



Australian Government  
Department of Employment  
and Workplace Relations

# **Mature Age Workers:** Is my workplace age inclusive?



# Is my workplace age inclusive?

**Below are 6 key factors that either contribute to or detract from efforts to create an age inclusive workplace culture.**

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## Clarity

The starting point for building age inclusive cultures is clarity and alignment around what a generationally diverse and age inclusive culture looks like, how it helps the organisation to meet its strategic objectives, and the behaviours and norms required and demonstrated by all. Strategies to ensure mature age workers feel included can be difficult to implement in workplaces where the right behaviours are not clearly articulated, defined and reinforced.

## Ownership

Approaches to make mature age workers feel included in the workplace can be eroded if there is no collective ownership or accountability for inclusion. Change and impact should be tracked via data. Frequent conversations about progress, behaviours and approaches that either enable or detract age inclusive efforts must be had regularly at all levels of the business.

## Motivation

Your business needs more than 'commitments' or 'plans' to change. To create a workplace with diverse age groups that make mature age workers feel included, leaders need to be motivated to act now and to have real conversations (even if uncomfortable or difficult). What's more, the right behaviours need to be rewarded to send organisation-wide messages. For example, rewarding age inclusive behaviour and not just technical skill.

## Support

Your business needs to have the right processes, systems and infrastructure in place to ensure it can cater for diverse age groups, minimise bias and maximise psychological safety for mature age workers. Businesses often need to rework policies and processes so that diverse age groups are supported through complaints processes, recruitment and performance management. For example, using age inclusive language during recruitment or offering flexible work arrangements.

## Behaviours

Your business needs to set behaviours that support diverse age groups and don't undermine efforts to ensure goals and priorities are met. Habits and good behaviours are set by high levels of trust, working together cooperatively, open-mindedness, willingness to take responsibility and respectfully challenging one another, and an agreed understanding of how everyone works together to contribute to a shared agenda.

## Capacity

Businesses and people do not simply transform. Behaviours and values shift and adapt through sustained efforts over time. In order for your business and people to shift, it is important that staff (and particularly leaders) have the skills, mindsets and resilience to create a culture where mature age workers feel included. What's more, they need to sustain mindsets and efforts over time.

# Inclusiveness Meter

Review the factors below based on your score in the Inclusiveness Meter.

## Clarity

### HIGH

All leaders and staff are clear on how they contribute to creating a workplace where mature age workers feel included.

### LOW

Efforts to create a workforce where mature age workers feel included are tokenistic, shallow or don't exist.

All leaders and staff are aligned on the behaviours and practices required to ensure mature age workers feel included.

Your business does not have a sense of shared values that support mature age workers.

## Support

### HIGH

Your business re-evaluates processes and policies to reduce bias, stay contemporary, and reinforce support for diverse age groups.

### LOW

Policies take a 'minimum standards' approach and work to meet legislative and regulatory requirements only.

Your work environment is designed to support diverse age groups and their safety. Staff can access means to make work comfortable and flexible.

The physical work environment is designed to largely benefit a specific age group (most often younger) and often supports hierarchy.

## Ownership

### HIGH

Your business measures whether diverse age groups exist, and if all age groups feel included.

### LOW

There is no data or reporting on diverse age groups, and whether all age groups feel included.

Conversations about behaviours, practices and decisions that undermine or enable age inclusiveness to occur.

Leaders and staff rarely discuss or exchange feedback on workforce composition or culture.

## Behaviours

### HIGH

Relationships and engagements between staff are professional, positive, supportive and respectful.

### LOW

Workplace social systems are 'clicky', status or generation driven.

Your business encourages safe spaces, collaboration without judgement, and values lessons learned (both positive and negative).

Your business and staff are fearful of change, slow to innovate, respond or change.

## Motivation

### HIGH

Your business recognises, rewards and acknowledges contributions that make mature age workers feel included.

