FOCUSED

on Everyday Respect

We recognise women in all their diversity

Efforts to advance gender equality have not lifted all women equally. By highlighting the specific demographics of people who experience exclusion, we increase their visibility and boost understanding of how exclusion is experienced within organisations and in society more generally.

Inclusive gender equality recognises that diversity, equity and inclusion strategies must consider and engage all genders in global efforts to achieve gender equality, with a particular focus on elevating and advancing currently under-represented and marginalised groups.

At its core, the intent is to create respectful, safe and inclusive cultures of belonging for all.

Throughout this document, the terms 'women', 'women in all their diversity', 'women experiencing intersecting inequalities' and 'diverse people' are used. Women includes both cis and trans women.

In referring to women experiencing intersecting inequalities, we mean the structural inequalities and multiple, intersecting and compounding barriers to inclusion and progression faced by:

- women from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds
- First Nations women
- ethnically and/or racially marginalised women
- single parents and sole caregivers
- women with disability (visible or invisible)
- neurodivergent women
- LBTQ+ women

When referring to diverse people, we mean the wealth and variety of people and aspects of identity that broadly make up Australia's population.

Champions of Change Coalition acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and commit to building a brighter future together. Our head office is located on the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. The 'Eora people' was the name given to the coastal Aboriginal peoples around Sydney. 'Eora' means 'here' or 'from this place'. The workplaces of our people and Champions of Change Coalition Members span the nation and the world. We extend our respects to the Traditional Custodians of all the lands on which we and our Members work and live.

Contents

Foreword

Respect is the foundation of any effort to improve gender equality and create safe, inclusive workplaces for all.

Leaders play a critical role in embedding everyday respect by setting the standard through leadership, calling out discriminatory and disrespectful behaviour, building respect into clear and simple policies and systems, and making sure respect, intersectionality and equality are central to every decision. We know how important it is for leaders personally to reach out to anyone who experiences sexual harassment at work and ensure they are supported.

FOCUSED on Everyday Respect is an essential resource for leaders and teams who are committed to ensuring everyone feels safe, respected, valued and included at work.

It aims to build a modern, consistent and shared understanding of what constitutes everyday disrespect and everyday respect in the workforce. This resource will help organisations enhance employee wellbeing, team cohesion and organisational performance. It will also help organisations meet their obligations under the Respect@Work legislation, advancing gender equality and inclusion, and more effectively harnessing the value of diversity in leadership and in the workplace.

As we near the one-year anniversary of the positive duty in the Respect@Work legislation, I am excited by the collective commitment of leaders to shape more respectful and inclusive workplaces for all.

By widely implementing and sharing resources such as this, leaders can set higher standards for workplace behaviour. With critical mass, these standards can also influence behaviours in our homes and communities, creating a safer, kinder, and more inclusive and respectful world for everyone.

Dr Anna Cody
Sex Discrimination Commissioner
Australian Human Rights Commission

From everyday disrespect to FOCUSED on Everyday Respect

F
UNEQUAL / UNFAIR
Actions, behaviours or decisions that are unequal or unfair

FAIR & EQUAL
Treat people fairly and equally

O
DIMINISHED
Undervaluing and diminishing people's contributions

OPEN-MINDED
Be open-minded and intentional

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INCONSIDERATE / OFFENSIVE
Comments and jokes that perpetuate stereotypes and belittle/are derogatory

CARING
Demonstrate care for others

U
EXCLUDED
Excluding or isolating people

UNITED
Promote workplace unity

S
UNSAFE
Allowing a hostile, unsafe workplace for people to persist

SAFE
Provide a safe environment

E
INCONGRUOUS
People's overall experience of the workplace culture is fragmented, inconsistent and disengaging

ENGAGED
Engage in open and constructive discussions

D
UNKNOWN / INVISIBLE
People's unique identity and experiences are not recognised or valued

DIVERSE
Celebrate and value diversity

The case for prioritising everyday respect

For people and teams

Respectful interactions and relationships at work foster a sense of belonging and trust, and enhance job satisfaction and retention.

- Employees working in a respectful workplace are more likely to remain loyal, reducing costs and disruptions associated with high turnover.[1]

- Leader kindness and generosity are strong predictors of team and organisational effectiveness.[2]

- Respectful environments help mitigate conflicts and unlawful behaviour, including sexual harassment, sex-based harassment and hostile work environments.[3]

- Respectful, inclusive environments help mitigate conscious and unconscious bias and outdated stereotypes.[4]

- Positive workplaces attract top talent, as prospective employees are more likely to prioritise respect, recognition and ethical behaviour.[5]

For business performance

Innovation, decision-making, productivity and business performance are enhanced in psychologically safe and respectful workplaces.

- People who feel respected at work are likely to experience higher job satisfaction, feel valued for their contributions and perform better.[6]

- Organisations with low employee engagement scores experienced 18% lower productivity, 16% lower profitability, 37% lower job growth, and 65% lower share prices over time.[7]

- Employees are more likely to feel comfortable taking interpersonal risks, speaking up with ideas or concerns, and engaging in constructive dialogue without fear of retribution when they are working in respectful environments, leading to improved performance.[8]

- Diversity of thinking leads to more innovative solutions.[9]

- Inclusion is closely linked to employee engagement, itself in turn a critical component of employee retention, productivity and financial performance.[10]

For talent strategies

Shifting demographics in Australia require us to harness all available talent, create environments that work for all and ensure they reflect the customers and communities we serve.

- The growing diversity in age, gender, disability and background of the workforce calls for inclusive workplace practices and policies to harness a wide range of talents and perspectives, preparing for the evolving socio-economic and demographic landscapes of Australia's future workforce.[11]

- The 2021 Census data points to a diversifying Australian population, indicating future workforce changes.[12]

- As generations shift, with a notable presence of Millennials (75% of the total Australian workforce) and Gen Z, employers must adapt to varying expectations and values.[13]

- Of mental health problems among employed individuals, 15–45% can be attributed to workplace conditions – leading to enormous societal costs ($15.8 to $17.4 billion).[14]

- Preventing mental health problems caused by work-related factors/stressors could expand Australian GDP by $3.5 billion per year.[15]

For communities

Embedding everyday respect across Australia's workplaces will support the cohesion, stability and security that underpins our prosperity as a nation.

- Societal polarisation features among the top three risks over current and two-year time horizons.[16]

- Backlash against the diversity, equity and inclusion movement around the world requires leadership and courage in the workplace.[17]

- Concerning trends in men's experiences, attitudes and social outcomes, for example, "gender equality has gone far enough and is edging towards discrimination of men".[18]

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Listening and learning
on everyday respect

Champions of Change Coalition has prioritised building gender-equal, diverse and inclusive workplaces since our establishment in 2010.

While, at times, the pace of change has felt too slow, many of our teams and talent pools are now more diverse than ever, leading to an incredible shift in workforce dynamics over recent years.

As the shape and nature of the workforce changes, so too have employee expectations of appropriate workplace behaviours and standards – particularly regarding respect at work.

Legal and regulatory standards have rightly evolved in response. Workplace language and behaviours that were once accepted, commonplace or overlooked are now outdated and in many cases unlawful.

We have led and supported these developments over the past decade as they are fundamental to achieving our vision of inclusive gender equality in our organisations. However, fostering employee wellbeing, team cohesion and optimal performance in this context has proven to be a challenging and nuanced task for many leaders.

To better understand and navigate this shifting landscape, our Members held Listen and Learn sessions with people across their organisations to hear different perspectives on what everyday disrespect and everyday respect look like in contemporary workplaces. Important insights emerged from these discussions, which informed the approach outlined in this resource.

Key insights

Employees

- Everyday disrespect in the workforce can significantly impact employee, team and organisational wellbeing and performance. The effects of unchecked disrespectful behaviour can be cumulative, compounding and often devastating to the careers and lives of those affected.

- **Most people want to create and be part of respectful workplaces, and do not set out to be disrespectful. However, some can be unaware of how their words, actions, behaviours and decisions impact others.**

- Some employees say they are nervous about speaking up as they fear saying the wrong thing.

- There are vastly different understandings and perspectives on what constitutes respectful behaviour among diverse workforces, shaped by different backgrounds, and life and career experiences.

- **The accepted standard of 'respect' in the workplace is often set or defined by the dominant or most powerful group, either consciously or unconsciously. This can result in under-represented or less powerful employees feeling marginalised, excluded or unsafe in the workplace.**

- Contemporary, consistent and clear standards on everyday respect could also be used to support more respectful behaviour towards employees from customers, clients, suppliers and contractors.

Managers

- **Creating an environment that encourages different and dissenting views is critical to organisational performance and psychologically safe and inclusive workforces. However, it also requires a clear understanding of what words or behaviour 'cross the line'.**

- Managers may feel ill-equipped to provide open and constructive feedback on employee performance, fearing it might be misconstrued and/or escalated as disrespectful behaviour, impacting team dynamics and performance.

- Social, community, economic and geopolitical tensions reverberate within diverse workforces, requiring clear standards for safe and respectful language and behaviour, underpinned by empathy, tolerance and understanding for diverse views.

- People want help with non-inflammatory language that can be used to draw attention to disrespectful words or behaviour in the moment, along with authentic and respectful ways to respond and demonstrate a willingness to learn/change when issues are raised. The goal is to solve the problem on the spot, de-escalate any tension and move on together.

Leaders / organisations

- **Most organisations feature 'respect' and/or 'inclusion' in their organisational values, but fewer have explicitly defined what these values mean in practice.**

- Without a clear understanding of what everyday respect looks like in the workplace, leadership practice and business systems cannot be geared to embed it in organisational cultures.

- Leadership accountability (and risk management) for employee psychosocial safety is now just as important as physical safety.

Communities

- Contemporary, consistent and clear workplace standards on everyday respect could make an enormous contribution to efforts to eliminate harmful behaviours in homes and communities, such as disrespect, harassment and other forms of gender-based violence. This is backed by evidence that expectations and 'modelling' of safe and respectful behaviours at work can radiate out to influence employee behaviour in other settings.

Experiences of everyday disrespect

Everyday disrespect affects people differently, and often has a heightened impact on those with intersecting experiences of marginalisation or exclusion. For example, lesbian and bisexual women may experience sexualised and hostile treatment from co-workers. People with disability may be targeted, and disbelieved more when they report unwanted behaviours. Comments to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may perpetuate both racist and sexist stereotyping.

To build and maintain inclusive workplace environments, it is important to recognise the multiple forms of everyday disrespect that people in our workplaces can experience and recognise how, for example, sexism can be compounded by other forms of discrimination such as racism, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, ageism and ableism creating unique disadvantage for women with these intersecting identities.

Creating space to listen to and learn from employees with lived experience of intersectional identities is essential to the process of identifying practical actions to address disrespectful behaviours towards them.

We know that 'everyday disrespect' does not occur in a vacuum.

Women, people from culturally and racially marginalised communities, single parents, people with disability, people in the LGBTIQ+ community and other under-represented or marginalised identities face systemic inequality and discrimination, including in the workplace, such as bias in talent processes.

Everyday disrespect experienced by these groups is amplified by the context of systemic inequality, making it more pervasive and more harmful.

Taking action to embed everyday respect

In response to the case for change, insights from our teams and stakeholder feedback, we have developed this resource, *FOCUSED on Everyday Respect*, to guide and support leaders. It covers:

- the case for leadership focus on everyday respect

- examples of how everyday disrespect manifests in workplaces

- a contemporary, clear and consistent 'blueprint' for everyday respect in workplaces – what it should look like in practice

- clear steps to embed respectful practices in leadership and across business systems

- the legal and regulatory context leaders must be aware of

- practical tools to help cultivate cultures of everyday respect

- case studies of promising practice from Members of Champions of Change Coalition.

We are grateful to our Members and their teams for investing their time, expertise and resources to develop these materials. We also sincerely thank the organisations and individuals that provided expert advice on the materials developed, including the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Disability Leadership Institute, Equality Australia, Our Watch and Maria Dimopoulos.

