

PHASE TWO: RESEARCH REPORT

**GENDER AND  
INTERSECTIONAL  
INEQUALITY:  
POWER AND PRIVILEGE  
IN VICTORIA'S LEGAL AND  
JUSTICE WORKFORCE**

**STARTS WITH US**

LEGAL AND JUSTICE SECTOR ACTION TO  
PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

Women's Legal Service Victoria acknowledges and respects the traditional custodians on whose land we are fortunate to live and work, and we pay our respect to all Elders past and present. Sovereignty was never ceded.

**ABOUT STARTS WITH US**

Starts With Us is a project by and for the legal and justice workforce in Victoria. It contributes to the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria by responding to the gendered drivers of violence against women as they manifest in our workplaces.

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**ABOUT WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE VICTORIA**

Women's Legal Service Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation which has been providing free legal services to women since 1982. We work with and for women to address legal issues arising from relationship breakdown or violence.

We exist to help build a gender equitable country. Our unique contribution to this vision – as lawyers, advocates and educators – is to work alongside women experiencing disadvantage to promote their rights to live free from violence and make informed choices about their relationships.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS****Research participants**

We thank the professionals from Victoria's legal and justice workforce who shared their stories and expertise. Without them, this report would not have been possible.

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Consortium partners are collaborating with Women's Legal to lead innovation on workplace gender equality in Victoria's legal and justice workforce.

Federation of Community Legal Centres, Landers & Rogers, Law Institute of Victoria, Slater and Gordon, Victorian Bar Association, Victoria Legal Aid

**SERVICES AND SUPPORT**

If you have experienced violence or sexual assault and require assistance, contact **1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)** to talk to a counsellor from the National Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence hotline. For confidential support and information, contact Safe Steps' 24/7 family violence response line on 1800 015 188.

If you are concerned for your safety or that of someone else, please contact the police or call 000 for emergency assistance.

**Assistance with workplace harassment and discrimination**

If you would like further information about workplace sexual harassment or discrimination, or to lodge a complaint, please contact the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission on 1300 292 153.

If you wish to discuss a matter confidentially or make a complaint relating to sexual harassment by a lawyer, please email the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner's office at: [harassmentcomplaints@lsbc.vic.gov.au](mailto:harassmentcomplaints@lsbc.vic.gov.au). A specially trained member of staff will make contact with you.

Worksafe Victoria has responsibilities in relation to the health, safety and welfare of workplaces under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004. Call 1800 136 089 or (03) 9641 1444, or email: [info@worksafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@worksafe.vic.gov.au)

Starts With Us is supported by the Victorian Government.



women's legal  
service victoria

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## WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE USE THESE TERMS

**Ableism** - The favouring of able-bodied, neurotypical people, and the exclusion or devaluation of people who are disabled and neurodivergent.

**Classism** - Prejudice, bias and discrimination on the basis of social class. Also refers to the unequal distribution of power, education, wealth and income that determine social position and status.

**Cisgender** - The term used to describe people whose gender corresponds to the one they were assigned at birth.

**Cisnormativity** - Social norms and privilege based on the assumption that everyone is cisgendered and that people will continue to identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.

**Colonialism** - Refers to ongoing impacts of invasion and dispossession of First Nations peoples in the establishment of white Australia.

**Gender** - Socially constructed identities, social roles and norms based on masculine or feminine traits assigned to men and women. The "socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women" (Our Watch, 2021, P.133). Gender also refers to how a person identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics. A person's gender identity or gender expression is not always exclusively male or female and may change over time (Australian Human Rights Commission, n.d.).

**Gender binary** - Classification of gender into two distinct categories of masculine/ feminine or male/female.

**Gender inequality** - Men's disproportionate share of power and resources, and unequal value afforded to men over women. LGBTQI+ people also experience inequality as a result of the rigid, binary hierarchies that underpin gender inequality.

**Heteronormativity** - Attitudes and systems that privilege heterosexuality as normal and legitimate.

**Homophobia/biphobia/transphobia** - Exclusion, prejudices and stereotypes towards same-sex attracted people, bisexual people or trans people.

**Intersectionality** - An intersectional feminist approach is a way of understanding factors that shape people's experiences of gender inequality, including but not limited to Aboriginality, culture, race, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, gender identity, education, class, age, and migration status.

**Legal and justice sector** - Everyone who works in a legal and justice workplace, such as legal services, government, statutory bodies, law firms, and courts.

**LGBTIQ+** - An acronym of "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, plus" that is an inclusive umbrella term for a range of diverse sexualities, genders and sex characteristics.

**Mis-gendering** - Intentionally or unintentionally using incorrect pronouns for a person's gender.

**Non-binary** - An umbrella term for any number of gender identities that don't sit neatly in the male and female binary, and can include people who do not identify with any gender. People whose gender is not male or female use many different terms to describe themselves, including genderqueer, agender, bigender. While none of the terms mean exactly the same thing, all reflect an experience of gender that is not simply female or male.

**Patriarchy** - Structures, social systems and cultural norms wherein women are devalued, and men have disproportionate power and privilege.

**Power** - The ability of an individual or group to exert authority or influence due to their privilege within social hierarchies.

**Privilege** - Advantages and benefits afforded to individuals by virtue of belonging to a group that has greater social, economic and/or political power.

**Racism** - Prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at a person or people because of their skin colour, ethnicity or country of origin.

**Social structures** - Economic, political, cultural or organisational systems that maintain and replicate the status quo, and, in turn, shape people's lives.

**Trans or gender diverse** - Umbrella terms for people whose gender identity is different to what was assigned to them at birth.

**Violence against women** - Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or could result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts and coercion.

**Woman/women** - Our definition of women includes all women, regardless of the gender they were assigned at birth.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**“The legal sector is still based on archaic patriarchal structures. It’s so hard to unpack all the subtle discrimination that happens day to day. I feel and see the micro & macro aggressions of classism, racism, ableism in my workplace every day, and my workplace is a ‘social justice’ organisation. Change really has to be made from the top down, and from the bottom up.”**

*Research participant*

This report presents findings from a survey of over 300 Victorian legal and justice professionals in early 2021. The findings will support ongoing work in legal and justice workplaces to address gender inequality. It takes an intersectional approach to better understand how, in our workplaces, gender inequality interacts with other forms of oppression and power.

In 2019, the first Starts With Us discussion paper found highly concerning ways in which sexism and gender inequality are experienced by women in legal and justice workplaces. This phase of research builds on the earlier findings, and examines how other social inequities intersect with gender.

We found:

- › Workplace cultures where “everyday” sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia are prevalent
- › Discrimination, bullying and harassment related to race/ethnicity, disability and mental health, class background, sexuality, and gender identity
- › Marginalisation and exclusion of employees of non-Anglo cultural backgrounds and the over valuing of white Anglo culture in workplaces
- › Inadequate support for employees living with disability and mental illness
- › Workplace cultures that favour white, able-bodied, heterosexual, class privileged, cisgender men
- › Lack of opportunity and other negative career impacts due to discrimination causing fatigue and feelings of poor self-worth.

The research found the sector is permeated by a culture that privileges white, able-bodied, class privileged, cis-gendered, and heterosexual identity. The experiences shared by practitioners shed light on ways that privilege is maintained through workplace cultures and structures that reflect and reinforce social hierarchies to the advantage of some, and discriminate against and exclude others. While the environments overwhelmingly favour white cisgender

men, we also found that some women benefit from the social pervasive hierarchies depending on how readily they reflect qualities and identities that are valued. The research found that a focus on gender only, in isolation from other ways systems of power and privilege operate, is unlikely to benefit those who are impacted by complex inequality in the legal and justice workforce.

The research highlights the need for an intersectional approach to workplace gender equality, if it is to benefit women who experience the compounding impacts of racism, ableism, colonialism, and discrimination based on sexuality, gender identity and class.

### Beyond “inclusion and diversity” to equality, respect and opportunity

Some progress has been made in recent times to improve diversity in legal and justice workplaces, and inclusion is on the agenda at many organisations. However, diversity and inclusion alone will not change where power is held, how it is used, or how it is experienced by people who don’t have it.

Respect, equality and opportunity must be afforded equitably and to everyone. This will necessarily require critical reflection on where power lies and how it functions, and actively working to disrupt it. Actions are required in each organisations as well as sector-wide to transform the ways in which power is held and exercised in our workforce.

The report presents areas for action, guiding principles and practical strategies to target the ways power and privilege function in our workplaces. The areas for action are:

- › Establishing infrastructure and resourcing capacity for organisational change
- › Taking action from the bottom up and the top down
- › Meaningful engagement to understand what is going on in your own organisation
- › Evidence-informed planning and implementing mutually reinforcing strategies to achieve change

- › Making it safe for people to speak up about their experiences and to report abuse, discrimination and unfair treatment
- › Creating transformative women’s leadership and career progression opportunities that disrupt systems of power and elitism
- › Engaging men in efforts to achieve gender equality

One of the ways the findings and recommendations in this report are being applied is in work that is underway by the Starts With Us consortium. Through a process of co-design, implementation and evaluation, a consortium of six leading sector organisations is working intensively with Women’s Legal to use existing evidence and tailor best practice tools to the needs and nuances of the legal and justice setting and pilot strategies to drive gender equality in their workplaces.

## › KEY FINDINGS

**Discrimination, bullying and harassment related to race/ethnicity, disability and mental health, class background, sexuality, and gender identity were frequently reported**

**Workplace cultures where “everyday” sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia are prevalent**

**White, Anglo culture is dominant in workplaces to the exclusion and marginalisation of others.**

**Inadequate support is provided for employees with disabilities or mental illness**

**Lack of opportunity and negative career impacts due to discrimination causes fatigue and feelings of poor self worth**

## ABOUT THE REPORT

This research report aims to drive and support action in Victorian legal and justice workplaces to address gender inequality and intersectional forms of discrimination and disadvantage.

