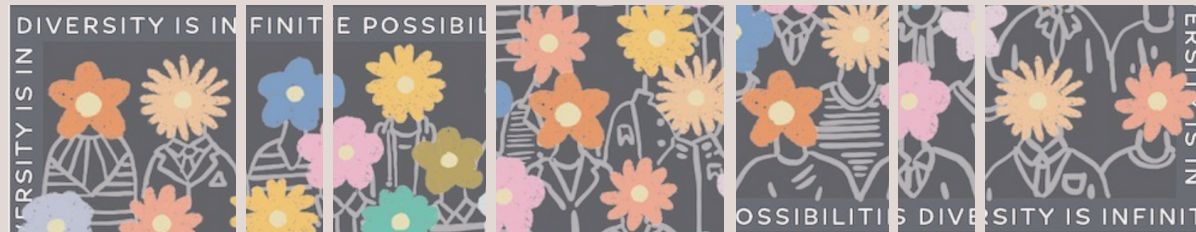


DESTINATION ABP

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FESTIVAL 2023

FINAL REPORT



ABP Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning

The University of Melbourne

The Diversity and Inclusion Advisory committee acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the unceded land on which the Festival of Diversity and Inclusion at the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning 2023 took place: the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation.

We recognise the unique place held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of the lands and waterways across the Australian continent, with histories of continuous connection dating back more than 60,000 years. We also acknowledge their enduring cultural practices of caring for Country.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledge in the Academy. As a community of researchers, teachers, professional staff and students, we are privileged to work and learn every day.

DESTINATION ABP: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FESTIVAL 2023

Overview

The second ABP Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Festival was held between September 18th to 22nd 2023 in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning (ABP). The festival saw staff and students organise five initiatives with the aim to make visible and celebrate the rich diversity of the ABP Faculty. Over the week, the ABP community was invited to take part in these initiatives ranging from forums, lunches to installations.

Objective

The Diversity & Inclusion Festival is aligned with the faculty's objective to provide support and resources for students and staff to incentivise purposeful engagement and contribute to the shaping of a welcoming, equitable, diverse and inclusive work and learning environment at ABP, cultivating a shared sense of responsibility and active participation from students and staff in ABP. This objective is part of Goals #1 and #2 of the Faculty's D&I Action Plan.

Activation Ideas Submitted: Five Submissions

Activation Ideas Implemented: Four Submissions



REPORT

Aim

The aim of this report is to reflect on the second iteration of the Diversity and Inclusion festival to understand how this action has contributed to attaining the Faculty's D&I objectives. The results of this reflection will then be then evaluated. The conclusions will be used to draw ideas and recommendations for its delivery in 2023.

Approach

This reflection is based on the feedback from the event organisers, which were received after the festival had happened. Organisers were sent a set of questions which were based on the measures listed in the D&I Action Plan as markers of success/improvement for this specific action.

The questionnaire went as follows:

- Which events did you organise/ attend?
- Could you share with us one thing that you or the participants loved about the session/event/ activity?
- Could you suggest one way we could improve on the next iteration of the Festival of Diversity and Inclusion?
- How do you think your session/event/activity contributed to diversity and inclusion in the faculty?
- How many participants joined this session/event/activity (rough estimate)?
- Is there any other event/session/activity you would have liked to see as part of the Diversity and Inclusion festival the next time?

Part of this report's analysis is also based on general observations shared amongst the committee members.



Image: Navalok

Reflection

Finally, we aim to draw lessons and insights from the feedback on the festival to understand the successes and the challenges noted in its delivery and implementation. This will provide us with an understanding of the extent to which we were able to address the following measures:

- Diversity in the number of D&I initiatives & ideas applications submitted.
- Diversity in the number of awarded D&I initiatives.
- Increase in engagement and participation of staff and students in D&I initiative implementation.
- Improvement in the perception of the faculty community who report feeling engaged and connected; and that they can contribute, and their contributions are valued.

EVENTS I

OPENING MORNING TEA

DATE: 18 September 2023

ORGANISERS: Diversity and Inclusion Festival Team

The Opening ceremony with Professor Hélène Frichot was a social gathering inaugurating the annual Diversity and Inclusion Festival at Melbourne School of Design. The event served as an opportunity to advertise student and staff-led initiatives that were part of the Festival of Diversity and Inclusion 2023 and promote awareness regarding Diversity and Inclusion in the faculty.

Organiser's Description: The Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning presents Diversity and Inclusion: Destination ABP. This year, the Festival of Diversity and Inclusion runs from Monday 18 September to Friday 22 September, and includes a range of events, exhibitions, social gatherings, and seminars. Join us for a morning tea in the atrium for the festival opening with Professor Hélène Frichot, Director of the Bachelor of Design, on Monday and find out more about Destination ABP 2023.