As always, we welcome feedback and suggestions on our work and encourage leaders to adopt or adapt this work to help create more safe, respectful and inclusive working environments for all people.

Everyday disrespect looks like this

	UNEQUAL / UNFAIR	DIMINISHED	INCONSIDERATE / OFFENSIVE	EXCLUDED	UNSAFE	INCONGRUOUS	UNKNOWN / INVISIBLE
What everyday disrespect looks like	Actions, behaviours or decisions that are unequal or unfair	Undervaluing and diminishing people's contributions	Comments and jokes that perpetuate stereotypes and belittle or are derogatory	Excluding or isolating people	Allowing a hostile, unsafe workplace for people to persist	People's overall experience of the workplace culture is fragmented, inconsistent and disengaging	People's unique identity and experiences are not recognised or valued
Examples of how it manifests in organisations	◇ Stereotypes and implicit bias influence the roles, projects and opportunities available and compound existing structural inequities such as the gender pay gap.	◇ Not paying the same attention to some people's contributions and perspectives. ◇ Micromanaging people instead of trusting them to do their jobs. ◇ Ignoring or dismissing the ideas of women, younger/more junior or culturally and racially marginalised team members.	◇ Sexist jokes and offensive comments about someone's gender. ◇ Homophobia, for example, using 'gay' as a slur. ◇ Jokes about religions. ◇ Refferences to stereotypes about certain racial, ethnic or cultural backgrounds. ◇ Jokes and negative comments about disability/age.	◇ Automatically excluding people based on caring responsibilities. ◇ Regularly scheduling work events over school or childcare pick-up times. ◇ Excluding some people from conversations or projects because they are different from the majority or dominant group. ◇ Valuing the contribution of team members who work in the office over those who work from home. ◇ Not being intentional about creating inclusion in digital environments.	◇ Allowing harassment and bullying in the workplace to go unchecked. ◇ Being unwilling to make reasonable adjustments for people needing assistive technology or safe access to the workplace. ◇ Lack of accountability or action for people's wellbeing. ◇ Failing to act on instances of unlawful conduct. ◇ Allowing underperformance to continue and not providing support for others, especially when they are struggling. ◇ Publicly criticising or belittling people in meetings.	◇ Leaders say they are working to create an inclusive culture but personally behave in ways that cause disengagement and disharmony among their people. ◇ Leaders say they are committed to increased transparency on workplace sexual harassment yet continue to impose non-disclosure agreements in settlements of complaints. ◇ People are driven to leave their team, employer or the industry in which they work because they do not feel safe, respected or included within it. ◇ People are exhausted and fatigued from trying to 'fit in' or speak out about negative and unlawful behaviours.	◇ People are not equipped with the skills and knowledge to know how to ask questions related to diversity and inclusion, and the workplace culture hinders respectful curiosity. ◇ The personal lives and obligations of people outside the workplace are not acknowledged or valued.
What we heard	**"*There is a pattern of the men giving the hot jobs and opportunities to the men.* ❝ **I was told 'your accent is too strong, clients won't understand you'.** **"*I wasn't considered for the talent program because they decided my focus right now was on my children.* **"*I understand that only one person can be successful, but there was no clear explanation as to why I didn't get the role.* **"*They always expect the women in the team to hold the microphone, hand out the nametags, welcome the guests.*	**"*People seem to naturally think I am incompetent because I use a wheelchair.* **" *There is a prevailing view here that age always equates to wisdom, experience and expertise, and the diverse perspectives and experiences of younger staff are often not valued and respected as they should be.* ❝ **He always picks up his phone or starts a side conversation when I have something to say.** **"*Older people are perceived as being unable to adapt to change in the same way young people can.*	❝ **I hear jokes inferring that I only got the job because I am a woman.** **"*A colleague referred to a trans person as 'it'.* **"*Male colleagues use 'f*g' or 'f****t' to insult each other.* **"*I get asked all the time 'I wonder what you would look like without your hijab'.* **"*'Bipolar' was used to describe a team member who was having a bad day; 'OCD' was used to describe someone who pays attention to detail.* **"*People use the word 'schizophrenic' to mean fractured and lacking in focus.*	**"*We were told that if you are not in the office every day, you are not serious about your career.* **"*I have requested meetings start after school drop-off but I have been told I should fit in what works for the majority.* **"*There aren't any clear 'rules' for our hybrid team meetings. If you're dialling in virtually, you might as well forget about contributing, it's only the people in the room that get a say.* ❝ **They just assume I don't have any experience or views that can contribute to the conversation, so I am not invited to attend.**	❝ **The whole team watched on as he belittled and harassed me. Everyone was too scared to speak up.** **"*I've been made to feel excluded, devalued and preyed upon for my disability.* **"*The leader told me I got the job because they wanted 'one throat to choke'.* **"*I have to do more than my fair share of work because my manager is too frightened to address my colleague's poor work ethic.* **"*In the office sexist jokes are part of my normal day. But I avoid engaging in any social events because I worry it could get more serious.* **"*The [organisation] tolerates bad behaviour from some managers and high-value employees who are usually men.*	**"*Not acceptable in this day and age. We work in an environment which encourages equality and everyday disrespect is counter-intuitive to the progressive society we are trying to promote and live in.* ❝ **There is a disconnect between what the leaders say and our policies to try to create inclusion, and the actual culture we work in.** **"*I actually just answer yes or no and keep my head down out of genuine fear I am saying or doing the wrong thing. That's not great for diversity of thought, either.*	❝ **One leader has never bothered to work out how to pronounce the names of colleagues from ethnically diverse backgrounds.** **"*They roll their eyes when I say I have to attend 'another' family funeral. They have no idea how important these occasions are in my culture.* **"*I ended up avoiding those individuals who belittled me and made me feel so uncomfortable. It made it much harder to do my job well but it's what I needed to do to survive it.*

FOCUSED on everyday respect:
a blueprint for action

What everyday respect looks like

How we can live it

FAIR & EQUAL
Treat people fairly and equally

- Ensure everyone has access to opportunities, recognising people's diverse talents, perspectives and contributions.
- Ensure stereotypes, in any form, are not being applied consciously or unconsciously to assess performance or leadership potential.
- Offer sponsorship to team members, especially those from under-represented and marginalised employee groups.

OPEN-MINDED
Be open-minded and intentional

- Recognise most people are well-intentioned and do not aim to be disrespectful in their interactions.
- Be mindful of and open-minded with people who have different life experiences and perspectives to yours.
- Intentionally invest time in understanding current language, research and practice on creating safe, respectful and inclusive workplaces.
- Ask for or provide guidance on what is considered respectful and disrespectful behaviour, and respond accordingly.
- Show genuine interest in others' voices and contributions.
- Ensure an equal share of voice at meetings.

CARING
Demonstrate care for others

- Show care and empathy towards colleagues needing support, especially those facing discrimination.
- Use language that respects gender identity, pronouns and cultural backgrounds.
- Regularly check in with colleagues and ask them how they are doing, personally and professionally.
- Respect the personal boundaries and privacy of others.
- Offer to help with workload or to seek additional resources when things get busy.

UNITED
Promote workplace unity

- Model respect and inclusivity, seeking alignment between policies and actual workplace actions and practices.
- Be an ally, supporting and amplifying the voices of under-represented colleagues.
- Organise team activities that are inclusive and welcoming.

SAFE
Provide a safe environment

- Take responsibility for the impact of your words and actions on others.
- Ensure team members have the tools they need to do their jobs safely and productively.
- Speak out against disrespectful language and behaviour you witness.
- Actively address any form of harassment, including reporting it.

ENGAGED
Engage in open and constructive discussions

- Respect and understand everyone's right to have a view and don't expect others to agree with you.
- Welcome and celebrate diverse ideas, viewpoints and perspectives that challenge the status quo towards better outcomes for all.
- Engage in debates and discussions with empathy, politeness and courtesy.
- View constructive feedback and dissenting opinions as an opportunity to listen, learn and create solutions that work for everyone.

DIVERSE
Celebrate and value diversity

- Embrace, respect and value differences in identity, background and perspective.
- Be curious and educate yourself about the experiences and challenges faced by under-represented and/or marginalised colleagues.
- Share stories and cultural insights around the organisation to broaden understanding of diversity.
- Recognise and celebrate significant cultural events for diverse employee groups.

Practical resources

Summary of practical tools

This section offers practical tools and processes for fostering respect, inclusion and belonging in the workplace.

1 **Leading the change**

A process for understanding and accelerating progress towards more respectful and inclusive workplace cultures.

2 **Understanding employer obligations**

Details on the legal obligations employers have to prevent everyday disrespect and create a psychologically safe workplace.

3 **Recognising and defining the behaviours**

Summary of the different forms of everyday disrespect and the harm it causes to people impacted.

4 **Setting the tone from the top:
leadership actions for everyday respect**

Defining, communicating and modelling everyday respect.

5 **Integrating respect into the organisation
policies and practices**

Integrating respectful practices through inclusive design and accountability mechanisms.

6 **Listen and Learn guide for leaders:
facilitating meaningful discussions on everyday respect**

A structured approach for leaders to facilitate Listen and Learn sessions, helping teams to understand and define everyday respect, share experiences of disrespect and explore practical actions to improve the work environment.

7 **Supporting upstanders:
empowering employees to act against disrespectful behaviour**

Practical advice on how to speak up in the moment, support those impacted by disrespect, and seek additional support when needed.

8 **Overcoming challenges and building support**

Addressing common pushbacks and high-level factual responses to help navigate these conversations effectively.

9 **Fostering constructive feedback:
building a culture of mutual respect**

Strategies for giving and receiving feedback in a way that promotes positive change and prevents escalation of disrespectful behaviour.

10 **Establishing a respectful environment in an online world**

Promoting the professional and respectful use of online communication tools.

11 **Interactions with clients, customers and suppliers**

Tackling everyday disrespect interactions with clients, customers and suppliers.

1 Leading the change

A process for understanding and accelerating progress towards more respectful and inclusive workplace cultures.

Diagnose → **Prioritise** → **Strategise** → **Embed** → **Review**

Diagnose

- Understand employer obligations and relevant legal frameworks.
- Define and recognise the behaviours.
- Understand the current state of respect and inclusivity within your organisation.
- Conduct or review surveys and assessments to gather data on employees' perceptions of respect and inclusivity.
- Organise focus groups/ Listen and Learn sessions to gain qualitative insights into the experiences and challenges faced by employees.
- Analyse existing data on diversity, equity and inclusion metrics, employee turnover, grievance reports and other relevant indicators.
- Compare organisational practices against industry standards and best practices.

Prioritise

- Identify key areas for improvement and prioritise actions.
- Identify gaps and areas of concern based on the diagnostic phase.
- Engage key stakeholders, including leadership, employees and external experts, to gather input on priorities.
- Establish clear, measurable goals for improving respect and inclusivity in the organisation.
- Use a prioritisation matrix to assess the impact and feasibility of potential initiatives.

Strategise

- Develop a comprehensive strategy to address the identified priorities.
- Create detailed action plans for each priority area, outlining specific actions, responsible parties, timelines and resources required.
- Allocate necessary resources, including budget, personnel and technology, to support the implementation of action plans.
- Develop or update policies to reflect the commitment to respect and inclusivity.
- Design training programs to equip employees and leaders with the skills and knowledge needed to foster a respectful and inclusive environment.

Embed

- Implement the strategy and integrate respect and inclusivity into the organisational culture.
- Ensure leadership sets the tone by modelling respectful and inclusive behaviour and actively promoting the initiatives.
- Develop a communication plan to keep all employees informed and engaged through case studies and role modelling.
- Embed respect and inclusivity into all business systems, including performance management, recruitment and supplier management.
- Encourage employee involvement through committees, taskforces and employee resource groups.

Review

- Establish regular monitoring mechanisms to track progress against set goals and action plans.
- Create feedback loops to gather ongoing input from employees and stakeholders.
- Conduct periodic impact assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of the initiatives.
- Use the findings from reviews and feedback to make continuous improvements.
- Adjust strategies and actions as needed to ensure sustained progress.

Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)[19]

Businesses and organisations have a positive duty under the federal *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and to eliminate unlawful work-related sexist behaviour, including sex discrimination, sex-based harassment and hostile work environments, on the basis of sex and victimisation.

Everyday sexism can form part of an individual's experience of these behaviours. The positive duty requires employers and 'persons conducting a business or undertaking' to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate, as far as possible, work-related sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and conduct creating a hostile workplace environment on the ground of sex and victimisation.

This duty includes businesses and organisations preventing these forms of discriminatory behaviour from being engaged in by themselves, their employees, workers and agents and, in some cases, by third parties such as customers, clients or members of the public.

The 'workplace' extends beyond the physical location of a place of work and can include the premises of clients, suppliers and associated businesses, as well as conference halls and other venues where work functions are held and transportation vehicles during work-related travel. Laws also apply to online communications that occur in the virtual workspace using work devices and/or personal devices such as phones, computers and tablets. Sexist behaviour, including sexual harassment of workers through social media, even if using private equipment or during non-work hours, can still be against the law.

Positive duty obligation	Examples
Sex discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly, or is unreasonably disadvantaged, because of their sex or a characteristic that is generally associated with people of that sex.	● Offering women and men different rates of pay or benefits for doing the same job. ● Having a policy that only full-time workers will be promoted, if this is not reasonable in the circumstances. ● Not providing women and men with the same opportunities for training, mentoring or promotion. ● Not hiring a woman because it is assumed that she is more likely to complain about sexual harassment or sexual language. ● Not hiring a man because existing staff do not want to work with a man. ● Not hiring a woman because it is assumed that the work is 'too physical' or 'too dirty' for women.

Positive duty obligation	Examples
Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that occurs in circumstances in which a reasonable person aware of those circumstances would anticipate the person being harassed might feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. See *Disrupting the System: Preventing and Responding to Workplace Sexual Harassment*	● Unwelcome physical touching, staring or leering. ● Repeated or inappropriate requests to go on dates. ● Requests or pressure for sex or sexual acts. ● Emailing, displaying or texting pornography, suggestive material or sexual jokes. ● Sexual comments in person, online or in writing, including explicit comments or innuendo. ● Intrusive questions about a person's private life or physical appearance. ● Sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of the body.
Sex-based harassment is unwelcome behaviour of a demeaning nature that happens because of a person's sex, or a characteristic generally associated with people of their sex, in circumstances where a reasonable person would anticipate that the person who is harassed might feel offended, humiliated or intimidated by the behaviour.	● Making inappropriate comments and jokes to a person based on their sex. ● Displaying images or materials that are sexist. ● Making sexist, misogynistic or misandrist remarks about a specific person. ● Verbally abusing or insulting someone on the basis of their sex. ● Requesting that a person engage in degrading conduct based on their sex. ● Bullying, physical threats, attacks or other hateful conduct motivated by a person's sex.
Hostile work environments on the basis of sex. A workplace environment is hostile on the basis of sex if a person behaves in a way that a reasonable person would expect might be offensive, intimidating or humiliating to someone because of their sex.	● Conduct involving gendered stereotypes, such as making women workers responsible for cleaning the office. ● Making demeaning comments about a person's anatomy such as pregnancy, menstruation or menopause. ● The display or circulation of obscene, sexist, pornographic or sexual photos, materials, posters or gifts. ● Making sexist, derogatory, suggestive or sexual comments, jokes or banter. ● Sexist, derogatory, suggestive or sexual emails, phone calls, text messages or online interactions.

19 Australian Human Rights Commission. (2023, August). Guidelines for Complying with the Positive Duty under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth). (2023). At *https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/Guidelines for Complying with the Positive Duty 282023 29.pdf*

Positive duty obligation	Examples
Victimisation involves retaliatory action, or the threat of such action, against a person because they have asserted, or intend to assert, their rights under the law, or because another person thinks that they have. A person can also be victimised if they help someone else to assert their rights (e.g. by being a witness).	◗ Demoting, threatening to demote or denying someone a promotion because they have made a complaint, or intend to make a complaint, of sex discrimination. ◗ Ostracising or excluding a worker in the workplace, or refusing them overtime shifts, because they appeared as a witness in support of a colleague who made a complaint of sex-based harassment. ◗ Moving a worker who has made a complaint to another worksite, or a non-client-facing role (without first checking if they would like to move). ◗ Intimidating or threatening a worker to prevent them from making a complaint.

Context matters

Context matters in determining if behaviour constitutes sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sex-based harassment or a hostile work environment on the basis of sex. The circumstances that a court will consider when applying the 'reasonable person test' may include: the relationship between the people; power imbalances; the seriousness of the conduct; whether the conduct was repeated; and the age, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex status, marital or relationship status, religious belief, race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, of the person being harassed.

Obligations under other legislation

Work health and safety

A positive duty to prevent harmful behaviours such as harassment, including sexual and gender-based harassment, racism, ableism, ageism also exists under Australian Federal and state and territory work, health and safety duties to prevent psychosocial hazards. Harmful behaviour becomes a hazard when it is severe (e.g. very harmful), prolonged (e.g. long term) or frequent (e.g. happens often). Workplaces must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, workers and other persons are not exposed to risks to their psychological or physical health and safety. They must identify and assess the risks of harmful behaviours; eliminate psychosocial risks if it is reasonably practicable to do so, or if it isn't reasonably practicable to eliminate these risks, minimise them so far as is reasonably practicable; and maintain and review control measures.

This includes risks from psychosocial hazards such as sexual and gender-based harassment. See Safe Work Australia for details.

Other anti-discrimination laws

While there is currently not a similar positive duty to prevent other forms of everyday disrespect, such as racism, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, ageism and ableism, under Federal Australian anti-discrimination legislation, employers could still be held legally responsible for these behaviours when they occur in the workplace. See the Australian Human Rights Commission for details.

Some positive duty obligations exist under state and territory legislation across all protected attributes. See the relevant legislation in each state and territory. See the Attorney-General Department's website for relevant links.

3 Recognising and defining the behaviours

The spectrum of workplace behaviour, whether in person or online, encompasses a wide range of actions, attitudes and decisions that can either inhibit or enable everyday respect.

At one end of the spectrum is everyday respect – behaviours, attitudes and practices that foster inclusion, value diversity and create a sense of belonging for all employees. This includes actions such as actively listening to diverse perspectives, providing equal opportunities for growth and development, and consistently demonstrating consideration for the unique experiences and needs of all team members. Everyday respect is characterised by fairness, empathy and a genuine commitment to creating an environment where every individual feels valued and empowered to contribute their best.

At the other end of this spectrum lies overt discrimination, blatant harassment, explicit bias, bullying and victimisation, which are now widely recognised as unacceptable and unlawful.

However, disrespect in the workplace can occur in-between these poles, in more subtle ways. 'Everyday' forms of disrespect can manifest as unintentional expressions of prejudice, bias, stereotyping or discrimination against a particular individual or group.

Often now described as 'microaggressions', these types of words, actions or behaviours can be pervasive, damaging and have impact accumulating over time. Whether intentional or not, they create a work environment where some individuals can feel excluded, intimidated or unwelcome.

This is particularly true for those who differ from the majority or dominant groups in the workplace. Recognising and addressing these behaviours, in addition to overt workplace discrimination, is crucial for fostering inclusive and respectful work environments.

Our experience and starting position is that most people want to create and be part of a respectful workplace, and do not set out to be disrespectful.

However, some people can be unaware of how their words, actions, behaviours and decisions impact others. By shining a light on how disrespect can manifest and its impact on people, we hope to encourage greater understanding, empathy, open-mindedness and a willingness to learn.

Through discussions with our teams, we see that disrespect in the workplace occurs in both overt and subtle ways.

'Everyday' forms of discrimination or bias are often subtle or unintentional expressions of prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination against a particular individual or group that can be pervasive and have a cumulative impact on people over time.

Examples of everyday disrespect include:

- sexism – occurs in daily interactions that collectively undermine and devalue individuals based on gender
- homophobia and transphobia – attitudes that contribute to a culture of prejudice against LGBTIQ+ individuals
- ableism – marginalisation and exclusion of people with disability as well as assumptions about their abilities, worth and contributions
- racism – biased views based on race, ethnicity or cultural background that reinforce racial stereotypes or marginalise people of certain racial, ethnic or cultural backgrounds
- ageism – marginalisation or unequal treatment of younger or older individuals.

Disrespect can also manifest as:

- lack of fairness or equality
- undervaluing or diminishing individuals or groups
- inconsiderate, ill-informed or offensive actions, behaviours and decisions, particularly in relation to the diverse needs and experiences of all people
- exclusion of individuals or groups of people from discussions or opportunities with no explanation
- bullying, harassment or victimisation
- incongruence with stated positions on diversity, equity and inclusion
- a lack of recognition of the unique attributes, capabilities and experiences of employees.

Seemingly small actions or comments, even when unintentional, can have a profound impact. They may reinforce harmful stereotypes and assumptions, affecting individuals' self-esteem, sense of belonging, workplace experiences and career paths. It's important to recognise that what might appear insignificant to some can deeply impact others' lives, experience at work and career opportunities.

- Everyday disrespect causes personal harm.
- The impact of everyday disrespect can be significant and lasting. It can:
  - take a personal toll on your employees' self-esteem, personal relationships and general health
  - stop people from feeling included and engaged
  - leave people exhausted and fatigued from the compounding nature of exclusion and constantly having to be the one to 'fit in' or speak out
  - perpetuate unhelpful, outdated stereotypes and other negative behaviours that people feel unsafe to call out
  - unnecessarily impede career progression
  - prevent people from participating equally in caring for their families.

What we heard:

"

It ends up as personal self-doubt that spills over into all aspects of work life and home life

It decreases motivation to remain in a male-dominated industry.

You weigh it up … is speaking up potentially a career-limiting move?

"

At an individual level it is toxic (infuriating, demotivating) and can be a driver to leave a team, employer or the industry in which you work.

4 Setting the tone from the top: leadership actions for everyday respect

What leaders say and do sets the tone both within and beyond organisations. By defining, communicating and modelling everyday respect, leaders foster a respectful and inclusive culture. Failing to detect, acknowledge or act on everyday disrespect can be perceived as explicit or implicit approval of everyday disrespect by the workplace and the wider community.

Here are some examples of personal actions leaders can take.

Understand what everyday disrespect looks like in your organisation	→ As CEO, conduct regular Listen and Learn sessions to personally identify and address the root causes of disrespect in the organisation.
	→ Review how organisation business systems reinforce everyday disrespect.
	→ Partner with organisations that focus on promoting safe, equal and respectful workspaces.
Set the tone	→ Consciously define what respect looks like for you and your organisation and lead through your actions, behaviours and decisions.
	→ Be aware of behaviours you have that may be unintentionally disrespectful or exclusionary; acknowledge them and work to change them. This includes recognising career and life advantages you have had that others may not have. Use *The Leadership Shadow* or *Power to Create Inclusive Gender Equality in the Workplace* as references.
	→ Communicate the importance of fostering an environment of everyday respect from the top down and across all levels of the organisation, reinforcing there is no place for disrespect.
	→ Speak out when you see disrespectful behaviour, sharing your stance against it.
	→ Role model everyday respect in meetings you lead and attend.
Value and elevate diverse voices and contributions	→ Develop an environment that is open to diverse ideas and perspectives.
	→ Ensure there are opportunities for all to freely and safely contribute within and across your organisation, starting with meetings you convene or attend.
	→ Adopt the *Panel Pledge* across your organisation to ensure high-profile discussions and forums include the voices and perspectives of women from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences.
	→ Elevate the voices and perspectives of diverse people of all genders.

