal their commitment to inclusion and create a more welcoming environment for minority applicants.

9.2.2. Cultivating a Culture of Respect and Open Communication

To foster inclusivity, organisations should create a culture of respect, equality, and fairness in the workplace.

- This can be achieved by implementing practices encouraging mutual respect among employees, enhancing group cohesion and inspiring respectful behaviour across teams.
- Providing DEI training for all employees is another crucial step in promoting understanding and fostering an inclusive culture.

- Open communication and feedback mechanisms are essential in this process. Leaders should encourage communication both horizontally among peers and vertically across management levels.
- Inclusive leaders should also ensure that all team members are involved in decision-making, recognising and valuing diverse perspectives. Empowerment initiatives that give employees the autonomy to make decisions related to their work can foster a sense of ownership and commitment.

9.2.3. Supporting Career Development and Work-Life Balance

Providing mentorship, training, and flexible work arrangements helps employees from diverse backgrounds grow professionally while managing their personal commitments. This approach fosters long-term retention and engagement within the organisation.

- Mentorship programs that connect experienced professionals with individuals from diverse backgrounds can be a valuable tool for fostering career development.
- Providing equal access to professional development and growth opportunities, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or background, is essential for promoting justice and fairness in the workplace.
- Organisations should also adopt merit-based practices to ensure fairness, which can positively influence organisational performance.
- Employees should have access to mechanisms that allow them to report concerns related to diversity and ethics.
- Furthermore, recognising the influence of family on employees' intention to stay with the organisation is important. Supportive policies that promote work-life balance can significantly enhance employee retention.

9.2.4. Resource Allocation and Ethical Standards

Equitable resource allocation is a practical intervention that can support the innovative work behaviours of diverse workgroups.

- Ensuring all employees have access to necessary resources, such as time and materials, is essential.
- Programs such as after-work gatherings, coffee time talks, and relaxation training can be beneficial in promoting team dynamics and helping employees cope with workplace stressors.
- Promoting ethical standards in diversity management helps create a fair, respectful, and inclusive workplace environment for all employees. Organisations should maintain a strong ethical climate where ethical behaviour is valued and enforced.
- A faith-friendly approach accommodating and celebrating diverse faith identities can further strengthen the organisation's commitment to inclusion. Recognising and celebrating various religious holidays can demonstrate respect for different faith traditions.
- Organisations should enforce anti-discrimination policies within human resource practices to foster a more inclusive environment. This includes implementing training programs that address unconscious bias and raise awareness of discrimination issues.

9.3 Evaluating the Effectiveness of Diversity Management Systems

Regularly evaluating diversity management systems is crucial for fostering an inclusive workplace. Organisations can identify areas for improvement by tracking diversity metrics and collecting employee feedback. This information allows for targeted policy adjustments, promoting a more equitable and supportive environment for all employees.

Practical suggestions for assessing the effectiveness of diversity management systems include:

- **Examine Employment Practices:** Ensure that all policies and procedures are fair, equitable, and free from barriers that could hinder the entry or advancement of employees from underrepresented groups.

- **Create Opportunities for Self-Expression:** Encourage employees to contribute their unique perspectives and experiences to the workplace. Foster a safe and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and respected.
- **Establish Regular Feedback Systems:** Implement mechanisms for employees to provide feedback on their experiences of inclusion, the work environment, and health outcomes.
- **Analyse Feedback Data:** Utilize the collected data to identify areas for improvement and assess the effectiveness of diversity initiatives.
- **Recognise Contributions:** Actively acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of all employees. Demonstrate that their work is valued and that they are essential team members.
- **Conduct Exit Interviews:** Conduct exit interviews to understand the reasons for employee departures and identify any issues related to diversity and inclusion.
- **Track and Measure Outcomes:** Implement systems to monitor the progress of diversity initiatives and evaluate their effectiveness in achieving organisational goals.

9.4. Strategies for Disability Inclusion

To promote disability inclusion in the workplace, it is essential to involve disabled employees actively. This can be done through a dedicated disability staff group, where disabled employees can review proposed changes and provide feedback to prevent unintended negative impacts.

