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# **Assessing organisational capacity to attract and retain migrant employees**

**A TOOL FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED BUSINESSES  
SEEKING TO INCREASE CALD WORKPLACE PARTICIPATION**

## Introduction

Increasingly, organisations with skill or labour shortages seek to employ skilled migrants. Generally this decision is reached only after exhausting local alternatives. In deciding on this course of action, employers will spend time reflecting on their business objectives and they will use considerable resources in the recruitment process. Recruiting skilled migrants and migrant labour is one solution to skill shortages and labour demand. It is important that a systematic approach be taken. An important first step is to undertake a review of the organisations capacity to recruit migrants. The checklist and list of additional resources will assist organisations to position themselves for the recruitment effort.

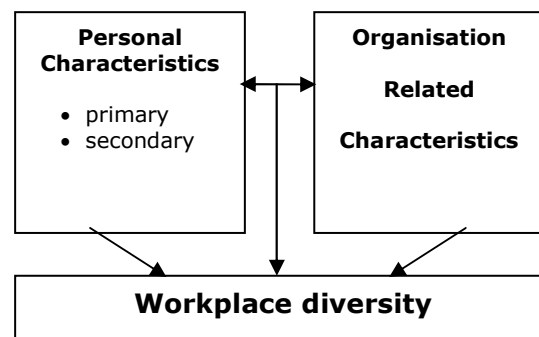
## What is workplace diversity?

Diversity refers to the characteristics that show difference in an individual. Recognising individual difference is important in gaining a better understanding of how to manage and promote diversity at work.

## Major characteristics of diversity:

- *Primary personal characteristics* e.g. race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality and mental and physical ability
- *Secondary personal characteristics* e.g. marital status, educational level, values and beliefs
- *Organisation-related characteristics* e.g. position in hierarchy, tenure and casual/part-time/full-time status.

The complex interaction of these characteristics gives rise to workplace diversity and provides the basis upon which to leverage bottom-line benefits.



Source: Australian Centre for International Business Model For Diversity Management: Adding Value through HRM 2001 produced for DIMIA in cooperation with the Australian Centre for International Business

## Managing diversity: the business case

A workplace that celebrates difference and encourages inclusiveness does so because it makes good business sense. Organisations that choose to actively manage diversity do so for bottom line reasons such as:

- to encourage innovation and excellence
- to attract talent
- to gain market leadership
- to retain staff
- to build a larger customer base
- to become an employer of choice

## Framework for diversity management

Employers who understand and accept their obligations under employment law ensure that equal opportunity and affirmative action policies are translated into good workplace practices. Diversity management is about more than obeying the law.

Managing diversity can be described as HOW an organisation creates a workplace climate or culture that is inclusive, respectful, innovative and supportive of each member of staff.

The principles that underpin and ensure good management of diversity run parallel with the principles that underpin best practice in management; particularly the HR functions, *recruitment, selection, training and development, performance management, occupational health and safety and workplace relations*.

## DIVERSITY CHECKLIST - CALD

*To be used as an initial assessment to determine organizational capacity to attract and retain migrant employees.*

**Purpose:** The purpose of this checklist is to assist small and medium sized businesses to make an initial assessment of their organisational capacity to attract and retain skilled migrants. Further evaluation should be undertaken to determine workplace capacity and may include: focus groups and employee attitudinal surveys and quantitative evaluations such as review of retention rates, participation of diversity groups and analysis of training and development data. Many of these tools can be found by following the links to Websites over the page.

**Instructions:** Take a few moments to reflect on the following statements and indicate whether yes or no.

yes	no
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### Legalities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers and supervisors understand EEO and workplace relations legislation.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employees have an understanding of harassment/discrimination legislation.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harassment and discrimination complaints are very low.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training is provided to ensure employees understand EEO and workplace relations.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discrimination of any kind is actively discouraged.</li> </ul>		

### Your organisation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversity is a core value espoused throughout the organization.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversity is important to this organisation for business reasons.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversity is incorporated into the company's business plan.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR plans and strategies include diversity actions e.g. targets.</li> </ul>		

### Your people

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is important that all employees understand and accept cultural differences.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment and selection activities are regularly reviewed to ensure that the selection criterion does not directly or indirectly discriminate.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Religious differences are accommodated in our workplace e.g. quiet room for worship or leave for cultural and religious events.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migrant employees with low level English would have/do have access to an English language program (on or off-site).</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CALD employees are included in a 'buddy'/mentoring program.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible working arrangements are encouraged to ensure work/life balance.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training and development opportunities are promoted to all employees.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occupational Health and Safety practices and policies are regularly reviewed to ensure understanding by all employees.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff retention rates are stable.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remuneration is at or above your industry benchmark.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff turnover is low in comparison to industry benchmark.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff have participated in at least one cultural awareness training event in the past 12 months.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment and selection activities are planned, promoted and reviewed to ensure flexibility, reliability, fairness and validity.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Induction and orientation activities feature the organisations commitment to diversity.</li> </ul>		

If you answered **yes** to most of these statements, your organisation may be positioned to manage diversity and may have the capacity to attract and retain migrants.

## RESOURCES

### Relevant Legislation

#### Federal

Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999  
Disability Discrimination Act 1992  
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986  
Workplace Relations Act 1996  
Racial Discrimination Act 1975  
Sex Discrimination Act 1984

#### Victoria

Equal Opportunity Act 1995  
Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2005

#### Useful Websites

- Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission  
Information on Commonwealth anti-discrimination provisions, and links to state EEO Commission sites  
[www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au](http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission  
[www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)
- Department of Immigration, Multicultural & Indigenous Affairs  
[www.border.gov.au](http://www.border.gov.au)
- Guidelines for the Australian Public Service  
[www.apsc.gov.au/publications01/diversityguidelines.pdf](http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications01/diversityguidelines.pdf)
- Information and case studies on the benefits to business and the economy of developing cultural and linguistic diversity in the Australian workforce.  
[www.diversityaustralia.gov.au](http://www.diversityaustralia.gov.au)
- Australian Institute of Family Studies  
[www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/diversity/main.html](http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/diversity/main.html)
- The Australian Human Resource Institute  
This site provides information and links to sites with information on diversity management.  
[www.ahri.com.au](http://www.ahri.com.au)

Sources: **Diversity - A Way of Life, 2004**, Commonwealth of Australia  
**Strategic Human Resource Management**, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed., 2002, Nankervis, Compton & Baird