

The Job Hunting Podcast

[Transcript 39. What leaders need to know: How to get business outcomes with Diversity and Inclusion - with D&I Expert Div Pillay](#)

Renata: Hello, everyone from a very, very cold Melbourne Friday afternoon. A few days ago, I interviewed my friend, Div Pillay, and I have been procrastinating in organising this introduction to our conversation because Div and I, well, I am such a big fan of Div and I've really, really always wanted her to be on this podcast from day one. And I am so excited about the conversation that we've had. And I actually don't know how to introduce her properly because it is an emotional introduction from my side. We have been talking about having our own businesses for a long time. We have been talking about the challenges that we have faced as migrants in Australia for a long time. We have been talking about how much we want to support our clients. In her case businesses that employ professionals from a diverse background and that want to employ even more of them and want to serve as clients from diverse backgrounds and want to support international students and so on.

Renata: And in my case, um, I want to support people going through recruitment and selection and give them a voice and make sure that they understand how important it is to have career literacy, to have a career plan and to invest in their careers. So she did that way before I did, but as soon as I decided it was my time, Div and her husband Vic Pillay were the first to embrace me and bring me on board. So I am part of the Mind Tribes team as head of market strategy. And I support some of their projects that way. And that has been such a warm welcome into this young sort of business community that's forming here in Melbourne Australia, but also because I know how much value she can add to my community of job hunters by discussing the incredible challenges and difficulties that people from a culturally and linguistically diverse background face when they are job hunting, when they're planning for their careers, when they lack the confidence and the ability to convey their messages and they improve their brands and their narrative to present themselves really well professionally and understand the value that they bring to the organisations and convey that value well.

Renata: I'm always doing that every single day. I would say 50% of my clients are Anglo-Saxon clients. And the other 50% are CALD clients, clients from a Culturally And Linguistically Diverse background based here in Australia or overseas, I have clients everywhere. And as somebody who has experienced it myself, I can certainly help them develop the skills needed to present themselves well in the job market. So I'm very passionate to bring her on board. Who is this interview with Div for? This interview is for anybody out there who is a leader of people who is an HR professional, who is interested in diversity and inclusion in the workplace, who is from a CALD background as Div and I are, who have experienced a formative action either positively or negatively. So if you are an Anglo-Saxon person, and you want to understand how that will impact your ability to job hunt and go through recruitment and selection, you should also listen to this podcast because we will be talking about it as well.

Renata: And what are her credentials? Oh my goodness. I could go on and on. And for that, I will refer you to the episode show notes. Div Pillay is a state Telstra business women's awards judge in Australia. That is a very important awards programme. And she has been asked to be a judge in 2020. She's part of the 100 women of

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influence here in Australia that, she got nominated in 2018. She's a Westpac bank, 200 business of tomorrow awardee. She's also the national chair of diversity and inclusion for the American chamber of commerce in Australia. She's on the board of street, which is a not-for-profit focused on youth homelessness and she runs Mind Tribes and Culturally Diverse Workforce. So Mind Tribes is her corporate consulting firm and CDW is her social enterprise that she runs with Michelle Redfern, who I have already interviewed for this podcast.

Renata: So I will link that interview with Michelle Redfern below in the episode show notes as well. So I hope that you enjoy this conversation. It went on for almost an hour, and I have timestamps in the episode show notes. If you want to skip ahead to find the right topics for you, but if you have time to go for a walk or cook something, or just listen to it while you're doing something else, I would strongly recommend that this is a podcast for our times. And I hope that you enjoy this conversation with my sister and great friend Div Pillay. Bye for now.

Renata: So, Div, thank you so much. First of all, thank you so much for taking the time to do this. I know you're super busy and thank you for doing it on video as well, which you know, many people opt out and I think some people like to see you when they're listening. So if you're listening to this podcast on iTunes, Spotify, please know that this is also available in video. You can access it on the blog or on YouTube people. So you have that option. If you want to see Div and I talking, why don't you start by telling us about your career journey? I think it's a good place to start on a job hunting podcast, to know how the guest got to where they are and how they became the founder of two organisations like you have Div.