Make it safe to speak out	→ Foster open communication channels that encourage all employees to share their insights and experiences through multiple pathways (e.g. team discussions, an anonymous reporting line, manager one-on-ones).
	→ Ensure internal communication promotes the importance of building a culture of everyday respect, including making the channels for support and reporting visible (e.g. HR, ombudsperson, yarning circles).
	→ Be transparent across all levels of the organisation about incidences of everyday disrespect.
	→ Hold to account (including through de-identified case studies) those who are disrespectful through appropriate organisation systems.
Make stereotyping and labelling a thing of the past	→ Actively debunk assumptions about the type of work that specific genders can and cannot do, especially physical roles, those historically considered 'gender-appropriate', functional and ancillary roles.
	→ Call out any stereotyping based on gender, age, race, religion, sexuality or ability.
	→ Identify where stereotypes are being applied to assess performance or leadership abilities, reframing discussions that label individuals as 'too' anything (e.g. 'too bossy', 'too soft', 'too emotional').
	→ Use the *In the Eye of the Beholder* report to critically reflect on the use of merit in decisions about people.
Respond to inappropriate jokes in the moment	→ Address and challenge humour or colloquialisms that are sexist, racist, homophobic, ableist, derogatory or exclusionary, in the moment or retrospectively, to ensure the joker and the audience understand your stance. This does not have to be confrontational or awkward. It could be as simple as saying 'that sort of thing is not on here', or having a quiet chat after the meeting.
Keep the focus on capability	→ Maintain a focus on content and capabilities versus appearance in conversations and introductions, especially with women and staff from diverse backgrounds, to avoid undermining a person's experience or credibility.
Support personal choices about caring and careers	→ Check whether you are making assumptions about, or choices for, people of all genders and backgrounds regarding how they value or prioritise their career.
	→ Ensure equal access to flexible work arrangements for all genders, including considerations of cultural responsibilities and expectations.

5 Integrating respect into the organisation policies and practices

Benchmarks of respect are also established and reinforced through organisational systems, policies, processes and decisions led or owned by the CEO. Interrogate these in your workplace to ensure you are establishing and maintaining high standards of inclusive everyday respect.

Leadership, governance and risk systems	◯ Establish and communicate clear expectations for respectful behaviour from the top down. ◯ Integrate respectful behaviour into daily operations, including ongoing consistent messaging across multiple platforms, regular staff engagement and conversations, and specific training on respectful behaviour and inclusivity for leadership. ◯ Include respect and inclusion criteria in risk assessments and mitigation strategies. ◯ Hold leaders accountable for fostering a respectful and inclusive culture through performance evaluations.
Human resource policy and practice	◯ Develop HR policies that explicitly promote respect and inclusion. ◯ Implement mandatory training on respect and inclusivity for all employees. ◯ Establish clear and confidential mechanisms for reporting and addressing disrespectful behaviour. ◯ Monitor and ensure clear consequences for negative behaviours. ◯ Ensure hiring practices are inclusive and bias-free.
Research, data analytics and reporting	◯ Track and report on diversity and inclusion metrics. ◯ Regularly collect and analyse employee feedback on workplace respect and inclusivity. ◯ Use engagement surveys, turnover data, and feedback to monitor the effectiveness of policies and interventions. ◯ Monitor turnover rates, particularly in any hotspots identified through employee engagement data. ◯ Conduct regular reviews of the monitoring data to identify trends and areas for improvement. ◯ Assess the impact of respect and inclusion initiatives through data analytics. ◯ Ensure clear documentation of impacts on team dynamics, culture and the overall workplace environment. ◯ Ensure leaders have visibility of their data and results and can work to take action with their teams.

Product development and innovation	◯ Integrate inclusive design principles to ensure products meet the needs of diverse users. ◯ Form diverse teams to bring varied perspectives to product development. ◯ Gather feedback from a diverse user base to inform product improvements.
Product and service offering and delivery	◯ Ensure products and services are accessible and inclusive for all customer segments. ◯ Train customer service teams on respectful and inclusive interactions with customers. ◯ Create channels for customers to provide feedback on respect and inclusivity.
Information Technology / AI	◯ Develop and implement AI systems that are free from bias and promote inclusivity. ◯ Ensure IT platforms and policies support accessibility and inclusivity. ◯ Incorporate respect and inclusivity in cybersecurity practices to protect all users.
Marketing and communications	◯ Ensure marketing messages are inclusive and respectful of all audiences. ◯ Use diverse representation in marketing materials. ◯ Engage with diverse communities to ensure marketing strategies are inclusive.
Investments	◯ Include respect and inclusivity as part of environmental, social and governance (ESG) investment criteria. ◯ Invest in companies that demonstrate a commitment to respect and inclusivity.
Supplier and vendor management	◯ Develop procurement policies that prioritise suppliers committed to respect and inclusivity. ◯ Offer training to suppliers on respectful and inclusive practices. ◯ Ensure a diverse supplier base.
Infrastructure and equipment	◯ Ensure all facilities are accessible and inclusive for all employees and customers. ◯ Incorporate inclusive design principles in infrastructure projects. ◯ Conduct regular audits to ensure facilities meet inclusivity standards.
Space design	◯ Design workspaces that accommodate the needs of diverse employees. ◯ Create spaces that promote collaboration and respect among employees. ◯ Implement safety measures that consider the diverse needs of all employees.

6 Listen and Learn guide for leaders: facilitating meaningful discussions on everyday respect

Use this guide to:

- kickstart a Listen and Learn session about everyday disrespect and respect in your team, cascading it through the layers in your organisation structure

- introduce *FOCUSED on Everyday Respect* to help guide team members in how we bring everyday respect to life in the workplace

- introduce Supporting Upstanders Guide outlining steps team members can take to address disrespectful behaviour in the workplace.

Suggested timing/format:

- Allow around 60 minutes for the session and have the two guides mentioned above available for everyone.

- Dedicate time in lieu of a regular team meeting, as additional standalone meeting or part of a team planning day, providing ample time for thoughtful discussion and engagement.

Creating a safe place for discussions:

- Consider keeping the groups fairly small (10), or enabling small group discussion within the larger group, to create an environment where people are more likely to feel comfortable to share openly.

- Be alert to how power dynamics might impact the conversation. Ensure there is space for everyone to contribute if they would like to.

- Be clear that contributions to the discussion are entirely voluntary, and ensure people don't feel in any way pressured to participate or share their personal experiences.

- Create multiple and alternative avenues for people to share if they do not feel comfortable sharing in the discussion (e.g. with an anonymous online platform or one-on-one discussion).

- Ensure all participants agree to keep the discussions confidential. Participants may share with others key insights and themes learnt through the discussions but should not attribute any comments and contributions to anyone or share experiences others have shared.

- Be clear about how the information is going to be used and ensure participants know the insights will inform action to address any challenges they may experience.

Step	Guide
Kickstart the conversation *(3 mins)*	**Everyday respect at work:** • Over the years, we've made great progress on building diverse teams and striving to build a workplace culture that's gender equal and inclusive (*provide examples*). • We use words like 'respect' and 'inclusion' to describe organisational values, but what does that mean to us? Is my definition of a respectful workplace the same as yours? It's likely we'll each have a different interpretation because of our lived experience. • Today, we're going to talk and share about what everyday respect looks like at work for each of us so we can build a common understanding. Our experience is that people don't set out to be disrespectful – they are often unaware of how their words, actions and behaviours impact others. • At its core, everyday respect involves us treating each other with dignity, so that we can all experience our workplace as a safe and inclusive environment. By talking about it today, we hope to encourage greater understanding and a willingness to learn. **Why does everyday respect matter?** • Setting clear guidelines on what everyday respect is, and is not, is key to working together to create an environment in which we can all contribute and thrive. • Everyday respect prevents personal and professional harm, reduces conflicts and misunderstandings, keeps our workplace safe, creates a sense of belonging and cohesion, boosts our motivation and job satisfaction, and makes it easy for us all to do our jobs.
Involve the team – what are your thoughts about disrespect? *(20–30 mins)*	• In our organisation, there are times when not everyone is treated with respect. (*Leaders should insert examples of everyday disrespect that they are aware of.*) • I am keen to hear from you about what everyday disrespect looks like in our organisation, and its impact on you, your teams and our work. I also want to understand how disrespect might be experienced differently in our organisation depending on who you are. • I am keen to explore with you how effective our current systems and processes are for addressing everyday disrespect and what more we can do to promote respectful and inclusive environments.

Step	Guide
Involve the team – what are your thoughts about disrespect? *(continued)* *(20–30 mins)*	◯ I am mindful of power dynamics in the room and the need to create an environment where people feel safe to contribute. I understand that not everyone feels comfortable sharing in a group environment, so we are also providing an anonymous platform *[name the platform]* alongside and following our discussion for you to share your views and experiences freely, and also anything we might have missed.
	◯ I also want to ask everyone to respect the confidentiality of others. You can share with others key insights and themes you have learnt through the discussions today, but please do not attribute any comments and contributions to anyone or share experiences others share with you in this forum.
	◯ What does 'everyday disrespect' look like in our organisation? Are there common themes or repeated behaviours?
	◯ What examples have you seen? What was the response or follow-up? How did you feel about it?
	◯ What is the impact of everyday disrespect on you personally, on your team and our organisation? What impact does it have on our gender equality and inclusion goals?
	◯ How does it affect different groups in the workplace? How does it impact people differently based on gender? How might it impact people with diverse identities (e.g. First Nations people, culturally and racially marginalised people, LGBTIQ+ people, people of different ages, people who are neurodiverse or people with disability)?
	◯ Do people feel safe to call out disrespectful behaviour in the moment? If not, why? If so, how does this usually play out?
	◯ Have you observed colleagues calling out or addressing these behaviours in the moment? Has this been effective? What was the result or reaction?
	◯ How effective are our current systems and processes in addressing everyday disrespect? Is there anything we are currently doing or have done in the past (e.g. training) that you have seen make a positive impact?
	◯ Where can we improve? What are some immediate and long-term practical actions that can address disrespectful behaviour in our organisation? What can I do? What can everyone in the organisation do?
	◯ In what ways do you think we could better handle instances of disrespect when they arise? Do you have suggestions for improvements based on what you've observed or experienced?
	Thank people for their contributions before moving on.

Step	Guide
Elaborate on everyday disrespect *(3 mins)*	◯ Everyday disrespect in organisations shows up in various forms, often subtly, but it can have pervasive effects.
	◯ Examples include: casual homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, ageism, casual racism, and ableism.
	◯ Disrespect can lead to a lack of fairness, contributions going unrecognised, impolite or inconsiderate behaviours that uphold stereotypes, and exclusion from opportunities or discussions, creating a work environment that can feel unsafe or unwelcoming.
	◯ There's also often a heightened impact for those with intersecting experiences of marginalisation or exclusion (e.g. women with disability).
Involve the team – introduce and discuss *FOCUSED on Everyday Respect* *(10 mins)*	◯ I'm pleased to introduce *FOCUSED on Everyday Respect*, developed with our organisation's input by Champions of Change Coalition. It's a 'blueprint' for everyday respect and what it looks like in practice.
	◯ The acronym FOCUSED is a handy daily reminder of the behaviours we need to live and breathe to create a thriving work environment. *Work through the guide with your team and let them know how they can access a copy (e.g. via the intranet or HR).*
	◯ Ask: What is missing? What else could we do in our team to live and breathe an environment of everyday respect?
Involve the team – introduce and discuss *Supporting Upstanders* *(10 mins)*	◯ We all have a role to play in setting the standard for inclusive everyday respect in our workplace. This includes:
	• checking our own actions, behaviour and decisions to ensure we're not being intentionally or unintentionally disrespectful or exclusionary
	• calling out disrespectful behaviour when we see it, hear it and experience it
	• seeking support from others. *Work through the guide with your team and let them know how they can accesss a copy (e.g. via the intranet or HR).*
Wrap up: *(4 mins)*	◯ Reflect on the session outcomes.
	◯ Invite comments and any other ideas on practical steps the team can take collaboratively to promote respect and address any issues.
	◯ Encourage team members to support each other in creating a respectful environment.
	◯ If team members have direct reports, ask leaders to use this Listen and Learn guide to hold their own discussions about everyday respect.

