

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IMPACT REPORT

2022 - 2025



 **GMHBA**





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Impact Report highlights the actions we've taken over the past three years to foster a more inclusive, respectful, and culturally aware workplace. It reflects our commitment to embedding DEI into every part of our organisation and acknowledges the contributions of our people.

This document serves to evaluate the efficacy of our current strategy while providing insights that have shaped our future direction. The achievements outlined reflect real progress—yet we remain committed to continuous learning and improvement. Our next phase will build on this foundation, guided by employee feedback, community input, and a commitment to making inclusion part of how we work, lead, and grow together.

**Kate Barlow**  
**Chief of People and Culture**



## Our outcomes

### ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY

Launched our **Disability Action Plan** to strengthen accessibility and inclusion, leading to the creation of an internship opportunity for a person living with disability.

Captured onboarding insights with a focus on key DEI touchpoints, achieving a **95% favourable response** rate in our 7-week onboarding survey

**Enhanced inclusivity in our interview process** by providing candidates with interview questions in advance resulting in participants reporting feeling more confident and better prepared for their interviews.

Introduced an **Australia Day public holiday swap option**, empowering employees to choose a day that better aligns with their personal values. In 2024, 21 team members opted in, with 22 participating in 2025, selecting an alternative day off within a designated period.

Enhanced our workplace arrangements by introducing a **reasonable adjustments process**, with 14 requests submitted over the past two years.

### DEMONSTRATE COMMITMENT

Established our first **Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group**, bringing together team members from across the business alongside local First Nations community representatives. RAP members all reported that these experiences significantly deepened their understanding of First Nations cultures and issues.

Celebrated **five major DEI events** across the organisation to promote awareness and cultural appreciation, enhancing employee connection and respect for diversity. These events included:

International Women's Day  
Harmony Day  
Pride Month  
NAIDOC Week

International Day of People with Disability

Built strong, values aligned **partnerships with over a dozen local and state organisations** to improve our culture by learning from others, expanding employment pathways and strengthening our connection with diverse communities.

### LEAD INCLUSIVITY

Provided **LGBTQIA+ allyship training** to 205 employees through Queer Town, equipping them with practical tools to foster inclusion across workplace, social, and family settings. Participant feedback highlighted increased empathy for lived experiences particularly around misgendering and marginalisation and greater confidence in using inclusive language, including pronouns.

Offered the **Queer Town Online Digital Short Course**, completed by over 200 team members. Content delivered was to positively impact interactions with members, patients, and customers by increasing awareness and confidence in using inclusive language, particularly related to pronouns.

Welcomed **four DEI guest speakers** to present to our leaders, with attendees describing Carly Findlay (OAM)'s presentation as especially thought-provoking.

## Our outcomes

Workplace inclusivity was reflected in the 2025 AES DEI survey, where 84% of respondents (n=418) agreed that

**"There is a genuine commitment to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment at GMHBA."**

## Areas of focus

In 2022 we launched our inaugural Diversity Equity and Inclusion Strategy, to guide our enterprise-wide approach to create a workplace that allowed every employee to feel seen, respected and empowered to thrive.

The strategy focused on six core goals:



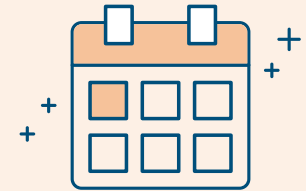
### RECRUITMENT AND ONBOARDING

Attract and welcome diverse talent through inclusive practices from day one.



### TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Equip our leaders, people, and wider audiences with the knowledge to lead inclusively and create meaningful impact for our members, patients and customers.



### EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Celebrate identity, raise awareness, and foster connection through meaningful experience.



### ENGAGING COMMUNITY

Collaborate with local organisations and diverse communities to strengthen shared impact.



### VOICE OF OUR PEOPLE

Listen deeply to lived experience to shape actions that matter.



### DATA

Measure what matters to track progress and drive accountability.



## RECRUITMENT AND ONBOARDING

We strengthened our commitment to DEI across the employee experience from attraction to onboarding through a series of targeted actions:

- ✓ **Included clear DEI commitment statements** in all internal and external job advertisements to signal our values and attract diverse talent.
- ✓ **Updated our website** to showcase key initiatives including DEI, Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), Disability Action Plan, and LGBTQIA+ and Neurodiversity initiatives to build trust with prospective candidates and demonstrate a welcoming and supportive culture.
- ✓ **Conducted a comprehensive review** of our onboarding process through a DEI lens, introducing a Reasonable Adjustments form to ensure new starters feel supported from day one.
- ✓ **Implemented a key change in the recruitment process** by providing interview questions in advance. Participants reported feeling more confident and better prepared, using practical techniques such as preparing keywords and familiarising themselves with the interview format to stay focused and reduce anxiety.
- ✓ **Achieved a 95% favourable response rate** in our onboarding survey conducted at the 7-week mark, reflecting the positive impact of these inclusive practices.

At GMHBA, we value a diverse and inclusive culture. We are committed to creating a workplace where every single person feels valued and can be their true, authentic selves. It allows us to be more reflective of our community, have a range of perspectives, and better support our customers, members, and patients. We encourage candidates with diverse backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and beliefs to apply for this role.





## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT



- ✔ **Delivered LGBTQIA+ allyship training** to 205 team members through Queertown which included the entire Member Experience team. The training supported more inclusive and effective engagement with members, particularly by building confidence in the appropriate use of pronouns.
- ✔ **Launched the Queer Town digital short course** with over 200 completions. Participants reported feeling better equipped to avoid assumptions, ask respectfully about pronouns and partner identities, and communicate more thoughtfully. While some felt the content reinforced existing knowledge, most acknowledged it enhanced their ability to engage respectfully and improve their communication with diverse individuals.
- ✔ Provided access to **Cultural Awareness training** via the ELMO platform.

- ✔ **Delivered targeted leadership development sessions** for Executive, Senior, and mid-level leaders, focusing on unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, and psychosocial safety.
- ✔ **Hosted guest speakers** including The Resilience Project, Cherie Clonan (The Digital Picnic), and Jennifer Whelan (Psynapse).
- ✔ **Invited Carly Findlay (OAM) to present her lived experience**, significantly raising awareness and empathy around disability for our leaders. It allowed open discussions and connections among leaders, strengthened collaboration and commitment to supporting those living with disability.
- ✔ **Facilitated Cultural Walks on Country** with 202 team members participating. These resulted in deepening cultural understanding, new insights into the richness and complexity of local history and the significance of indigenous experiences and sites within Geelong.

## Spotlight

# QUEER TOWN LGBTQIA+ PARTNERSHIP

### Queer Town Digital Short Course

Launched during Pride Month in June 2025, the course was made available to all GMHBA employees, with over 200 completions.

#### Feedback showed that:

**A significant majority (83%) of respondents reported increased knowledge and understanding of LGBTQIA+ themes.**

**All respondents (100%) feel more confident discussing LGBTQIA+ topics or advocating within their community.**

**An average rating of 4.33 out of 5 indicates strong overall satisfaction with the course and reflects consistently positive feedback from participants.**

### Queer Town LGBTQIA+ 101 Training

As part of our (DEI) Strategy—specifically focused on LGBTQIA+ inclusion—we partnered with Queer Town to deliver foundational LGBTQIA+ 101 training.

Over an 18-month period, 205 employees participated in the program, including all team members in member-facing roles within our contact centre. The training had a significant and lasting impact on our people.

Participants reported that the workshop:

- Encouraged greater inclusivity across workplace, social, and family settings.
- Fostered empathy for lived experiences, particularly around misgendering and marginalisation.
- Provided valuable, practical guidance on pronoun use, gender-neutral language, and respectful communication.
- Clarified key concepts such as the difference between sex and gender, and deepened understanding of gender diversity and minority identities.

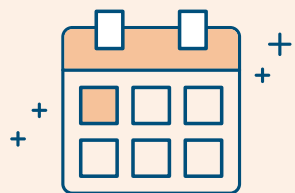
Feedback was overwhelmingly positive:

**83%**  
of survey respondents  
rated the training as **EXCELLENT**.

**88%**  
said they would very likely  
**RECOMMEND IT** to a colleague.







## EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



- ✔ **Strategic calendar featuring five major annual events since 2022**—Harmony Day, International Women's Day, Pride Month, NAIDOC Week, and the Day of People Living with Disability. These events, along with the employee-contributed Harmony Day Recipe Book, have fostered a greater sense of inclusion and cultural celebration, strengthening employee connection and appreciation for diversity within the organisation.
- ✔ **Smaller events** supported throughout the year such as IDAHOBIT day.
- ✔ **Women in Technology and Finance community grant April 2025** – an initiative supporting women in Geelong to advance or kickstart their careers in the two critical, high-growth sectors.



## Profile

# BEC FINDLAY

## Member Experience Team Leader

From day one I could see that GMHBA was more inclusive than most places I had previously worked, and that there were certain staff, who were motivating and campaigning for an ongoing commitment to become more inclusive every day. I could see the ripple effect that these staff had on immediate colleagues and made sure that I was a conduit for these ripples to the frontline agents.



**"The best way for anyone to contribute is to walk the walk. Educate yourself, and keep educating yourself as there is no limit. Be transparent about your ignorance, and ask if you don't know. Advocate by accepting every person exactly as they are."**



## ENGAGING COMMUNITY

GMHBA's engagement with more than a dozen local and state level organisations has significantly strengthened its community partnerships and deepened its commitment to DEI.

These collaborations have:

- ✓ **Expanded cultural understanding** through partnerships with First Nations organisations such as Wadawurrung and Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, including initiatives like cultural walks and tenure award gifts that honour Indigenous heritage.
- ✓ **Enhanced LGBTQIA+ inclusion** by working with Queer Town to deliver allyship training and digital learning, improving confidence and inclusive language use across the organisation.
- ✓ **Improved understanding through collaboration** with health and safety bodies like Barwon Health, Barwon Water, WorkSafe, and TAC, supporting more inclusive environments.
- ✓ **Strengthened youth and employment pathways** via partnerships with Northern Futures, Geelong Pre-employment Network, Youth Activating Youth, and GDP Industries, helping connect diverse populations to meaningful opportunities.
- ✓ **Built strategic alliances** with Geelong Cats, Deakin, and GenU to co-create initiatives that promote inclusion, wellbeing, and community engagement.



