

AWEI 2019 KEY TAKEOUTS: ALLIES

This edition of AWEI PRACTICE POINTS focuses on allies. Of the 27,347 respondents overall, 22.5% identified as LGBTIQ leaving 21,191 that could *potentially* be allies.

In this paper, we look at how many of our non-LGBTIQ respondents refer to themselves as an ally, and how active they are in the role of ally, in addition to the reasons behind others not choosing to identify as an ally. We also look at the difference that allies make to LGBTIQ employees and their overall sense of inclusion.

HOW WE DEFINED ALLIES

To be clear on what we meant by ally, this year's survey incorporated the following definition: *"someone who supports the creation and maintenance of an LGBTIQ inclusive workplace environment and is prepared to openly support their LGBTIQ colleagues participating within the organisations LGBTIQ inclusion initiatives."*

While the definition is reasonably broad, we wanted to exclude those who would not openly support their LGBTIQ colleagues or participate in LGBTIQ inclusion initiatives. We felt that a silent, inactive ally offered very little value to the work of inclusion if (a) nobody knew that they were an ally; and if (b) they did not openly support LGBTIQ colleagues or participate in inclusion activities. Silent allies, while meaning well, are invisible and therefore unlikely to have a positive impact on the culture or the LGBTIQ people who benefit from their support.

The articulation of this definition may have had some impact on numbers identifying as an ally, so we have in this paper deliberately dug a little deeper to find out as much as we can about why people chose not to identify as an ally utilising this definition.

"My company has a page full of "Allies" but I find that most people do not participate. I think that unless you actively contribute to the cause, you're a bystander"

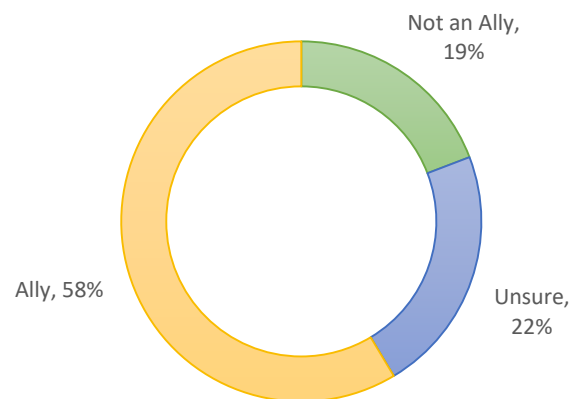
AWEI2019 Survey Respondent



BREAKDOWN OF ALLY IDENTIFICATION

This year, of the 21,191 people that were not LGBTIQ, 4 in 10 people would not call themselves an ally. Admittedly, 22% were sitting somewhere on the fence, not quite willing to say 'yes'. Sadly 18% (approximately 1 in 5 people) were very clear in their statement that they would not consider themselves to be an ally – at all.

Non LGBTIQ People (n21,191)



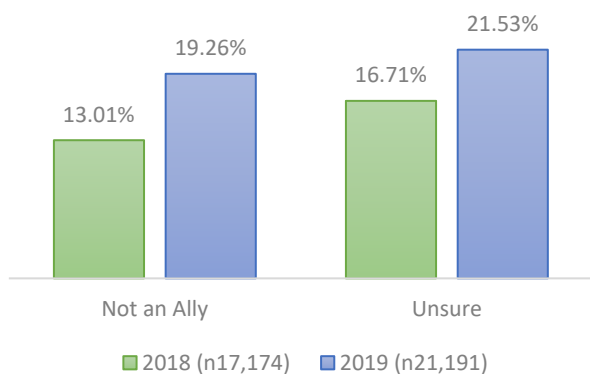
ALLY NUMBERS ARE DOWN 2019

While the definition utilised this year within the survey may count towards some of the decline in ally numbers this year, the decline is still significant when

compared to the numbers identifying as an ally last year; particularly when it comes to our Regional folk.