Div: So the question is about my first start in my working life. Well, now there's a story Renata. My first job was as we used to be known in those days, a training and personnel officer. So it was an affirmative action position. So I was the first person of colour to be employed in these, it was a drug and rehabilitation centre and they were starting up training and development into workplaces, because it was really a problem in the workplace where employees, you know, would come to work intoxicated and they were there. They were upping the occupational injuries on site to the point where South African workplaces had occupational health and safety nurses on site. So, here I was newly graduated, bachelor of social science. And I had done, I think about 70 paper applications. And I had, I thought it was really snazzy back then in the late 1990s, I had typed it up on an electric typewriter. It was really groovy.

Renata: It shows our age doesn't it? I did a typewriting course let me tell you, this is how old I am paid by my grandmother.

Div: Yes, my mom, my mom paid for me. And she bought me an electric typewriter, which was amazing because the previous one we had was one of those old ones where, you know, you had the manual ding! And somebody gave me the advice. I went to every possible workshop and seminar then to understand how to put a resume together. So someone said at some workshops,

Renata: Those were the days before internet Div.

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- Div: I know. Yeah. And you know, hand written and all that sort of notes and things. And somebody said, some career advisors said it was good to actually have your resume printed on coloured paper.
- Renata: I remember that. I was going to say if that was also trending in South Africa, it was definitely trending in Brazil.
- Div: It was the bomb to do this. And I went and spent some, some money that I had on this beautiful kind of an egg cream colour, you know, eggshell cream colour paper, which I thought was very corporate. And I did my resume on those because I wanted it to stand out in the fat pile. That's what this person said. So I tried everything. And I was quite entrepreneurial then because I, then somebody else said a good thing to do was to call up companies and let them know that you're interested and try and talk to the HR person. So I did all of that good work and I, I announced that I would be dropping by with my resume. And so I did so every couple of days I would go and print it out. I used, I think a couple of neighbours printers printed it out and I would shut off all nicely dressed and rock up to reception. Announce myself.
- Div: And I was very crafty back then too. And I said, Oh, I've just spoken to your graduate recruiter, and they asked me to drop off my resume and here it is. So I was really cheeky back then, too. And so, I did that proactively and this particular role was advertised in the paper one Saturday morning. So I had done all of this and had no, no call-backs, nothing. So I saw this ad and it actually required, you know, just a bachelor degree, a lot of the time, you know, the ads then wanted either, you know, engineers or accountants or finance people. And this one just said, you had to have a bachelor's and this is me. I can, I can apply to that. And I had, I was already director of youth services with rotary.
- Div: So I had a social impact. I work with youth services then, I had a number of volunteer roles under my belt as a student. So I just armed myself with all of that experience. Because I thought this is the place that will value it. And I did the same technique, so I applied formally, but I decided not to just drop it off randomly in, they had a letter box for all the respondents, but I decided to walk past the letter box and go to reception, chatted up the receptionist. And I asked, you know, are they recruiting for affirmative action roles? And she said, I don't know, I'll check in. And I said, I think it's the time that we should be starting to look at affirmative action roles. And she said, I'll ask, I'll ask the person hiring. I don't know.
- Div: And they actually, it actually wasn't. So the role advertise wasn't for an affirmative action role. But because I asked the question, they thought, Oh, this person doesn't seem too shabby. She speaks English quite well. She'll do as a black empowerment candidate. So I kind of nudged my way into that first role. It was, just taking initiative, I think. So I, when I reflect back, I think it was just me pushing, pushing all the boundaries I possibly could. Yeah, so that was my first training and personnel officer.
- Renata: And now, moving forward many, many years here you are, helping leaders understand affirmative action, diversity and inclusion, how to incorporate that into business, but the business case, the positive impact that it makes in operations in

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PNL in business results. Right? Yeah. So you can actually, with your business, prove to leaders that it is a good business decision to incorporate diversity and inclusion as part of their strategy. How do you do that Div?

Div: Well, we use business metrics that our clients actually use for there to measure their own performance of their companies. And we show the link particularly of cultural inclusion and diversity, and how that benefits, sales, and service, and retention and all of those metrics. So we don't actually look only at people metrics. So we don't look at just engagement and, you know, motivation and improvement on the talent pipeline. But we actually look at it in hard business metrics. So for example, if you would have included a customer who's multicultural, what does that do for your revenue and service lines? Or if you actually, you know, engage your non CALD or non-culturally diverse staff to be culturally competent, what does that do? So culturally inclusive and competent. What does that do for your bottom line? So it isn't rocket science. It's just, good correlation data that we've been able to showcase, but it, it does take time. So it, it's not a quick fix. It's a, it's a 12 months or more, very deliberate suite of activities that we push and match against. So it's not just a quick, quick fix.