## VOICE OF OUR PEOPLE

Listening to the voice of our people is foundational to an authentic and impactful DEI strategy. At GMHBA, we recognise that inclusion cannot be imposed from the top, it must be shaped by the lived experiences, insights, and aspirations of our people. Through surveys, focus groups, and open consultation, we've embedded employee voices into our DEI planning, ensuring our strategies are aligned, fit for purpose, and reflective of the communities we serve.

- ✔ **Established and actively supported employee representative groups** focused on LGBTQIA+ inclusion and Reconciliation, providing platforms for advocacy, education, and fostering belonging within the workplace.
- ✔ **Formed the January 26 Alternative working group**, a collaborative, cross-departmental team tasked with designing inclusive and culturally sensitive staff programs around this date allowing space for reflection, education, and respectful dialogue that acknowledges the diverse perspectives and histories of all Australians.
- ✔ **Explored the introduction of Multicultural Leave policies** to recognise and accommodate the diverse cultural and religious observances of employees.
- ✔ **Co-created a Neurodivergent Support Group** to offer tailored resources, peer support, and advocacy for neurodivergent employees, promoting a supportive and inclusive environment for neurological diversity.





## Spotlight

# RECONCILIATION

GMHBA's commitment to reconciliation with First Nations Peoples is reflected in a series of meaningful actions and partnerships that continue to shape our culture and deepen our understanding.

We formed a dedicated working group to lead and coordinate GMHBA's reconciliation efforts, including the development, implementation, and ongoing monitoring of our first Reconciliation-Action-Plan-(RAP)

The group includes nine employee representatives from across the organisation and is supported by Bonnie Chew, a proud Wadawurrung woman from Mirriyu Cultural Consulting.

Committee members shared that these experiences significantly enhanced their understanding of First Nations cultures and issues.

### THEIR FEEDBACK HIGHLIGHTED:

**Increased cultural awareness**, particularly through cultural walks, which were described as impactful and well-received.

**More visible inclusion efforts**, such as personalised Acknowledgement of Country in meetings.

**Emerging relationships and dialogue** with First Nations individuals and partners, showing early steps toward stronger external engagement.

### KEY ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN INCLUDE:

Offering since 2022 an **Australia Day Alternative**, empowering employees to choose whether to work on January 26 and take an alternative day off during a designated period - an initiative that respects individual beliefs and promotes cultural sensitivity.

Our **on-Country cultural walks** have had a profound impact, with 202 employees participating. Many described gaining new perspectives and beginning a meaningful journey of learning. The experience of hearing untold aspects of Australian history and the emotional impact of colonisation was deeply moving. Learning about local landmarks, language, and artifacts helped deepen cultural understanding and fostered a stronger connection to place.

We also **partnered with the local Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative**, incorporating 276 glass pieces as gifts for employee tenure awards an initiative that celebrates service while honouring cultural connection.





DATA

We continued to strengthen our data-driven approach to DEI by embedding inclusive practices across our systems, processes, and employee experience:

- ✔ **Launched a DEI Census**, gathering insights from 178 employees to better understand our workplace diversity.
- ✔ **Enhanced our payroll system** to allow employees to self-identify as First Nations, improving the accuracy of our demographic data.
- ✔ Integrated the collection of **DEI related information during the recruitment process**, including identification of First Nations status, disability, and requests for reasonable adjustments.
- ✔ Continued to include **DEI related questions in GMHBA's annual Alignment and Engagement full survey** to track progress, gather meaningful insights, and inform ongoing actions.
- ✔ Implemented targeted actions **to address the Gender Pay Gap**, contributing to measurable reductions and promoting pay equity.

## Profile

# JAY COLSTON-ING

Member Sales and Retention Advisor

**Can you share an instance where you felt GMHBA made positive strides in fostering inclusivity?**

As my partner and I both work at GMHBA, it was great to feel that we get the same treatment other couples would get within the business, the support from our Executive Team through to our Operations Team has helped us feel included and not judged. This is important and allows us to bring our true selves to work.

**Have you participated in any DEI training or initiatives? How has that shaped your approach to work and interactions with colleagues?**

I have attended The Queer town Workshop – this was amazing as being part of the Queer community it's hard to feel fully informed as it changes. Just because you are in the community doesn't mean we have all the answers. This training helped me realise how to communicate with work, friends, family and members in a non-confronting respectful and unbiased way.



**GMHBA is great at recognising when it needs to change or create policy to help inclusion.**

# OUR NEW PLAN

Our continued DEI approach will build on the foundations of our 2022 strategy and will focus on six key pillars:

RECONCILIATION

DISABILITY INCLUSION

LGBTQIA+ INCLUSION

GENDER EQUITY

NEURODIVERSITY

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Each pillar will feature a dedicated roadmap outlining specific actions and objectives, all integrated into a single cohesive DEI approach that embodies our commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace. Our approach will be intentionally intersectional.





# THANK YOU



 **GMHBA**

