

Deep Dive on Inclusion

Survey Report 2021

3rd annual survey shining a spotlight on diversity and inclusion in the Australian insurance industry.



Deep Dive on Inclusion

Survey Report 2021

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Foreword

Diversity and inclusion remain important issues for the insurance industry, particularly given the ongoing work-related challenges we have all faced during the pandemic and our need to adapt to new ways of working together.

Liberty Specialty Markets and Wotton + Kearney are delighted to again partner with ANZIIF to investigate how experiences of diversity and workplace inclusion are affecting the local insurance industry through our annual *Deep Dive on Inclusion Survey*.

In 2020, we surveyed the industry on how inclusion is experienced by diverse people working in the insurance and risk industry and explored how COVID-19 has impacted our experiences of inclusion at work. The 2021 survey revisits these themes to assess change over time, in particular how flexible work practices and remote working may have affected our feelings of inclusion and connectedness with colleagues. We also link to the 2021 Dive In Festival theme of *Active Allyship and Empowerment* to better understand if people are actively involved in supporting diversity and inclusion initiatives in their organisations.

One of Australia's leading inclusion experts, Dr Jennifer Whelan, of Psynapse Psychometrics, has again been commissioned to conduct the research. Through Dr Whelan's work, we are able to shine a light on how experiences of workplace inclusion are affecting diverse people working in the insurance and risk industry. The challenge for us all is to build on that understanding and identify ways to drive impactful, positive change.

This report is just one of the diversity and inclusion initiatives Liberty Specialty Markets, Wotton + Kearney and ANZIIF invest in. We are proud to support this important research and would be delighted to hear your thoughts on how its findings could benefit your business.



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Introduction

As the world adapts to a post-pandemic reality, this year's Deep Dive on Inclusion report will check in on how the insurance and risk industry is tracking on inclusion, and explore the ongoing organisational challenges posed by COVID-19. The 2021 survey was conducted while we continued to adapt to these ongoing challenges and eagerly anticipated the gradual return to a new kind of normal.

We also have an additional focus for this year's report. The Dive In Festival theme for 2021 is *Active Allyship and Empowerment*. We asked some questions in the latest survey about how allyship and empowerment is playing out across the industry so we will explore those findings too.

There has been an immense impact of allyship (and activism) in the inclusion space over the last couple of years, from Black Lives Matter to the #MeToo movement and others. D&I has become a central, driving force within organisations around the world – the case has well and truly been made. But for it to be truly successful,

inclusion needs to be embedded. All of us, but especially leaders, need to be informed, equipped and empowered to understand how to be active allies.

Now, more than ever, organisations are grappling with how to engage with these broader social movements, and leaders are faced with the challenge of how to respond. At the very least, there is a notable uptick in expectations from employees, when it comes to allyship and empowerment. It's time to move from intention to action.

Progress around diversity and inclusion continues apace in the insurance and risk industry despite, or perhaps because of, the challenges we continue to face in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Last year's survey was conducted alongside the immense disruption of lockdowns as employers and their staff adapted to working from home. The highlight findings from last year's survey showed that our sense of inclusion took something of a hit given the isolation in which many people worked.

However, the findings also indicated that an overwhelming majority of survey respondents felt that inclusion was more important than ever. Indeed, fostering a sense of belonging and psychological safety have become essential skills for leaders working in the new normal of hybrid and remote teams.

State of Play

Inclusion

The mainstreaming of flexible and remote work was a rapid response to COVID-19 last year. While most respondents agreed there were several benefits associated with this greater flexibility, it also created some concerns. Psychological safety was reduced, people reported feeling less informed and less connected to their colleagues. For women, who also took on the greater share of caring and schooling from home, there were additional challenges in terms of work/life balance.

Research by the Australian Institute of Family Studies showed that over two-thirds of employees were working from home during the pandemic. Of those, about half reported increased difficulty in managing work/life balance. Far more women than men transitioned to part-time hours to accommodate additional childcare and remote schooling requirements – 57% of women compared to just 9% of men.

Indeed, our *Deep Dive Survey* results from last year showed that more women than men worked from home. Women also felt more worried about their place in their team and less psychologically safe. With home-schooling hopefully soon to be a thing of the past, arguably the disproportionate negative impacts on women's work should be reduced.

This year's survey took place after more than a year of continuous uncertainty and adaptation, leaving many of us feeling fatigued as we approached the

promise of 'COVID-normal'. Where the balance will settle, in terms of returning to the office, remains to be seen. Many organisations aim to resume pre-pandemic levels of office attendance, while others are keen to retain the benefits of continuing some degree of remote work. This means that hybrid and remote teams will become something of a norm.

