

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRESS REPORT - 2019

CORRS  
CHAMBERS  
WESTGARTH

## 1 Diversity and inclusion at Corrs

Corrs Chambers Westgarth is enabling a truly diverse workforce. We strongly believe that diversity in all its forms should be embraced and celebrated and know that if it is, our people, our clients, our firm and the industry at large will benefit.

We want everyone at Corrs to feel connected, valued and empowered to succeed so every individual can maximise their potential and take full advantage of opportunities to pioneer, disrupt and lead.

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is grounded in developing diversity of thought as a driver of improved business performance and enhanced service delivery to clients. It is a central aspect of our recruitment, retention, people development, wellbeing and market development strategies.

Corrs' Diversity and Inclusion Policy (first published in 2012) outlines the firm's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Current strategic objectives include:

1. Build an inclusive culture that is vocal, clear and consistent about open acceptance
2. Build and demonstrate strong inclusive leadership skills to leverage diversity
3. Embed diversity, equality and inclusion principles into all our decisions, actions and people focused processes and policies
4. Mainstream flexible working arrangements
5. Engage with clients and industry to build shared value

## 2 Progress on diversity and inclusion objectives to 30 September 2019

The Corrs Diversity and Inclusion Council (**D&I Council**) continues to meet regularly to oversee the implementation and advancement of the firm's diversity and inclusion objectives, with regular reporting and updates provided to the firm's Executive Committee (**ExCo**) and the Board.

The D&I Council is comprised of partners across the firm, a Partner Diversity and Inclusion (who chairs

the D&I Council and is a member of the firm's ExCo) and a Diversity and Inclusion Manager. A number of national Steering Committees and local working groups are also in place for different portfolio areas to help identify and advance new initiatives.

### 2.1 GENDER DIVERSITY

	Data as at 30 September 2019
Women on Board	25.0%
Women in Senior Management <sup>1</sup>	21.4%
Women in Partnership	22.7%
Overall women within the firm <sup>2</sup>	65.2%

1. Includes representation of women on the firm's Executive Committee and in Practice Group Leader roles.

2. Includes partners and staff.

The firm has established gender targets to increase the representation of women in senior leadership roles, including:

- 33% of Corrs' Board to be women by 2024
- 35% of senior management to be women by 2024
- 35% of the partnership to be women by 2024

Corrs' Diversity and Inclusion Policy and gender targets are underpinned by a gender equality strategy to aid the retention of talent and promote a supportive and inclusive workplace culture. Key programs, policies and initiatives implemented and/or continued in the last 12 months which support our gender equality objectives include:

- an updated Gender Equality strategy which includes clear objectives and timelines for measuring progress;
- executive coaching for female partners and senior lawyers, to assist women to maximise their career potential;
- mentoring and networking opportunities for staff and partners (including formal mentoring programs and several women's networking events each year, such as Corrs Women in Business Events);
- unconscious bias awareness training for senior lawyers and business services managers;

- a commitment to identifying and addressing gender pay equity – our CEO Gavin MacLaren is a Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) Pay Equity Ambassador;
- gender equity assessment applied to talent identification, promotions, pay and leadership succession planning;
- along with other major law firms in Australia, continued participation in the Managing Partners’ Diversity Initiative to determine ways to improve gender diversity (and other forms of diversity) internally and across the broader legal profession;
- a gender neutral parental leave policy, which provides 18 weeks paid parental leave for primary carers and three weeks paid parental leave for secondary carers, and is inclusive of same sex couples, adoption, surrogacy and foster care;
- paid superannuation contributions for employees during periods of paid and unpaid parental leave (up to 12 months);
- a carer’s support initiative to assist our people with caring responsibilities and parental leave transitions – includes an external information and carer’s locator service;
- an onsite school holiday program for primary school aged children, held in Melbourne during January 2019 (will extend to other Corrs offices in January 2020);
- a Breastfeeding Policy and dedicated facilities in all offices;
- a Family Violence Policy;
- being a signatory to the Law Council of Australia’s (LCA) Equitable Briefing Policy and meeting the interim LCA target that women barristers receive 20% of our briefs (23%) and 19% of our barrister fees are being paid to women;
- our CEO Gavin MacLaren joining other business and community leaders in making the Panel Pledge to increase the visibility and contribution of women leaders in public and professional forums; and
- hosting and speaking at events to continue the public dialogue and share information and tools to advance gender equality across the profession.

Corrs is a WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017-2018, 2018-2019).



“The firm’s success relies on attracting and retaining talented people – of all genders – with diverse ideas, backgrounds and experiences, and providing a supportive culture that enables them to contribute fully and to thrive. My commitment and the firm’s commitment to diversity, including gender equality, is essential to a healthy firm.”

*Gavin MacLaren, Senior Partner and CEO*

## 2.2 MAINSTREAMING FLEXIBLE WORK PRACTICES

The need for flexible working is a key business reality for the firm and a key driver of diversity.

Our goal is to build on our existing flexibility framework by adopting a clear, consistent and vocal approach to enabling flexible working for everyone across the firm. Our Flexibility@Corrs Policy provides an array of options to enable individuals to fulfil their work and life responsibilities and interests.

Corrs’ continued focus on promoting formal and informal flexible work options to all our people has resulted in an increased use of varying types of work practices across different parts of the firm. Support for flexible working has been communicated by our CEO on an ongoing basis, with remote working also encouraged.