The report builds on earlier research by Women's Legal that found entrenched sexism and gender inequality in legal and justice workplaces in Victoria, including:

- › inequality in opportunity and barriers to women's career progression
- › sexual harassment, gendered bullying and disrespect towards women
- › gender bias, discrimination and stereotyping, and workplace cultures that condone, minimise and excuse violence against women (Women's Legal Service Victoria, 2019)

Following publication of the first Starts With Us report, and as work progressed with sector organisations to take action on the findings, we recognised the need to better understand professionals' experiences of intersectional social inequalities. Understandings of gender inequality have progressed substantially over recent years. It is clear that strategies to address gender inequality must have at the centre those who are most impacted by it.

This report builds on current evidence and best practice frameworks for progressing gender equality. It provides a snapshot of Victorian legal and justice professionals' experiences of workplace discrimination and poor treatment related to gender and intersectional inequities. The report presents a case for organisational strategies that strive to transform workplaces so that respect, equality, justice and opportunity are afforded equitably to everyone.

Participants' stories feature heavily throughout the report. Practitioners from across Victoria's legal and justice workforce were invited to share their experiences and observations, and they did so with generosity and courage. Participant quotes featured in the report are representative of themes that emerged when analysing the survey data as a whole. Moreover, practitioners' descriptions of their experiences, in their own words, can help us understand the experience of discrimination and inequalities in Victoria's legal and justice workforce. We encourage you to pay due attention to them.

### ABOUT STARTS WITH US

Starts With Us aims to drive and support organisational and sector-wide action to progress gender equality across Victoria's legal and justice workforce. We turn attention to prevention of violence against women in legal and justice

settings, not because the drivers of violence are present only in this sector, but because they are present across all parts of the Victorian community. As a workforce of 32,000 people, the legal and justice sector can make a significant contribution to Victoria-wide efforts to address the underlying drivers of violence against women.

Since its inception, Starts With Us has conducted two sector-wide research projects and supported a broad range of stakeholders to take action. Importantly, a consortium of six leading organisations in Victoria's justice system is working collaboratively with Women's Legal to develop, pilot and evaluate gender equality strategies that are tailored to the needs of legal and justice workplaces. The outcomes of the consortium's work will be a significant contribution to building specialist knowledge, approaches and tools for the benefit of all legal and justice workplaces in Victoria.

### ABOUT PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

If we are serious about ending violence against women, we must begin by addressing gender inequality. Primary prevention of violence against women is long-term work that aims to reach whole populations to change the attitudes, cultural norms and social and structural conditions that underpin violence against women.

While Starts With Us is focussed on addressing the drivers of violence against women in the legal and justice workforce, it is part of a broader efforts across Victoria in a range of settings (such as education, health, and local communities). The Victorian Government's Free From Violence strategy aims to break the cycle of family violence and violence against women, and requires us to act on the underlying causes of violence against women in everyday places, to promote respect and equality and to reject violence in all its forms (Victorian Government 2017, p.8).

The national framework for the prevention of violence against women, Change the Story (Our Watch 2021), identifies four pillars of gender inequality that must be addressed:

- › Condoning of violence against women
- › Men's control of decision making and limits to women's independence
- › Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity
- › Male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control

Change the Story makes clear that other forms of oppression, discrimination, power and privilege work

alongside and are interconnected with the drivers of violence against women. Gender inequality "...exists in relation to multiple and intersecting systems of sexism; racism; colonialism; classism; heteronormativity; cisnormativity; homo-, bi- and transphobia; ableism and ageism; and their corresponding systems of power and privilege. These intersections create systems of structured inequality, characterised by the unequal distribution of power, wealth, income and social status". (Our Watch, 2021 p46).

As such, we cannot address gender inequality without also addressing other forms of intersectional discrimination - recognising that gender may not be the most significant factor in every context.

This report discusses violence against women and is inclusive of all women, regardless of gender assigned at birth. We recognise that violence experienced by cisgender heterosexual women can be different to violence experienced by lesbian, bisexual and/or trans women, who may also be targeted on the basis of sexuality and/or perceived non-conformity with gender norms (Our Watch, 2021, p 125). While there are strong synergies between the drivers of violence against women and the drivers of violence against LGBTIQ+ people, such as rigid gender norms (Carman, Fairchild et al., 2020, p. 12), there are also differences. Primary prevention strategies to eliminate violence against LGBTIQ+ must also target unique factors that drive it. See "Pride in Prevention: A guide to primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities" (Carman, Fairchild et. el, 2021).

### AN INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST APPROACH

Intersectionality is a way of understanding social experience and inequality that has its roots in black feminist theory and the work of legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991). Intersectionality challenged white feminist understandings of gender inequality and discrimination (Cruz et al., 2017) by centring the simultaneous impact of sexism and racism for women of colour in dominant white societies.

An expanded intersectional feminist approach recognises that people's experiences of gender are shaped by many forms of oppression, power and privilege. Intersectionality does not sideline gender but recognises that there is no fixed hierarchy of disadvantage (Nasr, 2017). Intersectionality moves away from focusing on single or isolated causes to explain societal oppression and provides a lens for "...analysing the dynamics of power and social inequality in our society" (Chen, 2017, p5). It helps us understand and interpret multiple forms of interlocking power domains that uphold each other to

reproduce oppressive conditions (Fernando, 2018; WIRE, 2021). It recognises that power, privilege and oppression shape the way individuals experience and understand their lives, due to 'difference' from the dominant group.

An intersectional approach to primary prevention of violence against women helps us see that, to be effective in progressing gender equality, we must challenge all forms of discrimination (Nasr, 2017). From this perspective, "...gender inequality cannot be disentangled from other social injustices because gender inequality frequently intersects with other forms of structural and systemic discrimination, inequality and injustice", such as racism, colonialism, classism, heteronormativity, cisnormativity, homo-, bi- and trans-phobia, ableism and ageism (Our Watch, 2021, p 28). Primary prevention should work to address both the gendered drivers of violence against women and the intersecting systems of oppression and discrimination, power and privilege that shape the social context in which this violence occurs (Our Watch, 2021, p. 47).

By working to improve the cultures, attitudes and systems that maintain who has power and privilege and who does not, the Victorian legal and justice workforce can make a meaningful contribution to the elimination of violence against women.

In this report we use this intersectional lens to interpret the research findings, to:

- › Understand the various ways women and gender diverse people in the Victorian legal and justice workplaces may experience discrimination, poor treatment and barriers to career progression
- › Understand how power and privilege function to maintain and reinforce elitism and inequalities in Victoria's legal and justice sector
- › Put forward tangible actions that organisations and individuals can take to make progress towards workplaces where all people are valued, respected equally and treated fairly

## BACKGROUND RESEARCH

### GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Gender inequality in the legal and justice workforce is reflected in high prevalence of sexual harassment and workplace bullying, structural and indirect discrimination (particularly in relation to parenting and caregiving), and poor career progression for women, despite women outnumbering men as law graduates (Campbell and Charlesworth, 2011; Law Council of Australia, 2013; Women's Legal Service Victoria, 2019; Victorian Legal Services Board, 2019; International Bar Association, 2019; Urbis, 2020).

Research also suggests the culture of the legal profession is steeped in traditional masculine stereotypes, with the model lawyer commonly associated with "masculine traits", such as assertiveness, strength, ruthlessness, resilience, confidence, and rationality (Bartlett, 2008; Campbell and Charlesworth, 2011; Bishop, 2013; Friedman, 2017). The valorisation of these qualities results in exclusion and harm such as high rates of burnout, and hostility to women and other minorities in the profession (Brady, 2019, Women's Legal Service Victoria, 2019).

### DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

The demographics of the legal profession in Australia are unrepresentative of the Australian population, particularly at the higher tiers of the profession (Burns, 2013 Israel et al 2017 Napier-Raman, 2018a; Napier-Raman, 2018b).

Demographic information about the legal workforce is limited, although existing data indicates:

- › The majority of lawyers in Victoria (70 per cent) were born in Australia and are from a European or Anglo background (Victorian Legal Services Board Commissioner 2019)
- › Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law students face significant barriers while at university, including discrimination and racism, leading to high attrition rates (Rodgers-Falk, 2011, Melville, 2014). Less than one per cent of lawyers nationally are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (Urbis, 2020)
- › The top tiers of the legal profession in Australia, including barristers, the judiciary and private law firm partners, are dominated by privately educated, white men from middle or upper class backgrounds who attended elite universities (Napier-Raman, 2018a, 2018b, Howieson & Fitzgerald, 2012)
- › While a high number of Asian Australians enter law, they are poorly represented as law firm partners, at the bar, and in the judiciary (Asian Australian Lawyers Association, 2015, McKeith, 2019)

- › Students from low socio-economic backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds are underrepresented in Australian law schools (Rodgers-Faulk, 2011; Melville, 2014; Israel et al., 2017).

### OTHER EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Institutionalised racism in the Australian legal and justice system is widely acknowledged to be a problem (Cunneen 2019, ALRC, 2018), but its relationship to the culture of the workforce is not well documented. Lawyers writing about diversity of the legal profession point anecdotally to persistent biases, particularly in regard to racism (Nguyen & Reynah 2017; Tienyi, 2019 Mills, 2020). Employees' experiences of discrimination and disadvantage (other than gender discrimination) in the legal profession is under-researched in Australia. There is, however, existing research to draw on regarding sexuality and gender diversity, bullying, and mental health.

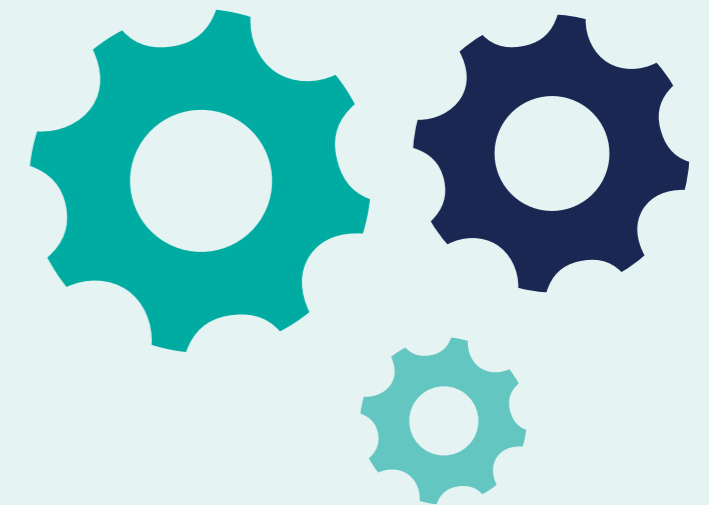
Surveys of professionals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ+) suggest that while inclusion and acceptance has improved in recent years, barriers to career progression and discrimination remain. One study found the legal profession remains socially conservative in regard to sexuality and gender diversity, and while there may be "tolerance" of LGBTIQ+ professionals, this often does not translate to equality (Ricciardo et al, 2021). Recent industry surveys found discriminatory or offensive behaviours were witnessed or experienced by 21 per cent of LGBTIQ+ participants and that many believe the legal profession in Australia needs to do more in regard to LGBTIQ+ inclusion (Lodewyke, 2017, Doraisamy, 2020).

