



THE STATE OF WEDDING MEDIA

2024/25

How inclusion is evolving in
Australian wedding media

A POLKA DOT WEDDING REPORT

www.polkadotwedding.com



INTRODUCTION

WEDDINGS ARE POWERFUL. SO IS THE WAY WE TELL THEIR STORIES.

At Polka Dot Wedding, we've always believed every love story deserves to be seen.

We know how quietly painful it can be to feel left out, and how much media shapes how people see themselves in the world.

That's why we created the State of Wedding Media 2024: to really dig into what inclusion looks like in our industry, and where we still need to do better.

It all started with a question: What does true representation actually look like?

So we reached out to couples, vendors, and our wider community right across the country. Some of our questions were open-ended, others asked about what's missing from wedding content. We talked about race, gender, body size, disability, culture, relationships and more.

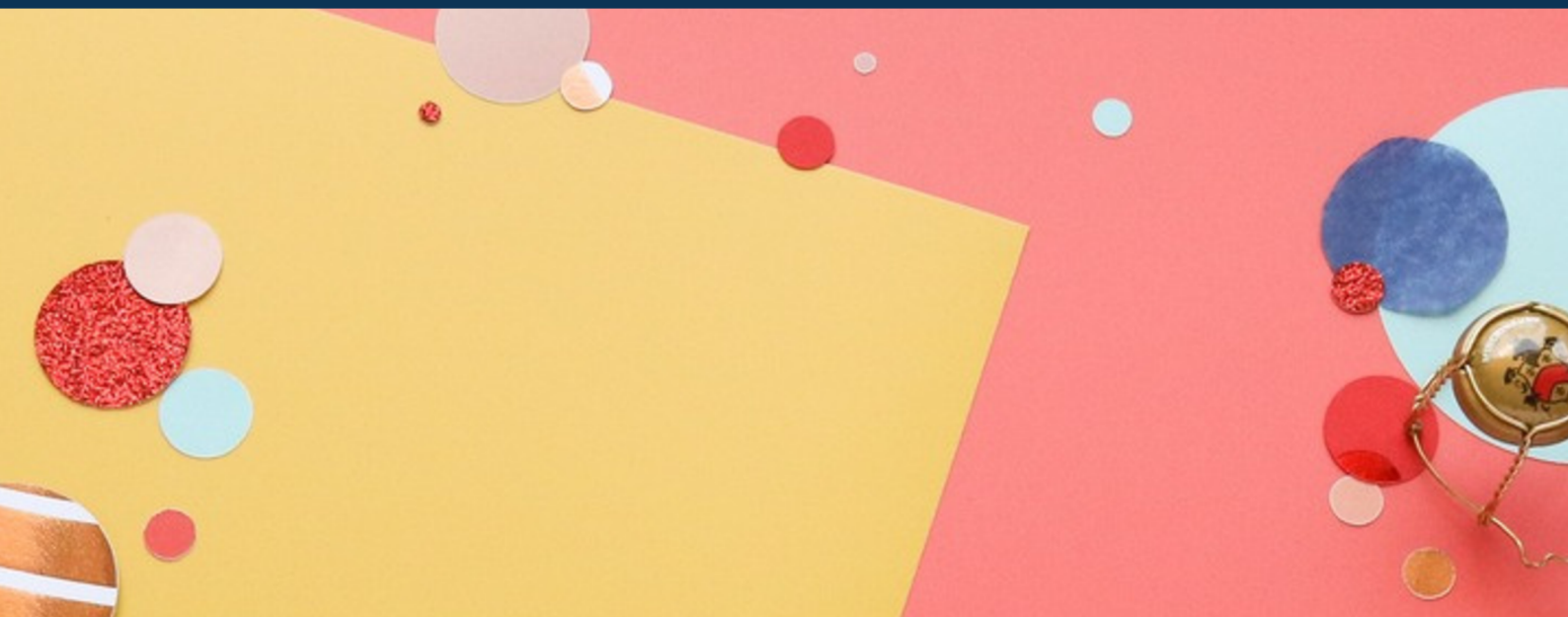
It wasn't about collecting data just for the sake of it - it was about listening.

This report isn't a checklist or a set of answers. It's a mirror: a real reflection of where we are now, where we've come from, and what still needs to change.

We're not sharing this because we've solved everything. We are sharing it because we care. Because we believe in showing up, listening, and learning. And because we are committed to doing the work.

We hope you'll join us to make real change.

Dorothy
Editor + Founder,
Polka Dot Wedding



WHERE WE ARE NOW?

Representation in wedding media is shifting — but not fast enough.

We heard it over and over throughout the survey:
many people feel left out of wedding media.

When you can't see yourself, it's hard to feel like you belong. For some, that dims the joy of planning. For others, it's a reason to opt out altogether.