This year's survey report revisits these issues and checks in on our core inclusion indicators. Over 400 people responded to the 2021 survey, which was administered in September while NSW and Victoria were in the midst of the most serious COVID-19 outbreaks and lockdown restrictions were at their harshest. There was, however, the beginnings of a pathway to COVID-normal, with vaccination targets in sight. Meanwhile, other states were spared the worst of these restrictions. Regardless, this year presented several challenges we might expect to impact on how included we feel at work.



Allyship & Empowerment

“An ally is anyone who actively promotes and aspires to advance the culture of inclusion through intentional, positive and conscious efforts that benefit people as a whole.”

Atcheson, 2018

This year the Dive In Festival theme was *Active Allyship and Empowerment*. In the last two years we have seen the emergence of activism in a range of contexts. From the #MeToo movement to Black Lives Matter, activism has accelerated the pace of social change for diversity and inclusion, which have become mainstream socio-political issues.

We have also seen these movements shine a light on many scandals in both the corporate and government spheres over the last couple of years, with AMP notably embroiled in a “gender problem”. Similarly, the behaviour of a number of federal and state members of parliament was exposed and serious questions were asked about the workplace culture in politics and parliament.

How organisations respond to, or participate in, these broader social activism movements had been a fraught area for some. Several high profile corporate leaders have taken public

positions on social change debates over the years. Most notably, Alan Joyce, CEO of QANTAS declared a company position on the legalisation of same sex marriage a few years ago. Andrew Forrest, CEO of Fortescue, continues to campaign publicly for action on Indigenous disadvantage and, more recently, on climate change.

While not all employees agree that organisations and leaders should espouse a public ‘company line’ on issues such as these, many leaders in organisations have grappled with the challenge of how to respond, if at all, when social activism and corporate cultures intersect. To speak out (or not), or to risk miscommunicating, has become a common concern for many leaders. This has been a clear theme in my work with organisations over the past year.

At the same time, corporate cultures are under increasing pressure to move from good intentions to tangible actions when it comes to the cultures of silence and cover-up that enable bad behaviour to continue unchecked. As work on diversity and inclusion matures in many large organisations, employees have come to expect actions to align with aspirations. Both the AMP and

government scandals point to a failure of organisational culture when it comes to speaking up. The backlash was loud and swift, and acted as a catalyst for other companies to examine their level of risk when it comes to failing to take action when things go wrong. More importantly, investing in building a more inclusive culture is seen as a powerful way of preventing these issues from arising in the first place.

While most companies and leaders shy away from overt activism, the topic of allyship has become a more regular (and less fraught) feature of the D&I conversation in the workplace. Indeed, in my consulting work with clients, the challenge of moving leaders from good intentions to tangible actions is a major task. Hand in hand with leader behaviours, organisations also need to foster a culture of ‘upstanding’ (as opposed to ‘bystanding’) and make it safe to speak up and speak out when problems become apparent.

An ally is often, but not always, a member of a privileged group who uses their influence to provide a platform for under-represented or marginalised groups. An ally takes responsibility for making changes that will help others be successful. The impact of activism

over the last few years has in many ways forced people in positions of power and influence to take a more active role in creating fair and inclusive workplaces. This has meant the focus has been largely on white male leaders in the Australian context, since they continue to occupy the majority of powerful positions in both politics and the corporate environment.

Importantly, while allyship can be a powerful individual act, it is also a strategic one aimed at achieving systemic, as well as personal, change. The benefits to fostering cultures of allyship and empowerment are many. In particular, active allyship by leaders as well as all employees, dramatically accelerates progress towards diversity and inclusion objectives. Active allyship and empowerment is characterised by:

Intention to action – A focus on building meaningful relationships with marginalised people based on trust, accountability and consistency. This means active allies go beyond simply voicing support to take practical steps to advance the interests of under-represented people.

A perspective switch – A focus on others rather than the self. Allyship is not about the ally, it is defined and measured by its impact on those we seek to ally with. This means allyship is less about our good intentions, and more about how our impact is received by others.

Allyship and empowerment tend to operate in tandem with a couple of other cultural dynamics in organisations. Firstly, the culture at work must create enough psychological safety to enable a ‘speak-up’ norm where inappropriate or exclusionary behaviours can be called out, and are dealt with effectively. When people do not feel safe to speak up, exclusionary behaviours can go unchecked. We explored the importance of psychological safety on inclusion in last year’s [Deep Dive Report](#).

A wealth of research on bystander intervention shows that if speaking up or intervening in inappropriate behaviours will incur a personal cost, people tend to stay silent. In this context, the costs of upstanding can be overt in the form of discrimination and marginalisation, or more subtle in the form of shaming or criticism. Fostering ‘upstanding’ behaviour and minimising ‘bystanding’ behaviour is a central part of active allyship. There is no shortage of examples of public scandals that could have been averted had speaking up been a part of the organisational culture.