In regard to mental illness, research shows that lawyers in Australia experience higher rates of mental illness compared to other professions and that this can be both a cause and outcome of workplace bullying (Andrea, 2019, Brady, 2019). Research by Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner found a range of cultural and institutional factors make it hard to improve the wellbeing of legal professionals (Brady, 2019). The factors include widespread acceptance of bullying, a culture of "resilience" and overwork, and poor workplace supports for employees suffering stress, burnout and vicarious trauma. The study also found that the "...dominance of a particular kind of 'alpha male' culture" contributed to barriers to wellbeing, particularly for women and minority groups who described experiencing sexual harassment and bullying that was sexist and racist in nature (Brady, 2019, p. 2).

Workplace bullying in the legal profession is alarmingly common (Law Council of Australia, 2013; International Bar Association, 2019; Women's Legal Service Victoria, 2019). Data collected by the International Bar Association (2019) for an international survey found more than half of the Australian women who responded had experienced bullying. Sexual harassment is also notoriously prevalent, with higher rates of sexual harassment reported in the legal profession than the national average (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2020; Victorian Legal Services Board Commissioner, 2019).

The recent Australian Human Rights Commission inquiry into workplace sexual harassment heard that, while gender inequality is an underlying condition for sexual harassment to occur, "...other forms of discrimination and disadvantage that create power imbalances in the workplace and in society, can also drive sexual harassment" (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2020, p. 18).

Available research seldom reports on people's specific experiences of bullying and sexual harassment and seldom captures significant demographic information aside from gender. There is a gap in research about the interaction between gender and other forms of social inequality and oppression. This report is a contribution to fill the research gap, and provides insights on experiences of gender and other forms of inequality in Victoria's legal and justice workforce.



## METHODOLOGY

### DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Between March and April 2021, professionals from across Victoria's legal and justice workforce were invited to complete an online survey and share their experiences and observations of how gender inequality intersected with other social inequalities in legal and justice workplaces. The survey collected both quantitative demographic information as well as inviting participants to describe their experiences (see Appendix 1 for survey questions).

Research participants were recruited using a snowball method, where current and former professionals in Victoria's legal and justice sector were invited via email and social media to participate in the study and encouraged to forward the invitation to others.

Participants' experiences were analysed by the Starts With Us project team at Women's Legal, using a thematic analysis to identify common themes in the data (see Liamputtong, 2009). Participants' responses to free text questions were read firstly to complete a content analysis of major themes and subsequently re-read critically to identify details and variation in responses. Themes were coded individually by members of the research team and cross-checked as a group for confirmation.

### RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

A total of 325 professionals responded to the survey with 81 per cent completing most questions. A full breakdown of participant demographics is included in Appendix 1.

The majority (93 per cent) of participants are women, 5 per cent are trans or gender diverse (including non-binary), and 2 per cent are men. Sixty nine per cent reported their sexual orientation as heterosexual and the remaining 31 per cent identified as LGBTIQ+.

Most participants were Australian born, with around 19 per cent born overseas. Participants were able to self-identify their ethnicity and racial background. While most participants described their ethnicity as Australian or Anglo ethnicities, such as English, Irish or Scottish, there was significant diversity in the remainder, with Asian, Southern and Eastern European, Middle Eastern, African and South American ethnicities reported. Three per cent of participants identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and less than 1 per cent reported a refugee or asylum seeker background.

A substantial number of participants (38 per cent) indicated that they identified as living with a disability, mental illness, or chronic illness. Although a significant proportion of participants were lawyers or solicitors (40 per cent), a wide range of other roles were reported, including paralegals, policy and research professionals, project managers, support workers, managers, directors and executives. The split between private and non-profit sector was almost even at 36.5 per cent and 36 respectively, with remaining participants stating they work in government, the bar, court services, and the judiciary.

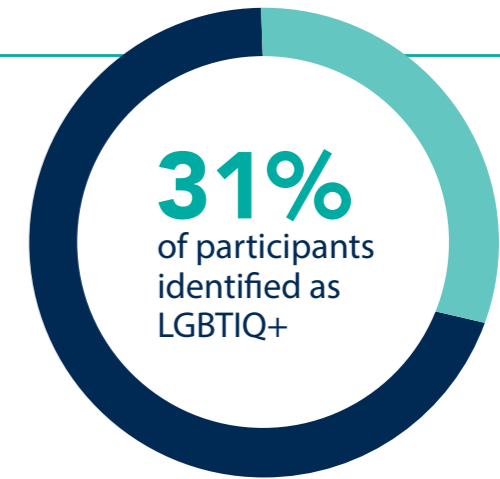
Survey participants were self-selected and they were specifically asked about discrimination, inequality, harassment, and poor treatment they had experienced or witnessed. We make no claims that the data is statistically representative. However, themes emerged in the data that are consistent with previous research.

### GENDER

**93%** Women

**5%** Trans, Gender Diverse or Non-Binary

**2%** Men



### ETHNICITY

**52%** report their ethnicity or cultural identity as other than Australian including Asian, Middle Eastern, African and European.



**19%** of participants were born overseas

**3%** are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



### DISABILITY

**38%**

of participants report living with a disability, chronic illness, or mental illness

### OCCUPATION

**40%**

are lawyers (a range of other roles were reported)



### JOB ROLE



**18%**

work in Government



**36%**

work in the Non-profit sector



**36.5%**

work in the Private sector



## WHAT VICTORIAN LEGAL AND JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS TOLD US

**“ Asked where I am from regularly. Not being allowed in Court room early and asked to wait with clients once due to racial profiling. Bench mispronounces my name despite weekly appearances before them. Waiting to be called for hours due to senior lawyers being prioritised. Being spoken down to or patronised due to gender or being exposed to sexism.”**

Research participant

This section provides a snapshot of discrimination, disadvantage and bullying or harassment experienced or witnessed by Research participants while working in Victorian legal and justice workplaces. The most common forms of discrimination, bullying and harassment described by Research participants related to their gender, age, race/ethnicity or religion, and disability or mental health. Less frequent, but still common, were descriptions of being the target of discrimination, harassment or bullying because of class background, sexuality or gender identity [see appendix 2].

### RACE, ETHNICITY AND RELIGION

**“ She humiliated me in front of my staff and other teams... I reported to HR and she apologised later, however, she continuously would make derogatory comments on 'how thick my hair is' or 'that she can't eat my food' or 'how ignorant I am in [not] knowing about the Australian Footy.’”**

Research participant

Experiences of racism in Australian workplaces are common (see for example Diversity Council Australia/ Jumbunna Institute 2020; Blair et al 2017; Bargallie, 2020) with recent research finding that women of colour often face significant barriers, disadvantage and discrimination in the workplace (Women of Colour Australia, 2021). Our research found that Victorian legal and justice workplaces are no exception.

Being the subject of, or witnessing racist jokes, and racial, ethnic or religious stereotyping, were the most common experiences of racial micro-aggressions reported by participants. Racial micro-aggression refers to “...brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target group or person.” (Sue et.al. 2008 p. 273).

**“ When I was a student volunteer at a solicitor’s office and there was another student volunteer who was also Chinese, a senior professional visited and saw us, turned to the solicitor and said, “So it’s the Asian invasion”. Being mistaken for other Asian/Chinese solicitors”**

Research participant

**“ Being asked to confirm that I came to Australia by plane (as opposed to boat I assumed)... these questions were clearly due to my skin tone as I have a very simple last name”**

Research participant

Participants also described that they or others had been overlooked for promotions or certain roles due to ethnicity, race or religion, or discriminated against in the recruitment process.

**“ We mainly speak [a language other than English] in my country but we learned English at school. I was told that I need to take English classes as my pronunciation and writing was not good. I will not get promoted or have a pay rise. There was always a different reason for not giving me a pay rise.”**

Research participant

Others described experiencing racism and sexism in interchangeable, inseparable and simultaneous ways.

**“ Being the subject of jokes because I am a woman and Chinese - assumptions about the gender roles I take on at home etc.”**

Research participant

Some participants noted that, when instances of racist discrimination were raised in their workplaces, the response was further use of harmful racial stereotypes.

One participant observed, ...brown members of staff are often seen as volatile or overly 'emotional' when they

express concern about systemic racism and issues of racial justice”. This attitude has the effect of diminishing the seriousness of racism, silencing complaints against racist behaviour, and making it more difficult for others to speak up.

### DISABILITY

**“ I have a weird gait because of my disability. My boss followed me down the corridor in front of everyone imitating how I walked and laughing.”**

Research participant

Almost 40 per cent of survey participants indicated they are living with a disability, mental illness and/or chronic illness. Of those, a significant majority reported mental illnesses such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and depression. Statistically, legal professionals in Australia suffer high rates of mental illness compared to other professions, and a culture of 'resilience', overwork, high stress, and poor recognition of mental health issues within the profession are all contributing factors to high levels of poor mental health (Brady, 2019).

Our research corroborates these findings.

**“ My former employer told my colleagues and barristers about my mental health when it wasn't impacting my work”**

Research participant

A substantial number of survey participants indicated they had experienced or witnessed discrimination, disadvantage, bullying or harassment due to disability, mental illness or chronic illness. A strong theme in participants' responses was that their mental illness, disability or chronic health issue was not taken seriously, not believed, or dismissed.