7 Supporting upstanders: empowering employees to act on disrespectful behaviour

The standard we walk past is the standard we accept, so it's critical to understand how disrespect manifests in the workplace and address the behaviour when we see or hear it happen. Raising it in the moment, speaking to the person engaging in the behaviour later, and seeking support from a colleague or manager, including if the behaviour persists or is unlawful, are all ways we can foster more inclusive and safe working environments for all.

Here's what you can do if you see, hear or experience disrespectful behaviour.

Speak up in the moment or speak to the person later	If you're comfortable and feel safe, directly address the person engaging in disrespectful behaviour. 'I' statements can help to express how the behaviour affected you or others, aiming for a constructive conversation rather than a confrontation. For example: ● *"I just wanted to talk about what you said just now/earlier…" That sort of comment is unfair/judgemental/old fashioned…"* ● *"I think you meant it as a joke, but it sounded sexist/inappropriate/unhelpful…"* ● *"I feel/felt really uncomfortable by your comment just now/earlier…"*
Speak to the person impacted	If the behaviour is directed at a person or group of people, check in with the person(s) impacted and make sure they are okay. Let them know where they can get support or report the behaviour, and ask them how you can help, including if something like that happens again.
Seek support	If you don't feel comfortable or safe to address disrespectful behaviour in the moment, or if it persists, you can seek support from a supervisor or mentor who may be able to provide advice or intervene on your behalf.
Document it	If the person persists or repeats the behaviour, it may be helpful to keep a record of what has occurred. This could include for example *(customise for your organisation)*: ● date and time ● location ● who was involved, including witnesses ● description of the incident – keep it factual ● consequences – impacts and actions after the incident ● communication – any exchanges, verbal or written.
If it's serious – report it	If you think the disrespectful behaviour is serious and/or unlawful, encourage the affected person to report it or offer to report it on their behalf. If the affected person doesn't want to report it, you can still do so to ensure a safe environment for all, but the wishes of the person(s) affected should inform any action taken (see *Building Confidence and Trust in Workplaces Responses to Sexual Harassment*, which can apply to all forms of inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour in the workplace). You can report incidents through a number of channels including *(customise for your organisation)*: ● your supervisor/manager/team leader ● the HR department ● the employee assistance program hotline ● diversity and inclusion representatives ● an anonymous online report These channels provide support and advice, maintain confidentiality and ensure people can report issues without fear of retaliation.

8 Overcoming challenges and building support

Promoting everyday respect in the workplace can sometimes be met with resistance. It's not uncommon for people to respond with criticism or dismiss efforts as 'woke' or unnecessary, which can stem from differing perspectives and lived experiences, as well as fear of change or missing out.

Focus on shared values

Model the everyday respect you're advocating for by grounding the conversation in shared values that can help bridge differences and foster mutual understanding. Here are some strategies to deal with resistance.

- **Empathy and understanding:**
  - Take time to understand differing perspectives.
  - Encourage people to elaborate on their perspectives and concerns.

- **Respect diversity:**
  - Highlight shared values or goals that recognise and celebrate diversity in race, culture, gender, ability, sexuality and background.
  - Articulate and share the broader benefits of respect and inclusion for everyone, emphasising how diverse perspectives enhance the workplace.

- **Community:**
  - Show how everyday respect positively impacts the workplace and promotes solidarity with under-represented and marginalised groups.
  - Recognise that change takes time, and that listening and learning is essential to finding common ground.

- **Kindness in action:**
  - Encourage actions that stand against bullying, discrimination and injustice, and support initiatives that uplift and protect vulnerable populations.
  - Provide information in different formats for further learning and reflection, advocating for systemic changes to create a fairer society for all.

What you might hear	How you might respond
This is just more 'woke' rubbish. *This is PC gone mad. You can't say anything anymore.*	Respect and inclusion are organisational values, not trends. Our goal is creating a workplace where everyone feels safe, valued and included.
But it's just a joke. People shouldn't be so uptight. *Everyone's too easily offended nowadays.*	What seems harmless or funny to one person may be hurtful to others. Impact matters more than intent. Standards of respectful behaviour are evolving in the law, society, online and in workplaces. Seemingly minor events can have a significant impact on a person's wellbeing or sense of belonging. It is important to recognise and respect the feelings and experiences of others to create a positive and inclusive work environment for all.
But you're just taking it the wrong way. *I didn't mean anything bad by it.*	Consider the other person's perspective. Instead of defending oneself or justifying one's actions (e.g. "I was only joking") or dismissing their feelings (e.g. "You're overreacting!"), it is important to understand their experiences and why they felt hurt. Recognising exclusion can be challenging, especially if we haven't experienced it in the same way ourselves.
This is about optics, not real change.	Efforts to build everyday respect are about creating genuine change and a more inclusive workplace that benefits everyone. They're part of broader efforts to ensure equitable systems and policies.
It feels like we're being micromanaged.	Respect and inclusion are core values for most organisations these days. We are creating more specific guidelines as a baseline that will benefit all.
This is unnecessary; we've never had a problem before.	Issues may not be visible to some, but that doesn't mean it's not happening or that people are not impacted. Disrespect is often not noticed by those who are not directly impacted.
It feels like reverse discrimination.	Promoting equality and respect for all doesn't take away from anyone. It's about providing equal opportunities and a respectful environment for everyone.

9 Fostering constructive feedback: building a culture of mutual respect

Maintaining a respectful and inclusive workplace is vital for collaboration and wellbeing. Disrespectful behaviour, intentional or not, can harm individuals, team dynamics and workplace morale. Addressing such behavior sensitively and constructively is essential to prevent escalation and promote positive change.

By calling out disrespect with professionalism and empathy, we model respectful behaviour, foster awareness and encourage better communication. Upstanders play a critical role in calling out disrespectful behaviour and contribute to creating a speak-up culture.

This approach is not about blame but about understanding and improvement.

While supporting upstanders is critical, equipping those who receive feedback with tools to respond constructively is equally important. Acknowledging feedback, expressing gratitude and committing to change can de-escalate conflicts and build a culture of mutual respect. Combining sensitive feedback with constructive responses helps create a harmonious workplace where everyone feels valued.

This approach drives better outcomes for the organisation by fostering an environment of continuous improvement and respect.

Providing feedback	Responding to feedback
Hey, I noticed your comment earlier might have rubbed some people up the wrong way. Can we chat about how to phrase things better?	*Thanks for pointing that out. I'm really sorry if my comment came off wrong. I'll be more mindful from now on.*
That joke you made in the meeting made me a bit uncomfortable. Maybe we should steer clear of those kinds of topics at work?	*I appreciate you telling me. I didn't mean to offend anyone. I thought it was a joke. I'll avoid making those kinds of jokes again. They're clearly not funny.*
Your tone seemed a bit sharp during the discussion earlier. Let's try to keep things positive, okay?	*Sorry about that. I didn't realise my tone was sharp. Thanks for letting me know, I'll work on it.*

Providing feedback	Responding to feedback
That remark you made felt a bit off and could be hurtful. Let's try to keep it respectful.	*I'm sorry if what I said was hurtful. I didn't realise, but I will be more aware in the future.*
It seemed like you interrupted our colleague, and it might have come across as dismissive. Let's make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.	*I apologise for interrupting. I'll do better at letting everyone have their say.*
Some of your comments lately might be seen as unprofessional. Can we talk about how to improve our communication?	*Thanks for the heads-up. I'll make sure to keep my comments professional and respectful.*
Your feedback is important, but the way it was delivered felt a bit too blunt. Let's work on a better way to share our thoughts.	*I see what you mean about my feedback being blunt. I appreciate the honesty and will work on my delivery.*
A few of your recent comments might have come off as insensitive. Can we chat about how to be more considerate?	*I didn't mean to be insensitive. Thanks for the conversation. I'll be more considerate in the future.*
Your behaviour in the meeting felt a bit confrontational. Let's try to be more collaborative.	*I'm sorry for coming off as confrontational. I'll focus on being more collaborative and positive.*
It seems like your actions might have been misunderstood. Let's clear things up and make sure we stay respectful.	*Thanks for clarifying. I didn't mean for my actions to be misunderstood, and I'll make sure to keep things respectful.*

10 Establishing a respectful environment in an online world

The adoption of flexible ways of working has led to the widespread use of various digital workplace communication platforms and channels. While embracing digital tools such as enterprise social networks can lead to a more connected, collaborative and productive workforce, it has also created new and different opportunities for misunderstanding and everyday disrespect.

Some of the ways that disrespect can manifest through digital communication channels include the following.

Exclusion

Distributed ways of working may increase the potential for 'in-groups' and 'out-groups' to form, based on co-location. People who work alongside each other physically may develop stronger relationships, due to the increased opportunity for informal communication and networking opportunities. Equally, in hybrid forums, where people attend both in person and virtually, those joining online may be inadvertently excluded from conversations or decision-making processes.

Misinterpretation

In the absence of non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, body language and tone of voice, messages may be easily misinterpreted.

Informality

The informality of digital workplace communication, such as casual language, lack of tone or the use of emojis, may lead to perceptions of unprofessionalism or even disrespect.

Anonymity

Some individuals may feel emboldened to engage in disrespectful behaviour online due to its perceived anonymity. This could manifest as cyberbullying, harassment or negative comments that would be less likely in face-to-face interactions.

Digital overload

The influx of emails, messages and notifications from digital workplace communication channels may lead to communication fatigue. In this environment, people may struggle to negotiate, set and respectfully communicate appropriate boundaries to support their wellbeing.

To mitigate the risk of disrespect via digital communication channels in the workplace, organisations should take proactive steps to promote a respectful and professional online environment. Here are some actions you can take.

Establish clear communication policies

Develop and apply guidelines for the appropriate use of digital workplace technologies such as enterprise social networks. These guidelines should align with an organisation's values, culture and existing policies regarding appropriate and respectful conduct, the appropriate use of systems, and preventing discrimination, bullying and harassment in the workplace.

Implement a social media policy

Create a clear policy on social media use to guide employees' behaviour on external social media channels. This should include guidelines on how to represent the organisation online, define what is and isn't appropriate to share online, what constitutes respectful communication, and how to stay safe when using social media.

Provide training on digital etiquette

Offer training sessions that educate employees on the nuances of digital workplace communication, including how to maintain professionalism and avoid misunderstandings when using these channels.

Encourage empathy and understanding

Foster a culture of empathy where team members are encouraged to consider the perspectives and feelings of others before communicating. This can be reinforced through regular discussions, workshops or team meetings focused on building a respectful workplace.

Support healthy boundaries and wellbeing

Provide tools and guidelines to help employees use digital workplace technologies in ways that are productive and supportive of their wellbeing. This might include negotiating and setting expectations for response times, promoting digital detox periods, and encouraging the use of status indicators to signal availability.

Address disrespect promptly

Ensure that the process for reporting disrespect through digital workplace communication channels aligns with existing policies for addressing disrespect. This consistency will help swiftly address issues, prevent escalation and reinforce a respectful workplace environment.

11 Interactions with clients, customers and suppliers

Sometimes our people's experiences of everyday disrespect occur in their interactions with clients, customers and suppliers. To tackle this:

- **start by establishing clear policies** so your team knows they have the right to refuse service to disrespectful stakeholders. This empowers them and sets a standard for acceptable behaviour

- **ensure stakeholders are aware** that there are expectations for how they will treat your team

- **provide comprehensive training on conflict resolution** and de-escalation techniques. This will give your people the skills to handle difficult situations calmly and effectively.

- **create a robust support system** to ensure your people can report incidents of abuse without fear of repercussions. Take these reports seriously and act on them promptly

- **publicly recognise and reward employees** who exemplify inclusivity and respect in their interactions with customers, stakeholders and colleagues. This reinforces positive behaviour and builds a supportive environment.

Things to consider

Your organisational context:

Different workplace environments impact the way everyday disrespect and everyday respect manifest.

For example: online versus in-person environments; office environments versus work on onsite or in the field.