Secondly, the intention-action gap must be addressed, especially on the part of leaders who have the most influence and power when it comes to allyship. It is rare that I come across overt resistance or disagreement with the values and aspirations of diversity and inclusion in my work with clients.

On the contrary, most leaders I work with genuinely espouse values of fairness and inclusivity. The challenge is that good intentions do not always translate into actions and impact. Perspective-taking is an important part of the journey for leaders seeking to be active allies. Understanding the lived experience of diverse people is a critical part of being an inclusive leader, and being an effective ally.

Finally, there is an element of risk – and courage – when it comes to being an ally. A number of senior business leaders I’ve worked this year have shared concerns about ‘cancel culture’ and the consequences of getting it wrong when speaking publicly in support of diversity and inclusion. As a part of this year’s Dive In Festival, I interviewed James Brindley, Managing Director of Lion. He spoke powerfully about overcoming his concerns about “getting things wrong”. James emphasised how important it is for leaders to speak loudly and often about the importance of inclusion, to be willing to make mistakes, and to listen and learn from diverse people. This year’s survey will give some insights into respondents’ views on allyship and empowerment.

Demographic Snapshot

The 2021 survey attracted over 400 respondents across the insurance and risk industry, a sample size comparable to that of the 2019 survey, but a smaller sample than that of 2020, which was over 600 respondents.

Women comprised 49% of respondents and 56% of the sample was of Anglo-Australian or New Zealand cultural background. Over 80% of respondents reported English as a first language, and 84% identified as heterosexual.

A large majority of respondents worked full-time (88%), and 64% were in operational roles. Almost 40% of respondents were parents or carers and 45% of respondents were individual contributors.

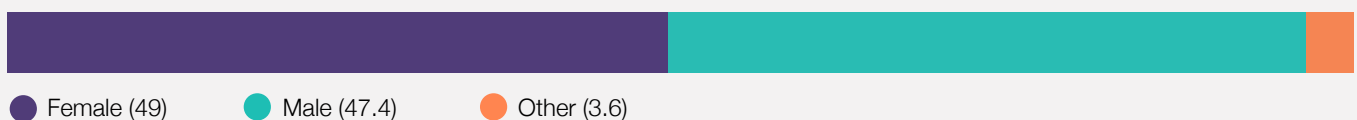
Again, looking at gender representation by level, we can see that women's representation still declines with seniority, as was the case with the results from last year's survey. From this sample, the 'Think Manager,

Think Male' dynamic continues to be a feature – both across organisations in general and in the insurance/risk industry. This year's survey results do show some attenuation of this dynamic. However, from middle manager level, women continue to be notably under-represented. Again, this is in line with the ASX data, which shows some improvements in the representation of women, but not significantly beyond mid-level.

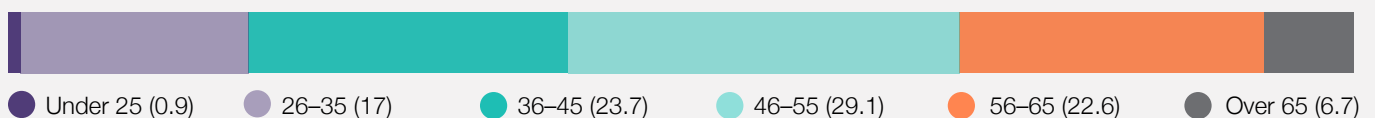
Gender Representation By Level



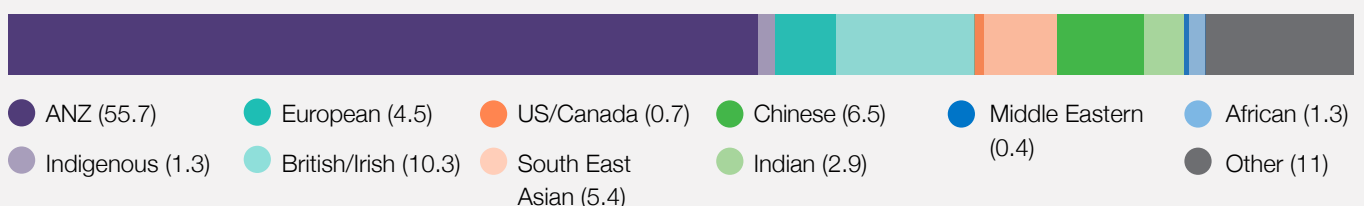
Gender



Age



Ethnicity



Inclusion Index

In 2019, the *Deep Dive Survey* produced an Inclusion Index as a single overall metric to reflect how inclusive people believed their workplace to be. This index acts as a baseline measure against which to compare the subsequent survey results, and future surveys going forward.