**“ My manager does not take my health condition seriously. My requests around accessibility often are ignored or I am told to compromise. Prior to becoming**

**aware that I had [a condition] I experienced a lengthy process of my manager attempting to manage me out through her belittling me or gas lighting me. Once I had a diagnose [sic] I continued to experience the same issues even though I had explained that I had cognitive concerns etc. My manager tried to get me to resign and reconsider if I was the right fit for my role. Instead of attempting to support and offer support in the diagnosis and attempting to discuss reasonable adjustments.”**

Research participant

Legal and justice workplaces were also described as not accommodating to people's needs, often because it was seen as 'too hard' by management. Participants told us they were asked to 'make do' or 'compromise' rather than have their needs met. Participants reported having experienced discrimination in workplaces that have disability action plans, but in practice lacked the necessary supports. Participants described instances where reasonable adjustments that embed or enact those plans through accessibility requirements, changes to work arrangements and other reasonable adjustments were not met.

**“ Refusal to hold team based events in accessible conference room, instead holding upstairs, where inaccessible”**

Research participant

Some survey participants mentioned their jobs, workloads and/or work environments had contributed to their mental illness, and that they did not receive support when they asked for it. Disturbingly, a small number described having their employment terminated or role demoted after asking for help. Individuals advocating disability rights in the workplace was seen as a deficit, indicating a culture where people with mental illness or chronic illness are viewed as a burden. As one participant said: “There was a general understanding that taking time off was not being a team player...”. Others stated they had unfair expectations placed on them and requests for assistance were not considered.

### DISCRIMINATION

**25%** said they experienced discrimination due to their ethnicity, race or religion

**22%** said they experienced discrimination due to disability or mental illness

**11%** said they experienced discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity

## BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

**45%** described bullying or harassment due to gender

**13%** described bullying or harassment due to disability

**15%** described bullying or harassment due to race, ethnicity or religion

## SEXUALITY AND GENDER IDENTITY

**“...regular micro-aggressions common in heteronormative workplace”** *Research participant*

Almost one-third of Research participants identified as LGBTIQ+ (30 per cent) and just under 5 per cent identified as trans or gender diverse. Previous research has found the legal profession is not yet truly inclusive of LGBTIQ+ people, and conservative values around sexuality and gender identity still influence “...the overall culture of the profession” (Ricciardo et al., 2021, pg. 3), “tolerance” of LGBTIQ+ professionals does not always translate to acceptance or inclusion, and diversity initiatives can be tokenistic.

Discrimination, disadvantage and bullying related to sexuality was less frequently identified than other forms of discrimination, although some participants relayed examples of both subtle and blatant homophobia.

**“As a newcomer to [workplace] another newcomer [competing for a promotion] persuaded [supervisor] to reject my application by telling him I was a lesbian (to which he reacted with disgust). When applying [for a position] was asked if I was ‘just going to go off and have babies’ to which I replied that my (same sex) partner might. Did not get accepted.”** *Research participant*

**“Offensive language regarding homosexuality”** *Research participant*

Though less commonly noted, participants’ descriptions of poor treatment related to gender identity highlight the significant harm experienced by trans and gender diverse people in the workplace. Participants reported experiences of exclusion, being subjected to jokes made about

transgender people, hostility about their appearance, and mis-gendering. One participant described workplaces paying lip service to acceptance and diversity, while in practice tolerating discriminatory attitudes and behaviours.

**“Exclusion in some spaces. Being asked if I am in wrong bathroom, men not speaking to me directly or including me in conversations. Some people not looking at me directly. Mis-gendering...”** *Research participant*

On survey participant described feeling unsafe at work, “...it was necessary for me to hide my transgender identity in order to not place my physical safety at risk...” They went on to explain that their experiences had occurred at workplaces that were ostensibly LGBTIQ+ supporters/allies, including workplaces that held special events for trans and non-binary people. The participant described these events as hurtful and contradictory given the treatment they had been subjected to.

## AGE

**“I have been told by a solicitor briefing me upon first meeting me that he was glad I looked older than my Bar photo because he was afraid he was briefing a little girl.”** *Research participant*

In our first Starts With Us discussion paper, we described that young women experienced bullying and harassment as part of a continuum of behaviours (including sexual harassment) that had the effect of devaluing and diminishing their worth. Similarly in this research, age was found to be a factor in women’s experiences of discrimination, disadvantage and harassment. Younger women described being infantilised, degraded, disrespected, and not taken seriously or mistaken for students or hospitality staff. Others described that being

an older worker led to ridicule and being overlooked or sidelined for work and in organisational decisions. Assumptions were also made about their capabilities (particularly in relation to using technology).

**“General comments about age and that ‘young people’ make more valuable contributions because they are more inclined to engage with social media platforms therefore their inputs are more valuable”** *Research participant*

Consistent with our previous research findings, age in combination with gender was reported as a prominent cause of discrimination in legal and justice workplaces.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

**“I was surprised to discover upon starting law school how unusual [coming from a public school education] was...I have found it frustrating how closely-knit the law school is, and how knowing people working within the legal system greatly increases your chances of getting a job.”** *Research participant*

As described earlier, there is a profound lack of diversity in educational and class background in the top tiers of the legal profession, which has its roots in the prestigious law schools many attend (Israel et al. 2017). The vast majority of the judiciary, for example, attended elite private boys’ schools (Napier-Raman, 2018a), and barriers to entry and completion of law school remain for people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, participants in our survey noted that certain privileges are afforded to the “...private school boys club”, as it

was described by one participant. Attending the “right” school and university, or having family connections, creates pathways to career progression that are not available to those who attend public schools or are from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Lack of family financial support and having to work while studying, rather than volunteering and internships, also disadvantage those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

**“I feel that being from a very poor background, I had to work harder than others with less support. Less opportunity available for things such as clerkships. My resume will not look as good as others that have had the luxury of private schools, good grades from being spoon fed - starting from the beginning or ones career. I have had to work for money to support myself from a very early age, whereas others had the luxury of volunteering in legal avenues”** *Research participant*

Jokes and stereotyping, and elitist comments about schools and universities, were reported by a number of participants.

**“At a job interview with a private law firm, the employer made disparaging and elitist comments about the public school which was listed on my resume”** *Research participant*

Others described being excluded due to not having the “right” class background, not fitting into the norms of elite workplaces, not understanding how the ‘system’ worked, and having to work so much harder to succeed in law than their more privileged peers.

## OVERARCHING OBSERVATIONS

The experiences of discrimination described by survey participants highlight ways in which different forms of privilege function in legal and justice workplaces. Our findings demonstrate that a gender lens alone cannot capture the multiple, overlapping ways inequality and disadvantage are experienced by women in legal and justice workplaces. When participants’ experiences are looked at as whole, patterns of power and privilege are evident that indicate legal and justice workplaces both reflect and reproduce white, able-bodied, cisnormative, heteronormative, and patriarchal power structures.

## WORKPLACE CULTURES AND EXCLUSION

**“Workplaces refusing to consider flexible work options at senior level...Workplaces refusing to allow for time off to attend religious events. Workplaces not having internal grievance policies, and being mocked for certain ethnic / physical characteristics. Workplaces valorising excessive, full time work which excludes women with caring and/or religious / cultural obligations. Workplaces prioritising a certain aesthetic. Workplaces celebrating Christmas without seeing how exclusionary this is for people from diverse religious backgrounds. Workplaces requiring staff to ‘out’ their religious diversity by explicitly asking for days off for cultural events, while see Anglo-Christian events as ‘normal.’”**

*Research participant*

Survey participants were asked to describe the culture of Victorian legal and justice workplaces they work in or have worked in. When looked at together with individual experiences described in the prior section, a picture emerges of legal and justice workplaces as highly exclusionary. Participants described subtle and overt ways in which exclusion occurs; including “everyday” (Essed, 2002) sexism and racism, homophobia and transphobia, marginalisation of employees of different cultural backgrounds, and lack of support for those living with mental illness or disability.

**“Conversations about people’s skin colour and referring to them as “black” or “black black”... Regular conversations about current events, and concluding that “boys will be boys”. Conversations in a broader context about mental health often draws the conclusion that we need to just suck it up thereby creating an environment where you cannot express if you are experiencing poor mental health...”**

*Research participant*

### “EVERYDAY” RACISM IN WORKPLACE CULTURES

Based on participants’ observations, a key way in which exclusion operates is through racist micro-aggressions. The volume of survey responses about micro-aggressions suggests it is a significant feature of legal and justice workplaces. Racist comments and “jokes” focused on people’s skin colour, religious or cultural backgrounds, and discriminatory stereotypes directed at both clients and employees were commonly relayed by participants.

**“When we hired a Muslim at our workplace, her burqa was commented on by someone saying, ‘we’ve hired a terrorist’”**

*Research participant*

**“Solicitors refer to Chinese clients in discriminatory ways such as “Ching Chong China man” or making fun of Chinese names in a derogatory way”.**

*Research participant*

**“At boutique commercial firms I have observed a disgusting amount of racial discrimination and comments based on someone’s religion, ethnicity, or cultural background. Sometimes these comments were made in ignorance or stereotyping, sometimes they were said with malice”.**

*Research participant*

The casual manner in which the comments described above were made reflects the very definition of “everyday racism”, as practices that disadvantage ethnic minorities which infiltrate organisational life and become seen as normal (Essed, 2002).

Several participants also noted that racism they witnessed centred on employees’ professionalism, aptitude or abilities; including, as one participant stated, “... generalisations about people’s work ethic based on their backgrounds”.

**“...a senior manager in our organisation complained to my colleague about how [a group of First Nation’s colleagues visiting the organisation] were being ‘unprofessional’ in the office and that they didn’t want this group to meet in our offices again....In my opinion it was a mix of classism/racism that this ultra-privileged person thought was ‘unprofessional’...”**

*Research participant*

**57%** had observed discriminatory attitudes and/or cultures in their workplace

**40%** of participants did not report or seek support for the bullying, harassment or discrimination they had experienced

**44%** of participants said their experiences had caused them to consider leaving the sector

**“I have noticed a general attitude of people looking down on others if they have accents, especially brown people with accents as opposed to European for example. There is a general view that people of south Asian appearance, for example, who have accents are not as smart as others”**

*Research participant*

**“Workplaces that are extremely white washed with the views of the white males being the ones that are given dominance, because they are the ones in leadership, even though they do not represent our clients in the slightest. Our ‘inclusion and diversity committee’ is also chaired by a white person and has predominantly white members”**

*Research participant*

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Like the previous phase of Starts With Us research, a significant number participants stated they had experienced sexual harassment. In the current research, however, some participants explained that their experience of sexual harassment was related to their sexual orientation, and others described sexual harassment which occurred in conjunction with homophobic or other harassment.