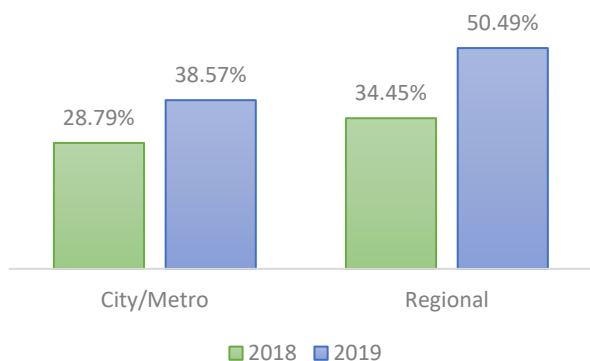
We saw a 48% increase from last years figures in terms of people who did NOT identify as an ally and a 29% increase in those who were unsure.

Ally Numbers Declining Overall



When comparing metro with regional areas the difference in numbers were even more pronounced. While City/Metro areas had a 34% increase in those not identifying as an ally (or unsure); Regional areas saw a 47% increase.

Not an Ally or Unsure



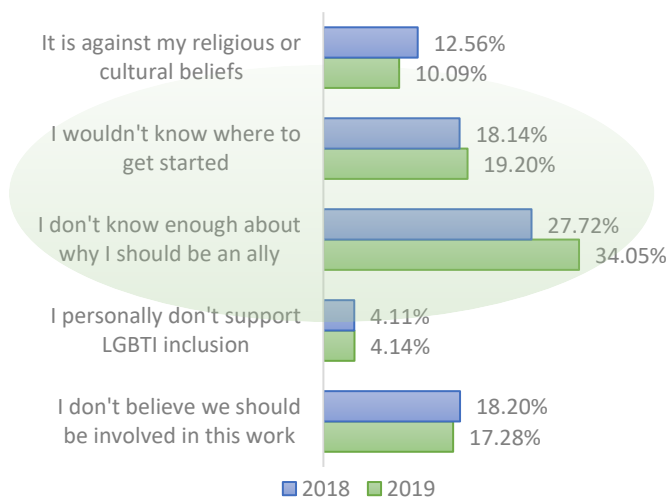
REASONS FOR NOT BEING AN ALLY

In looking at the reasons for *not identifying as an ally*, we were interested to find out if religion, culture, conservatism or fear of being thought of as LGBTIQ played a part.

When comparing our top reasons for not being an ally to those identified last year, regardless of the definition change this year, the pattern of responses were very similar.

Topping all reasons were two areas that pointed directly to communication and ally training.

Why aren't you an ally?



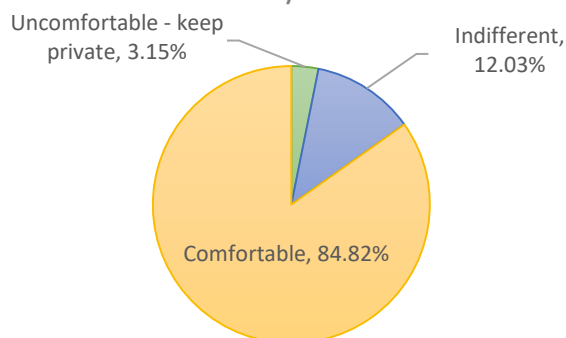
Interestingly, the number of people who cited religious or cultural beliefs and just not believing that we should be involved in this work has dropped from last year. The top two reasons for not being an ally this year are not knowing where to get started (19.2%) and not knowing enough about why one should be an ally (a significant 34.05%).

INCLUSIVE VS ACTIVE ALLY PARTICIPATION

To get a better sense of inclusion vs active participation as an ally, we delved a little deeper into the data.

When it comes to comfort levels in regard to LGBTIQ people openly talking about their partners and families, 85% of the 27,214 people who responded to this question felt comfortable with this.