KEY POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Having a formal opening to the Diversity and Inclusion Festival helped to raise awareness of the events and the committee amongst attendees.
- The attendance at the event was more than expected, with attendance from staff and students.
- Holding the activation in the atrium helped to attract more attendance than expected and also became an opportunity to invite people to the other event later in the week.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- If the event managed to find more speakers, the activation could have become more eventful and enabled more meaningful engagement.

Attendance: 65 | **Cost:** A\$1048



Image: Navalok

EVENTS II

VEDIC WAYS OF BUILDING UP

DATE: 18 September 2023

ORGANISERS: Navalok, Sarah Harine Devepriya, Riyannah Alexander

A week long exhibition set up in the atrium highlighted vernacular architectural styles of South Asia hosted by students.

Organiser's Description: Vastu Shastra is an ancient Indian architectural system encompassing design principles, spatial geometry, and arrangement based on Vedic texts. With this knowledge rooted in human experience and the environment, the epistemologies of Vastu traverse several subcultures creating distinct identities. The exhibition aims to highlight the architectural diversity within the philosophies of Vastu. Drawing interest in South Indian Architecture and its influences, the event intends to expand awareness beyond the well-known landmarks of India.

KEY POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- The event showcased specific cultural diversity, thereby helping to better understand and appreciate various subcultures in the faculty.
- The week long activation offered more flexibility to the attendees to visit the exhibition.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Including opportunities for interaction could have made the event more engaging.

Attendance: 50 (on the first day) | **Cost:** A\$533



Poster: Navalok

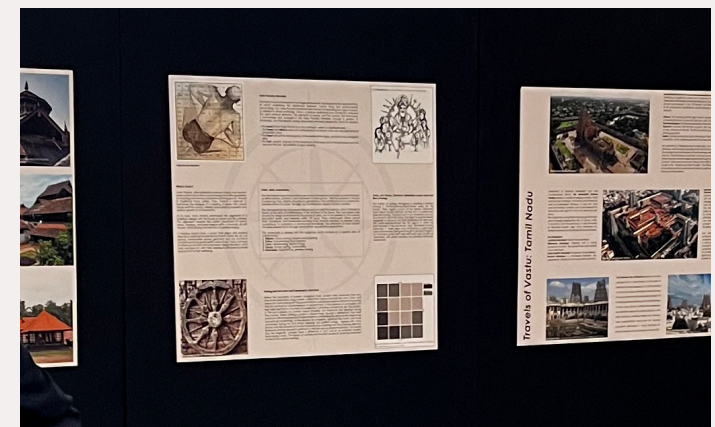


Image: Navalok

EVENTS III

GLOBAL POTLUCK



Poster: Navalok

DATE: 20 September 2023

ORGANISERS: Annie Howard

The potluck event held in the atrium invited all students and staff members to share some food they enjoyed. Students were encouraged to bring food from preferred eateries and amounts were reimbursed.

Organiser's Description: Please bring a favourite dish that makes you think of home, a happy childhood memory, or just something you love to eat. Come and share the flavours and stories from us all at ABP.

KEY POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Space and opportunity for students to celebrate their culture with others.
- Created a temporary meeting place for students and staff to interact in a
- safe and relaxed environment
- Students were able to socialise and strengthen friendships with access to free food.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The idea behind the event was not communicated well as most attendees did not bring anything to share with others. Perhaps finding a means to convey this idea better would be helpful.

Attendance: 100 | Cost: A\$399

EVENTS IV

QUEERS IN CONSTRUCTION

DATE: 20 September 2023

ORGANISERS: Sam Neave

The student-organised symposium brought together academic staff, students, and industry experiences to highlight challenges and experiences of gender identities in the construction industry.

Organiser's Description: The significance of hosting a panel on queer individuals in the construction industry cannot be overstated. By shining a spotlight on this often-overlooked demographic, we foster inclusivity and diversity within the field. This panel serves as a platform to highlight the contributions, challenges, and unique perspectives of queer professionals, paving the way for greater representation and acceptance. It empowers aspiring queer individuals by showcasing role models and breaking down barriers.