Tailor your messaging and approach to suit the context/environment in which you operate.

Case studies

Creating a respectful workplace culture

Commonwealth Bank

Issue addressed

➡ In building a brighter future for all, CBA wants everyone at CBA to feel respected, safe and included. This is reflected in the CommBank values of care, courage and commitment. At CBA, bringing out the best in each other means embracing differences and celebrating the things people have in common to deliver better outcomes for employees, customers and communities.

➡ In 2022, CBA introduced Respect Lives Here, an initiative to foster respect, safety and inclusion at work. Respect Lives Here is a multifaceted program of work encompassing education, leadership, reporting, measurement and transparency to prevent and respond to inappropriate behaviour at work.

➡ The key objective of Respect Lives Here is for all CBA employees to understand standards of respectful behaviour in the workplace, to be able to identify and appreciate the impact of disrespectful behaviour on others, and to become active bystanders to prevent further disrespectful behaviour.

Actions taken

➡ CBA partnered with the University of New South Wales (UNSW) to develop a Respect Lives Here employee survey to measure people's experiences of respectful and disrespectful behaviour, the prevalence of these behaviours, and people's willingness to act when the behaviours are experienced or witnessed.

➡ The survey aimed to provide a benchmark for assessing prevention practices and provided CBA with insights on areas to focus the Respect Lives Here response. CBA engaged UNSW to undertake the primary analysis of the data and to advise on actions. The findings were shared widely with the CBA Group Board, executives and all employees. The survey insights informed the design of Respect Lives Here.

➡ CBA used evidence-based studies by Our Watch, Griffith University and UNSW to design self-paced learning, based on behavioural change concepts. The organisation also captured the lived experiences of employees on video and used short clips to promote reflection and conversation, and developed a podcast with Our Watch on everyday sexism and inclusive language.

➡ Key concepts are covered in two parts:
- **Module 1 Respect Lives Here: Why it Matters** explains why respect is important at work, describes how it is reflected in behaviours and experiences, and the impact it has on CBA's people.
- **Module 2 Respect Lives Here: Making a Difference** builds on key concepts introduced in Module 1 and examines the important role of active bystanders at work. It provides four strategies to handle situations that don't look, sound or feel right.
  - **The rollout of the learning began with leaders** to set the tone from the top and influence standards of behaviour in the workplace.
  - **Leader experience, including train the trainer:** Prior to the organisation wide rollout, key concepts and videos were presented to senior leadership teams to provide a collective experience of watching and hearing the lived experiences of employees who were excluded or disrespected at work.

The conversation and reflection that followed created considerable support for the concepts to be shared with all employees.

- As leaders set the standards of respectful behaviour in their teams, a train-the-trainer approach was used for rollout, providing leaders with the videos and facilitator notes to guide conversations with their teams. Leaders were also supported by HR Business Partners or members of CBA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion council members to facilitate their team sessions.

- **Group rollout of Respect Lives Here foundations:** Feedback from the facilitated sessions was incorporated into the design of the two self-paced learning modules, supplemented by short leader-led team discussions. The modules were customised for cultural contexts outside of Australia and rolled out across the Group worldwide.

Outcomes, impact or early indicators of success

➡ As at February 2024, nearly 30,000 employees have experienced Respect Lives Here. After completing the learning, participants reported feeling confident in recognising microaggressions (85%) and understanding the impact of microaggressions at work (89%). They also reported that the learning increased their confidence and knowledge of how to take action (represented by a 10% increase in pre/post self-rating).

➡ Although it is two years since CBA began Respect Lives Here, many participants across CBA globally have said they still remember the videos that drove the learning and discussion. The raw, unscripted stories from employees who experienced microaggressions in the workplace made many reflect on their behaviour and be more deliberate and aware of how their actions may impact others who are different to themselves.

➡ Respect Lives Here is more than learning. CBA has embedded the principles of respect, safety and inclusion into leadership development programs, graduate onboarding and in the way CBA approaches employee listening. Respect Lives Here aligns the strategies of all CBA's employee resource networks and underpins the diversity, equity and inclusion narrative.

Adaptions made as a result

➡ CBA has begun to roll out the third online learning module, Respect Lives Here: Preventing Everyday Sexism. This module reinforces previous content about micro-affirmations, microaggressions and active bystander responses in the context of everyday sexism and gender stereotypes. This module includes commentary from industry experts on how gendered norms, mindsets and behaviours, if left unchecked in the workplace, may lead to more serious behaviour such as discrimination and sexual harassment. This learning supports CBA's longstanding commitment to prevent and respond to inappropriate behaviour at work and forms part of the organisation's response to the newly introduced positive duty to prevent sexual and sex-based harassment.

➡ Drawing on the insights of the Respect Lives Here survey, CBA knows that people who experience microaggressions are more likely to use informal networks such as peers for support than to use formal channels such as hotlines. To encourage more people to seek support when they experience microaggressions and to normalise reporting of disrespectful behaviours, CBA will pilot a trained Respect Lives Here active bystander network. CBA will track employee uptake of the network, debrief trained active bystanders, and use their experiences to continuously improve the organisation's approach to prevention of and response to inappropriate behaviour at work.

# Leading change with the Purple Banner initiative

RioTinto

Issue addressed

➡ Committed to changing the culture to ensure Rio Tinto is a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace for everyone, Rio Tinto launched the Everyday Respect taskforce in March 2021. Rio Tinto partnered with trusted experts Elizabeth Broderick & Co (EB&Co) to conduct an independent review – to help better understand, prevent and respond to harmful behaviours at work, with a focus on bullying, sexual harassment and racism.

➡ In February 2022, Rio Tinto publicly released in full the *Building Everyday Respect* report and its commitment to implementing the 26 recommendations, centred on leadership and behavioural change, safe and inclusive facilities and a caring response.

➡ In June 2022, Rio Tinto launched its Purple Banner initiative as part of this commitment to changing culture and creating a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace.

➡ Purple Banners are a strategic tool used to increase learning about disrespectful and other harmful behaviours occurring within the business. Sharing selected incidents can highlight a wide range of social, organisational and workplace factors that must be addressed to prevent harm.

➡ The intent and objectives of the initiative are to:

• increase the transparency of disrespect and other harmful behaviours that occur across the business

• open up discussions within teams about behaviours and important information about incidents that bring to light different learning

• help prevent disrespectful behaviours from continuing in the future.

Actions taken

➡ A Purple Banner guidance note was created for People/Human Resources Leaders to support them to use Purple Banners including when and how to choose incidents to apply a Purple Banner.

➡ Purple Banners are not mandatory, and a strategic approach to what is shared is taken to avoid further normalising unwanted behaviours. This includes considerations of whether sharing the incident could:

• increase awareness of different types of harm that exist, such as bullying, sexual harassment and racism, to name a few

• increase understanding of caring and human-centred responses to harmful behaviours.

Express permission is obtained from an impacted team member to share their story (even when de-identified).

There is a guidance and approval process in place to ensure Purple Banners balance people-centricity, confidentiality and data privacy with transparency, so Rio Tinto does not cause further trauma to those involved or trigger trauma or harm in others.
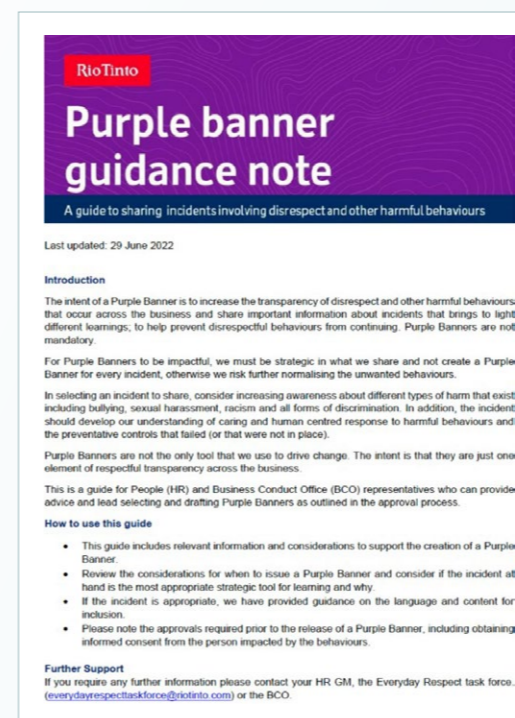
Outcomes, impact or early indicators of success

➡ Purple Banners have been used and deployed across the business. They have been introduced where there is a baseline level of understanding in regards to psychological safety, together with active sponsorship of senior/executive leaders. The Everyday Respect training covering psychological safety the *Bystander to Upstander* report have provided a foundation for the use and discussion of Purple Banners.

➡ In terms of application, Purple Banners are typically shared and discussed using regular work cadences (e.g. at start-up or team meetings) to facilitate meaningful team discussion and lessons.

➡ Feedback from the businesses using these Purple Banners has been positive. They encourage timely and continued conversation on respectful behaviours, foster psychological safety within teams and cover insights and lessons that have a positive influence on behaviour.

➡ They also provide an opportunity to demonstrate meaningful action being taken in response to disrespect and harmful behaviours, that in turn supports/encourages upstander behaviour.

Key insights and lessons learnt

➡ Leveraging similar messaging used for safety incidents (Safety Banners) meant people were familiar with its format and seriousness.

➡ There is a need to be strategic in what is shared and not create a Purple Banner for every incident, otherwise there is a risk of further normalising the unwanted behaviours.

➡ In selecting an incident to share, people leaders are advised to consider increasing awareness about different types of harm that exist – including bullying, sexual harassment, racism and all forms of discrimination – and opportunities to develop understanding of caring and human-centred responses to harmful behaviours and to improve preventative controls.

➡ The business context and cultural nuances should be considered in the introduction and use of Purple Banners.

Adaptions made as a result

➡ This approach has helped Rio Tinto focus on the person using harmful behaviours and the impacts it has on the impacted person and organisation more broadly.

➡ Aligning the Purple Banner initiative to the embedded safety approach has been effective to strengthen the direct link of respect to a safe and respectful workplace.

Embedding respect in everyday operations

VIVA
EnergyAustralia

Issue addressed

➲ Viva Energy believes everyone is entitled to feel safe, respected and included, and this means having a workplace that proactively addresses sexual harassment. The Respect at Viva program has been introduced to ensure all team members have a consistent understanding of what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, and have clear and effective ways to report and respond to sexism, gender-based harassment and sexual harassment.

➲ Viva is striving to increase female representation, particularly in operational, shift-based environments where the majority of roles have traditionally been held by men. To ensure it has an inclusive culture for all team members, Viva wanted to create psychologically safe and inclusive operational environments that support diversity and where team members can raise inappropriate behaviours if they experience or witness them.

➲ While Viva's overall company score for the employee survey question 'in my organisation gender-based harassment and sexual harassment are not tolerated' is high, there have been comments suggesting that everyday sexism exists in some parts of the organisation. The culture of intervening when these types of inappropriate comments occur needed to be developed.

➲ Respect at Viva was developed with the following objectives:

• Provide all employees with a comprehensive understanding of what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate workplace behaviour, including harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying, the legislative framework, recent legislative changes and employee obligations.

• Align the 'why' to Viva's values, inclusive culture and safety, and ensure a positive experience at work.

• Inspire the audience to think about their own values, beliefs and approach, what gets in the way of the right behaviour, and what good looks like.

• Reinforce expectations of bystanders and avenues available for reporting and support.

• Ensure leaders understand their role in modelling appropriate behaviour and intervening where necessary.

Say it again
Because we all see things differently
Were your words or actions received positively and as you intended? If in doubt, ask.
VIVA EnergyAustralia

Say it again
Because we want you to speak up
We all have the power to help each other learn and improve.
VIVA EnergyAustralia

Say it again
Because it helps keep us safe
Observe inappropriate behaviour? Have the courage to intervene and character to accept.
VIVA EnergyAustralia

Actions taken

➲ After learning from Komatsu's program, a practical tool, Say It Again, was introduced at Viva's Geelong Refinery as part of the broader Respect at Viva program:

• to raise awareness of everyday sexism

• provide team members with a simple phrase they could use in the moment if they felt uncomfortable about something that was said

• educate team members more generally on how to intervene and where to go for support.