Renata: So for those that are not very familiar with diversity and inclusion strategies, explain to us what CALD actually means as an acronym and explain also if you can, how HR strategies are in operation, especially in large organisations, when you are looking at the makeup of your workforce and looking at workforce of the future and, looking at creating opportunities and, enabling better improvement in performance for the workforce, how are they working? And how are they segmenting also the workforce and treating those differently?

Div: Yeah. So to answer the first question, CALD stands for Culturally And Linguistically Diverse individuals, and it really is very interchangeable with migrants. So you'll generally find your migrant population in Australia is culturally and linguistically diverse. So they come from other home countries around the globe and they likely speak, two or more languages and, including English. So, you know, our country is pretty much made up of about, you know, 60% multicultural people anyway. And the census data shows that that is just growing with the number of births as well that you have into a migrant population. Our international student cohorts are generally about 50% or more in our universities. So that just tells us the richness of cultural diversity that we have in this country. In terms of HR strategies that, very much, around in Australian companies.

Div: So corporate and government, you'll find that diversity and inclusion really either fits as a portfolio or special, kind of category of HR business practise that sits alongside the other practises. So you've got your recruitment and on boarding or sourcing and recruitment. You've got your, you know, on boarding and learning and development. You've got your, remuneration, and then you've got your, employment relations employment law, you know, overall experience and wellbeing and all those other pieces. And, you know, somewhere under learning and development is a talent management function that looks at talent pipelining, and sometimes the diversity and inclusion portfolio of work sits underneath the talent management pipeline.

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And my opinion, you know, I pretty much always speak my mind Renata. So my opinion is that this, kind of siloed, mentality of seeing diversity and inclusion some way as a special project or, in addition to a portfolio of work.

Div: So by and large, doesn't get a large amount of investment from the business because it's always either a shared function or it, in some businesses I've seen it actually sits in the events team. So in the events team for employees, so under employee experience. And that just says a lot about how integrators diversity and inclusion is in a people function in a business. And this is why we've seen in, in my mind, we've seen diversity and inclusion very much, much sort of celebrated in terms of a calendar of events. And many people are familiar with international women's day and harmony week, and also sort, you know, celebration LGBT IQ events and things like that, pride week. So it tends to be a celebration of diversity represented or demographically represented. Doesn't tend to be good integrated talent pipelining from an inclusion perspective.

Div: So it just, your audience really needs to get the distinction between diversity and inclusion and what we need right now is the inclusion part of it, and the valuing. I mean, you'll really only get the business benefit that we spoke about earlier when diverse talent is included. So it's like, you know, pencils and a pencil box, you know, you've got all the colours in there, but you can't draw a pretty picture if you don't use all of them, just sits like a static piece of paper with a very boring drawing. So, you know, I'm really quite vocal about that, about the inclusion part of it. And there just isn't enough good practitioner capability around that inclusion aspect.

Renata: Because it's the inclusion aspect that will give the business results.

Div: Absolutely, absolutely nothing, not just having people represented and diversity is very much a fact. If you look at you know, most organisations in Australia, most of them have many people coming from CALD backgrounds and migrant backgrounds and, you know, starting to see emergence of indigenous leaders coming through at grad level.

Div: And it's starting, I mean, it's represented. But our big question is where is it represented? It's typically represented in the lower entry roles and in the middle of the pack. So by and large, migrants or CALD professionals sits mid to senior. And there's a very tiny proportion that's senior to executive on track. And the data shows that if we see them there, they have sat there far too long. So the trajectory, so they've kind of plateaued, so they've reached mid to senior. So if you just look at, you know, many migrant professionals lifecycle in Australia, you've got the entry, the first five years of settling your career, the five to 10 of push, you know, up and specialisation, maybe a couple of career changes in between to get a little bit higher in their pay, a little bit more advanced in their leadership journey.

Div: And then they sit there and they sit there likely around five to eight years longer than a person born here.

Renata: And why do you think that is?