Flexibility training for managers continues, with the focus being on practical implementation avenues to reduce barriers and improve flexibility uptake. A team-based approach to flexibility allows for open and candid conversations and ensures everyone is clear on business, individual and client needs, assisting in effective implementation of flexibility. Flexibility panel events in each office have been held to promote open conversations on flexible working, share personal experiences and debunk any myths.

## 2.3 INCLUSION AT CORRS

“I belong. I bring my whole self/identity to work. I feel connected, valued and empowered to succeed.”

Building an inclusive culture that is vocal, clear and consistent about open acceptance is a key priority. We want our people to contribute their perspectives, ideas and talents, identify opportunities and challenge the status quo. Recognising and harnessing individuals’ differences will enable diversity of thought and innovation and assist in firm and client success.

The firm continues to participate in Diversity Council Australia's (DCA's) biennial Inclusion@Work index, with the latest survey undertaken in August 2019. Our employees were asked about their views and experiences at work, enabling us to understand how inclusion in the workplace is being experienced and how it can be improved. The results will provide insight into how we are performing and how we have progressed since 2017, as well as areas to focus on to ensure all our people feel valued and empowered to succeed.

## 2.4 CELEBRATING, SUPPORTING AND INCLUDING THE DIVERSE RANGE OF PEOPLE AT CORRS AND IN THE BROADER COMMUNITY

### CORRS INNOVATE RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN JULY 2018 - JULY 2020

Our [2018-2020 Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan \(RAP\)](#) is our second RAP. It provides a clear roadmap for the firm to continue its reconciliation support efforts, including bold new goals and progression of existing activities. The plan seeks to:

- raise awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievements and contributions;
- increase our people's awareness and understanding of issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to achieve social inclusion and economic independence; and
- help us to deepen our relationships with the wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Key initiatives and achievements in the last 12 months include:

- continued participation in the CareerTrackers Program, an Indigenous employment pathway and launch of an internal Catering Indigenous Work Placement Program in the Perth office;
- hosting a group of students from the University of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit (UQ ATSI) InspireU program for high school students considering tertiary studies in law (Corrs ran a 'speed mentoring' session, where students met with junior and senior lawyers in structured rotations);
- performing over A\$600,000 of pro bono legal work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities;
- funding a \$7,500 yearly indigenous scholarship at Melbourne Law School;

- increased supplier diversity outcomes nationally – Corrs is a member of Supply Nation, an organisation which facilitates the opportunity for Indigenous businesses to be integrated into the supply chain of Australian organisations;
- public firm support (along with 18 other law firms) for the Uluru Statement of the Heart; and
- strengthening relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, businesses and individuals in all Australian states where Corrs operates. Examples include the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia (to which we provide secondees on a short and ongoing basis as well as offering pro bono support), Dreamtime Art, Kinaway Chamber of Commerce, Noongar Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Kulbardi and Abundance.

**“The firm’s ongoing support of reconciliation reflects our active commitment to diversity, inclusion and community building, and respect for the Traditional Owners of our Land. We are proud of the progress we are making and look forward to continuing to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations, and communities.”**

*Gavin MacLaren, Senior Partner and CEO*

### PRIDE@CORRS NETWORK

Founded in 2014, the firm's LGBTI+ network is managed by a national LGBTI+ Steering committee, consisting of volunteers from across the firm. Our Pride@Corrs Network aims to increase and support the inclusion of our LGBTI+ people and enhance our broader engagement with the LGBTI+ community. The Pride@Corrs Network is not only for our LGBTI+ employees – allies are welcome and encouraged to join.

Corrs is a proud member of Pride in Diversity (PID), Australia's leading organisation for the promotion of LGBTI+ equality and inclusion in the workplace. Key initiatives and achievements in the last 12 months include:

- being awarded silver tier employer status in PID's Australian Workplace Equality Index;
- LGBTI+ inclusion awareness online training and interactive ally sessions held in each of Corrs' offices. These assist staff and partners to gain a better understanding and awareness of why LGBTI+ workplace inclusion is important, the challenges faced by LGBTI+ employees and the LGBTI+ community more broadly, and learn how each of us can help create a more inclusive work culture;

- continued Gold Partner sponsorship of Midsumma, Victoria's premier LGBTIQ+ arts and cultural festival, including hosting a marquee at the headline Carnival event (shared marquee with Equality Australia) and participating in the Pride March;
- providing continued pro bono advice and support for Out for Australia, The Channel, SheQu, Transgender Victoria, the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations and others; and
- recognising and celebrating key community events, including Wear It Purple Day, IDAHOBIT day and World AIDS Day.



### **CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

Corrs values the cultural diversity of our people and of the broader community.

Building awareness and understanding of the firm's cultural diversity and leveraging this for business success is essential. In 2017, we signed a cultural diversity commitment with members of the Managing Partners' Diversity Initiative to improve cultural diversity in leadership.

We are members of the Asian Australian Lawyers Association (**AALA**), which promotes cultural diversity in the law, and are supporters of the African Australian Legal Network and the Diverse Women's Mentoring Association.

Key initiatives and achievements in the last 12 months include:

- continued gathering of cultural diversity data for our workforce to help us better understand the firm's cultural diversity profile, set meaningful goals to improve cultural diversity in leadership and enable a cultural lens in the context of recruitment and talent development;
- recognising and celebrating key cultural and religious dates including Diwali, Lunar New Year and Ramadan; and
- hosting various events, including the annual AALA AGM and AALA Judicial Diversity Panel event to hear diverse experiences and perspectives in our judicial system, which included the Chief Justice of Queensland Supreme Court.