Sang et al. (2021) described practical strategies for fostering disability inclusion among employees with both physical and mental disabilities, including:

- **Adapt the Environment, Not the Person:** Evaluate current practices and culture to ensure they do not disproportionately impact employees with chronic health conditions or disabilities.
- **Establish a Disabled Staff Network:** This allows disabled employees to contribute to policy development and design accessible workspaces.
- **Create an Inclusive Workplace:** Implement disability training, offer flexible working options, and introduce disability leave so that medical-related absences do not count against an employee's record.
- **Collaborate with Trade Unions:** By working with trade unions, organisations can integrate disability awareness strategically and adopt a proactive, collective approach beyond basic equality laws (Sang et al, 2021).

Pomaki et al. (2012) reviewed workplace-based interventions for preventing work disability in employees with common mental health conditions and identified three main elements:

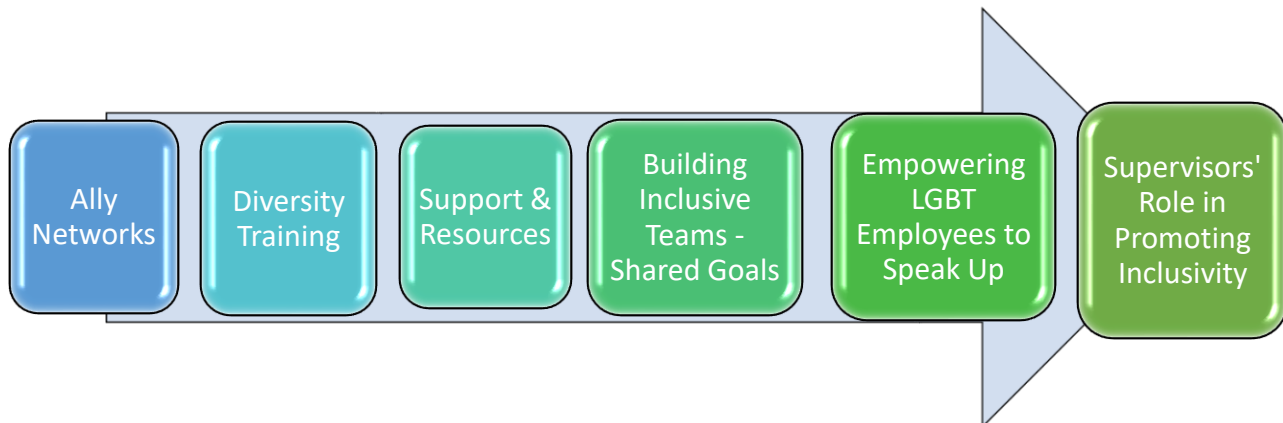
- **Facilitation of Access to Clinical Treatment:** Supporting access to treatment improved work functioning, quality of life, and economic outcomes, though evidence on reducing absence duration was limited.
- **Workplace-Based High-Intensity Psychological Interventions:** Cognitive-behavioural therapy improved work functioning, quality of life, and economic outcomes.
- **Facilitation of Navigation through the Disability Management System:** Helping employees navigate the disability management system positively reduced absence duration.

The findings suggest that workplace-based interventions can enhance work disability outcomes for employees with common mental health issues. Specifically, access to clinical treatment and high-intensity psychological interventions were most effective in improving work performance and quality of life and reducing costs (Pomaki et al, 2012).

9.5 Inclusive Workplaces for LGBT Employees

Creating a welcoming workplace culture for LGBT employees is essential for promoting their inclusion. Effective diversity management significantly shapes the experiences of LGBT employees by reducing discrimination and enhancing their overall well-being at work (Lloren & Parini, 2017). This culture involves fostering an environment where every individual feels valued, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. To achieve this, organisations need to implement practical strategies that foster inclusivity.

Figure 13: Strategies to foster inclusivity for LGBT Employees



9.5.1. Ally Networks

Ally networks composed of supportive non-LGBT employees play a critical role in building an inclusive workplace. These networks:

- Offer visible support for LGBT employees.
- Help address discriminatory behaviours and attitudes.
- Foster a sense of belonging for LGBT individuals.