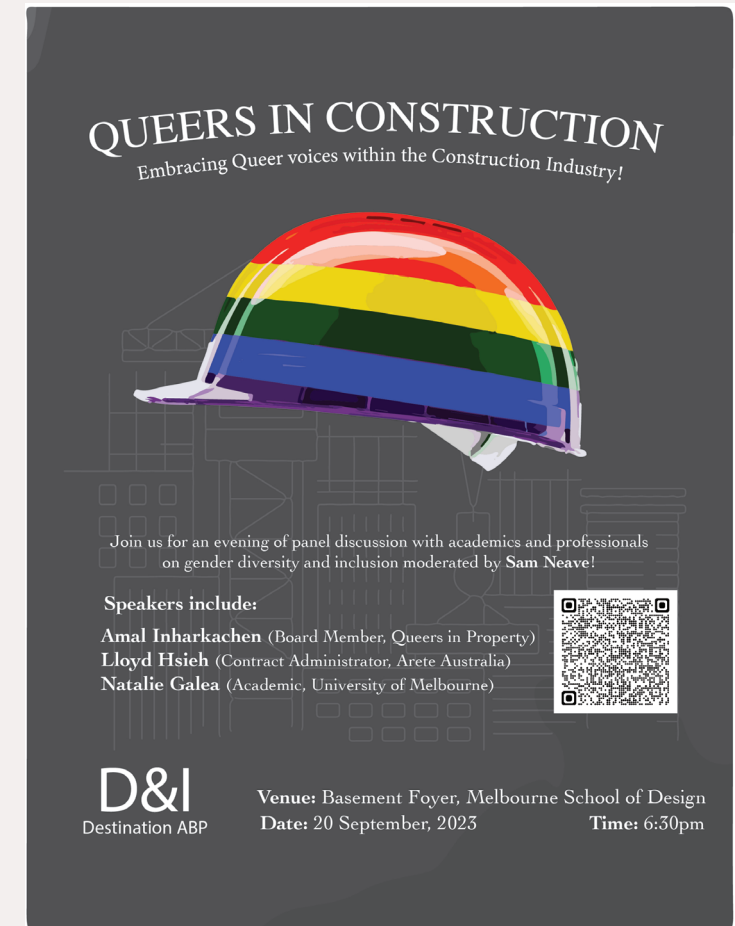
KEY POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- The event and setting created opportunities for honest conversations among all attendees.
- Highlighted the progress and shortcomings of the University in accommodating more gender diversity.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The event was held past the university times and therefore the attendance to the symposium was significantly low. Improving attendance could be helpful to improve the overall quality of the event.

Attendance: 7 | **Cost:** A\$ 865



Poster: Navalok

EVENTS V

TAKE UP SPACE II

DATE: 22 September 2023

ORGANISERS: Fatima El Samad & Qaisara Mohamad

“Take up Space!” was a festival event celebrating the identities and contributions to the academic and social communities of minority women and non-binary individuals in which they live, study, and work. The event saw students and some staff share food, poetry, and activities like zine-making to centre and celebrate minority women’s voices in the faculty. Take up Space! Was also an opportunity for participants to share their lived experiences in academia and the techniques they use to subvert oppressive structures.

Organiser’s Description: University can oftentimes be exclusionary both academically and socially for minority women and non-binary individuals, with feelings of isolation in predominantly white spaces continuing in the workforce. Take Up Space is a social gathering for minority women and non-binary individuals to find solidarity and share their experiences of thriving in the institution, encouraging them to continue to take up space.

KEY POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Participants felt welcomed and appreciated as individuals and collectively in a culturally safe space.
- The activities engaged participants and allowed them to “take up space” through verbal and creative expression.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Lack of participation of current students beyond the organiser’s acquaintances. Engaging more current students studying at MSD through student associations would be essential to ensure sustainable participation in future iterations of the event.

Attendance: 15 | **Cost:** A\$



Poster: Fatima El Samad & Qaisara Mohamad



Image: Wendy Walls

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Organiser	Event Name	Event Type	Venue	Date	Cost (AUD)
D&I Festival Team	Inaugural Morning Tea	Social Forum	Atrium	DAY 1 18 th September, 2023	\$1048
Navalok, Sarah Harine Devapriya, Riyannah Alexander	Vedic Ways of Building Up	Exhibition	Atrium	DAY 1 18 th September, 2023 - 22 nd September, 2023	\$ 533
Annie Howard	Global Potluck	Lunch Gathering	Atrium	DAY 3 20 th September, 2023	\$ 399
Sam Neave	Queers in Construction	Symposium	Basement Glyn Davis Building	DAY 3 20 th September, 2023	\$ 865
Fatima El Samad & Qaisara Mohamad	Take up Space II	Social Forum	Basement Glyn Davis Building	DAY 4 22 th September, 2023	

Total Costs: A\$

REFLECTION

The second iteration of the Diversity and Inclusion Festival succeeded in collaborative efforts to organise various activities, events, and gatherings to foster culturally safe spaces welcoming everyone at the faculty and beyond to celebrate one another. The autonomy within the organised events allowed participants to engage and better interact with the broader ABP community. Building on the learnings from the previous year, the events organised under the theme of 'Destination ABP' focused on highlighting specific aspects of Diversity and Inclusion which can be better placed within the D&I Action Plan framework. Critical feedback was also received, suggesting improvements in participation and identifying better times to ensure higher and more impactful engagement in the future edition of the festival.

