



WOMEN OF COLOUR AUSTRALIA

Championing Australia's Women of Colour

MEDIA RELEASE

Women of colour subject to racism, tokenism, sexism in the workplace despite D&I policies

Women of Colour Australia launches with nationwide survey revealing the stark reality women of colour face in the workplace

SYDNEY, Australia- 28 June 2021: A recent nationwide survey of more than 500 women of colour in Australia found that 60% have experienced discrimination in the workplace related to their identity as a woman of colour, despite almost the same number (59%) of respondents saying their workplace has a Diversity & Inclusion policy in place.

Conducted by Women of Colour Australia (WoCA) in partnership with Murdoch University, the inaugural Women of Colour in the Australian Workforce survey was unveiled over the weekend, at the official virtual launch event. WoCA is Australia's first not-for-profit organisation of its kind championing Australia's women of colour through tailored programs, community support initiatives and advocacy work.

The survey revealed that discrimination and racism in the workplace towards women of colour are not impacted by industry, positions or salary. Many of the respondents were white-collar workers, with 70% working full-time and close to 30% earning between \$100,000 - \$149,990.

Of the 60% who have faced discrimination in the workplace related to their identity as a woman of colour, the top challenges were racism, tokenism, sexism and a combination of these. Interestingly, only 2% of the respondents said they were their organisation's leader while 58% had white males as leaders, 26% had white women as their leaders, with 7% saying their leader was a woman of colour.

While the issues surrounding workplace gender equality are well documented, there is very little data on the intersection between women's experience at work and their cultural background and ethnicity.

Dr Pilar Kasat, Chairwoman of WoCA commented, "Our research clearly illustrates that women of colour continue to experience disproportionate discrimination and prejudices in the workplace despite the widespread rhetoric of diversity and inclusion. D&I initiatives should explicitly focus on race as well as gender as both combined create specific, unique challenges for women of colour that are too easily overlooked with broad platitudes that seek to advance women's representation without questioning which women are most likely to benefit".



The findings of the survey were discussed during an insightful panel discussion entitled *Women of Colour in Leadership: Beyond Default Views and Perspectives* with an impressive line-up of women including cross-cultural consultant, Tasneem Chopra, Antoinette Latouff, Director of Media Diversity Australia and multi-award winning journalist, Carly Stanley, CEO and Founder of an Aboriginal community-led non-profit organisation, Deadly Connections, Mariam Veiszadeh, Lawyer and Diversity & Inclusion practitioner, Juliana Nkrumah, Founder of African Women Australia and Katja Henaway, Founder and CEO of Women's Business.

The key findings from the survey are:

- 6 in 10 women of colour felt they had faced challenges in the workplace related to their identity as a woman of colour, while 21% do not believe so and the remainder answered “maybe”
- Close to half (48%) the respondents said their organisations provides cultural/diversity training but only 41% felt it was useful, 24% did not and 34% answered “unsure”
- While 30% believed their identity as a woman of colour was valued in the workplace, 43% did not, and the remainder answered “maybe”
- While close to 60% said their workplace had a diversity and inclusion policy, 22% said it did not and the remainder were unsure
- 36% felt they would be heard and respected if they were to raise issues relating to their cultural identity in the workplace, while 32% said they wouldn't and 33% were unsure
- Many of the women named ‘mentoring’ as a key need for future development in their careers
- A total of 543 women of colour completed the survey, with 7% identifying as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Brenda Gaddi, Founder and Managing Director of WoCA said, “The term Women of Colour has been around for over four decades, yet there is still a lot of confusion around its true meaning. Rather than being limited to skin colour, it is more importantly a commitment of solidarity amongst women who have been minoritised and racialised. WoCA emerges from the need to create a space that represents and speaks for the unique experiences of women of colour in contemporary Australia.

“As we stand in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, the original and first matriarchs of this land, we welcome all to join our movement and help us create a fairer and more equitable Australia for all women of colour.”

Supporting Quotes

Tasneem Chopra OAM, Cross Cultural Consultant and WoCA Ambassador

“At Women of Colour Australia we are not waiting for a seat at the table - we're building our own. The wins for women of colour in representation in leadership across this country are too few, and the efforts to be heard are frequently exhausting. WoCA's response in forming this entity is a bold reply to structural exclusion, affording a safe space for diverse women to set the agenda about what impacts them NOW and further, raise one another in a collective gesture of self-care.”

Priscilla Brice, Managing Director All Together Now

“Women of Colour Australia is a much-needed organisation right now as Australians are waking up to the injustices experienced by First Nations women, Black and Brown women. WoCA clearly understands that building communities of resistance is an important step towards achieving racial justice. I'm looking forward to seeing how WoCA develops and progresses racial equity for all women of colour in Australia.”

-ENDS-

For more information about WoCA and to donate, click [here](#).

To become a part of our team and volunteer at WoCA, click [here](#).

About Women of Colour Australia

Founded in 2020, Women of Colour Australia is a non-profit organisation run by women of colour for women of colour. WoCA aims to champion Australia's Women of Colour through tailored education programs, community support initiatives, and advocacy work.