This report captures those experiences. It reveals the gaps, the patterns, and the frustrations. And it shows where we're making progress - and where there's still work to do.

84%

of respondents said
part of their
identity is missing
from wedding media

1 in 3

felt invisible
or excluded
during wedding
planning

3 IN 5

felt unsure
reaching out to
media featured
vendors

"It's exhausting to have to
imagine yourself into every
wedding you see."
Survey respondent

70%

said the lack of
representation
made them feel
less excited
about planning

40%

said wedding
media still shows
the same kinds
of people over
and over again

50%

said they rarely or
never see people
who look like them
in wedding media

66%

vendors cited
fear or lack
of guidance
as barriers to
inclusion

"It's hard to plan a wedding that reflects
you when you don't see yourself anywhere."
Survey respondent

WHO WE HEARD FROM

We built this report on real voices from across the wedding industry and our community. While our survey reached a broad group, it did not reflect as much diversity as we had hoped. Most people who shared their experiences identified as white, heterosexual, and non-disabled. That is not a reflection of who belongs here. It reflects who has been centred in wedding spaces for a long time.



AGE

- Most common ages: 33, 39 and 42
- Range: 21 to 68



GENDER

- 82% female
- 10% male
- 8% non-binary, trans or other



ETHNICITY

- 65% White/European
- 10% First Nations
- 25% other backgrounds
(including Chinese, Singaporean and Arab)



LOCATION

- 85% of respondents were based in Australia
- The rest were from the USA, UK, Canada, New Zealand and more



SEXUALITY

- 70% heterosexual
- 15% bisexual
- 10% queer
- 5% lesbian or gay



DISABILITY OR NEURODIVERGENCE

- 20% identified as disabled or neurodivergent



OTHER IDENTITIES

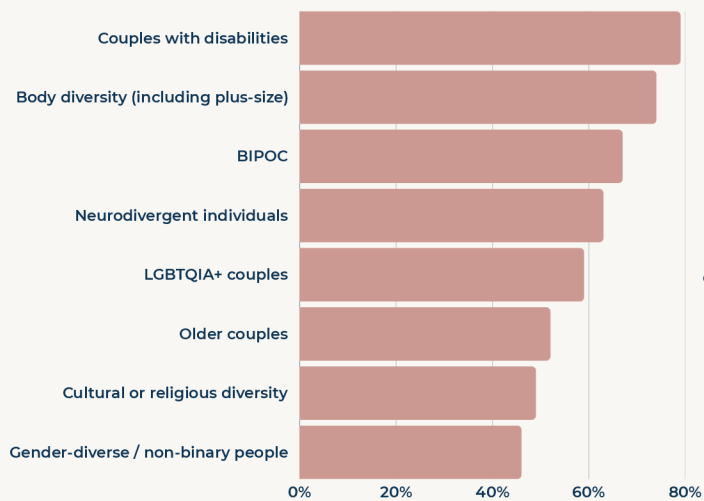
Some people also shared identities not captured by the categories above, including being “plus-size,” “older women,” “mothers,” or “in a 20-year age gap couple.”

WHO'S MISSING FROM WEDDING MEDIA?

We asked readers which identities felt most underrepresented in wedding media- and how often they actually saw them featured. The answers showed wide, consistent gaps, with some groups barely visible at all.

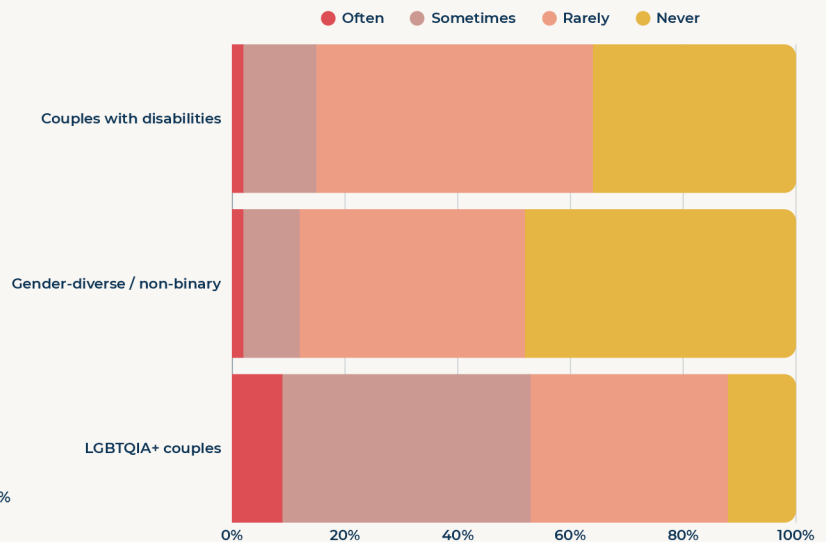
Which aspects of diversity do you feel are most underrepresented in wedding media?