### LOW

Your business is largely reactive with time, task and tenure being key measures of success.

Your staff are motivated to ensure mature age workers feel included, challenge the status quo, and hold others to account.

Your business leaders do not motivate staff to ensure mature age workers feel included and may exhibit detrimental behaviours.

## Capacity

### HIGH

Your leaders and staff possess the skills required to guide and shape culture that makes mature age workers feel included.

### LOW

Your leaders and staff lack the requisite skills and knowledge to foster cultures that make mature age workers feel included.

Your leaders and staff have access to work arrangements that support personal wellbeing and work life integration.

Flexible work arrangements are often given as a reward to trusted, favoured and tenured employees.

# Actions I will take...

**Identify which of the 6 key factors you need to work on the most in your organisation.**

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Clarity

Support

Motivation

Ownership

Behaviours

Capacity

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## **Decide on the focus of your efforts**

In relation to this factor, what are some actions you can take to ensure mature age workers are included and supported in your organisation?

## **Below are general actions to take based on your LOW age inclusiveness rating.**

Note against each general action, one thing you can do in your organisation to make mature age workers feel more included.

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Convene leaders and consider strategic objectives, consequences of behavioural breaches, and organisational barriers to ensuring mature age workers feel included.

Develop clear performance measures around age diversity and inclusion efforts and communicate these clearly to teams. Collect and analyse data over time, and ensure it is a recurrent item at leadership meetings.

Make the factors impacting staff and team commitment to ensuring mature age workers feel included, talk about them openly and develop clear and specific strategies to address these issues.

Critically review human resources processes, including end-to-end talent processes, to ensure mature age workers feel included and supported, and make the physical work environment more inclusive for all staff.

Ensure efforts to make mature age workers feel included are not just a tick box activity. Strategies to achieve this might include tracking the sense of safety and belonging felt by team members or tying bonuses and progression to achieving these goals.

Develop opportunities for mandatory training and development of leaders and managers, including one on one or team coaching sessions for tenured employees.

## **Below are general actions to take based on your MEDIUM age inclusiveness rating.**

Note against each general action, one thing you can do in your organisation to make mature age workers feel more included.

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Convene leaders and consider strategic objectives, consequences of behavioural breaches, and organisational barriers to ensuring mature age workers feel included.

Develop clear performance measures around age diversity and inclusion efforts and communicate these clearly to teams. Collect and analyse data over time, and ensure it is a recurrent item at leadership meetings.

If there are known factors impacting staff and team commitment to ensuring mature age workers feel included, talk about them openly and develop clear and specific strategies to address these issues.

Explore opportunities to embed mature age worker inclusion into key human resources processes, including end-to-end talent processes, and make the physical work environment more inclusive for all staff.

Ensure efforts to make mature age workers feel included are continually valued by the organisation and not just a tick box activity. Strategies to achieve this might include tracking the sense of safety and belonging felt by team members in every area of the organisation.

Develop strategies to facilitate exchange of experience and lessons through cross team and cross organisation collaborations, and learning and development opportunities for managers and leaders regarding age inclusivity.

## **Below are general actions to take based on your HIGH age inclusiveness rating.**

Note against each general action, one thing you can do in your organisation to make mature age workers feel more included.

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Allow leaders to regularly meet and check in on strategic objectives and continually evaluate possible barriers to ensuring mature age workers feel included.

Check in with staff and data to ensure your business is on track.

Support conversations about how your business can maintain or extend current behaviours and support systems.

Evaluate human resources processes, including end-to-end talent processes, and routinely assess the physical work environment to ensure it is supportive of all age groups.

Review training and mentoring approaches to support lifelong learning for all workers. Training and mentoring not only improves organisational skill-sets but doubles as a retention mechanism.

Regularly facilitate exchange of experience and lessons through cross team and cross organisation collaborations, and learning and development opportunities for managers and leaders regarding age inclusivity.