

# IWD **MORE** 25 **VOICES** **MORE** **REPRESENTATION**

ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

## **The Impact of Representation on Womxn's Social, Political and Professional Inclusion**



In partnership with:



Pureprofile 

VC

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# OUR PARTNERS

## CORPORATE PARTNERS



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The Cultural Intelligence Project



Jerusha Mather Yasmin Poole Chantal Mousad Dimitria Groutsis Joy Adan

# THE CAMPAIGN

International Women's Day (IWD) is a global platform designed to honour the achievements of womxn in various social, economic, cultural and political spheres, while highlighting the ongoing challenges they face. It is a symbolic day for the collective effort towards gender equality and womxn's empowerment, and is marked through events, campaigns, and celebrations at a community and corporate level.

In Australia, IWD is a fixture in government agencies and businesses, many of which host events, panel discussions, and award ceremonies to mark the occasion.

But, as well-intentioned as IWD and its associated events are, often the reality of their meaning and effectiveness falls flat for womxn with intersecting identities.

Now in its third year, the More Voices, More Representation on International Women's Day campaign has uncovered a consistent lack of representation on IWD in Australia. Our years of research, analysis, partner insights and advocacy have uncovered how IWD too often fails to accurately represent the intersecting identities of womxn in Australia.

What began in 2023 as a campaign to understand what IWD means for all womxn — including underrepresented, underserved, minoritised, and racialised womxn and non-binary people — has now evolved into a more holistic look at how representation (or lack thereof) for intersectional womxn plays out against the backdrop of social, professional, and political inclusion in Australia.

This year, the More Voices, More Representation campaign expands in ambition, as the survey takes a deeper dive into understanding how representation can and does affect many different aspects of womxn's lives — especially those who have an intersecting identity.

The campaign continues to drive constructive conversations about the need for truly diverse voices to be represented on IWD and every day, across politics, stages, media, and screens — as well as what this means against a backdrop of increasingly antagonistic attitudes towards diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in corporate and political spheres.





# SURVEY METHODOLOGY

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The survey was conducted by Pureprofile, on behalf of Vu Consulting. 1,017 Australians who identify as women or non-binary (womxn) were surveyed in November 2024.

The sample included a representative diverse mix of womxn, designed to accurately reflect the diversity of Australia's womxn.

These quotas were calculated based on multiple sources, including data from the ABS Census, public research, and publications from organisations focused on diverse communities. While precise figures for some groups are unavailable and overlaps are uncertain, every effort was made to create a robust and representative sample using sound research methodologies.

Groups include: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Black community; Womxn of Colour; Immigrants; Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD); People with a disability (physical or mental); LGBTQIA+ or gender diverse; Caucasian or European descent.

For the purposes of the survey, respondents were classified into two segments with no overlaps: non-diverse women (women of Caucasian or European descent, straight, and physically and mentally able-bodied) who made up 40% of survey respondents, and diverse womxn (womxn who do not fit the classifications already mentioned), who made up 60% of survey respondents.

Respondents were asked to evaluate how represented they felt in a variety of contexts, including on International Women's Day, at corporate events, and in politics.



# SURVEY METHODOLOGY

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## Demographic breakdown:

### GENDER IDENTITY

Female - 99.9%  
Non-binary - 0.1%

### AGE

18-24 - 14%  
25-34 - 23%  
35-44 - 22%  
45-54 - 21%  
55-64 - 19%

### LOCATION

New South Wales - 31%  
Victoria - 28%  
Queensland - 19%  
South Australia - 7%  
Western Australia - 11%  
ACT - 2%  
Tasmania - 2%  
Northern Territory - 0.5%  
Metro - 68%  
Regional - 32%

### EMPLOYMENT

Employed full time - 56%  
Employed part time - 35%  
Maternity leave or childcare - 2%  
Unemployed/looking for work - 6%

### DIVERSITY

Caucasian/European - 45%  
Immigrants - 27%  
Immigrants (non-English-speaking background) - 15%  
Immigrants (English-speaking background) - 12%  
Refugees (non-English-speaking background) - 1%  
Refugees (English-speaking background) - 1%  
Womxn of Colour - 14%  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander - 9%  
CALD - 7%  
People with a disability - 7%  
LGBTQIA+ - 5%  
Black community - 1%  
Other - 4%



# SURVEY FINDINGS

## Shaping Inclusion: Key Drivers of Representation in Public Spaces

**OVER HALF (54%) OF WOMXN DIDN'T SEE ANY CHANGE IN REPRESENTATION OF THEIR DEMOGRAPHIC IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS**

**15%**

feel more represented

**16%**

feel less represented

### At International Women's Day Celebrations:

Womxn from minoritised, racialised, and underserved communities reported a 5% increase overall in representation. Diverse womxn are less likely to say representation is stagnant (49% vs 61% for non-diverse).

