



PRESS RELEASE

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BEER AGENTS FOR CHANGE: INDUSTRY DIVERSITY SURVEY

38% OF THOSE IN THE BEER INDUSTRY HAVE BEEN ABUSED OR HARASSED IN THE WORKPLACE

In July 2021, the Beer Agents For Change undertook an industry-wide diversity survey to establish a benchmark for change in order to create a diverse, inspirational and thriving beer community, while gaining an understanding of the current climate in the Australian beer industry.

The results showed a staggering 38% of respondents had experienced abuse or harassment in the workplace.

- 20% have experienced sexual abuse or harassment
- 20% have experienced abuse or harassment due to gender.
- Of those who had experienced abuse or harassment - 90% were female.

Beer Agents For Change is a collective of five women with more than 60 years of beer industry experience between them. Spurred on by the events of Brienne Allan's (@Ratmagnet) public callout for stories of harassment on Instagram in May 2020, Brittany Higgins and the entire #metoo movement, reflection of owned experiences found that our own Australian beer community is not immune to these issues.

The collective wants to lead meaningful change in diversity and inclusion, starting with the Australian beer industry, with a view to promote courageous conversations in a respected and respectful manner.

The results of this survey reflected that there are diversity issues within leadership, a lack of ethnic diversity throughout the industry, and that harassment and discrimination - and reporting these incidents - are a real problem for those who identify as women.

The area of discrimination does not appear to discriminate.

- Half of those who responded to the survey have experienced discrimination in the beer industry.
- 36% have been discriminated against for their gender, 25% for their age, 14% for their physical appearance, 7% for their sexuality and 4% for their race.
- 80% of those who answered that they had not experienced discrimination were male.

The Beer Industry Diversity Survey collected data from more than 220 respondents who work in the beer industry, either directly or indirectly. More than half identified as male – showing that while it is anecdotally not a true representation of the industry as a whole, it is not just women who are looking to contribute to the conversation. (Diversity data for the Australian beer industry specifically does not yet exist.)

- 75% of those who answered the survey believe that there is not a good level of representation of all communities and walks of life in senior roles in the beer industry.



According to [WGEA](#) (The Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency), 32% of managers are female, 20% of Directors and 0% of Chair positions held by females in the Alcoholic Beverage industry (hospitality is only marginally better). The observations of respondents are in line with the WGEA stats.

There is a lack of gender diversity in leadership roles within the brewing industry.

- More than half of respondents reporting 10% or less of senior positions are held by women or non-binary people within their organisations.

It's not just gender diversity that is an obstacle in the beer industry, but less than one third of respondents answered that there is a policy addressing ethnic diversity in their workplace or offer employee information in any language other than English. Less than a quarter of businesses acknowledge Indigenous custodianship of land and names at key sites. These responses highlighted the need for diversity improvement conversations beyond gender.

When asked for commentary on how the industry could be more representative, respondents elicited passionate and strong responses that expounded how changes could be made.

“Really anything, the bar is so low you couldn't trip over it.”

“By discontinuing the use of [aggressive] language like ‘crushable’ ‘smashable’ ‘an insane amount of hops’ and instead talking about things in ways that invite intrigue and curiosity. By being more inviting at any/every opportunity.”

The established ‘Boys Club’ is more than just a myth, with respondents mentioning this term more than 30 times throughout the survey's open commentary. Perceived barriers to entry hit a wide range of responses, including:

“Generally, all senior roles are filled by straight white males.”

“The marketing of beer has been sexist and white dominated.”

“Physically for women. I have always been asked if I can repeatedly lift malt bags and kegs.

“Not seeing representation in senior roles.”

“The top is 40+ male focused. These levels of [the] community, although they appear in all the marketing campaigns, seem shut off - the kingdom is locked out to anyone who is a bit different.”

The Australian beer industry is missing out on potential growth opportunities, with global data showing that companies with diverse leadership have an average higher profitability than those that do not. According to a recent McKinsey report, “companies in the top-quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 21% more likely to outperform on profitability” This report also stated that top-quartile for ethnic and cultural diversity were 33% more likely to have industry leading profitability.

And for those that are lagging behind? The same report acknowledges that those in the bottom quartile for gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are 29% less likely to achieve above average profitability. [McKinsey & Company - Delivering Through Diversity - 2018](#)

Currently, only 75% of respondents answered that there is a code of conduct and workplace harassment policy in place. The minimum legal requirement for all organisations is covered by FairWork Act 2009, addressing bullying, harassment and discrimination, with new provisions recently added for sexual harassment. So, whilst not all employers need to have a 'code of conduct,' they must abide by these laws. It is notable that a quarter of respondents were not aware.



Beer Agents For Change is using this survey to start courageous conversation while creating meaningful change in the beer industry. In order to create a diverse and inspirational thriving beer community, the industry must acknowledge that change needs to be actioned. This survey will be completed at the beginning of every financial year to illustrate and track progress.

Beer Agents for Change will be embarking on a journey of impactful actions, including a pledge for diversity and inclusion, resources, workshops and templates for continued improvement and a number of other projects.

Are YOU ok with what you see here? What are YOU going to do?

The responsibility for change rests with every one of us, if you want to be part of the progress, join the movement.

We thank the survey respondents for their honesty and commitment to making change in the Australian craft beer industry. All data collected was anonymous and confidential, and used for industry insight.

For more information, please contact:

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Additional Resources available:

[WGEA - Liquor Industry Gender Diversity Stats](#)

[Fair Work Act 2009](#)

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 - varies for each state

[McKinsey & Company - Delivering Through Diversity - 2018](#)

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