In 2020, the Inclusion Index score was 3.8 on a 6-point scale, down from 4.1 the year before in 2019. COVID-19 was likely a significant contributor to this drop in overall levels of inclusion. We could expect that negative impact to continue to be felt this year, and indeed the Inclusion Index score for this year was 3.8 again.

In line with last year's results, about 40% people agreed that their workplace was inclusive to some degree, but this leaves over half of respondents who do not feel that their workplace is inclusive.

While the 2020 survey was collected during a period of massive adjustment and disruption, the 2021 results suggest that the prolonged impact of lockdown measures, and the associated uncertainty and disruption, continue to take their toll.

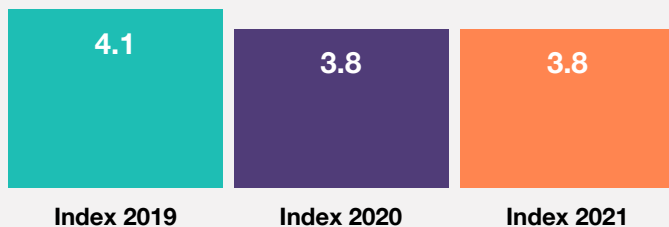
Indeed 65% of respondents reported that COVID-19 is still impacting on how and where they work. In line with last year's data, only 26% of respondents

were mostly office-based at the time of this survey (compared to 88% before the COVID-19 pandemic). Given this, not surprisingly, again over 80% of people agreed to some degree that inclusion is more important now than ever.

As with previous year's results, we first looked at how the Inclusion Index varied by key demographic factors. And again, there were some consistent results. Some of the trends identified in last year's results were also evident this year:

Men (3.9) continue to report feeling more included than women (3.6). Non-binary people also reported lower levels of inclusion (3.4).

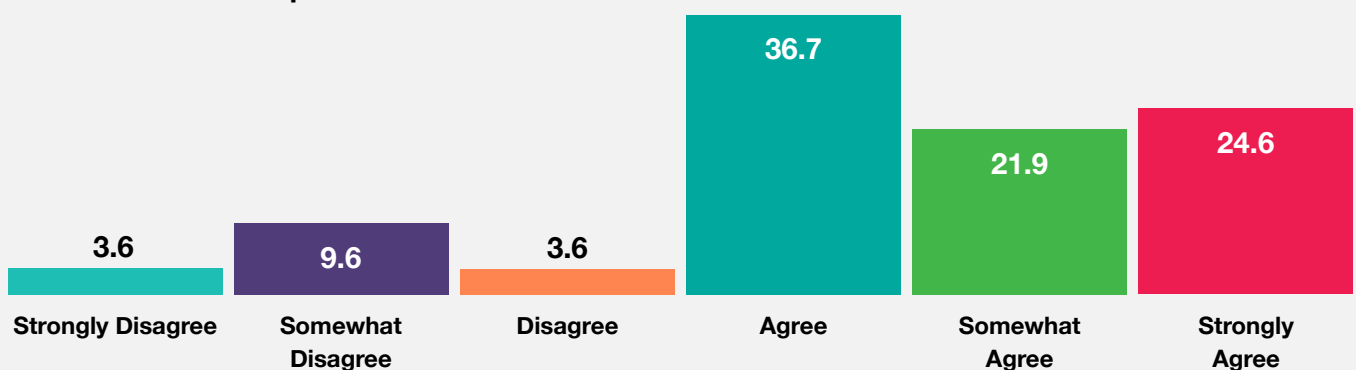
Inclusion Index By Year



80%

agree that inclusion is more important now than ever

Inclusion is More Important Than Ever



More people disclosed a disability this year (10%), but they reported slightly lower levels of inclusion – 3.6 on the Inclusion Index compared to 3.8 for people who did not disclose a disability.

More people identified as lesbian and gay this year (9%) and they reported similar of overall inclusion compared to heterosexual respondents.

It is heartening to report that more people are comfortable disclosing their sexuality and disclosing a disability. One of the most common informal indicators of an inclusive culture is how comfortable people are being themselves at work. In fact, many

organisations adopt ‘authenticity’ as an inclusion pillar. To see these numbers increase suggests that workplace cultures are becoming more open. However, a challenge remains when it comes to ensuring their experiences are more inclusive.

People aged 36-45 reported the lowest levels of inclusion by age group with those under 25 or over 65 reporting the highest levels. This is consistent with demographic research more broadly reflecting that people in their 30s and 40s are more likely to be dealing with the competing pressures of career and caring responsibilities.

People with caring responsibilities felt slightly less included, as did people working part-time.

There were no significant differences in overall inclusion by role type (operational vs business support), however, senior leaders and board members continue to report higher levels of inclusion (4.1) than less senior employees and individual contributors (3.7). Again, this is in line with most findings on inclusion – the more power and influence you have, the more included you tend to feel.