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Div: That is that's where all the bias sets in. In terms of talent identification, you know, who is on the talent pipeline, who isn't an in there sits a hell of a lot of bias about who should advance and who shouldn't. And, you know, I experienced this in my career in my last corporate career. I reached that point. So that's very much my story. Reached that point, and you know, for about at least three or four years, I was a top performer couldn't fall to my performance appraisals, always ranked number one, was the most highly educated person there in HR, but was always told year on year for about four years that I needed to increase my profile that I potentially needed to move to Sydney where the head office was, that I needed maybe to get another lateral move was the conman to understand more of the business.

Div: Because this was my first, you know, telco role. Maybe I needed a little bit more diversity in my telco experience. So there's kind of this little shuffle yeah. Shuffle here, shuffle there. And, you know, one year, two years, three years, four years, I have seconded for my HR director on numerous occasions and did a very good job, and was recognised for that. But then when it actually came to just shifting the needle and pushing forward, it just tended to plateau a little bit. And you know, whether that's, you know, some people would label that as unconscious bias, some people would label it, many different things, but for me, the end result was I wasn't advancing in PEO leadership. That's a fact. And that's many people's stories. Really.

Renata: It is it's many of our listeners' stories. I'm pretty sure, even though the stats don't show, but because of the feedback that I get directly through emails and messages that the listeners of this podcast are at that point or, or more senior, you know, I have very, a few listeners that are under 30. So most of them are 30 plus, and they are either currently looking for work, unemployed, but most of them are employed and just very dissatisfied with, you know, what's going on in their employment. They may have been overlooked for many years. They may have been stuck. Some of them blame themselves for being stuck, men and women, mostly women tend to blame themselves. You know, I had kids, I left and I came back and I couldn't get my foot in anymore. And so, they don't understand that the organisational structures and the structures in civil society at large really enable them to feel like that. It's not their fault.

Div: Yeah. Yeah. There's definitely structural, you know, entrenched structural bias. And that is at an organisation level structure, but also in a leader mindset as well, in terms of who is suitable or talented enough to advance.

Renata: And then once I start looking at the feedback that I get, especially from clients and people that are, that are talking to me weekly is that, I have the CALD clients and followers stat feel like they're always being overlooked for roles and opportunities. And the non-CALD, or the Anglo-Saxon people that are thinking that they're always being overlooked because there needs to be affirmative action within the organisations or in the recruitment and selection process for the CALD and the women, and, you know, people from diversity background to come. So especially men that are in their forties and fifties are feeling really scared to be out of work during covid. How do you navigate this? Do you get that as well as feedback to you? Do you get those questions and what is your answer?

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- Div: Yeah, it's a very interesting question. Because I think when you start to segment, talented people into who needs to advance first, versus who needs to play a waiting game, it always tends to be quite divisive. And you probably, you know, whoever you talk to on a given day will probably likely feel excluded from the conversation. The advice I'd give to both men and women, CALD and non-CALD people is to understand your reality. And that's the thinking that I employed in South Africa because prior affirmative action, people told me you don't have a chance. You don't have a chance in this white dominated society. Especially with a degree like yours. And I see the government today making underplay for the arts.
- Renata: What was your degree Div? I don't know.
- Div: I did a bachelor of social science and honours degree in organisational psychology and then a masters. At that time, you know, I was told you likely won't get a role because it's, you know, white governments, odds are stacked against you. And so in my preparation for that reality, so accepting of the reality was for me, like a problem to solve and a way to navigate around it. So when, all right, okay. If it's stacked against me and that's what I have to deal with, as a reality, then I will go about other avenues to gain work experience and to find a place that actually I can start and commence because I was really convinced that this wouldn't be the reality forever. And I thought, okay, what do I do right now in this reality? And how do I accept this reality and work around it and still get to a good enough outcome where I could meet my financial needs, but also meet my career need.
- Div: And that's the decision that I took at that point. And then affirmative action came about in my last year of graduating and it changed my reality and it got me a step in, and from there I kept going and the advice I give to people in Australia who likely are in a similar boat where, you know, now there's, you know, potentially more focused on gender than ever before in Australia. And I'm not sure whether your audience, will see a report that's come out by, this today that's come out which actually shows a 5% market value increase for companies that employ women at a senior level. So senior management executive, and the top job of field.
- Renata: I saw that on the Age this morning, about the report. I'm going to link the report on the episode show notes.
- Div: That'd be lovely. Yes. And my commentary on LinkedIn today was that, you know, because it was really contextualised in those COVID context saying, you know, if you want to bank on productivity and improve business recovery post COVID, you should bank on a woman, in senior leadership.
- Div: And of course my commentary on LinkedIn was, 'I hope that's the case for all women, not just for a woman of a certain demographic profile or educational status. I hope it's all women with an intersectional lens across age, diverse experiences, international experiences, cultural diversity, ethnicities, all sorts of women, because it's that intersectional lens that will get that diversity up in terms of productivity gain and, business performance gain.' So I made that commentary, but back to your question about the advice is that if, if you are finding that you're applying for a role in an organisation that actually has pretty much on their websites and then their

