

Allyship key element in supporting diversity: Dive In

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Calling out unacceptable behaviour and providing support for those who show courage in speaking out are important elements of allyship, a Dive In session has heard.

Financial services law firm The Fold Legal co-founder Charmian Holmes says scandals that have emerged at larger firms, including AMP, have shown attitudes are changing.

“The community will call out poor behaviour and the promotion of people who don’t know how to behave in a positive and inclusive workplace,” she said today.

“We are seeing a real changing and a turning of the tide within larger financial institutions in particular and hopefully that will continue.”

Ms Holmes says conversations “taken offline” can be effective in avoiding adversarial scenarios and driving positive behaviour change, especially in smaller workplaces and where someone may have been unaware of concerns. Workplaces should set the right cultural tone and be clear about that looks like and their values, she told the online session held as part of the Dive In festival for diversity and inclusion. The event was titled How does Active Allyship Contribute to an Inclusive Workplace.

“It is really important that people feel that no matter what their background or their position in the organisation, if they make a valuable contribution it is going to be recognised,” she said.

The session, sponsored by Aon and hosted by Director Growth Strategies Dav Bachra, also heard from Paralympic Games gold medallist Curtis McGrath, who lost both his legs in a blast while serving with the army in Afghanistan. Mr McGrath called for equal opportunity “to have a go” and says it’s important to listen to others on what they believe they can offer.

“Having the equal opportunity and having the equal resources is really important,” he said.

Journalist and former Sunrise host Melissa Doyle, who created the Age Against the Machine podcast addressing issues facing women over 50, told the session that people can play a vital role even if they aren’t taking a lead on issues.

Ms Doyle says some people show great bravery in speaking out, and valuable support can be provided in making sure those taking a lead “don’t feel like they are standing on a mountain all by themselves”.

“If we are not brave enough to be that voice, then stand next to those who are, and make sure that they feel stronger for having that support crew around them,” she said.