

PRACTICE POINTS

2021 DATA ANALYSIS FROM THE AWEI NATIONAL SURVEY

BEST PRACTICE FOR THE INCLUSION OF PEOPLE OF DIVERSE GENDERS & SEXUALITIES IN AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES

AWEI ISSUE 2: AUGUST 2021

BEING OUT AT WORK

The annual Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) Employee Survey had its largest response to-date this year, including 186 participating organisations. The 2021 Survey saw a response rate of 44,915 employees across Australia (with an additional 584 employees working for Australian organisations overseas). Of all respondents, 18.8% individuals (n7,930) identified as being of diverse sexuality and/or gender (LGBTQ).

All respondents worked in organisations active in LGBTQ inclusion, whether they be in the early or developmental stages of their inclusion journey or highly experienced in this aspect of diversity & inclusion.

This edition looks at respondents of diverse sexuality; those who are out at work and those who are not out (closeted) at work in regard to their sexuality.

TENURE AND DEMOGRAPHICS

In regard to length of time with their current employer, 42.44% of employees with a diverse sexuality have been with their current organisation for over five years; a lower rate when compared to 53% of all respondents.

Regarding multi-faceted aspects of diversity experience within the workplace, 55.60% respondents with a diverse sexuality also identified as having a diverse identity (n3,351); These include: being an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; person of colour; identifying with a CALD background; living with a disability; being neuro-diverse; person of faith; or mature age employee.

Of all respondents 18.8% live outside of metropolitan areas, compared to 16.74% of all LGBTQ employees and 16.06% of diverse sexuality respondents.

Like last year, 1.56% of respondents with a diverse sexuality worked in overseas locations. This is also a similar average to all respondents (1.52%).

Of the 6,560 respondents with a diverse sexuality, 39.04% also participated in last year's Survey (n2935).

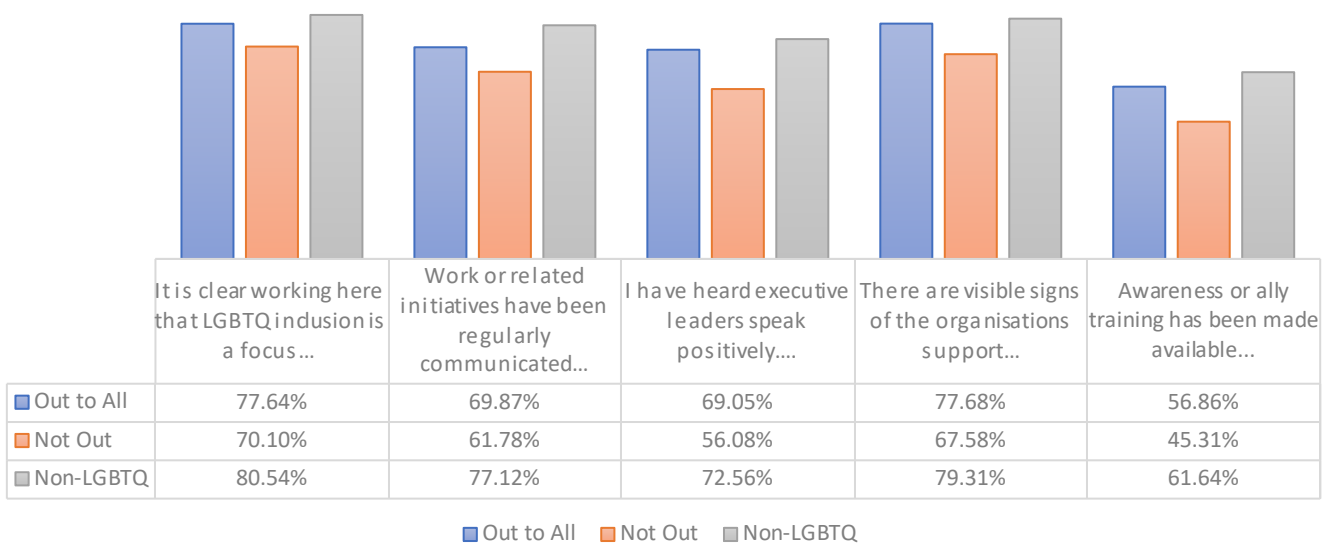
GENERAL VIEWS OF ALL RESPONDENTS

Personal views on workplace inclusion fared better for employees who were **out to all** (n2,517) at work, compared to those **not out at all** at work (m985) in regard to their diverse sexuality.