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public statements made a play for gender balance. And let's say, you're a man you've got to understand where is your best marketability positioning. So, if you're going to go in there, go in there with your eyes open in terms of what is accessible in your personal job market.

Div: And I'm very particular about people when I'm coaching them is to say, yep, there's the market, the broad market, there's that internal job market in an organisation. And then it's your personal market. You've got to layer that and figure out what is the sphere of influence in your personal market? How are you understanding that reality and how are you navigating it? Because it's that internal agency of navigating what's happening right now and moving past it or around it, that will get you moving forward. But if you're going to throw your hands up in the air and say, Oh gosh, I'm a CALD person. There's only a white woman being employed or go, gosh, I'm a white man, middle aged look at all these women getting employed well, that's you pretty much calling on the gods to help you, which is likely not going to happen. I think the best position is to understand the reality is, creating your own personal job market context, and then navigate through that, playing on your strengths, of course, going market, it's a market proposition, right? It's you selling yourself as a service and product to the market and how do you best do that? And that's what people need to figure out to be honest. And I think most people who figure it out, move. Despite, you know, the playful women or the playful CALD or whatever there is.

Renata: But what we know, I mean, I've just interviewed Anita Ziemer this morning from Slade group and, you know, talking to her, and of course, what we see in figures that we get and statistics, and what she sees in her job is we're still employing non-CALD people. That's the reality. We want to have that diversity in the recruitment, but when it comes to the selection, it's still not happening as much as we want to see it. You call on that all the time on your social media platforms. What would you advise CALD women and men, going through recruitment and selection? How would you position them for success? What would the best tips be? I mean, you teach that as part of your culturally diverse women and workforce programmes. Can you give us the top tips that you would give them?

Div: Yep. I think the first thing is, understanding yourself really well and valuing your cultural diversity in terms of your brand. I think the biggest lesson that I've learned from seeing, you know, almost 180 plus women come through our culturally diverse women's masterclass, is the consistent undervaluing of cultural diversity as a strength and building it into a brand and being able to articulate that through a recruitment and interviewing process. I think, there's somehow an unconscious voice that's, you know, saying to people from diverse backgrounds fit in, fit in, fit in, this is how it's done in Australia. This is how you front up for an interview. This is what you say. And somewhere in there, there's a loss of that individuality and that voice, and that unique brand and the confidence to back yourself. And that's what's missing, is in my read from coaching so many women, you know, for so many years coming from a culturally diverse background. It's the inability to articulate that as a strength and included in their brand. It's the overemphasis of fitting in and integrating and sounding more like, and it's just not on. And we lose the diversity in

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there. But it needs to be cleverly crafted, and I do think that there's a little bit of fitting in, I suppose. But it's not without losing your sense of self. So my top tip is to actually spend some time figuring that out, because that on a cover letter, that on an opening summary on LinkedIn, that's in the first question in an interview, why have you applied for this role, what interests you in this role, is exactly you need to come out every single time.

Renata: I'm going to tell you something. And I have to be very careful because she's a client and I have to keep her anonymity, but she's interviewing for roles on zoom. And I've been working with her for many weeks now, more than a month. And we got to a stage where she's so comfortable with her CALD status, that her background is CALD. She has, she added a couple of things on the background that identifies where she's from. And she's really proud of that. You know, so some items of decoration and things, and she said, look, you know, this is from my mother and this I inherited from my grandmother and it's all there. And I think that she wants to position herself that way, you know, super duper, very professional woman. Lots of great roles that she's done. Plus she now knows that that's a strength for her, and I am so excited for her.