40%

feel their organisation has focused on inclusion **MORE** this year, but

10%

disclosed a disability and reported feeling less included

42%

have caring responsibilities

66%

still agree you need to be a certain kind of person to get ahead

9%

identified as lesbian or gay

Key themes

Gender & Age

The most common theme in inclusion research is the persistent finding that women feel less included than men. As with previous years, this was again the case with women scoring lower (3.6) on the Inclusion Index than men (3.9). When we look at individual item responses, we find that women score lower than men on almost every item. Among the largest gender differences in responses was on the items shown in the graphic below:

Gender differences in inclusion are well established, and more broadly, research shows that women are typically more likely to perceive unequal treatment in terms of promotion and development opportunities, performance evaluation and so on. While women continue to be paid less than men, and are under-represented in leadership roles, this is hardly surprising.

The insurance and risk industry continues to have one of the largest gender pay gaps of any industry, and as we saw earlier, women remain under-represented in senior leadership roles. Our survey results show that these disparities are reflected in lived experiences at work, specifically, women's sense of inclusion.

Inclusion Index Item	Women % Agree	Men % Agree
Leaders in my organisation are accountable for promoting a diverse, inclusive culture	78	90
My leader is a good role-model for inclusion	76	89
I feel safe to express my views openly	70	81
My organisation has appropriate policies and practices for dealing with bullying, harassment and discrimination	84	92
I have felt the same level of connectedness to my team	62	72
I have felt more worried about my place in my team	31	24

Women feel less included overall than men

31%

women feel more worried about their place in their team (compared to only 24% of men)

66%

respondents agree you need to be a certain kind of person to get ahead

Key themes

COVID-19 & Flexibility

“Many commentators have remarked that COVID-19’s legacy will have been to finally make the case for mainstream flexible working.”

Almost 40% of this year’s respondents were carers. Of those with caring responsibilities, 46% were women. A key theme in terms of the impact of COVID-19 and working from home has been the apparent rebalancing of family and caring responsibilities between men and women. Indeed more men reported caring responsibilities than last year – 39% this year compared to 31% last year, likely due to the increased frequency of work from home.

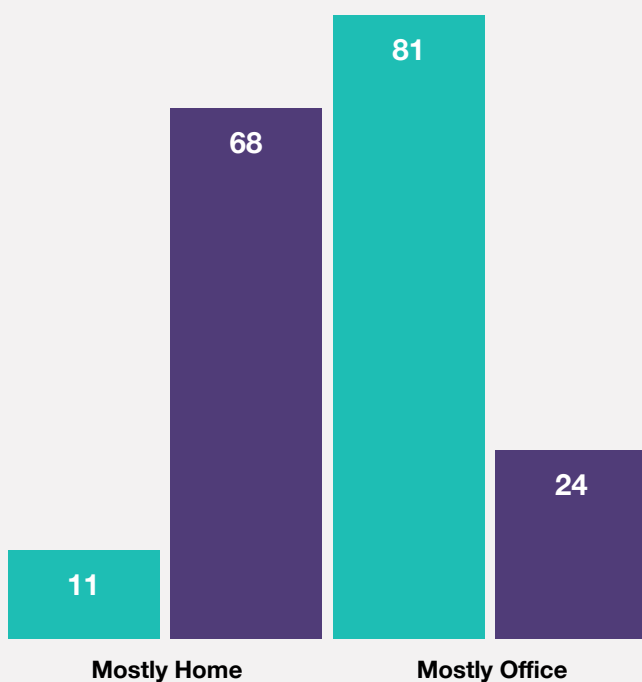
Indeed more people were working from home this year (73%) compared to last year (47% in 2020). This is arguably the result of the timing of the 2021 survey – in the midst of the Delta outbreaks that saw both Melbourne and Sydney under hard lockdown restrictions.

Not surprisingly, 90% of respondents believed their organisation was more open to flexible work as a result. Many commentators have remarked that COVID-19’s legacy will have been to finally make the case for mainstream flexible working, and our survey data seems to bear this out.

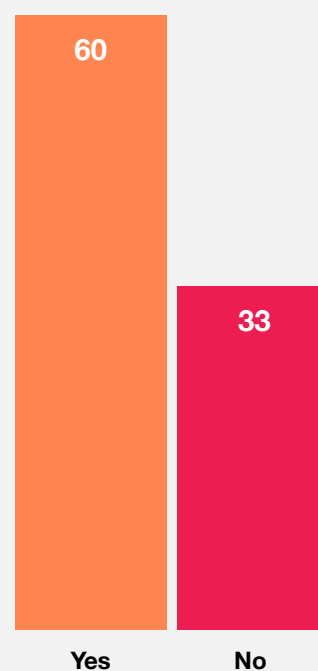
Last year’s results showed that people with caring responsibilities and those working from home were more worried about their place in their team, and felt less connected. That was not evident this year, with carers and those working from home no more worried or less connected than others. This suggests that the mainstreaming of working from home has levelled that particular playing field somewhat.