26% of people with a physical or mental disability feel more represented now, which is the equal highest group alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (compared to only 9% of immigrant non English speaking who feel more represented)

**↓ 11%**

decrease for CALD womxn

**↓ 7%**

decrease for immigrant womxn from non-English-speaking backgrounds

**↑ 14%**

increase for Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander womxn

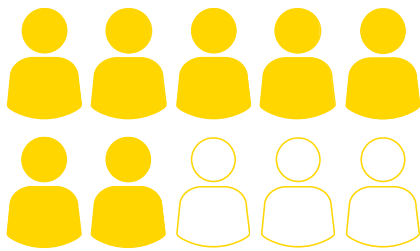
**↑ 14%**

increase for LGBTQIA+ community

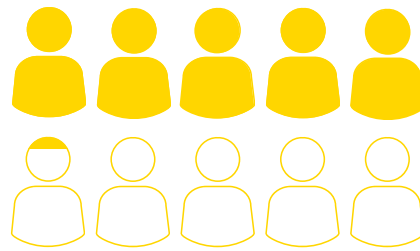
**Food for thought:** Feelings of representation differ between different groups, suggesting there's more that can be done to bring everybody on the journey to an inclusive future.

# SURVEY FINDINGS

## Voice and Value: Examining Women's Participation in Corporate Keynotes and Panels



74% of working womxn are not invited to speak at events



52% of working womxn who are invited to speak at events do not receive any compensation

Diverse womxn are more likely to be paid for speaking (41% vs. 23%)

**35%** of those who are paid to speak at events feel the compensation is 'fair'

**27%** of non-diverse women felt compensation was 'fair'

**38%** of diverse womxn felt compensation was 'fair'



**Food for thought:** Regardless of intersecting identity, fair compensation remains a critical issue for all, reflecting the undervaluation of womxn's voices overall.

# SURVEY FINDINGS

## The Importance of Representation and Diversity in Politics

**WHILE DIVERSE WOMXN SEE DIVERSITY AS KEY  
TO PROGRESS, SOME NON-DIVERSE WOMEN VIEW  
REPRESENTATION INITIATIVES AS SUFFICIENT  
AND FEEL EXCLUDED FROM THE FOCUS**

**80%**

of womxn believe  
political leaders should  
reflect the population

**51%**

of womxn say diversity  
impacts their vote



# SURVEY FINDINGS

## The future of International Women's Day

### WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

# 65%

of respondents feel change is needed to improve representation at corporate events, in the media, or on professional panel sessions

## 54%

address intersectional womxn's issues

## 46%

increase diversity representation

## 35%

prioritise fair payment for participation (41% diverse vs 25% non-diverse)

## 35%

lead with diverse leadership teams

## 33%

more diversity and inclusion training for organisers



# SURVEY FINDINGS

## The future of International Women's Day

### WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

When asked about the drivers for feeling more represented, womxn said:

- 👍 A focus on womxn's achievements (46%)
- 👍 Empowering initiatives (43%)

When asked about the drivers for feeling less represented, womxn said:

- 👎 A focus on issues unrelated to them (34%)
- 👎 The women speaking did not look or sound like me (32%)

Diverse womxn were almost twice as likely (38% vs 20%) to feel less represented due to a lack of empowering initiatives



**Food for thought:** The call for equitable representation is growing. Corporations and governments can inspire positive action and participation by all by promoting initiatives that reflect the lived experiences of all womxn.

# PARTNER TAKEAWAYS

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You can find a curated list of speakers with intersecting identities for your next IWD event in our Resource Centre via [morevoicesmorerepresentation.com](https://morevoicesmorerepresentation.com).

Bookings should go directly to the speaker or the organisation they represent – fees will vary.

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“Many organisations still focus too heavily on the diversity and not the inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds. This report not only highlights the inequities of CALD women in colour in positions of power, but the profound effect their authentic inclusion has for the wider community. Organisations need to commit to creating environments to not only see but hear from women with different experiences and can proficiently speak on intersectional issues that are currently ignored. For DEI initiatives to truly take us further, the importance of intersectional voices cannot be overlooked.”

**-TIFF NG, FOUNDER OF THE SOCIAL STORY**

“The diverse mainstream of Australia’s women simply haven’t been included in International Women’s Day celebrations for a long time. If the origins of IWD didn’t recognise the intersections of ethnicity and class I don’t know what it did, and we are taking it back. IWD is about all of us.”