85.11% of Non-LGBTQ respondents showed personal support for the work their organisation does for LGBTQ inclusion at 85.11%, compared to 77.85% of LGBTQ employees who were out to all.

However, only 37.76% of non-LGBTQ respondents believe their organisation should put more effort into this space; compared 89.58% of those out to all and 84.71 % of those not out at work.

Non-LGBTQ respondents are more likely to see visibility and inclusion for people of diverse sexualities and genders, when it comes to communications, executive leaders, awareness and ally training.



Still, a majority of employees believe training in this area of diversity and inclusion should be mandatory for people managers (Out to All 91.01% vs Not Out 85.73% vs non-LGBTQ 77.46%). This is a consistent response rate year to year.

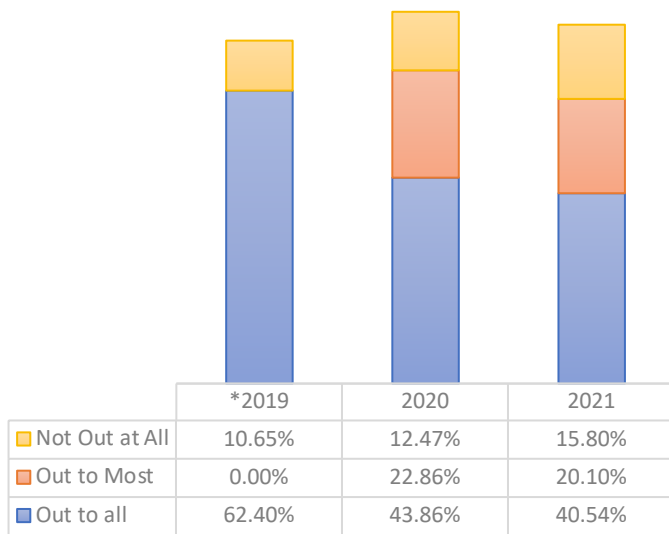
DIVERSE SEXUALITY: BEING OUT AT WORK

There was a 27.5% increase in the number of respondents with a diverse sexuality this year (n6,560). There was also a 4% increase in the number of respondents identifying as Bisexual (n1,578); and 6% decrease in those identifying as Gay or Lesbian (n3,586).

Regarding sexual orientation, men are more likely to be out (71.25%) than women (50.65%) and gender diverse people (50%). While this is consistent with annual findings, the percentage of employees of any gender identity who are out at work has decreased this year. Likewise, those not out at work has increased.

This trend repeats when looking at age demographics; those **out to all** at work has decreased between 2% - 5% across all age brackets. Consistent with previous years, young people under 24 years old (n768) are the most likely to NOT be out at work.

Once again this year, those who were **not out at all** at work (2019: 10.65% vs 2020: 12.47% vs 2021: 15.86%) increased. Those were **out to all** at work (2019: 62.4% vs 2020: 43.86% vs 2021: 40.54%) increased.



*'Completely Out': In 2019 and years prior, there was no option for 'Out to Most'.

As these concerning rates appeared for the first time in 2020, multiple tests across the various breakdowns continued to show that fewer employees were willing to be out at work in regard to their diverse sexuality.

It was only when we added in the 2020 figures to include those that were **'out to most'** did we see numbers anywhere near comparable to 2019.

However, in 2021, there was a 6% drop in the total of employees who were **out to all** or **most**. Likewise, those **not out at all** has increased approximately 3% every year since 2019.

More positively, of employees **not out at all** at work (n985), there was a decrease in those who felt that they would not be accepted within their team should them be out (39.23% compared to 49.29% last year.)

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Despite the above, for the first time ever, we saw an improvement in the general health and wellbeing of employees not out at work and a slight decrease in the same areas for employees out at work.