COVID-19 Impact

- Prior to COVID-19 where did you mostly work?
- Where do you currently do most of your work from?



Is COVID-19 Still Impacting Significantly?



Key themes

Role & Leadership

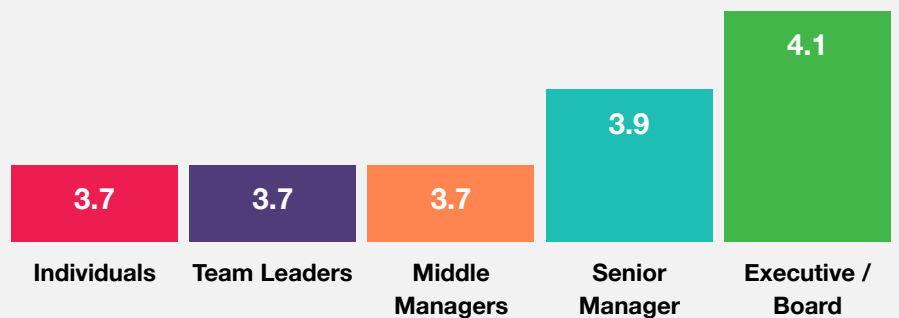
In the first *Deep Dive on Inclusion Survey*, we found that people working in support functions (e.g. HR, IT, finance, marketing, administration and customer service) felt more included than those in operational functions (e.g. brokerage, under-writing and claims and loss-adjusting). Last year we found no differences by role type and we theorised that the impact of COVID-19 had blurred the differences between these functions in terms of experience and work pressure.

This year, we again found there was no significant difference in the Inclusion Index by role type. We also found no differences in terms of the impact of COVID-19, in feelings of connectedness, or in feelings of worry about one's place in one's team.

When it comes to leadership, our results align closely with both previous years' results. Again, inclusion increases with seniority – senior leaders felt more included in terms of the Inclusion Index.

Senior leaders felt more connected throughout COVID-19 compared to individuals and less senior leaders. Senior leaders also felt less worried about their place in their team. This suggests that while leaders may be connected with each other, their teams are feeling less certain and secure.

Inclusion Index by Level



Felt the Same Connectedness



Felt More Worried About My Place



As we've just seen, the more senior you are, the more included you tend to feel. This is a consistent trend over three survey results now. A common theme in leadership development work around inclusion is the often stark differences in experience and perspectives when it comes to leaders, and the people they lead.

It is common for leaders to assume that the level of inclusion they feel is shared by their teams. It is also common for inclusion research to show that this isn't actually the case.

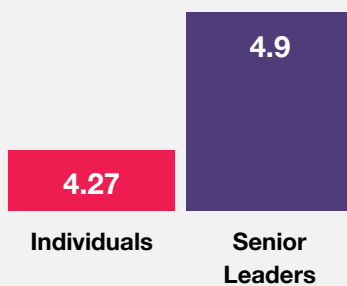
It's easy to assume that if the leader feels included, everyone else does too. Inclusion research suggests this assumption is incorrect. For this reason, we call inclusion a "lowest common denominator property of teams" – the team is only as inclusive as its least included team member.

If we look in a little more detail we can see some specific areas where leaders experiences and those of the people they lead are likely to differ. As you can see from the graphs, leaders and individual team members have quite difference perceptions when it comes to inclusion. The upshot is that leaders feel

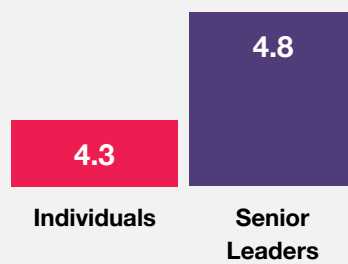
they're doing a better job of inclusion than their teams do.

For this reason, many leadership development programs focus on teaching leaders to consider inclusion from the perspective of those they lead, rather than from their own position. This means considering your leadership in terms of its impact, rather than your intentions (no matter how good your intentions are!). A key callout for leaders here is that their experience may not be shared by their teams. An inclusive leader should aspire to understand inclusion from a broader range of perspectives and experiences.