Talking LGBTIQ Partners/Families

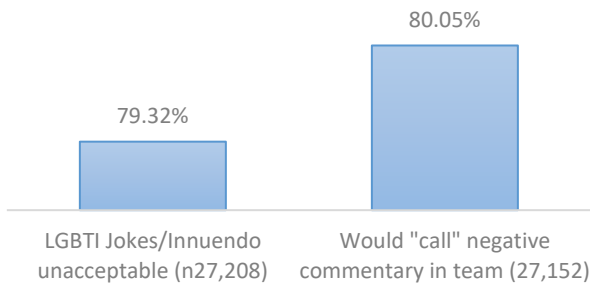


In terms of believing jokes or innuendo targeting LGBTIQ people at work, of the 27,208 people that responded to that question, 79% believed it to be unacceptable.

80% of respondents said that they would call that behaviour if they heard it.

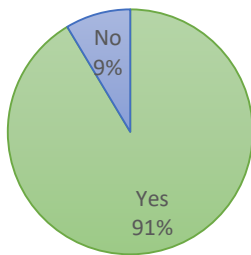
So while people may not be identifying as active allies, clearly this does not mean that people aren't inclusive in and of themselves.

LGBTIQ Negativity: Majority Views & Actions



The numbers of non-LGBTIQ people who personally support LGBTIQ inclusion within the workplace is also heartening.

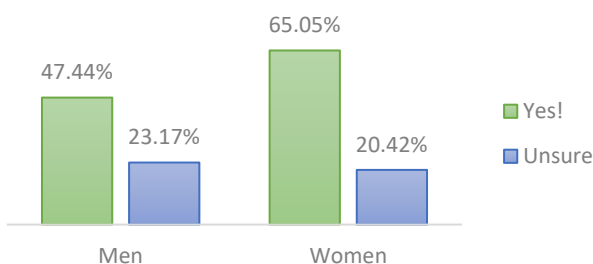
Non-LGBTIQ people supporting LGBTIQ Inclusion



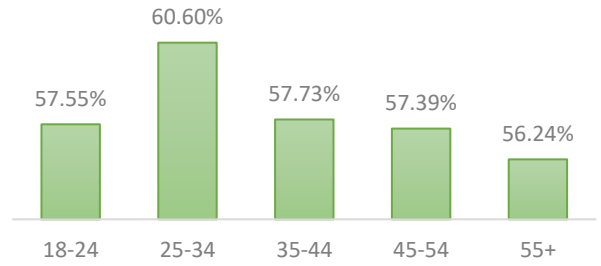
ALLIES BY GENDER AND AGE

We are often asked if age or gender makes a difference when we refer to non-LGBTIQ allies, here is what we found:

Non-LGBTIQ Allies by Gender



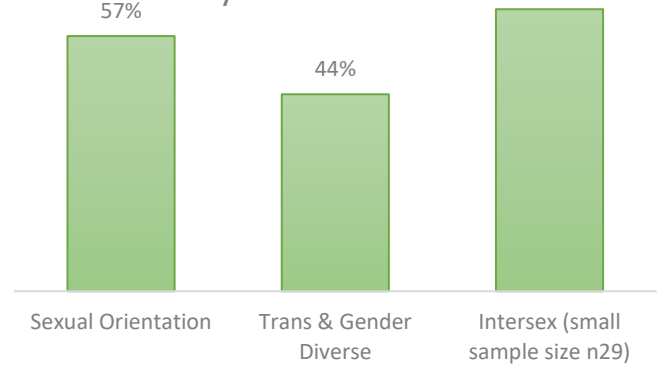
Non-LGBTIQ Allies by Age



THE DIFFERENCE ALLIES MAKE

It is clear that LGBTIQ people value the role that allies play in inclusion.