➲ Sessions were held for intact Refinery operational shift teams and Say It Again was introduced as a tool for team members to use if they experienced or heard sexist or inappropriate comments.

➲ By providing a phrase known to all team members, Viva employees are more easily able to raise concerns in the moment, and express in a non-threatening way that they are feeling uncomfortable. It also provides an opportunity for team members to reflect on what they said if they are asked by a colleague to 'say it again'.

➲ It is important to note that while inappropriate comments and behaviours are termed 'everyday sexism', Viva has taken the opportunity as part of the Say It Again initiative to point out that casual or everyday sexism is really just sexism and can be a precursor to other more serious behaviours.

➲ Posters were developed to support the campaign.

Say it again

Because we owe it to each other

Never walk past inappropriate behaviour.
Step up and say something.

VIVA
Energy Australia

Say it again

Because what you say matters

We all have a voice. Speak up and share your ideas.
They will be heard.

VIVA
Energy Australia

Outcomes, impact or early indicators of success

- So far, 75% of Viva Energy employees have attended a face-to-face session and the program feedback has been consistently positive.

- Anecdotal evidence suggests the Respect at Viva program and the Say It Again concept have created increased awareness of what is acceptable workplace behaviour, the importance of intervening when inappropriate comments arise, and a greater understanding of the importance of inclusion more generally.

- During the past three years, the overall engagement score for Viva's Your Voice employee survey has increased for Viva Energy overall and also for the Geelong Refinery, where the culture is noticeably different – there is a greater understanding of what constitutes respectful behaviour and the environment is more collaborative, inclusive and tolerant.

Key insights and lessons learnt

- During the Respect at Viva program, a number of powerful, personal examples were shared, which created meaningful discussion and building of trust.

- Running sessions in intact shift teams was helpful, given the amount of time these teams spend working together. This not only allowed team members to provide support for one another but also encouraged conversations about being mindful of individual differences, being aware of maintaining boundaries between work and home life, and ensuring new members to the team feel included.

- Beginning the Respect at Viva program with an activity linking personal values to the Viva Energy diversity pillars (Pride, Gender, First Nations, Family, Abilities, Culture) provided a foundation for conversations about the importance of respecting individual differences.

Adaptions made as a result

- A Respect at Viva hotline has been introduced for employees as an additional, external avenue to confidentially report concerns about inappropriate behaviours.

- A standalone 'Prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace' policy has been developed, outlining responsibilities of team members and managers, how reported cases will be managed, and support available.

- While the initial intention of Say It Again was to focus on sexist comments, it came to light that the approach is useful for any type of inappropriate comments, and it was subsequently expanded to other areas of diversity such as race and religious background.

- Based on feedback from the Respect at Viva program, follow-up education is being developed, focusing on the role of bystanders in creating a safe and inclusive environment and ensuring leaders understand the important role they play in responding appropriately and seeking support if a report is made directly to them.

- The refinery onsite induction has been enhanced to ensure all team members, including contractors, are aware of inappropriate comments and behaviours, and to make clear that they won't be tolerated.

- A forum has been held with our key contractors at our Refinery to share learnings and identify ways to work together to ensure the site is respectful and inclusive for everyone.

Building an inclusive environment

KOMATSU

Issue addressed

➲ In 2019, Komatsu Australia introduced an initiative called Say Again?, a mechanism designed to call out everyday sexism, and any other inappropriate comments, without being confrontational.

➲ By encouraging everyone across the business to have peer-to-peer conversations and remark 'Say again?' when they heard something sexist or inappropriate, it gave the person who made the comment the chance to think about what they had said and to rephrase it.

➲ 'Say again?' became part of the vernacular at Komatsu and was a fantastic first step in educating Komatsu's people about the impact their words can have on others.

➲ In 2023, Komatsu planned to review the Say Again? program, in line with Respect@Work legislation, and assess its impact. This plan was accelerated by a high-profile, serious incident of sexual harassment that occurred in the business. From this incident, Komatsu created a face-to-face workshop, led by senior leaders with the support of HR, called Respect at Komatsu.

The intent of the workshop was to set expectations and seek commitment from teams on what a safe and inclusive environment at Komatsu looks like, in compliance with relevant legislation. Komatsu also started the journey towards transparency by sharing details of the sexual harassment incident.

While the reaction from the business was shock and disbelief that the incident had occurred, employees appreciated that the organisation was sharing the details and welcomed the transparency.

➲ During one workshop activity, Komatsu also highlighted nine examples of disrespectful comments made and inappropriate behaviours that had occurred across the business. Respect at Komatsu introduced the concept of Komatsu Zones to the business, to help people understand the seriousness of incidents and educate them about early intervention.

If intervention occurs early, when an issue is in the grey zone, the issue is unlikely to progress to the red zone. During the workshops, the organisation had an open discussion with people across the business about the steps that could have been taken to prevent the sexual harassment incident from occurring, if an intervention had taken place when it was in the grey zone.

➲ Komatsu also used the workshops as an opportunity to seek feedback on Say Again? and its effectiveness.

Actions taken

➲ Virtual people leader briefing sessions were held to share workshop content and seek alignment on the approach across the business.

➲ Face-to-face workshops were led by senior leaders (general managers and direct reports) and supported by HR.

➲ Collateral including posters was developed to support the campaign.

Komatsu Zones

GO — PROCEED WITH CAUTION — STOP

- A safe and inclusive environment
- Everyone is being treated with respect
- Friendly banter and workplace interactions
- Free from legal risk or exposure

- Employees feeling uncomfortable or having differences of perspective
- Banter and workplace interactions are going too far or offending
- Requests to stop are being ignored and behaviours are continuing
- Tension is increasing and action is required

- Fear or anxiety at work
- Lack of consideration for others
- Disrespectful and harmful comments
- Legal exposure for discrimination, bullying, harassment, etc

Respect at work

GO — PROCEED WITH CAUTION — STOP

Our commitments as a team

Campbellfield

Think before you speak
Speak up if you see something
Respect each other
Be mindful of others
Think of the impact
Acknowledge others opinions
Keep banter in the green zone
Treat everyone equally
Treat people the way you want to be treated
Be kind
Listen to each other

KOMATSU
Creating value **together**

Respect at Work Workshop

Activity – Scenarios (15mins)

Group sizes will depend on the number of attendees. Ideally each group will work through 2 of the 8 scenarios. Each scenario and the instructions are on their own page below so that they can be printed and handed out. Alternatively, you can unhide the scenarios slide within the PowerPoint presentation.

Break into groups and answer the below questions:

- How would this make you feel?
- What zone do you think it fits in?
- How would you address this?

Scenarios:

1. A fellow employee makes a comment that "you better lay off the chips, you are getting a bit chunky".
2. You are walking past a fellow team member, and they slap you on the bottom and say "nice pants".
3. You were in an intimate relationship with a colleague and the relationship has now ended. You are trying to keep things professional given you work together, but the other person wants to rekindle the relationship. They are constantly asking for a second chance and "accidentally" running into you in the office all the time.
4. You overhear a manager making disrespectful comments to the wider team about you.
5. You're out for drinks with colleagues and you order a wine. You hear a colleague say "Wine? Are you gay?".
6. You turn up to work in a pink shirt and your colleague says, "Showing your girly side today".
7. A colleague asks "would you like anything for lunch? I'm going to that Chinese-y place".
8. A colleague is continually making misogynist and offensive remarks about women. He's explained that he hates his mother and thinks all women are like her.

CASE STUDY
Building an inclusive
environment

CASE STUDY
Building an inclusive
environment

Outcomes, impact or early indicators of success

- The vast majority of Komatsu employees have attended a face-to-face workshop or have completed an online make-up session if they were unable to attend in person. Around 2,500 Komatsu employees across 30 locations have completed the Respect at Komatsu workshop. The workshop has also been adapted for New Zealand and New Caledonian legislation (and translated into French) and rolled out in these locations.

- Komatsu committed to a process of transparency in order for everyone at the organisation to learn from mistakes together. Since the rollout of the Respect at Komatsu workshops, Komatsu has issued monthly Respect at Komatsu Incident Shares via email, outlining details of incidents related to respect.

  Each incident is categorised into one of the Komatsu Zones and details are shared of the actions taken to ensure employees, contractors and customers are treated with respect at work. The aim of Incident Shares is to provide transparency on the type of incidents that occur in the business and support open discussions within teams. The intent is to continue to learn from experiences and become more aware of the impact of the comments and behaviours on others so that everyone can work together to create a safer and more inclusive environment at Komatsu.

- Thirty teams made and shared their commitments at their respective locations in poster format.

- Komatsu experienced a spike in reports of disrespect or inappropriate behaviours shortly after workshops were completed, suggesting there was increased understanding of what constitutes inappropriate behaviour and an increased level of trust in the organisation to create a safe and inclusive environment for its people.

- Compared to the 12 months before the rollout of Respect at Komatsu, Komatsu has experienced a significant reduction (a 45% drop) in whistleblower calls. Komatsu believes this is because people feel more comfortable in raising concerns with their people leader or HR.

Key insights and lessons learnt

- Transparency and Komatsu's commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment were well received. Employees have appreciated the honesty and approach to shared learning.

- A small number of Komatsu people leaders did not display the right behaviours during workshops. For example, saying that they would not be offended by particular comments made during the activity. Komatsu has worked with these leaders to help them understand their role and the potential impact of their words and actions.

- Komatsu received feedback from some regions that the examples in the activities were not relevant.

- While participants agreed with the overall intent of the Say Again? program, some shared that it was no longer effective. Say Again? gave people a mechanism to call out inappropriate comments in a non-confrontational way and many people felt comfortable using it to do so, but Komatsu heard that the phrase had become a bit of a running joke, which took away from its effectiveness. They also learnt that for some people, including apprentices, it is difficult to call out offensive comments directly, and more training was required to support people in having the conversation and knowing how to escalate further if required. Generally, the sentiment has been that the campaign was useful, but the organisation is ready for the next iteration.

- Komatsu Zones became part of the vernacular following the workshops (e.g. people would say, "That's in the grey zone"). Komatsu received feedback that it was less confrontational than 'Say again?', because it focused on the words or actions, rather than the person responsible.

Adaptions made as a result

- Leadership teams at each location have a quick briefing before workshops to ensure everyone is on the same page and there are no comments from people leaders that take away from the intent of the workshop.

- Some regions adapted the examples within the activity to localise the content.

- Komatsu has kept Say Again? and Komatsu Zones as two tools in the toolkit to empower people to call out inappropriate and disrespectful behaviour. Say Again? used to be the headline for changing behaviours. Say Again? now falls under the Respect at Komatsu program as an optional tool to call out inappropriate behaviour.

- In addition to the face-to-face workshop, under Respect at Komatsu, the organisation has:
  - updated and renamed the policy – Respect at Komatsu policy
  - created an eLearning module to be completed biannually, which is also assigned to new starters for completion within one month of commencement with Komatsu
  - included Respect at Komatsu content in face-to-face onboarding programs
  - initiated the Respect at Komatsu Incident Shares to continue on the transparency journey.

Fostering inclusivity in meetings and teams

Issue addressed

- In 2017, CSIRO included a range of diversity and inclusion questions in its annual staff survey, which was completed by 3,693 people (a 74% response rate).

- For two of the questions relating to inclusion, the results were statistically lower than the comparison benchmark for Australian organisations:

  - the extent to which senior leaders championed diversity and inclusion (68% favourable response; 11% lower than the Australian benchmark)

  - the extent to which immediate managers included people who were not like them (73% favourable response; 7% lower than the Australian benchmark).

- While the overall summary score for the full suite of diversity and inclusion questions was above the comparison benchmark for Australian organisations (66% for CSIRO, 64% for the Australian benchmark), people who identified as being LGBTIQ+, gender diverse people, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, and people with disability identified different experiences, lower than the whole-of-population results.