MEASURES

DIVERSITY OF D&I INITIATIVES:

For the second edition of the D&I festival, the committee received five placemaking grant applications, of which four were approved. There was a great amount of diversity in the type of events carried out and the communities they were aimed at supporting. Initiatives such as Take Up Space and Vedic Ways of Building Up targeted different cultural communities in the faculty, while Queers in Construction highlighted various interests pertaining to gender diversities in the faculty. Global Potluck aimed to provide a space to promote a sense of belonging and community well-being in the faculty through gestures of cultural exchange. Events like Take Up Space, Global Potluck, and Queers in Construction, addressed the intersectionality of lived experiences within the faculty, thereby creating spaces to foster better welfare. Furthermore, the opening ceremony helped to promote all events and encourage word-of-mouth promotion for other events. For instance, Queers in Construction brought individuals both teaching and learning in the faculty to share their interactions and experiences as construction professionals and individuals. Events such as these offer encouraging opportunities to respectfully address complex issues within D&I by creating engaging environments.

ENGAGEMENT INCREASE:

While the festival drew a decent amount of participation from students, staff engagement with the festival events was unequal amongst events. Although student and staff members were involved in organising the events, some drew very little attention from the intended audience beyond the organiser's network. Reasons for this lack of faculty staff engagement may lie within the timing of the events and the festival as a whole. Since the festival was organised in Week 9 before the semester break, academics and faculty staff might have been experiencing higher-than-average workloads. Limited event attendance may also point to reconsidering locations, as events held in the atrium saw fairly more engagement than those hosted in the basement. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the festival attracted nearly as many attendees as the festival in 2022, with twice as many activations, thereby highlighting the engagement per event has been higher in the second iteration of the D&I festival.

KEY LEARNINGS

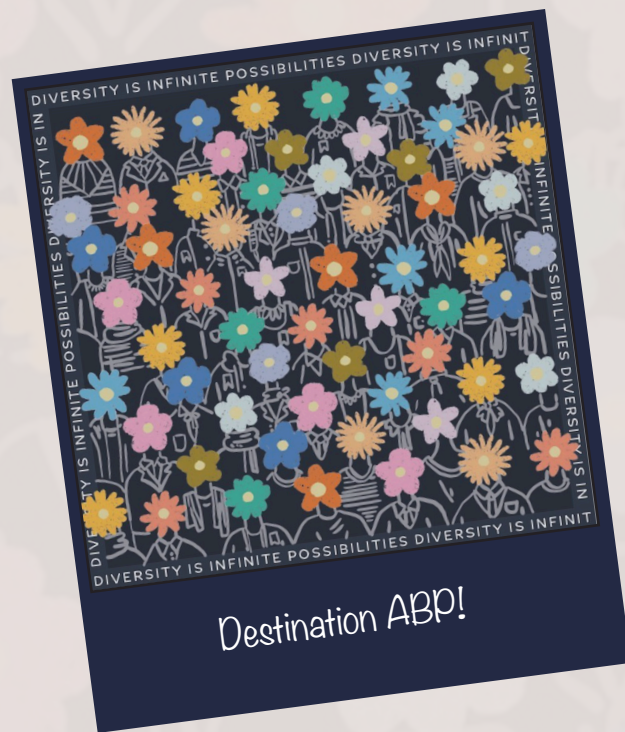
Based on organiser feedback and the D&I action plan objectives, we can identify specific areas for improvement for future editions of the D&I festival:

Engagement

A combination of digital and physical marketing along with the organisation of the events in visible and easily accessible spaces is crucial to attract more engagement.

Timeline

Organising the festival happening closer to the end of the semester was not a favourable factor in increasing engagement as faculty staff were busier during that time. A longer scope of time or another moment throughout the semester may be beneficial.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FESTIVAL 2023

FINAL REPORT

Festival Team

Working Group

Annie Howard
Derlie Mateo-Babiano
Wendy Walls
Navalok (Student
Representative)

Branding & Design

Radhika Sandeep Paralkar

Navalok

Research Assistant and Report Writing

Navalok

ABP DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Faculty of Architecture, Building & Planning
The University of Melbourne