Div: But I think, you know, it needs to be used very cleverly. So you need to know how to link it in to a value proposition, to the role. So you can't just kind of dangle your cultural diversity and, you know, as a pro, unless you can really link it to a values based outcome for the business. So understanding the products, customer base, the service design process, the untapped market in the multicultural market and positioning yourself as a person of colour who understands the lived experience of a migrant,

Renata: Can it understand the narrative, the decision making process, the language. So many people fail to put languages on resumes these days. I think at some point a few years ago, somebody must have told people not to put languages. Don't you think so? I'm like, I know you speak all these languages, all that. Well, Oh, they don't really mean much in my sector and I'm like, let's look at companies that have subsidiaries in those countries and let's see if there is a connection that we can make.

Div: Yeah, absolutely. That's really sound advice to connect what you have with that company, with their brand, with their product, or also their lack thereof. So, you know, I've positioned myself for board roles where I felt that there was a lack of diversity and that they needed me in there as a diverse voice. And I've got those roles on the basis of my diversity, but I didn't just push it in. I really cleverly crafted a rationale of why it's a valuable benefit to have me in there. So I think that crafting takes a little work, and that's where you're brilliant at coaching and developing people to do that because it really is a confronting process. I mean, what I've learned from the women on our masterclass, it's terribly confronting. And I went through that myself. I took probably likely, far too long for me to discover that properly. So I think, you know, accelerating back to, with the help of a coach and really delving into it and clarifying it and getting someone to ask you the hard questions before you have to front up and get those hard questions from someone you don't know, is actually quite beneficial. But I think, I dunno what you find with

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your, with your audience, but there's also a lack of investment of CALD people in themselves.

Renata: Well I was about to say, if anything in terms of what you said before, you said something and I'm going to paraphrase, there needs to be a little bit of an adaptability. The positive thing about adapting to being in an environment like Australia is to be a little bit more laid back and be kind to yourself and more resilient when you don't get the opportunity and just bounce back and move on. Like so many others in the job market, do probably better than migrants and CALD people because there's so much on the line for them. They want to succeed so badly. And there's a lack of status quo, sometimes a lack of network and connections that really makes it more frustrating for them. And possibly they overthink it more than others do. You know, they overthink the gaps in their careers, you know, the times that they weren't working, there's a lot of overthinking of that, if you're a migrant that others don't really care that much, you don't really have to worry too much about that.

Div: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. I think migrants just have a very, I think far too evidence based approach on proving their competence. You know, they really want to know that they nail every single thing, that they're, you know, expert at. When actually that's just maybe too much for the role, you know, it's just, there's no expectation that you're an expert on 10 things. As an expectation that you're an expert on two of the main things and that's where you sell yourself. So I think, especially people coming from developing countries who have really taken a hard road to educate themselves, maybe the first in their families to get educated. There's so much on the line to showcase competence that we're hardwired to actually prove it all the time. And it's even in those micro moments of networking as well, you know, in a networking context. And I often will hear people, you know, the quick, tell me about yourself. They tend to over talk people like, well, this qualification, that qualification, you know, I've got experience in that and people go, Oh, really? That's a lot. It's a sense of self, you know, it's hard, it's hard. I've been there.

Renata: Most of your work and your time is telling leaders how to support people from diversity and diverse background, how to support and how to recruit, how to manage and help them grow and stay in the business. Right. What advice do you give leaders that are listening to better support diversity and inclusion in the workplace? Leaders and colleagues by the way. Let's do both.

Div: Okay. The main thing is like any business problem I often say to them, do you understand your data? Do you understand your people? You know, especially if they're looking at, you know, some of the people I speak to, I mean, well, most of the people I speak to are Anglo people, Australian born, and cultural diversity and inclusion is a new concept. Because of this, they've just got the hang of gender inclusion. And the thing that I say to them is actually know your market. So know your internal employee market and then know your customer market really well from a data perspective, because once you understand that, the business case for where the gaps are, and how to close them, becomes a clear cut position. And once

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I've got that decision from them, then I can actually show them how. And it is about, creating a win, win for these organisations, especially at a leadership level.