Health + Wellbeing (Strongly Agree/Agree responses)	2021 Out to All (n2517)	2020 Out to All (n2339)	2021 Not Out (n985)	2020 Not Out (n665)
I feel safe and included within my immediate team	94.23%	95.27%	82.12%	80.24%
I feel mentally well at work	79.78%	83.89%	66.84%	61.04%
I feel I can be myself at work	88.85%	91.15%	55.05%	48.40%
I feel a sense of belonging here	79.90%	82.35%	62.55%	59.88%
I feel productive at work	83.07%	86.62%	81.75%	81.22%
I feel engaged with the organisation and my work	83.07%	86.29%	71.91%	71.08%

However, it is important to note that employees who are out to all fare better on all scales of engagement and wellbeing.

That said, given the unique experiences from 2020, we suspect that working remotely / working from home presented unique challenges for employees who are proudly out at work. Likewise, employees not out at work may have felt safer working out of office.

78.34% of diverse sexuality respondents would feel supported coming out to suppliers, customers or external business contacts; compared to 83.47% of those out to all.

67.24% of diverse sexuality respondents feel their orientation would be valued in career progression; compared to 74.27% of those out to all (the latter had a 9.15% drop compared to the same cohort last year).

60.1% WORKPLACE INITIATIVES HAVE HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON HOW I FEEL ABOUT MY OWN SEXUALITY

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Those who were the target of inappropriate workplace behaviours based on their diverse sexuality have continued to decrease (2019: 16.04% vs 2020: 13.02% vs 2021: 12.67%).

Those who witnessed more serious bullying and harassment continued with an average of 2% increase each year. 13.06% of LGBTQ respondents witnessed more serious bullying and harassment.

Despite this trend, those who experienced being the target of more serious bullying and harassment decreased to 5.60%.

Of LGBTQ respondents, 18.7% (n1,490) identify as having **both** a diverse sexual orientation and diverse gender. While this cohort had positive shifts in their lived experiences regarding bullying and harassment, they are still more likely to be discriminated against because of their diverse sexuality; 16.40% experiencing inappropriate jokes/unwanted commentary and 9.60% being the target of more serious bullying.

VISIBILITY OF ALLIES

In surveying LGBTQ respondents regarding the visibility of executive active allies within their organisation and allies within their immediate work area, the results were somewhat disappointing.

Only 64% of LGBTQ employees knew of executive allies within the organisation compared to 68.52% last year. There was a significant drop in the percentage of respondents who knew of active allies within their immediate work area (2020: 74.66% vs 2021: 68%). Perhaps of more concern is the 16.4% drop of LGBTQ respondents who feel that active allies positively impact their sense of inclusion in the workplace (2020: 65.84% vs 2021: 49.4%). Those out to all are more likely to feel this positive impact (55.90%).

DIVERSE DEMOGRAPHICS AND INTERSECTIONALITY

55.60% of respondents with a diverse sexuality identified as having another diversity identity (n3,351) compared to 40.89% of LGBTQ respondents (n3,561).

67% of these respondents with another diversity identity feel most valued for their diverse sexual orientation. While this response rate appears positive, it is important to note that they have also experienced the highest rates of exclusion (51%) and stigma (66%) based on their diverse sexual orientation. They also believe it is the least accepted aspect of their identity (40%).

“AS A QUEER MIGRANT WOMAN OF CALD BACKGROUND, MULTIPLE LEVELS OF OPPRESSIONS MAKE ME FEEL UNWELL, MARGINALISED AND INVISIBLE.”

IN CONCLUSION

Despite efforts in LGBTQ workplace inclusion practices and a general majority of support of work in this area of diversity and inclusion, employees with a diverse sexuality still appear to be 'going back into the closet' as percentages of those not out at work have continued to increase over the last three years.

While overall health and wellbeing fares better for employees out at work, we saw positive shifts for employees not out at work this year (perhaps due to remote working).

The visibility of Active Allies and their positive impact on LGBTQ colleagues is down, especially in Regional Australia.

LGBTQ employees with multiple diverse identities are most valued for their diverse sexuality but this aspect of their identity still experiences the most stigma and exclusion and least acceptance.

Please speak to your Relationship Manager regarding how to use this information to influence your activities and promote a more inclusive workplace for LGBTQ employees.

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