**“...a colleague discussed my sexuality and relationship practices in detail after introducing me while showing them around the office...”**

*Research participant*

While women of all backgrounds reported experiencing sexual harassment, lesbian women also appeared to experience this in ways that was connected to their LGBTIQ+ identity, and/or homophobic bullying. This is consistent with the Respect@Work report (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2020) which found that rates of sexual harassment are much higher for people who otherwise experience disadvantage and discrimination.

### POOR RECOGNITION OF DIVERSITY

Not surprisingly, given the descriptions of exclusion and discrimination and hostility, participants noted a general lack of diversity within their workplaces.

As one respondent noted, when workplaces lack diversity in their leadership it “...sends an implicit and sometimes explicit message that there is no space for people from diverse backgrounds”. Some indicated the lack of diversity was a result of deliberate hiring preferences, where workplaces favoured a particular demographic:

**“While not overt, I can see men and louder people favoured, and people of colour systemically overlooked”**

*Research participant*

**“Our workplace recruit and champion white middle class, private school educated people.”**

*Research participant*

In the first Starts With Us report, we found women are often excluded from socialising and bonding with colleagues due to social events being held in male dominated spaces, such as strip bars, which impairs networking opportunities and therefore career progression for women. The current research highlights that exclusion also occurs via the normalisation and over-valuing of white Australian culture including how colleagues socialise, and through the kinds of events that are celebrated. An example cited by participants is the celebration of Christian events, such as Christmas, while experiencing difficulty obtaining or being denied leave for non-Christian celebrations or cultural events. This included requests for taking time off for Aboriginal cultural traditions and practices.

**“ In corporate law, I have seen discrimination against ethnicity/religion when colleagues have taken leave to observe traditional holidays. I have seen these same colleagues faced discrimination in not being considered for secondments because they are not white.”**

Research participant

Another form of exclusion identified by participants is poor recognition of diversity in sexuality. For example, one participant noted that while International Women's Day is acknowledged in their workplace, International Day Against Homophobia Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) is not, and another participant described that requests to have the LGBTIQ+ flag in their email signature were denied.

Participants described that exclusion can lead to significant fatigue and having to work hard to “fit in” socially in order to succeed in the sector.

**“ At moments, you feel like you don't belong or fit in and have to work harder to feel included, like you have to prove something.”**

Research participant

**“ I often find it difficult to feel like I'm a “cultural fit” for workplaces and teams because I do not share the same cultural experiences and backgrounds as most of my colleagues.”**

Research participant

Like the previous Starts With Us report, several participants said they had left workplaces or the sector altogether because of their experiences. Many described experiencing significant barriers to career progression and fewer opportunities, despite working as hard as, or harder than, their peers.

**“ As a woman migrant to Australia, I have had a tough experience finding my way in a career with the government in the legal and justice workplaces and I believe that there is still a lot of work to be done for women of ethnicity to develop a career in justice. In addition to ethnicity and gender, also age is a barrier.”**

Research participant

## OVERARCHING OBSERVATIONS

The experiences shared by participants show that one of the ways privilege is maintained in the workplace is by a culture of exclusion that is perpetrated in both subtle and overt ways. In the first Starts With Us report, the link between the hyper-masculine traits of the model lawyer and workplaces that favour men and are hostile to women was discussed. In this phase of the research, however, participants' experiences illustrate how class, racial and other forms of privilege are intertwined and lead to workplaces that are hostile to difference.

**“ I was very upset after being called a migrant at an interview when I was looking for a traineeship. It made me realise that I had to work extra hard and it would be harder for me due to my skin tone.”**

Research participant

A significantly frequent comment was that people's experiences in the legal sector had caused self-doubt and feelings of worthlessness that led them to question their abilities and their career choice.

**“ It made me doubt myself and my ability to succeed.”**

Research participant

**“ I constantly questioned my value and worth.”**

Research participant

**“ I constantly question whether working in law is for me.”**

Research participant

It has been argued that the culture of the legal profession champions and values certain norms, traits and behaviours which become reinforced in workplaces that are (cis) male dominated (Bartlett, 2008; Bishop, 2013). As Galloway argues, the law has “...been built by men for men over centuries, and the legal profession continues to rely heavily on personal networks that by their very nature reinforce the status quo” (2020, p. 1). As described earlier, the model lawyer is commonly associated with masculine stereotypes and a culture of resilience and overwork, leading to high rates of burnout and fatigue.

In the first Starts With Us report, we discussed the link between the hyper-masculine traits of the model lawyer, and workplaces that favour men and are overtly hostile to women where attributes associated with “femininity” are signs of “weakness” (2018). Participants' descriptions of workplace cultures in the current phase of the research reflect a similar dynamic, as well as highlighting ways other forms of societal privilege are upheld and result in legal and justice workplaces that are hostile to difference.

## HOW POWER AND PRIVILEGE ARE UPHELD

**“ Intersectionality is a way to see a person or group's experience of privilege and marginalisation through hierarchies of power. As a feminist framework, it focuses on how power works through social and economic systems to maintain positions of power or powerlessness”**

WIRE, 2021

When examined as a whole, the experiences of Research participants present a picture of legal and justice workplaces where power and privilege function to create environments in which differences from the norm are not accepted, or are perceived as not accepted. Mendez de la Brena & Baracsi (2020, p31) explain that power can be “... embedded in beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, socio-cultural structures, institutionalised policies and ideologies... [and] systems of oppression such as classism, (hetero) sexism, ableism, racism and other oppressive 'isms' are interconnected in ways that nurture, reinforce and validate each aspect of existence”. The experiences shared by practitioners for this research show ways in which those multiple forms of power interact.

Our research for the first Starts With Us discussion paper found sexism and gender inequality are prevalent in the sector, and commonly takes the form of gender stereotyping, disrespectful or dismissive attitudes towards women, preferential treatment of male employees, pay inequity, and inequality of opportunity (particularly for those with caring responsibilities). The current research extends our understanding to ways that gender inequality is experienced differently, and with varying harmful impacts.

**“ It is very difficult to isolate singular experiences of discrimination and prejudice, because the ways in which unconscious bias, exclusion, and pressure to conform are exhibited in nuanced small behaviours over time.”**

Research participant

Analysis of participants' experiences as a whole indicates that power is reinforced and maintained in discrete ways. On its own, a gender lens to understand inequality can miss other important cultural and structural factors that impact professionals' experiences and treatment in the workplace.

### THE RACIALLY AND CLASS PRIVILEGED BOYS' CLUB.

**“ The legal sector is still based on archaic patriarchal structures. It's so hard to unpack all the subtle discrimination that happens day to day. I feel and see the micro & macro aggressions of classism, racism, ableism in my workplace every day, and my workplace is a 'social justice' organisation. Change really has to be made from the top down, and from the bottom up.”**

Research participant

Consistent with our previous research, participants reiterated that a “boys' club” culture is prevalent in Victorian legal and justice workplaces. While the previous research discussed ways in which the boys club discretely functions to maintain male privilege, it is overwhelming evident in the current research that the boy's club culture also reflects and upholds class and racial privilege.

While the legal and justice sector in Victoria is permeated by a culture that privileges white, Anglo cisgender, able-bodied, class privileged, heterosexual male identity, it is important to recognise that systems of privilege and power don't only benefit men, and that not all men are privileged. The ways power and privilege influences cultural norms in a highly competitive profession can lead people, including women, to exercise whatever power they might have. Women who more readily fit into the valued norms of the profession can benefit from ways in which they are otherwise privileged. For example, while sexual harassment and other expressions of gender inequality are common experiences for white women, they benefit from white privilege (see for example Hamad and Liddle, 2017, Hamad, 2019). In fact, many of the experiences of bullying described by participants were perpetrated by other women they work with, and some said their experiences occurred in social justice and feminist organisations.

**“ I have worked in [Community Legal Centres] CLCs for just under a decade. I have seen horrendous treatment of staff in that time. Managers in CLCs are sometimes far behind other sectors, ignoring or actively working against diversity. I feel my strong desire and commitment to social justice is used to instil a feeling of obligation and responsibility and therefore makes me and others put up with bad behaviour and unfair work conditions. ”**

Research participant

### COMPLAINTS MECHANISMS, TRAINING AND POLICIES ARE NOT ENOUGH

Diversity and inclusion advocates often promote strategies that place a great deal of the responsibility for change with the affected individuals, including pursuing complaints and encouraging women and minorities to be “more pushy” to advance their careers (Allman, 2016). Speaking up about injustice can have negative consequences, as well as holding those who are harmed responsible for addressing problems that are cultural and structural in nature. Additionally, for people to be able to speak up, organisations must make it safe for them to do so.

While it is crucial that workplaces and the sector have robust complaints mechanisms in place, it was reported by participants that complaints about poor treatment being minimised is one of the common and discrete ways in which power is maintained. Only half of the participants who experienced discrimination or bullying had reported the experience at their workplace, and many described that reporting did not result in accountability or action. Troublingly, several participants said that making complaints about discrimination they experienced or witnessed had impacted their career negatively and they therefore felt less likely to complain in the future.

**“ ...I have felt deeply hurt and sidelined by this behaviour, because it is not possible to bring up negative experiences ... or alert firms about the reality of their cultures. [...] surface displays of support are a form of gaslighting and manipulation to disguise the lack of real change that continues to pervade the legal industry.”**

Research participant

**“ We are not allowed to talk about these things because the people who create this culture are titans of industry. If you speak you do so at your own peril and can risk your entire career. We are voiceless”**

Research participant

While women of all backgrounds reported experiencing sexual harassment, lesbian women also appeared to experience this in ways that was connected to their LGBTIQ identity, and/or homophobic bullying, sexual harassment and sexism. This reflects the findings of the Respect@Work report (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2020) that sexual harassment is much higher for people who already experience higher rates of disadvantage and discrimination.