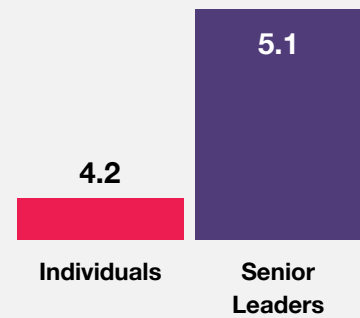
I see leaders taking pro-active steps to ensure everyone in my team feels included



My leader is a good role-model for inclusion



I feel comfortable being myself at work



Key themes

Allyship & Empowerment

The 2021 Dive In Festival theme was “active allyship and empowerment”. To explore this theme, we included some items in this year’s survey. Specifically we asked respondents two questions relating to allyship:

1. Do you consider yourself to be an advocate for diversity and inclusion?
2. Can you recall a time you have personally helped support an initiative that is designed to drive diversity and inclusion?

Over half of respondents consider themselves to be advocates for D&I, and almost half can recall personally supporting an initiative. This is heartening news, but it also suggests we have a way to go in terms of getting people actively involved in initiatives.

Most organisations, particularly large ones, have a range of D&I initiatives reaching to individual contributor levels. Given that half of respondents have not lent personal support to an initiative, there is definitely scope to improve active participation. This also highlights the importance of ensuring that organisational initiatives and training programs reach a critical mass of employees. Programs that are only accessible to senior leaders are less likely to drive practical change.

When we look at where allyship is more likely to come from, we find that more women than men consider themselves to be advocates, and can recall personally supporting a D&I initiative. More leaders also consider themselves allies compared to individual contributors, again highlighting a valuable opportunity to involve the whole of organisation in D&I programs, training and other initiatives.

57%

are inclusion advocates often or all the time

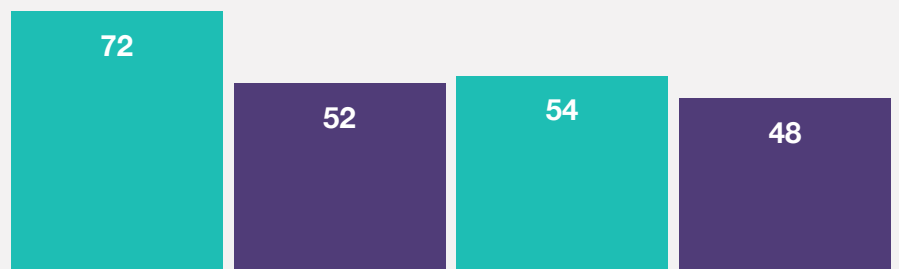
47%

recall personally supporting a D&I initiative

Allyship by Gender

● Women

● Men



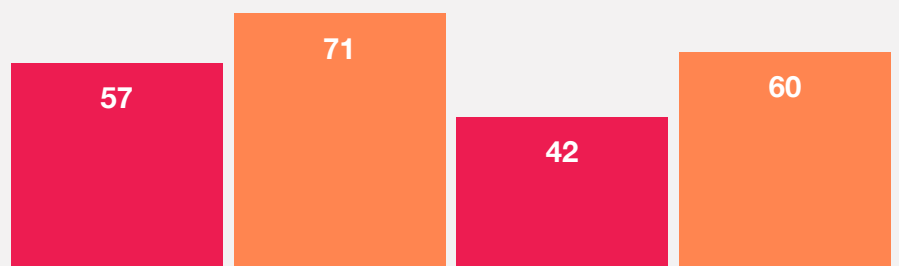
Do you consider yourself to be an advocate for diversity and inclusion?

Have you personally helped support an initiative to drive diversity and inclusion?

Allyship by Level

● Individuals

● Leaders



Do you consider yourself to be an advocate for diversity and inclusion?

Have you personally helped support an initiative to drive diversity and inclusion?

Deep Dive Conclusions

This is the third Deep Dive on Inclusion Survey exploring inclusion in the insurance and risk industry in Australia. In 2019, our first survey, we established a baseline measure of inclusion, the Inclusion Index. We found some themes that are well supported by broader research on inclusion. Women felt less included than men, leaders felt more included than individuals, and older employees felt more included than younger

people. A common finding in inclusion research is that the dominant groups tend to enjoy a more inclusive experience and that has been borne out in our first, and second surveys.

Last year, the survey took place as the COVID-19 pandemic was well under way, and we were all learning new video call skills and adjusting to what is likely the most significant social and organisational disruption of our generation. Last year's themes were still evident this year, as we found that people were feeling less included overall, less connected to their colleagues, and more worried about their place in their teams. While many

people and their employees benefitted from the mainstreaming of flexible work, there were some significant negative impacts in terms of psychological safety.

This year, we continued to grapple with the ongoing impact of COVID-19. The survey was conducted in the midst of the major Delta outbreaks, which were most impactful in Melbourne and Sydney. However, there was the promise of a return to normal on the near horizon as we all studiously tracked vaccination rates. We expected COVID-19 to continue to impact on this year's results, given most respondents resided in NSW and Victoria, and that was certainly the case. The Inclusion Index was the same as it was in 2020, 3.8, down from 4.1 in 2019.