Div: I mean the easiest way to turn the tide is to look at senior appointments, because likely appointing a culturally diverse person into a head of products or services, starts the ball rolling in diverse thinking, they will ask the questions naturally of that market segment. For example, when you've got both your employees and your customers looked after, so really looking at it very strategically about where those first appointments in the senior executive team needs to be made, is really, really important decision making. And that advisory that we provide is really key. And so from, but from a data centric point of view, and almost every client that we've worked with large corporate and government, absolutely don't have a handle on culturally diverse data. They're almost scared to collect it. They don't know how they've never asked it before. So from a recruitment perspective, they just haven't collected that. So they don't know.

Renata: It goes back to that first question that I asked you, and, you know, I haven't been in the sector for a long, long time. I think the last time that I worked very closely with HR was when I was head of governance at Monash. And I had to kind of know, and it, diversity was a big elephant in the room. Nobody would actually mention anything. And I was wondering if things had evolved to a point where we now have to segment our workforce and we can identify them, put people and sort of stratify them so that we know how many male, female, CALD, Anglo-Saxon. Do organizations do that?

Div: I think yeah. From a male, female perspective, yes. And that's about it to be honest, male, female, we can understand. But we, you know, there's very few organisations that actually can say, I think the next piece of data that they can find is languages spoken, but that's, if it's recorded at the recruitment process and people tick a box somewhere. They can tell you how many indigenous and nonindigenous people they have because people tick a box again. But more than that, they just don't know. We can see it clearly from org charts at a senior level where they don't have CALD people. That's pretty much from a first name and surname categorization. And then even from looking at second tiers. So, you know, places of education, your passports, things like that, that we kind of nudge them with, here's how you can find it. So from your existing data, we can layer...

Renata: So when you're doing your audit, you can ask for that?

Div: We can ask different questions to kind of anticipate or predict, but, you know, you've got some names that are pretty innocuous. Like you can't really, I mean, someone can have a very Anglo Saxon sounding name, but it could be a migrant, you know, you just don't know. But the likelihood of that percentage is quite small when you kind of layer the languages, country of birth, dual passports, primary education, and international experience. As soon as you start to layer those things, you realise, okay, this workforce is far more diverse than people anticipate it. But yes, it's very interesting because every organisation we've started with, we're doing a large piece of work for the Victorian government, no understanding of culturally diverse data.

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- Renata: What about the U.S.? Now you're, chair of the American chambers diversity and inclusion committee here, I think in America, you can gather more data. Right. And I have found through my clients that they are very uncomfortable, my clients that have worked in HR or still work in HR very uncomfortable with some of their, head office requests that they can activate here. Is that right?
- Div: Absolutely. So the U S is far more experienced at collecting that data so that even from a people of colour perspective, they can segment very well, you know, into Latin America, into different parts of, you know, migrants, you know, generation on generation. They can catch that data really easily. The UK is also good at it. Canada is good at it. So those countries are far more advanced. Even Germany is quite good at it as well. So we've got a couple of clients who are multinationals and you can see the difference in the accessibility of data collection and accessibility of data. So Australia is very much lagging in that respect.
- Renata: Okay. Talking about HR and diversity and inclusion data. What if people want to get into that career of working in diversity and inclusion and helping with the changes that are needed in their organizations. And do you need to get training done or is it learning on the job? What would you recommend for people that want to get into that type of role?
- Div: I do think that, you know, some HR training or education is good. But the problem that you find in the market right now is that diversity and inclusion practitioners, either being supported, and scaled up in this COVID slash post COVID world, or they are absolutely being scaled down. So I think it is really relevant, or correlated to the organisation culture, the leader at the top, about where diversity and inclusion is really positioned, whether it's just a nice to have or whether it's actually quite integrated into the business's talent strategy to have it there. You know, one of our large clients, the head of diversity inclusion has been stripped down. So, it's and large engineering organisation and absolutely needs this role to be driving their inclusion plans, but has been stood down so, and likely will exit.
- Div: So I think for people who are interested in it, like with anything, you have to plan your pathway in very carefully. And you've got to go into organisations knowing what the sentiment is about DNI in the first place. And then work with the competition of people who have been stood down right now, who will be moving around into those roles if they are roles available. Yeah, so it's a pretty dire situation. I mean, I would like to tell you better in years, but, yeah, and I think a number of the consulting firms have announced this morning that they have laid off a significant number of consultants. So the DNI world is filled with, you know, you've got a top tier consulting firms with large DNI practices, and then you've got entrepreneurs like myself, plus they've got in-house practitioners inside organisations.
- Div: So, you've got to understand the landscape there and I reckon the number of people who've been stood down from large consultancies, and top tier ones will likely go the entrepreneurial route and consultant independent consultant group. So that's something else to play in the competitiveness of the whole landscape. But yeah, so I think there has never been a better time with the black lives matters movement,