**-PROFESSOR NAREEN YOUNG, ASSOCIATE DEAN  
(INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT) AT UTS  
BUSINESS SCHOOL**



# PARTNER TAKEAWAYS

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“This year will highlight those leaders who have been just performative in their words /actions and those who are meaningfully fostering inclusive environments. It will be these leaders who recognise intersectionality who will continue to see the benefits of success (time and money).”

**-SOLAI VALLIAPPAN, INVESTOR, ADVISER, BOARD DIRECTOR**

“The increasing DEI backlash in the USA underscores the urgent need for stronger leadership accountability at the Executive Committee (ExCo) and Board levels, along with clear communication about its value, the why, and the very real, tangible risks of pulling back on DEI. Intersectional representation in 2025 must go beyond surface-level gestures to address deeply embedded structural inequities. Leaders have a responsibility to articulate why DEI matters – and they must do so by highlighting its proven impact on innovation, diverse decision-making, and long-term organisational success. However, achieving meaningful representation requires courage.

Leaders must not only prioritise DEI initiatives but also confront the very workplace cultures that perpetuate dangerous biases – biases that unfairly blame DEI for unrelated issues such as poor governance or risk management failures. DEI is not the scapegoat—it's the solution. True progress will depend on a top-down commitment to systemic change, paired with an ability to bring everyone along on the journey. This means centring diverse lived experiences, being transparent about impact, and empowering diverse women to shape policies and initiatives.”

**-MIN-SHI MICHELLE LIM, AAPC DIRECTOR, ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE, ETHICS, AND INTERSECTIONAL DEI SPECIALIST**

# PARTNER TAKEAWAYS

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“As we see increasing backlash and resistance towards diversity, equity and inclusion programs, it becomes even more critical to hear the lived stories and perspectives of women from diverse backgrounds and/or who identify as having intersectional identities. Open and transparent communication about the systemic reasons driving DEI efforts, and a robust change management plan to drive awareness, adoption and effective execution of DEI programs, have never been as important. And that starts with listening to those who are most impacted by lack of representation.”

**-NITI NADARAJAH, FOUNDER OF COACHING BY NITI**

“Intersectional representation for women in 2025 demands stronger, braver leadership —both corporate and political— that doesn't back down in the face of DEI backlash. With the More Voices 2025 survey indicating that 80% of women believe political leaders should reflect the population, the call for inclusivity is clear.

Leaders must clearly communicate the purpose and impact of DEI efforts, making it evident that inclusivity is a driver of progress, not a threat. It requires both a top-down and bottom-up approach that brings everyone along while addressing internal biases that wrongly attribute organisational failures to DEI. True representation is about standing firm in the belief that diversity isn't just the right thing to do—it's essential for resilience, innovation, and sustainable success, driving productivity and shared prosperity for Australia.”

**-RACHEL YANG, GIANT LEAP**

# PARTNER TAKEAWAYS

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“It’s so important for our younger generations to see representation of all women during IWD – so that they know that their values, beliefs and experiences matter. Seeing a diverse range of female leaders’ voices elevated during IWD ensures that all women are represented and heard. All of our lived experiences are different and unique, and we cannot address the inequities and inequalities for all women if we do not have voices from all women.”

**-LISA SARAGO, CEO AND CO-FOUNDER OF LAND ON HEART AND LAND ON HEART FOUNDATION, DIRECTOR OF AI INDIGENOUS INNOVATIONS, FOUNDER OF TIDDAS IN TECH**

“Attacks on minority groups are often seen as distant problems, affecting 'other people' far away from 'us'. This perspective ignores the interconnected nature of social discrimination. Intersectional representation is crucial, especially on occasions like International Women’s Day, because it reveals that policy decisions and their consequences directly impact individuals within our own circles—people who are not abstract strangers but neighbours, colleagues, and friends.

When discriminatory policies and rhetoric go unchallenged, they create a broader environment that gradually normalises harmful conduct. This slippery slope of marginalisation, seen vividly in Trump’s America, extends beyond its initial targets, emboldening misogyny and other forms of discrimination that ultimately impact us all. Recognising these issues are not remote or theoretical, but deeply personal and local, is key to fostering empathy and mobilising communities to proactively challenge systemic discrimination.”

**-GRACE YOUNG, CHIEF INNOVATION OFFICER, WATTWATCHERS**

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UTS Business School and Pureprofile

 [morevoicesmorerepresentation.com](https://morevoicesmorerepresentation.com)

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