Allies have made a difference to my sense of inclusion



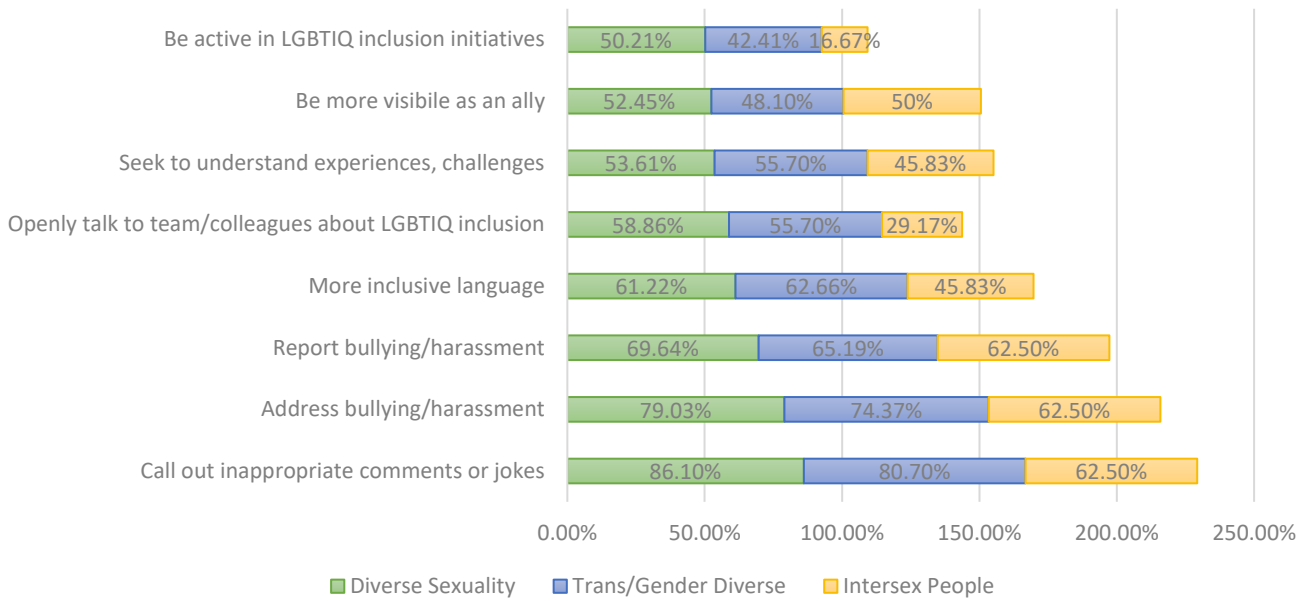
While the chart above shows really good numbers in terms of the difference that allies make to one's *personal sense of inclusion*; we do need to keep in mind that for many, while the value of allies are appreciated, *personal sense of inclusion* may not necessarily be impacted; particularly if one is out and comfortable in their own skin regardless of whether allies or exist (or not).

However, for 44-63% of LGBTIQ people (depending on how they identify) allies make a personal difference to their sense of inclusion at work, regardless of whether they are out/open at work. This is a significant number of people who are personally impacted by the support of those around them.

WHAT LGBTIQ PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO SEE FROM ALLIES

When asking LGBTIQ people what behaviours they feel are most important for an ally/champion in terms of impact and encouragement of an inclusive culture, here were the top responses:

What LGBTIQ people value most in allies



It is not surprising that the ally behaviours that LGBTIQ believe would make the biggest difference to them, have to do with personally addressing and/or reporting bullying/harassment and calling out inappropriate commentary and jokes. While not every ally will have the opportunity to do this, the remaining actions seem aligned to the key activities regularly undertaken by allies; these being:

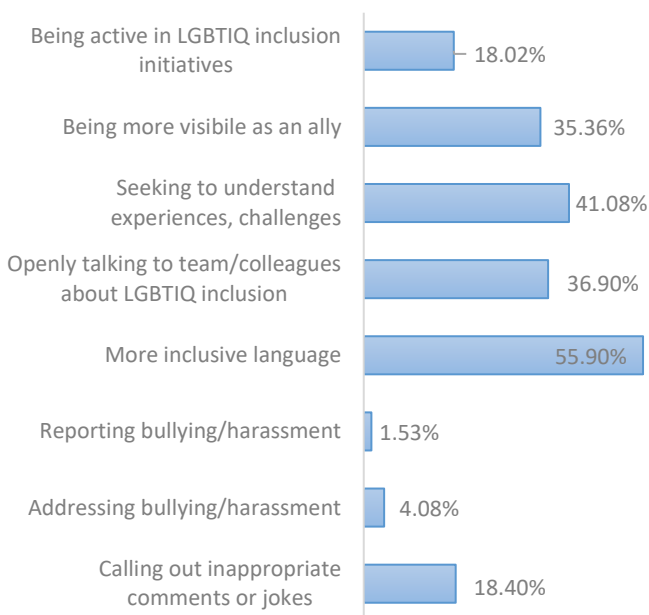
SUPPORT GIVEN TO ALLIES

We have already identified that top two reasons for not identifying as an ally within the workplace are:

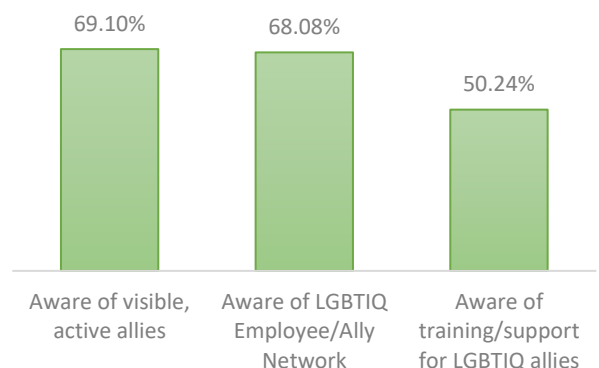
1. Not knowing enough about why somebody should be an ally; and
2. Not knowing where to get started

So we investigated how aware non-LGBTIQ people were of active allies, employee networks or training/support for LGBTIQ allies. Here is what we found:

What Allies are regularly doing



Non-LGBTIQ people



While there is awareness of allies and networks, only half of all non-LGBTIQ respondents were aware of any training or support available to LGBTIQ allies.

KEY TAKEOUTS

- While it appears ally numbers have fallen since last year, we do need to be mindful that this year's survey defined allies as those who not only supported an LGBTIQ inclusive workplace but who were also prepared to openly support LGBTIQ colleagues or inclusion initiatives. This differentiated between allies who were visible and active, and those who were essentially hidden.

While supporting in principle is nice, those who are not visible or active do not contribute to an inclusive culture or an LGBTIQ employees' sense of overall inclusivity in the same way. The assumption that this may have resulted in the drop in people identifying as allies is somewhat supported by the fact that 91% of all non-LGBTIQ people supported LGBTIQ inclusion and that over 2/3rds of non LGBTIQ people felt LGBTIQ related jokes and innuendo was not only unacceptable but something that they would be prepared to "call".

- When we then asked WHY people were not identifying as allies, the top two reasons clearly stood as being areas that we could address: *Not being sure WHY they need to be an ally* and *Not knowing enough about HOW to be an ally*. Surprisingly only a small percentage of those who do not identify as an ally cite religious and/or cultural reasons and even these were down from 12.56% to 10.9% this year.
- While women are more inclined to be allies than men (65% vs 47%) and men are more likely to be unsure (23% vs 20%) we found very little difference when it comes to age.
- Having allies in the workplace does have an impact on the sense of inclusion amongst LGBTIQ people.

CONSIDERATIONS

- We need to differentiate between those who support LGBTIQ inclusion in principle and those who are visible and openly engage when determining ally numbers. Clearly defining what you mean by ally will help you to do that.
- There are a significant number of people who do not consider themselves to be an ally because they do not understand WHY they should be one. This can be easily rectified through training, communications and storytelling.
- It appears that we can do more in providing allies with information on "how to be an ally", what it means, why it's important and behaviours that will make a difference. If we were to accomplish this, we should see a significant increase in the number of visible allies.
- Consider bringing your Pride in Diversity Relationship Manager in to run some additional ally training sessions or perhaps look at producing collateral aimed at supporting and educating allies.

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This data may be used if referenced as above.

The Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) is Australia's national benchmark for LGBTI Inclusion within the workplace. The accompanying AWEI Employee Survey captures lived experience, perceptions and views of those working within workplaces active in this space. 2019 AWEI Employee Survey captured 27,347 results responses. These data sheets, designed to inform practice, along with videos and blogs are published regularly by Pride in Diversity.