Actions taken

- To address this inequity in experience, CSIRO developed and implemented a number of practical tools to support inclusion, including:

  - a guide on how to run and participate in inclusive meetings, which has been downloaded more than 1,910 times and is visible in meeting rooms across CSIRO

  - a guide on how to lead and work in diverse teams, which has been accessed more than 500 times.

Outcomes, impact or early indicators of success

- Results of a follow-up pulse survey undertaken in 2023 indicated the following changes when comparing key groups to the overall organisation results for the two relevant inclusion questions:

  - People who are gender diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were no longer scoring the organisation lower.

  - The LGBTIQ+ community were scoring the organisation higher.

  - People with disability were still scoring the organisation lower; however, the gap had significantly closed.

Key insights and lessons learnt

- Overall, the efforts have resulted in progress in achieving an inclusive workplace with structure and systems in place to support continued development across the organisation.

- Consistent and focused efforts are required to ensure inclusion is experienced by all across the workplace.

Embedding
everyday respect

QBE

Issue addressed

➲ QBE's purpose is to enable a more resilient future, with one of its key priorities being to continue building a high-performance culture that cares for its people and customers.

➲ At the heart of caring for its people is ensuring everyone feels respected, has a sense of belonging, and feels safe to speak up. In 2024, QBE took an innovative approach to understand the personal toll and impact when individuals don't feel respected or have their sense of belonging undermined, leading to the introduction of the Respect@QBE initiative.

➲ Through the lived experiences of five QBE employees, QBE placed a spotlight on what everyday disrespect looks and feels like to build awareness and empathy, and, in turn, inspire a proactive bystander approach. The aim was to identify and acknowledge everyday disrespect by checking in on those impacted, build greater confidence to speak up, challenge everyday disrespect, and prevent future instances of disrespectful behaviour.

Actions taken

➲ QBE has upheld a sustained commitment to preventing and responding to inappropriate behaviour at work, with its *Respect at Work Roadmap* addressing the newly introduced positive duty to prevent sexual and sex-based harassment.

➲ While the starting position was to specifically address the everyday disrespect that underpins sexual harassment, QBE recognised the opportunity to broaden this remit. In addition to considering ways to proactively address everyday experiences of disrespect, the focus included 'everyday interactions' that can positively or negatively impact team connections, productivity and wellbeing – commonly known as micro-affirmations or microaggressions.

➲ QBE aimed to take proactive preventative measures to address everyday disrespect and, in turn, prevent issues from unnecessarily escalating to more serious instances of inappropriate workplace behaviour.

➲ To optimise messaging cut through, QBE undertook a storytelling approach by creating videos representing diverse experiences of everyday disrespect. The intent was to stand in another's shoes to understand how seemingly trivial instances can accumulate over time to undermine self-confidence, team cohesion, productivity and belonging.

➲ In the five videos created, unique examples of everyday disrespect were shared, detailing how it made the individuals feel, what people may not realise about these experiences, and suggested actions to collectively embed a workplace culture that is safe and respectful.

➲ To bring the content to life, QBE partnered with Workplace Respect to roll out Respect@QBE employee engagement sessions, with 26 sessions delivered to close to 500 attendees to date.

Outcomes, impact, or early indicators of success

➲ Since launching Respect@QBE the following outcomes have been observed:
- an acknowledgment that everyday disrespect is often normalised, even for those who experience it
- evidence of discussions about building resilience to inappropriate behaviours, rather than recognising them as not 'right' in the first place
- fostering a safe and judgement-free forum was key to sharing both lived experiences and instances where people now understand the impact they have had on others
- a strong sense of community, empathy and collective action to:
  - check in where everyday disrespect is overheard or observed. One QBE colleague shared, 'just acknowledging what you saw or overheard means we are not alone.'
  - be mindful of the impact we can have on each other
  - support colleagues to understand their impact on others
  - be open to feedback to ensure a preventative proactive approach.

Adaptations made as a result

➲ QBE has a strong focus and commitment to Safety to Speak Up.

➲ As a follow-up to Respect@QBE, a Call it Out safety module has been created and will be added as pre-work.

➲ Knowing that a barrier to speaking up is not knowing what to say, a 2024 'Shared Language' campaign will provide shared QBE language or phrases that can be collectively used to safely alert people or call out inappropriate comments and behaviour.

CASE STUDY
Ensuring everyday respect
in an online environment

Ensuring everyday respect in an online environment

Issue addressed

➲ Telstra has proudly been at the forefront of technology for over 100 years. As digital technologies grow, Telstra continues leading the way with networks, tech and experiences, focusing on building a connected future so everybody can thrive.

➲ One of the digital technologies Telstra uses to facilitate a connected future internally is the enterprise social network Viva Engage.

➲ With the most recent version of the Viva Engage guidelines being from 2019, it was noticed that the guidelines were not as effective as they could have been in application, and processes in reporting content were unclear. Telstra needed to reassess the guidelines to make sure they remained current and could continue to keep the platform a safe, inclusive and engaging space for all employees.

Actions taken

➲ To support respect through Viva Engage, Telstra has outlined clear principles to support a safe space for everyone at Telstra to share what they're working on, stay informed and connect with their colleagues.

Viva Engage principles

We want Viva Engage to be a safe space for everyone at Telstra to share what they're working on, stay informed and connect with their colleagues. Help us foster this community by respecting each other and following our Social Media Policy.

You are responsible for what you post on Viva Engage. Before you post or comment, consider how it may be read by others. Here's a handy checklist:

- Is what I am saying respectful to others? While it's okay to disagree, this must be done respectfully. If you're not sure, consider getting one of your peers to review before posting. Another consideration is – would I say this verbally to someone in the office, face to face?
- Does this have the potential to offend someone? If so, edit before posting.
- Is my message better placed in an alternative forum? Viva Engage is for community discussion. If you have a query relating to a specific team or individual, including yourself, consider if this is the most suitable place for it.

For guidance on how to best use inclusive language while interacting on Viva Engage, refer to our Inclusive Language Resource.

Posts or comments that could be considered defamatory, discriminatory, hateful, harassing, threatening, obscene, disrespectful, unhelpful to the wider discussion they're a part of, or breach any of the relevant policies listed below, will be removed by the Viva Engage team and possibly result in disciplinary action.

Just like any social media channel, you're responsible for what you post on Viva Engage. How you show up on Viva Engage is guided by these guidelines, as well as Telstra's:

- Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Telstra Code of Conduct
- Use of Systems, Services and Software Policy
- Information management
- Privacy Policy
- Structural Separation Undertaking
- Intellectual Property Policy.

Importantly, the use of Viva Engage is also guided by Telstra's Social Media Policy, including, but not limited to, the 3Rs below.

Respect

- Be respectful to others when posting. While it's fine to disagree, be respectful of those you're responding to.
- Never post anything that could be considered defamatory, discriminatory, hateful, harassing, threatening or obscene to another person or entity. Doing so could result in your post being removed and possible disciplinary action.
- Think before you post, and if in doubt, talk it out with your peer or 1-up. Don't post on the platform until you've considered different perspectives, and, what your words could mean to someone else.
- Communities and groups exist to create a sense of belonging, not to diminish or attack marginalised or vulnerable groups of people. Posts that incite violence or promote hate based on identity or vulnerability will be removed.
- If you're still unsure, check our Inclusive Language Resource.

Responsibility

- It's up to all of us to ensure the information we share doesn't pose a risk to the health and safety of others, as well as our community more generally. Misinformation can cause harm to your peers.
- Contributing to discussions on Viva Engage should be approached with responsibility. Content or comments that could be perceived as unhelpful or negatively disruptive to the current conversation thread or theme may be removed.
- Make sure your posts don't reveal any confidential data, including customer information. We take privacy seriously, so keep people's personal details off Viva Engage.
- Everything in Viva Engage stays in Viva Engage! (No public posts or Tweets, and so on).

Representation

- Be clear about who you are, where you're from and what you do. While this is more relevant to our external social media channels, the same applies on our internal channels.
- Be aware of the policies that apply to anything you post on our channels, which are listed above.

⊙ Telstra employees are also provided clear guidance on how to report disrespect in the online environment in two simple steps:

How to report content on Viva Engage

How we show up on Viva Engage is guided by our usage guidelines, which include the Social Media Policy, Discrimination, Bullying & Harassment Policy, and Code of Conduct.

If you see something that you feel goes against our guidelines, help us by taking one of the following actions:

1. If you feel comfortable, contact the person on Viva Engage. People often do not realise the impact of their post or comment on others and are often happy to remove or edit it once they do. If the person is new to Viva Engage or Telstra, you can share a link to our usage guidelines which are on the right-hand side of the All Company community.

2. Report the post in Viva Engage by clicking the ellipses ••• , ""Report"" and following the prompts. The Viva Engage team will then receive a notification, review, and act on anything that doesn't follow our guidelines. The person whose post or comment you reported will not know you've done so.

It's important to keep in mind that reporting a post or comment doesn't guarantee it will be removed.

What happens next?

We regularly review content posted on Viva Engage to ensure it's a safe and inclusive environment for all our people. This includes asking users to remove comments, or, removing comments in whole or in part, if the content doesn't align with our guidelines or the 3Rs. We may also delete or close comments on Viva Engage threads if we believe the conversation could be detrimental to the wellbeing of our people. These decisions are made by the Viva Engage team.

Outcomes, impact or early indicators of success

After consulting with teams and Employee Representative Groups across the business, Telstra took on feedback and refreshed the Viva Engage community guidelines so that they were well placed to continue to keep Viva Engage a safe space for everyone at Telstra.

Telstra receives an average of 6,000 comments every month and 25,000 posts every year on Viva Engage, and so the guidelines are designed to be applied to many different situations, with the underlying principles of maintaining respect, responsibility and representation.

Here are a few examples of the key differences with this latest iteration of guidelines:

⊙ The guidelines were made broader, above and beyond relying on social media guidelines. That's because Viva Engage is unique, creating additional implications when it comes to ensuring everyone feels safe.

⊙ A 'report content' button was introduced on Viva Engage, so it's easier to report content in a discrete way.

⊙ Links and references to the inclusive language resource have been included so Telstra's people know what respectful language looks like.

Telstra is still in the early stages of these new guidelines taking effect, and so far, it has received positive feedback from employees around the utility of the guidelines. Telstra has also noticed a shift in the way people show support for each other on the platform, and we have not had any content reported yet.

From everyday disrespect ➤ to **FOCUSED** on Everyday Respect

UNEQUAL / UNFAIR	➤	Actions, behaviours or decisions that are unequal or unfair	**F**	**FAIR & EQUAL** ➤ Treat people fairly and equally
DIMINISHED	➤	Undervaluing and diminishing people's contributions	**O**	**OPEN-MINDED** ➤ Be open-minded and intentional
INCONSIDERATE / OFFENSIVE	➤	Comments and jokes that perpetuate stereotypes and belittle/are derogatory	**C**	**CARING** ➤ Demonstrate care for others
EXCLUDED	➤	Excluding or isolating people	**U**	**UNITED** ➤ Promote workplace unity
UNSAFE	➤	Allowing a hostile, unsafe workplace for people to persist	**S**	**SAFE** ➤ Provide a safe environment
INCONGRUOUS	➤	People's overall experience of the workplace culture is fragmented, inconsistent and disengaging	**E**	**ENGAGED** ➤ Engage in open and constructive discussions
UNKNOWN / INVISIBLE	➤	People's unique identity and experiences are not recognised or valued	**D**	**DIVERSE** ➤ Celebrate and value diversity

FOCUSED on Everyday Respect

F | **FAIR & EQUAL** → Treat people fairly and equally

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Champions of Change Coalition includes CEOs, secretaries of government departments, non-executive directors and community leaders who believe gender equality is a major business, economic, societal and human rights issue. Established in 2010 by Elizabeth Broderick AO, our mission is inclusive gender equality across our workplaces by 2030 and a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership.

championsofchangecoalition.org

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OF CHANGE
COALITION**