The presence of ally networks can enhance the psychological safety and job satisfaction of LGBT employees (Perales, 2022).

9.5.2. Diversity Training

Training programs focused on gender and sexuality are essential for cultivating a more inclusive work environment. These programs:

- Increase awareness and understanding of LGBT issues.
- Reduce prejudice and discrimination.
- Encourage inclusive behaviours among all employees.

Diversity training can result in greater support for LGBT colleagues and contribute to a positive workplace climate (Perales, 2022). There is evidence that diversity training effectively supports the management of sexual minority status in the workplace (Rosopa et al, 2020).

9.5.3. Support and Resources for LGBT Employees

LGBT employees face unique challenges in the workplace, and additional resources can help them feel valued and respected. Support can be provided through:

- Creating a community for those with shared experiences
- Mentorship programs and other initiatives that promote inclusion.
- Access to LGBT-friendly healthcare benefits and sensitivity training (Santos & Reyes, 2023).

9.5.4. Building Inclusive Teams through Shared Goals

Research shows that creating diverse teams with shared goals helps members see themselves as part of a unified group, emphasising cooperation and interdependence as essential for achieving common objectives (Lewis et al., 2020). This collective team identity reduces the likelihood of conflicts rooted in individual identities, allowing for greater information exchange, improved group dynamics, enhanced decision-making, and increased creativity.

9.5.5. Empowering LGBT Employees to Speak Up

Establishing safe, formal, and informal communication channels for LGBT employees is critical to increasing visibility and addressing workplace discrimination (Bell et al, 2011). Formal channels, like employee resource groups and union support, can bring attention to challenges faced by sexual and gender minorities and offer needed social support. Some LGBT employees may hesitate to use these channels, fearing their concerns will be disregarded or that they may be labelled as "troublemakers", increasing the risk of mistreatment. Organisations can help by building confidence in employees to use these channels and addressing specific needs, especially for transgender and bisexual employees who often face unique challenges (McFadden & Crowley-Henry, 2018).

9.5.6. Role of Supervisors in Promoting Inclusivity

Many LGBT employees prefer to address workplace concerns informally, often turning to supportive supervisors or line managers. When supervisors are inclusive, their trust and respect encourage open communication (Di Marco, 2017). Being close to their teams also allows supervisors to spot and prevent subtle discrimination, especially if they are properly trained. Selecting and training supervisors on diversity issues can improve workplace inclusivity and safety (Di Marco et al., 2021).

10.0 Conclusions / recommendations

This literature review assessed peer-reviewed studies from 2009 to the present, and the relevant Australian legislation, to provide AMPC with an evidence-based resource on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practices, and their relationships with employee attraction, engagement and retention in workplaces.

Findings indicate that a well-implemented DEI management system can positively influence employee wellbeing, psychosocial and cultural safety, job satisfaction, and workplace commitment - factors that significantly affect employees' intention to stay, reducing costly turnover and ultimately benefiting organisational productivity and goal achievement. The review highlights the different personal, organisational, and environmental factors that are related to DEI. It also contains particular focus sections on employees who are Indigenous, neurodiverse, and identify as LGBT. This review also produces practical interventions to create diverse and inclusive workplaces, to:

- attract diverse job applicants during recruitment.
- retain diverse employees through diversity management practices, and
- evaluate the effectiveness of diversity management systems.

The reviewed academic literature clearly demonstrates that improving workforce diversity and inclusion is of increasing concern for organisations across the globe, primarily due to current shortages of, and competition for, skilled labour in many industries. Technological developments, as well as increased awareness of individual rights (including recent Australian workplace psychological safety regulations), have also encouraged workers with a variety of demographic characteristics to seek meaningful employment with equitable opportunities for their skill use and career advancement. As noted at the beginning of this review, overall, employees are more likely to stay with an organisation when their valued needs are met in their job environment (Brough et al., 2022).

This review has summarised the key strategies within the literature, which AMPC and its member employers can consider improving the employment and retention of diverse workers within meat processing plants and work sites. The extent to which these practices already occur, are viable, and can be sustainable for meat processor employers to adopt, is clearly a required next step.

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