These are the identities most often missing from wedding content: disabilities, body diversity, and BIPOC couples topped the list.



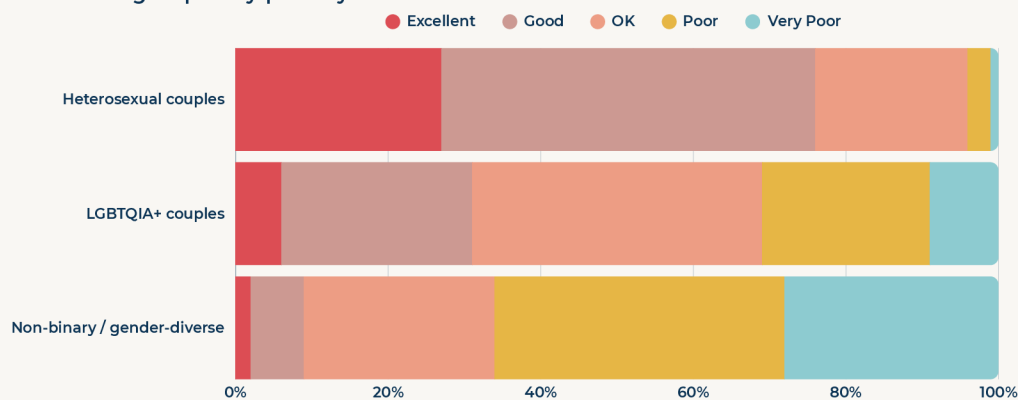
How often do you see the following represented in wedding media?

Even when represented, many identities were noted to appear just occasionally, especially gender-diverse and disabled couples.



How well do you think wedding media represents these relationships?

Heterosexual couples are well represented, but LGBTQIA+ and gender-diverse relationships are often missing or poorly portrayed.



"As a fat, queer person, I never saw anyone who looked like me. It made me feel like weddings weren't made for people like us."

Survey respondent

"Disability is just absent. Like we don't fall in love, get married, or deserve to be celebrated."

Survey respondent

"Non-binary people exist. Our love exists. But we're invisible in every magazine and blog I read. It's lonely."

Survey respondent

WHY REPRESENTATION MATTERS

When people don't see themselves in wedding media, it has an impact. The stories we choose to share - or not share - send a message about who weddings are for. And who they're not.

"It made me feel like weddings weren't made for people like me."

What Happens When Representation Is Missing

The emotional impact runs deep. It's not just about visibility; it's about trust, belonging, and feeling safe to celebrate who you are. Couples told us they felt:

- Their identities or relationships weren't valid
- Planning was harder, lonelier, or more isolating
- Unsure if vendors would understand or respect them
- The wedding industry "wasn't for people like me"
- Traditions and cultural practices were excluded or misunderstood
- Pressure to fit a version of weddings that didn't reflect them

"We were a queer interracial couple and couldn't find a single wedding like ours online. It made the whole thing feel like we were building from scratch."

- Survey Respondent

"When you don't see yourself, you start to think that maybe you're not as valid."

- Survey Respondent

"Even when diversity is shown it feels tokenistic or surface-level."

- Survey Respondent

The Ripple Effect on Planning

These feelings shaped the planning process. Many couples limited who they contacted, choosing only vendors who showed experience with similar couples.

"I only contacted vendors who had already worked with people like me. It felt safer that way."

- Survey Respondent

"I was anxious about reaching out to vendors because I didn't want to be judged."

- Survey Respondent

When People Do See Themselves...

For those who saw themselves represented, it made a real difference. It helped them feel inspired, affirmed, and more confident to plan a wedding that was fully theirs.

"We saw a wedding that looked like ours and it changed everything. Suddenly we had a vision. Suddenly it felt possible."

- Survey Respondent

"Seeing someone like me made the whole thing feel more achievable."

- Survey Respondent

"It made me feel seen. Like I'm allowed to exist in this space too."

- Survey Respondent

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

Representation doesn't happen by accident. To build a more inclusive wedding industry, change needs to be deliberate, ongoing, and accountable. When asked what wedding media should do differently, respondents didn't hold back. They called for systemic shifts - from who gets featured, to how stories are told, to who's behind the lens and at the editorial table.

“Feature people outside the norm. Show real diversity. Don't just tick a box.”

What people told us needs to change

- **Share more weddings** that include people of colour, disabled people, queer couples, couples of diverse sizes, and older couples - in joyful, celebratory ways.
- **Ditch tokenism.** Real inclusion is more than a single image or theme week.
- **Amplify vendors** from underrepresented backgrounds - not just their clients.
- **Highlight cultural and religious traditions** with care and accuracy.
- **Showcase relationships** that reflect the full LGBTQIA+ spectrum, not just “white gay men”.
- **Avoid ableist, sizeist, ageist or heteronormative assumptions** in captions and storytelling.
- **Diversify your team** - editors, writers, stylists, photographers. Inclusion starts behind the scenes.

