

Inclusive Leadership

What does inclusive leadership mean?

Inclusive leadership is vital to organisational success. It empowers leaders with the capabilities – including mindsets, knowledge, skills, and behaviours – to create inclusive workplaces, where all people feel valued and respected and have access to opportunities and resources. This enables everyone to contribute their unique perspectives and talents to enhance the organisation.

Diversity encompasses all the differences among people, including factors in their social identity, such as:

- Age
- Caring responsibilities
- Cultural background
- Disability
- Faith/religion
- Gender
- Indigeneity
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Socio-economic background.

It also includes aspects of their professional identity, like their:

- Profession
- Education
- Work experiences
- Organisational role.

Why is inclusive leadership important?

Inclusive leadership is powerful because it harnesses diversity to drive the innovation, performance, and productivity that is essential in today's business environments. It leads to:

- **Enhanced innovation:** Inclusive leaders recognise that diverse teams bring a wide range of experiences and viewpoints to the table. This diversity sparks creativity and innovation.
- **Improved employee engagement:** Inclusive leadership fosters a sense of belonging. When employees feel included and valued, they are more motivated and committed to their work.
- **Better talent attraction and retention:** Organisations that prioritise inclusivity are more attractive to diverse talent. Inclusive leadership helps retain top talent by ensuring that people from all backgrounds have opportunities for growth and advancement.
- **Increased productivity:** Inclusive leaders promote open communication and collaboration. This results in more effective teamwork and higher productivity.
- **Enhanced decision-making:** Inclusive leaders encourage diverse perspectives during the decision-making process. This leads to well-rounded decisions that consider a broader range of potential outcomes.

Characteristics of inclusive leaders

- Self-aware
- Actively listen
- Promote equity
- Lead by example
- Empower others
- Are culturally competent
- Challenge bias
- Are always learning

Inclusive leadership is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic advantage, leading to better organisational performance, increased innovation, and more engaged employees.