I am feeling like I have missed out on two years of my life and career. More than two years ago I felt I had clear plans for myself, and COVID-19 has made it impossible to pursue my path.

The biggest challenges presented during periods of lockdown was there was little separation between working from home and life outside of that.

Our team catch up regularly and have been closer than ever before COVID-19, we had time to complete tasks that have sat in the team to do list for a while.

It's hard to keep connected and the more senior leaders seem to have in-jokes vibes, which can be challenging for those of us straddling team member/junior leadership roles.

It seems we are offered flexible working arrangements as a whole, but teams are being isolated and expecting flexible working arrangements around the team leader as opposed to individuals' own needs and work/home balance.

There has been less focus on diversity and inclusion by the leaders at my organisation. This impacts on me as a LGBTIQ+ woman as I see less visible active allyship working from home, which is critical to me feeling included and safe. I also have been limited as part of my role on my organisation's employee resources group to organise education/training sessions and panel events etc. to help our people learn more about the community.

Several leadership experts, including Kirsten Ferguson, have predicted a "great resignation" as life returns to normal and organisations (and leaders) want to see their people back in the office more often. The change has presented a significant opportunity for people to reassess how and where they want to work to maintain greater work/life balance.

More than ever, organisations and leaders who fail to understand the changing needs of their employees' risk losing talent at unprecedented rates. This is especially the case for women, and for younger employees, both of whom feel less included and perhaps are more likely to vote with their feet and change jobs.

We also found some consistent themes in this year's survey results, most notably:

- Women still feel less included than men, scoring lower on the Inclusion Index, as well as on almost every individual item. While we are making some good progress in terms of gender equality and the representation of women in senior roles, we still clearly have a way to go to improve women's experiences in terms of inclusion.
- The number of people disclosing a disability, identifying as a non-binary gender, and lesbian or gay was notably higher this year compared to previous years. That more people feel comfortable to disclose this information and be themselves is

heartening. This is often used as an informal barometer of the openness of workplace cultures and how they embrace authenticity and inclusion. We found no significant differences by cultural background, which is also encouraging.

- Leaders again report higher levels of inclusion than individuals, and the more senior the leader, the more included they feel. More notably, leaders feel that they are doing a better job in terms of role-modelling and accountability than their teams do. This perception gap has been a theme in the two previous surveys, and clearly suggests that moving leaders from a place of good intentions to tangible actions and impact should be a priority.

Active Allyship

It is fitting then that this year's Dive In Festival theme was Active Allyship and Empowerment. At the beginning of this report we outlined two key features of active allyship – moving from intentions to actions and taking the perspective of diverse people. Our survey results suggest leaders are under the spotlight in terms of driving allyship, but we can all play a role in moving from 'bystanding' to 'upstanding'. The impact of activism in the inclusion space during the past couple of years has prompted many organisations to accelerate their progress towards a more diverse and inclusive workplace culture.

As this year's Deep Dive Survey suggests, leaders have an enormous role to play in driving this change. That's not to say we don't all have a role to play. To be allies, words and action must be aligned. We need to move beyond good intentions. To be an active ally, consider how you might:



Share development opportunities with a broader range of people – don't rely on go-to people or your 'inner circle'.



Acknowledge your own place in the culture – power and privilege play a large role in people's experiences of inclusion, so if you have enjoyed the advantages of privilege and you have power over the culture, use your influence to empower others.



Acknowledge the lived experiences and perspectives of others, especially when this involves systematic inequality, micro-aggressions and marginalisation – speak with diverse people, don't speak for them.



Become a sponsor – champion someone from an underrepresented community, and advocate for their interests when key decisions are made.



'See something? Say something!' – call out inappropriate behaviour, and if you hold a position of power or influence, use your power to call out unacceptable behaviour – this is an important way of role-modelling upstanding behaviour, and creating a 'speak-up' culture.



Build a network of allies with whom you can share experiences, provide support for each other.



Use inclusive language – be aware of gendered or stereotypical language and in-group banter, and when you're speaking to everyone, make sure you're speaking to everyone.

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Author bio

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Dr Whelan founded Psynapse in 2010 with the goal of bringing innovative cognitive science research out of the laboratory, and into the world of practical solutions to organisational problems. A central passion for her work is helping organisations and leaders to leverage diversity and inclusion to drive innovation and organisational performance.

She is an active thought leader and a regular contributor to industry forums, events, and public debate, including contributions to *The Conversation* and *The Age*; and engagements with The Sydney Opera House, The Committee for Economic Development of Australia, The Australian Human Resources Institute and The Diversity Council of Australia.



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