“Media should broaden its lens and showcase people of all sizes, cultures, ages, abilities, relationships and budgets.”

“The highest profile media only show a very specific type of vendor. It's almost like a trend popularity contest.”

“Much of wedding media and many vendors default to heteronormative language. Gender neutral language should be standard.”

“Don't wait for special “weeks” to showcase these weddings (eg NAIDOC week or Pride week- it must be shown all the time”

“There's so much pressure to be perfect. It would be nice to see more everyday people and real celebrations, not just the glossy stuff.”

What we're still hearing...

“It still feels like if you're not white, thin, straight, and able-bodied, you're not the ‘ideal’ couple.”

“There are still so many stereotypes. Not everyone is young, rich, and having a huge wedding.”

“I'm older and getting married for the second time - wedding media never shows people like me.”

Signs of progress...

“I've started to see more LGBTQIA+ weddings, and it feels like a step in the right direction.”

“Some blogs now feature bigger bodies, more people of colour, and different family structures.”

“There is more diversity now than there used to be - not enough, but it's a start.”

“There's a long way to go but it's nice seeing real couples and a bigger range of people represented.”

THE VENDOR PERSPECTIVE

We didn't just ask couples. We also asked wedding professionals: what challenges have you faced in trying to create a more inclusive business - and what would actually help? Their answers revealed frustration, fear, and a strong desire to do better - but not always knowing how.

"I want to do better, but I'm not always sure how to do it well or who to ask."

The challenges vendors face

FEAR OF GETTING IT WRONG

"There's always this fear that I'll make a mistake and offend someone, even if I'm trying."

PRESSURE TO MATCH THE 'AESTHETIC' CLIENTS WANT

"My couples want a certain kind of look and that look is usually very narrow."

WORRY ABOUT BEING TOKENISTIC

"I don't want it to come off like I'm just ticking a box or using people for diversity points."

LACK OF CLEAR EXAMPLES OF WHAT 'GOOD' LOOKS LIKE

"There aren't many examples out there of inclusive media done really well."

LIMITED ACCESS TO DIVERSE IMAGERY OR STORIES

"I'd love to feature more diverse weddings, but I'm not getting submissions that show that."

What would help?

Vendors told us what would actually make a difference:

PRACTICAL RESOURCES

"Something like a checklist or guide would be so helpful. I want to do better but I need a starting point.."

MORE DIVERSE REAL WEDDING SUBMISSIONS

"More diverse couples submitting real weddings would help. It's hard when all the images you get look the same."

EDUCATION BEYOND THE SURFACE

"Real education. Not just rainbow logos. Something that gets into the hard stuff in a supportive way."

PEER SUPPORT

"I think we can all do more to lift up underrepresented businesses — share their work, recommend them, collaborate."

BETTER REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA ITSELF

"I look to wedding blogs and mags for inspiration too. If they showed more variety, we'd all benefit."

"Inclusion should be part of how we all show up, not just something for one month a year."

THE PATH FORWARD

This report isn't the end. It's a mirror, and an invitation. The wedding industry, and wedding media in particular, holds real power to shape how love is seen. That means we have a responsibility to do better, not just in what we say, but in what we do.

"It is so important for people to see themselves in wedding media, in all the ways they are."

Inclusion can't be a trend. It has to be woven into how we plan, publish, photograph, hire, collaborate and share stories. Every day, not just on special occasions.

For media, it means asking who gets seen, who gets centred, and who is missing from the feed. It means recognising that lived experience is more than just content.

For vendors, it means thinking about inclusion at every step. Not just diverse photo shoots, but who you hire, how you market, and how you make people feel.

For all of us, it means slowing down, asking questions, doing the work, and being willing to get things wrong and try again. It means really listening, not just to the loudest voices, but to those who are too often left out.

Our Commitment

At Polka Dot Wedding, we are not here to tick boxes. We hold close to the idea of "nothing about us, without us." Your voices shape what we do, and your experiences are what matter most. We are committed to keeping people at the heart of every story and every decision.

That means:

- Publishing real stories that reflect real people
- Making room for different bodies, cultures, genders, relationships, family structures and ways of celebrating
- Supporting vendors who are doing the work
- Amplifying underrepresented voices by seeking out stories we do not often hear
- Offering resources, space, and accountability - not just feel-good moments
- We'll keep learning. We'll keep listening. And we'll keep showing up.



Thank you

To everyone who shared their thoughts, frustrations, and hopes - thank you. Your voices are the reason this report exists. We see you. We're listening, and we're making change happen. If you have ideas, feedback, or want to be part of the conversation, we hope you'll reach out.

THIS IS THE START. NOT THE END.

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