DATA INSIGHTS: WORKPLACE CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS PART 1

Our first Insight looks at perceptions of diversity and inclusion.

This first part focuses on perceptions of employees born overseas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Forthcoming parts will discuss people with a disability, female and male employees, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) employees.

This is the first edition of the VPSC’s Data Insights series.

Each Insight piece in this series will present findings from the VPSC’s workforce data holdings, combined with wider research, to highlight key workforce issues in the Victorian public sector and indicate where action is required.

Matters to be covered in the coming months as part of the series will include workplace diversity, bullying, employee engagement and wellbeing, sexual harassment, learning and development, and career intentions.

Why diversity and inclusion matters

Diverse and inclusive workforces that reflect the communities they serve derive multiple benefits.

They are:

- more capable of understanding and meeting the needs of customers
- adept at providing different ways of looking at work issues, driving innovation and boosting productivity
- better placed to attract and retain talent[1].

Inclusiveness in the public sector

Victorian public sector workplaces are supportive of diversity and inclusion, according to the 2016 People Matter Survey.

Over 51,000 employees from 123 public sector organisations completed a new diversity and inclusion module of the VPSC People Matter Survey in 2016.
When asked whether their organisation had a positive culture in relation to diverse groups:

- 81 percent report a positive workplace culture for employees from varied cultural backgrounds
- 69 percent of all Aboriginal respondents report a positive workplace culture for Aboriginal employees.

**Employees born overseas**

More than one in five survey respondents indicated they were born overseas.

Employees born overseas are equally positive as Australian born employees about workplace inclusiveness for people from varied cultural backgrounds.

Place of birth does not impact on perceptions of the extent to which cultural background determines success within the organisation (figure 1). Similarly, it does not impact perceptions of the extent to which workplace cultures are positive for employees from varied cultural backgrounds (figure 2).

![Figure 1: Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation](View text version of Figure 1 bar chart)

![Figure 2: There is a positive culture in my organisation for employees from varied cultural backgrounds](View text version of Figure 2 bar chart)

Employees born overseas in countries where English is not a main language are more likely than other employees to perceive their organisation as inclusive and fostering an environment where people are treated fairly and with respect (figure 3 and figure 4).
Aboriginal employee perceptions

The profile of survey respondents shows that 0.9 percent identify themselves as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders.

The majority of Aboriginal employees (69 percent) report a positive workplace culture for people who are Aboriginal. This was even higher than the positive rating result of all respondents (at 64 percent). However, 13 percent of Aboriginal employees, reported a negative workplace culture (figure 5).

Aboriginal employees are more likely than non-Aboriginal employees to perceive cultural background as a barrier to success in their workplace (figure 6).
Figure 6. Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation

(Percent of respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aboriginal</th>
<th>non-Aboriginal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

* This article uses the term Aboriginal to refer to all Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is inclusive of all people in Victoria who identify as Indigenous Australians, Koorie and Koori.

Results for question on positive culture are based on responses from 51,070 people employed by 123 public sector organisations.

Results for question on cultural background as a barrier to success in organisation are based on responses from 57,212 people employed by 169 public sector organisations. The overall response rate for the 2016 survey was 35 percent.

Footnote [1] Researchers and human resource practitioners alike have investigated and promoted the benefits associated with a diverse workforce and the best approaches to unlock those benefits. This research includes:

- Stevens, F.G (2008). *Unlocking the benefits of diversity – All inclusive multiculturalism and positive organisational change.*
- Hays (2014). *The balancing act, creating a diverse workforce.*
Chart descriptors

Figure 1. Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation

The majority of respondents agree with this statement.

The chart has 3 identifiers, with 4 categories of response. Numbers are expressed as a percentage of all responses, and may have been rounded up.

- **Born overseas in other than a Main English Speaking Country**
  - Don’t Know 4
  - Disagree 7
  - Neither agree nor disagree 13
  - Agree 76

- **Born overseas in a Main English Speaking Country**
  - Don’t Know 5
  - Disagree 6
  - Neither agree nor disagree 15
  - Agree 75

- **Australia-born**
  - Don’t Know 5
  - Disagree 4
  - Neither agree nor disagree 14
  - Agree 77

Figure 2. There is a positive culture in my organisation for employees from varied cultural backgrounds

The majority of respondents agree with this statement.

The chart has 3 identifiers, with 4 categories of response. Numbers are expressed as a percentage of all responses, and may have been rounded up.

- **Born overseas in other than a Main English Speaking Country**
  - Don’t Know 2
  - Disagree 5
  - Neither agree nor disagree 10
  - Agree 83

- **Born overseas in a Main English Speaking Country**
  - Don’t Know 4
  - Disagree 5
  - Neither agree nor disagree 13
  - Agree 79

- **Australia-born**
  - Don’t Know 4
  - Disagree 3
  - Neither agree nor disagree 13
  - Agree 81
Figure 3. My organisation fosters an environment of inclusiveness
The majority of respondents agree with this statement.

The chart has 3 identifiers, with 3 categories of response. Numbers are expressed as a percentage of all responses, and may have been rounded up.

**Born overseas in other than a Main English Speaking Country**
- Disagree 10
- Neither agree nor disagree 22
- Agree 68

**Born overseas in a Main English Speaking Country**
- Disagree 17
- Neither agree nor disagree 25
- Agree 59

**Australia-born**
- Disagree 16
- Neither agree nor disagree 25
- Agree 59

Figure 4. My organisation fosters an environment where all staff are treated fairly and with respect
The majority of respondents agree with this statement.

The chart has 3 identifiers, with 3 categories of response. Numbers are expressed as a percentage of all responses, and may have been rounded up.

**Born overseas in other than a Main English Speaking Country**
- Disagree 11
- Neither agree nor disagree 17
- Agree 72

**Born overseas in a Main English Speaking Country**
- Disagree 19
- Neither agree nor disagree 20
- Agree 62

**Australia-born**
- Disagree 18
- Neither agree nor disagree 20
- Agree 63
Figure 5. There is a positive culture in my organisation for employees who are aboriginal
Bar chart demonstrating that the majority of respondents agree with this statement.

The chart has 2 identifiers, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, with 4 categories of response. Numbers are expressed as a percentage of all responses, and may have been rounded up.

Aboriginal
- Don’t Know 3
- Disagree 13
- Neither agree nor disagree 15
- Agree 69

non-Aboriginal
- Don’t Know 14
- Disagree 3
- Neither agree nor disagree 19
- Agree 64

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Figure 6. Cultural background is not a barrier to success in my organisation
Bar chart demonstrating that the majority of respondents agree with this statement.

The chart has 2 identifiers, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, with 4 categories of response. Numbers are expressed as a percentage of all responses, and may have been rounded up.

Aboriginal
- Don’t Know 4
- Disagree 12
- Neither agree nor disagree 18
- Agree 66

non-Aboriginal
- Don’t Know 5
- Disagree 4
- Neither agree nor disagree 13
- Agree 78

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