Similarly, and consistent with our previous research, participants reiterated that a “boys’ club” culture is prevalent in Victorian legal and justice settings. While the previous research discussed the ways in which the boys club discretely functions to maintain male privilege, it is overwhelming evident in the current data that the boy’s club culture also reflects and upholds class and racial privilege.

Training and awareness-raising can play an important role in building the capacity of workforces to take action on discrimination and inequality. Similarly, organisational diversity and inclusion policies can be part of the foundations for organisational change. However, on their own these strategies do not improve workplace cultures and can be detrimental if they obscure responsibility for tackling the systemic, structural and cultural ways in which power is afforded and denied. Organisations that do not address systems of power and privilege stand to lose the confidence and trust of their workforce if actions are perceived as inauthentic.

**“ In recent years there have been plenty of events and CPDs addressing the issue of harassment and discrimination. They are always full of people who are already doing the right thing and never attended by the people who need to be there. They need to be a compulsory part of legal training and continuing professional development. We ought not be appointing anyone as silk or to the bench unless we are positively satisfied that they take issues of harassment and discrimination (on ANY basis) seriously and are ACTIVELY working to combat it.”**

Research participant

## WHAT NEXT? TAKING ACTION

Our research paints a stark picture of how privilege and power operate in Victorian legal and justice workplaces and the resulting harmful impacts of this including harassment, discrimination, bullying, poor career progression and exclusion. These research findings play a vital role in steering the Starts With Us project. An intersectional approach helps us see that, to be effective in progressing gender equality and preventing violence against women, all forms of discrimination and power must be disrupted. Gender inequality cannot be disentangled other forms of “structural and systemic discrimination, inequality and injustice” (Our Watch, 2021, p 28). Our work in this space should therefore work to address the gendered drivers of violence against women as well as the intersecting systems of oppression and discrimination, power and privilege.

### INTERSECTIONAL GENDER EQUALITY ACTION IS AN OBLIGATION, NOT AN OPTION

Legal and justice workplaces are obligated to ensure equal and safe workplaces. Using an intersectional gender equality lens contributes to making sure workplace strategies to address gender inequality are for the benefit all women.

Since the introduction of the Gender Equality Act in 2020, the Victorian public sector (which includes some legal organisations) is required to consider intersectionality in the development of their Workplace Gender Equality Action Plans (Victorian Government, 2020). The rest of the legal and justice sector should follow this lead. In addition, organisations need to comply with their legal and ethical obligations to provide a safe, fair and equitable workplace, under the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act (2010).

An intersectional approach to gender equality also links directly to international human rights agreements in regard to upholding and protecting women’s rights to which Australia is a signatory on (Our Watch, 2021).

We also know that organisations that actively value inclusion and diversity attract and retain highly skilled staff, improve productivity and performance, and increase growth and market competitiveness (Law Society NSW, 2021). Workplaces that prioritise safety, fairness and equity also benefit from attracting a more diverse range of clients, role model high ethical standards, and greatly reduce the risks of discrimination claims made against them (Law Society NSW, 2021).

### BEYOND DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Inclusive workplaces are those where all employees feel valued and respected, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can meaningfully contribute their perspectives and talents (Diversity Council Australia, 2022). While greater representation and diversity in an organisation is a positive step towards encouraging inclusion, diversity in of itself will not necessarily change where power is held, how it used, and how it is experienced by those who don’t have it.

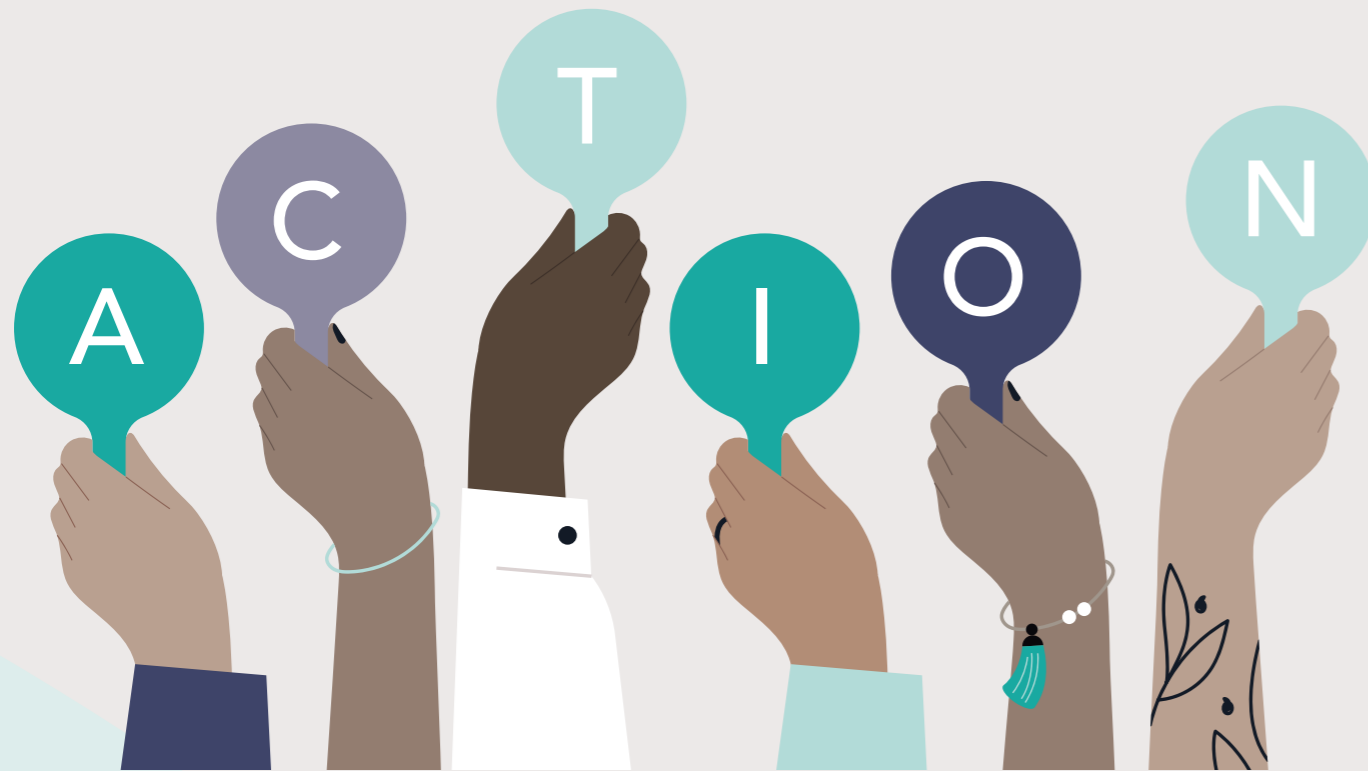
An intersectional approach towards gender equality means shining a light on who holds power and why. The problem doesn’t lie with those who are marginalised but with the cultures and power structures that exclude those who are deemed ‘other’. Put another way, we need to understand what sits behind exclusion, so we can work to bring about meaningful inclusion.

### TAKING SECTOR-WIDE ACTION

We know that generally speaking, the legal profession operates within a highly competitive, hierarchal environment. The experiences of inequality and discrimination described by Research participants stem from systems, structures and cultures of power and privilege; as such, action and investment is needed across the sector not just in specific workplaces.

The Change the Story Framework outlines the need to take coordinated action on the gendered drivers of violence with an understanding of the social context in which these drivers occur. Sector-wide, this means:

- › Coordinated leadership: leaders listen to and understand the nature and impacts of intersectional forms of discrimination and commit to genuine inclusive action
- › Consistent messaging about actions and benefits of transforming workplaces so that respect, equality and opportunity are afforded to everyone
- › Sector-wide targets to drive diversity across sector and at all levels
- › Strong, accountable and consistent responses to bullying, harassment and discrimination and consequences for perpetrators
- › Collection, analysis and sharing of data to measure change and inform forward planning
- › Collective advocacy to government to keep intersectional gender equality a policy and funding priority



### TAKING WORKPLACE ACTION

Most workplaces have diversity and inclusion committees or similar bodies that lead organisational change. These mechanisms ordinarily aim to ensure there is diversity in the workplace and inclusive cultures and practices. However, our research tells us that discrimination, bullying and workplace harassment are still experienced even where these mechanisms are in place.

Our recommendations are based on our research findings and draw on a number of key frameworks that make valuable contributions to ensuring an intersectional lens is used in progressing gender equality in workplaces to prevent violence against women. Of particular note are:

- › **Pride in Prevention:** A guide to primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities (La Trobe University, Rainbow Health, 2021).
- › **Intersectionality Matters** (Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, 2017),
- › **Change the Story** (Our Watch, 2021),
- › **Lens on, hands on:** An Intersectional Guide to Financial Capability Program Development (WIRE, 2021)
- › **Everybody Matters:** Inclusion and Equity Statement (Family Safety Victoria, 2018).

Our recommendations have been developed in consultation with representatives from the legal and justice sector. Rather than a prescriptive 'how to' manual, these recommendations aim to guide thinking and action through an intersectional lens. With such a diversity of organisations within the sector, a one size fits all approach is not appropriate. The following principles will be helpful when considering the recommendations:

- › Ensure your organisational leadership both understands the need for this approach and commits to long term action.
- › Build on your strengths and look for existing, enabling workplace systems and practices. There may be areas you are already active in, such as collecting demographic data, reviewing key policies or building a positive, respectful workplace culture. Extend on these strengths as they offer a familiar platform from which to build.
- › Aim for mutually reinforcing and comprehensive actions that drive progress. In other words, it's better to start working comprehensively on one of these recommendations, rather than just one aspect of multiple recommendations.
- › Make a plan. It's unlikely your organisation will have capacity to take on all the recommendations at once. Build an iterative plan that aims for realistic work, over time and considers resourcing needs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### › RECOMMENDATION 1

#### ESTABLISH THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPACITY FOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Taking meaningful action towards intersectional gender equality in the legal and justice workplaces means a sustained and long term commitment, investing time and resources, and planning, evaluation and reporting.