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and the big push on business recovery and diversity and how it plays into that, it's a really good time to be in it. But I do think that you've got to be well versed and well positioned with networks to get in, to companies who are on the track to make change in that regard. So I do think it's timing in placing and if you're entering it without any DNR background, it's going to be tough.

- Renata: Okay. So, let's now move into, you promoting some of the things you want to promote. So for people that want to know more about, Culturally Diverse Women and Culturally Diverse Workforce, and they are based in Australia, are you going to open registrations this year? How is 2020 going to look like for the CDW training?
- Div: Yep. So of course, our master classes were face to face delivered. So we've had to of course, pause on those. We've got one group in flight at the moment, but we will resume and complete that group. But what we've decided to do is actually, move our master classes in-house. So we, this was previously a public programme. And while that's not totally off the cards, our strategy now is to move in-house inside organisations. So we are working with those organisations who see the value of cultural diversity, especially with the gender lens. And, we think that we'll get more traction in terms of leadership and pay for these women who are specifically selected by their organisation, senior executive, to go on our masterclass programme, we'll have a closer touch point in terms of the change that will make for their leadership and pay, and we'll follow them through inside the organisation and, watch for that change, and hold people accountable to make change for them, which in a public programme is really hard to do.
- Div: Whereas in-house we will do that. So we have a number of organisations who've, signed up to support us with those classes. So if you're an organisational head and you look up and you look at your top tiers and you don't see any culturally diverse people, or you have agenda action plan, and it doesn't actually intersect with culturally diverse women, then I'd love to hear from you.
- Renata: We will include your LinkedIn company page on the episode show notes, anything else you want to promote? The awards?
- Div: Yes, we do. We have the awards. So we actually plan this year to run a culturally diverse workplaces award. So this is for men and for women.
- Renata: And this is Australia only, so if you're listening overseas sorry.
- Div: Yes. Oh, well, I wish I could go international but not yet. So national awards all States in Australia, but the difference with these and the reason behind it is very strategic because it is about, getting, you know, 250 people into a gala event, recognising the progress that has been made with culturally diverse people inside organisations, but also looking to Ghana this community into action to say, if you haven't done enough, what should you be doing? So look to the organisations, the heads of organisations and culturally diverse people with may change, but look to see what you can do more of. And we want to actually make sure that we engage this community in that strategic discussion. So it is an awards. Yes, but it's also a community of practise that

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we're trying to build, for organisations that really are tuned in to look at diversity more than just a gender lens.

Div: So we are, we've got three categories and, it's for organisations that have stepped up where we have a category for advocates and allies, which typically likely will be Anglo men and females who have backed CALD people, and then we'll have CALD role models. So, you know, people like you Renata who actually do a lot for CALD people and the advancement in organisations.

Renata: Listeners you can nominate me, there you go.

Div: I might add, but it is for professionals or entrepreneurs. So if you were at Monash and you were head of governance role, you could apply.

Renata: Don't nominate me.

Div: So nominate people Renata coaches.

Renata: Yeah. I will give you a list. I will actually compile a good list of people in the show notes.

Div: So the date to watch for that is much 21st. So it's the UN's international day for elimination of race discrimination, which is the 21st of March next year. And, you know, fingers crossed. We actually are in a space to hold a public events, gala event like that. If not, and we're still battling with this virus, then we will have it later in the year, but mark my words, it will happen.

Renata: I know you, I know it will. You're tenacious.

Div: I am, I am, but thanks for inviting me Renata. I really appreciate it.

Renata: Thank you for coming on the podcast. This is long overdue. I really wanted to have you on board and I'm sure that the listeners will really enjoy this conversation and relate a lot to what we've spoken today. So thank you, Div.

Div: Absolutely pleasure. Thanks Renata. Bye. Bye.