#### What does this look like in practice?

- › Establish a well-resourced, skilled, and trained project team with a clearly articulated mandate for change.
- › Organisational leaders publicly express their support for the work and the project team, and make intersectional gender equality part of their role to ensure this work has the support and longevity it needs.
- › Set up monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and reporting and accountability requirements from the start of your action planning.

### › RECOMMENDATION 2

#### ACTION THAT IS BOTH TOP DOWN AND BOTTOM UP

The knowledge of those with lived experience of inequality and discrimination must be front and centre of any work undertaken to achieve change. However, the responsibility for taking action must not rest on those experiencing inequality. Indeed, leaders and managers have a legal obligation to create and maintain safe work environments as prescribed by the positive duty under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. Be mindful that those who speak up can experience, or be fearful of, even greater harm, victimisation and scapegoating. This is especially the case in organisations that haven't acknowledged how their workplace culture and structures contribute to exclusion, bullying and harassment.

#### What does this look like in practice?

- › Design and roll out a regular calendar of Intersectional Gender Equality 101 training for ALL staff in all roles and at all levels. This needs to part of induction of new staff and ongoing and regularly delivered mandatory staff training. The training needs to introduce foundational concepts, data and definitions, and the role workplaces can play in progressing intersectional gender equality.
- › Organisational leaders listen, acknowledge and genuinely understand intersectionality and gender inequality and make a sustained and committed investment to embed long term, mutually reinforcing strategies that create positive change.
- › Individuals critically reflect on their own position of power and privilege.
- › Leaders and those in positions of power and authority must model the change they want to see.

## RECOMMENDATION 3

### GATHER DATA THROUGH MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON IN YOUR ORGANISATION

Gather comprehensive demographic data about your whole workforce. You should ask about employees' experiences as well as how they think inequality and exclusion can be addressed in your workplace. This will give you an accurate picture of your workplace bearing in mind that a range of factors may impact on experiences and opportunities in the workplace (Nasr, 2020)

#### What does this look like in practice?

- › Plan out a multifaceted engagement strategy so that employees can safely and anonymously share their experiences and insights via a range of methods and in a broad timeframe.
- › Collect workplace demographic data: disaggregate and analyse the data in relation to Aboriginality, age, disability, race, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, and other relevant social categories.
- › Examine the demographics of decision-making positions such as senior leadership, committees and your board, to ensure marginalised people are represented. Collect and review disaggregated data on pay and contract equity and the composition of management teams.
- › Carry out a *Culture Check* to get a deeper understanding of how power and privilege is functioning in your organisation. Via anonymous surveys you may ask about experiences of discrimination, bullying and disadvantage – prioritising respondents' safety and anonymity. Ask about the cultural norms in your workplace: do they reflect the values commonly associated with the "model lawyer" such as overwork or aggression? Or do they reflect respect, collaboration and inclusiveness?
- › Collect and analyse this data regularly to check your progress and track changes over time.

## RECOMMENDATION 4

### PLAN AND IMPLEMENT MUTUALLY REINFORCING STRATEGIES LED BY AN ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Ensure gender equality plans and strategies are directly informed by what staff have told you and involve a diverse range of organisational stakeholders in developing strategies (Nasr, 2020).

This means the direction and priorities of workplace gender equality plans and actions taken by senior leadership should be decided in partnership with employees (particularly those most marginalised) and informed by their experiences in the workplace.

#### What does this look like in practice?

Planning and taking action to transform the systems and culture that shape different employees' experiences and opportunities are co-designed by those with lived experience include workplace-specific responses, such as:

- › Implement inclusive, equitable and transparent processes across the employee life cycle: attraction, recruitment, on-boarding, professional development, retention, and flexible work practices.
- › Target the diversification of the workforce through recruitment processes that intentionally drive up diversity across the workplace and at all levels. Leadership and management communicate about initiatives that challenge power and privilege.

- › Report back to staff on progress against specifically developed indicators of success.
- › Training for leadership and management on legal obligations and why intersectional workplace gender equality is central to a well-functioning workplace, and how to design, plan and evaluate the work.
- › Incorporate training in your annual staff training calendar on your organisation's goals and legal obligations, and what is expected of staff.
- › Build capacity at the leadership and management level for managing and responding to any potential resistance and backlash to this work.
- › Design a communications plan with key messages and use a range of methods to deliver them.

Create or update existing policies that aim to create the conditions for gender equality in the workplace, such as flexible work and leave policies. For example, include leave for religious festivals outside the usual Christian calendar.

## RECOMMENDATION 5

### MAKE IT SAFE FOR PEOPLE TO SPEAK UP ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES AND TO REPORT ABUSE

We know that many people who experience workplace bullying, harassment and discrimination don't report it, and/or resign their position rather than risk experiencing further disadvantage or trauma. Organisations need to shift to a complainant-centred reporting process and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the complainant is prioritised.

#### What does this look like in practice?

- › Set up a complaints process that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of the person making the report. This includes support referrals for complainants, working in partnership with specialist organisations to draft policies and procedures so that complainants are not re-traumatised by the complaints process, and consulting closely with the complainant on their options for progressing the report (Law Council of Australia, 2021).
- › Provide training to managers and human resources personnel or contact officers about trauma-informed and culturally safe approaches to managing reports.
- › Feed de-identified information into the mechanisms that are leading systems-level change in your workplace, for example by using information gleaned from anonymous reporting mechanisms.
- › Build accountability mechanisms into the complaints process so that perpetrators are held to account for their behaviour. Make it clear who is responsible for what and follow up actions taken.
- › Promote these policies and processes to all staff so they know what they can do and how they can expect a report to be dealt with, whether anonymously or making a specific complaint about another party.
- › Review the process for using Non-Disclosure Agreements (if applicable). Reflect on who they benefit most, ask whether they act to silence the complainant and therefore further marginalise them, while protecting the perpetrator? If non-disclosure agreements are used, make sure they are at the request of the complainant and specifically tailored with their consultation (VEOHRC, 2020).

## > RECOMMENDATION 6

### CREATE TRANSFORMATIVE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND CAREER PROGRESSION OPPORTUNITIES THAT DISRUPT SYSTEMS AND CULTURES OF POWER AND ELITISM

While helpful for some individual women, leadership and career progression programs do little to genuinely shift opportunities for the majority of women in workplaces. This is because they tend not to acknowledge the systems of power (Nasr, 2020).

#### What does this look like in practice?

- > Identify the systems, policies and practices that limit different people's career advancement and work towards transforming them.
- > Actively target and recruit women from groups that experience intersectional inequality.
- > Involve women in co-designing strategies to improve diversity in leadership and women's career progression.
- > Ensure mentorship programs are implemented alongside, and not as a replacement for, action to transform systems, policies and cultural norms in workplaces.
- > Assess workplace policies and processes such as parental leave and flexible working practices, to see how they promote or hinder the advancement of women's careers.

## > RECOMMENDATION 7

### ENGAGE MEN IN THE CONVERSATIONS AND PROCESSES

While most men are not violent towards women, when violence does occur (including harassment and bullying for example, in the workplace), it is predominantly perpetrated by men. We also know that a significant number of men hold sexist and violence supportive attitudes, and that many men don't feel they have a role in speaking out when they witness disrespect towards women and sexist behaviour (Our Watch, 2019). We need to create opportunities for men to explore the connections between sexist beliefs and behaviours and how systems and cultures within the legal and justice system act to support and maintain them.

#### What does this look like in practice?

- > Make space and create opportunities for men to reflect on and challenge established norms around masculinity and its relationship to existing structures of power and privilege across all aspects of life, not just in the workplace.
- > Promote the message that intersectional gender equality upholds basic human rights obligations and that all workplaces have an obligation to uphold these.
- > Promote the mutual benefits of gender equality in the workplace, including from a business and reputational perspective.
- > Call on men at all levels of the organisation to be positive role models by calling out sexist and discriminatory behaviours.

## THIS REPORT AND ITS RECOMMENDATIONS ARE PART OF THE STARTS WITH US JOURNEY

The findings and recommendations from this report will be applied to the work done by the six legal and justice organisations who comprise the Starts With Us consortium. The consortium is piloting strategies to drive gender equality in their workplaces by tailoring existing evidence and best practice tools to the legal and justice setting, through a process of co-design, implementation and evaluation.

The various parts of Starts With Us, including the practical recommendations from this report, are all contributing to the development of a workplace intersectional gender equality framework and 'how to guide' for Victoria's legal and justice workforce.



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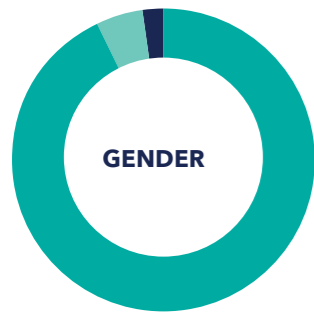
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APPENDIX 1

# SURVEY PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

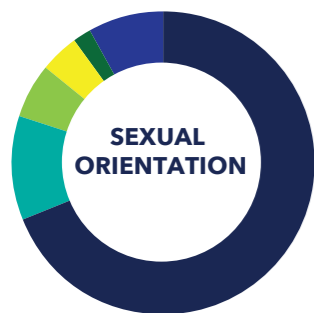
Total number of survey participants = 325

How would you describe your gender?



- WOMAN OR FEMALE 93%
- TRANS, NON-BINARY, GENDER DIVERSE, OR OTHER 5%
- MAN OR MALE 2%

How would you describe your sexual orientation?



- HETEROSEXUAL/STRAIGHT 69%
- BISEXUAL OR PANSEXUAL 11%
- QUEER 6%
- LESBIAN 4%
- GAY 2%
- OTHER (INCLUDING FLUID, ASEXUAL, HETEROFLEXIBLE, HOMOSEXUAL) 8%

Do you identify as a person living with a disability, chronic health condition or mental illness?



- YES 38%
- NO 62%

Participants were able to self-describe their disability or mental illness. A number of conditions were described. The most common were anxiety, depression, chronic illnesses, mobility disabilities, and neuro-divergence such as ADHD and autism. Forty-four percent described more than one condition.

Were you born in Australia?



- YES 81%
- NO 19%

Place of birth



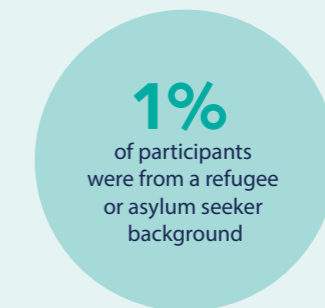
- ASIA 20%
- ENGLAND/UK 18%
- NEW ZEALAND 12%
- SRI LANKA AND INDIA 8%
- MIDDLE EAST 8%
- SOUTHERN AND EASTERN EUROPE 8%
- IRELAND 6%
- NORTH AMERICA 6%
- AFRICA 6%
- SOUTH AMERICA 4%
- OTHER 4%

Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?



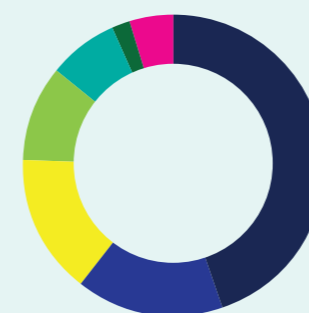
3% of participants identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Do you identify as a refugee or asylum seeker?



1% of participants were from a refugee or asylum seeker background

How would you describe your cultural or ethnic identity?



- AUSTRALIAN 48%
- AUSTRALIAN AND OTHER 17%
- ANGLO EUROPEAN (SUCH AS IRISH, SCOTTISH OR ENGLISH) 16%
- EUROPEAN (MEDITERRANEAN OR EASTERN EUROPEAN) 11%
- ASIAN 8%
- MIDDLE EASTERN 2%
- OTHER 5%

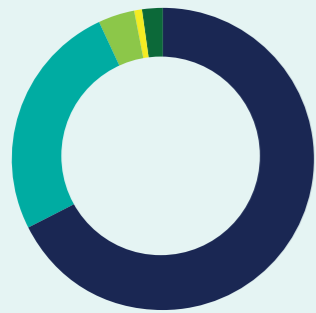
Participants sometimes described more than one

How would you describe your racial background?

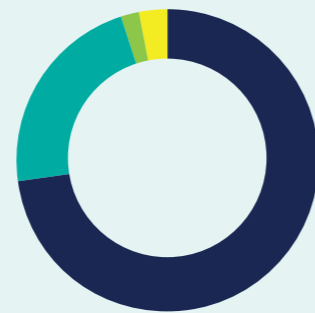


- WHITE, CAUCASIAN, ANGLO OR EUROPEAN 76%
- ASIAN 8%
- AFRICAN 3%
- ABORIGINAL 2%
- OTHER (INCLUDING PACIFIC ISLANDER, MEDITERRANEAN, MIDDLE EASTERN, LATINO, JEWISH OR MIXED) 11%

How would you describe your type of employment?

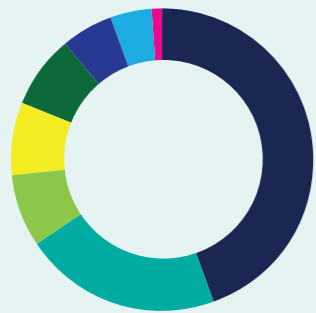


- FULL TIME **67%**
- PART TIME **26%**
- CASUAL **4%**
- UNEMPLOYED **1%**
- OTHER (SELF-EMPLOYED, WORKCOVER) **2%**



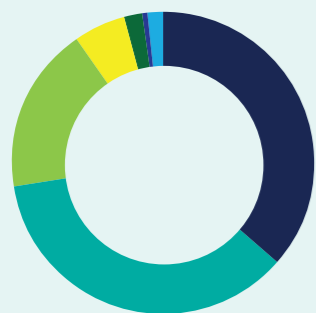
- ONGOING **73%**
- CONTRACT **22%**
- VOLUNTEER **2%**
- OTHER **3%**

How would you describe your job title/role?



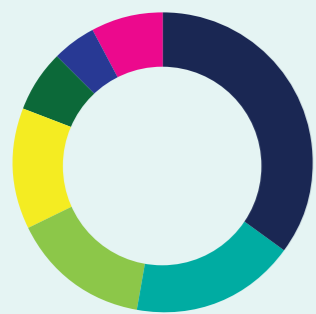
- LAWYER OR SOLICITOR **40%**
- PARALEGAL OR LEGAL ASSISTANT **19%**
- MANAGER, DIRECTOR OR EXECUTIVE **7%**
- BARRISTER, COUNSEL OR SPECIAL COUNSEL **7%**
- POLICY AND RESEARCH OR PROJECT MANAGER **7%**
- SUPPORT WORKER **5%**
- HUMAN RESOURCES, COMMUNICATION, ADMINISTRATION, OR IT **4%**
- OTHER (INCLUDING CONCILIATOR, EDUCATION AND TRAINING, LAW GRADUATE AND STUDENTS) **11%**

How would you describe the sector you work in?



- PRIVATE **36.5%**
- COMMUNITY AND NOT FOR PROFIT **36%**
- GOVERNMENT OR STATUTORY AUTHORITY **18%**
- THE BAR **5.5%**
- COURT AND COURT SERVICES **2%**
- JUDICIARY **0.5%**
- OTHER **1.5%**

While working in the legal and justice workforce, have you ever experienced unfair treatment or disadvantage because of any of the following?



- GENDER **59%**
- AGE **30%**
- ETHNICITY, RACE, RELIGION **25%**
- DISABILITY OR MENTAL ILLNESS **22%**
- GENDER IDENTITY OR SEXUALITY **11%**
- CLASS **8%**
- OTHER INCLUDING CARING RESPONSIBILITIES, JOB ROLE, PHYSICAL APPEARANCE **13%**

Participants could choose more than one option

While working in the legal and justice sector have you experienced bullying or harassment based on any of the following?



- GENDER **45%**
- AGE **14%**
- ETHNICITY, RACE, RELIGION **15%**
- DISABILITY OR MENTAL ILLNESS **13%**
- GENDER IDENTITY OR SEXUALITY **11%**
- CLASS **3.5%**
- OTHER INCLUDING CARING RESPONSIBILITIES, JOB ROLE, PHYSICAL APPEARANCE **9.5%**

Participants could choose more than one option

Have you observed discriminatory attitudes and/or cultures in your workplace, based on someone's identity, background, or circumstances?



- YES **57%**
- NO **34%**
- UNSURE **9%**

If you have experienced unfair treatment or bullying/harassment, did you tell anyone and/or seek support?



- YES **43%**
- NO **40%**
- UNSURE **17%**

Have your experiences ever caused you to think about leaving the sector?



- YES **44%**
- NO **56%**

## APPENDIX 2

# INTERSECTIONALITY AND GENDER IN LEGAL AND JUSTICE WORKPLACES: ONLINE SURVEY

## 1. SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

How would you describe your gender?

*You are not required to use any particular words so please feel free to use those that are meaningful for you.*

---

How would you describe your sexual orientation?

*Please feel free to use words that are meaningful for you.*

---

Do you identify as a person with a disability, a chronic health condition or mental health issues?

- Yes  
 No

*If you feel comfortable doing so, please specify the nature of your disability. For example mobility disability, vision impaired, communications disability, chronic pain, learning disability, Neuro-divergent, etc.*

---

Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?

- Aboriginal  
 Torres Strait Islander  
 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
 Neither

Were you born in Australia?

- Yes  
 No

If you answered no, in what country were you born?

---

How would you describe your cultural or ethnic identity?

---

How would you describe your racial background?

---

Are you a refugee or asylum seeker?

- Yes  
 No

How old are you?

---

## 2. EMPLOYMENT

Is your employment

- Full time  
 Part time  
 Casual  
 I am currently unemployed  
 Other (please specify)

Is your role

- Ongoing  
 Contract  
 Voluntary  
 Other (please specify)

What is your job role?

*For example barrister, policy officer, paralegal, solicitor, HR, support worker, volunteer, etc.*

---

Do you work in the

- Private sector  
 Not for profit/community sector  
 Government or statutory authority  
 Judiciary  
 Court and court services  
 The bar  
 Other (please specify)

## 3. YOUR EXPERIENCES

The next few questions ask about your experiences of unfair treatment, harassment, or bullying.

*Reminder: please do not mention the names of people, workplaces, or organisations in your responses.*

While working in the legal and justice workforce, have you ever experienced unfair treatment or disadvantage because of any of the following?

Select all that apply.

- Ethnicity  
 Race  
 Disability  
 Class  
 Gender  
 Gender identity  
 Sexuality  
 Age  
 Religion  
 Mental illness  
 Not applicable  
 Other (please specify)

Tell us your story. What happened?

*You may tell us of more than one incident, for example, you may have experiences based on more than one attribute.*

---

While working in the legal and justice sector have you experienced bullying or harassment based on any of the following?

Select all that apply.

- Ethnicity  
 Race  
 Disability  
 Class  
 Gender  
 Gender identity  
 Sexuality  
 Age  
 Religion  
 Mental illness  
 Not applicable  
 Other (please specify)

Tell us your story. What happened?

*You may tell us of more than one incident, for example, you may have experiences based on more than one attribute.*

---

## 4. WORKPLACE CULTURES AND SUPPORT

The following questions ask about your views and experiences of workplace cultures and supports available. Please do not mention the names of people, workplaces or organisations in your responses.

Have you observed discriminatory attitudes and/or cultures in your workplace, based on someone's identity, background, or circumstances?

- Yes  
 No  
 Not sure

What have you observed?

---

If you have experienced unfair treatment or bullying/harassment, did you tell anyone and/or seek support?

- Yes  
 No  
 Not applicable

Tell us your story. What happened?

*You may tell us of more than one incident, for example, you may have experiences based on more than one attribute.*

---

## 5. IMPACT ON YOUR CAREER

The following questions ask about how your experiences may have impacted on your career path.

Have any of the experiences you described above had an impact on your career?

- Yes  
 No  
 Not sure

Can you describe the impact on your career?

---

Have your experiences ever caused you to think about leaving the sector?

- Yes  
 No

## 6. FURTHER COMMENTS

Is there anything further you'd like to tell us?