

PRACTICE POINTS

2021 DATA ANALYSIS FROM THE AWEI NATIONAL SURVEY

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

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Inclusion of Diverse Gender Employees & those with a Trans Experience

The annual Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) Employee Survey had its largest response rate ever this year, including 186 participating organisations. The 2021 Survey saw a response rate of **44,915** employees across Australia, of which 18.8% individuals (n7,930) identified as being of diverse sexuality and/or gender (LGBTQ).

Respondents were employees working within organisations active in LGBTQ inclusion, whether they be in the early or developmental stages of their inclusion journey or well versed in advancing and advocating workplace experiences for LGBTQ people and their allies.

This edition looks the inclusion of trans and gender diverse employees and their experiences in the workplace.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

This year saw the largest response rate for trans and gender diverse employers (n1,438), which nearly tripled from previous years.

Regarding gender identity, 39% identified as man/male (n567); 33% woman/female (n479); 20% non-binary (n283); 2% agender (n32); and 4.5% identified using another term. Of these respondents, 388 use they/them and other non-binary personal pronouns.

The largest age demographic of trans and gender diverse respondents is 25 – 34 years, comprising 38%.

39% of these employees have been with the current organisation for over five years, compared to the national average of 52%.

Views of gender diverse respondents and those with a trans experience varied greatly, ranging from those who experience what we would call “red flag” culture; those where there is acknowledgement of change; and things getting better to those who are comfortably comfortable in their own skin and valued for who they are at work.

“SINCE ADVISING MANAGERS AND OTHER COLLEAGUES OF BEING TRANSGENDER, I’VE BEEN MUCH HAPPIER AND PRODUCTIVE AT WORK.”

GENERAL VIEWS OF ALL RESPONDENTS

While a majority of all employees personally support the work their organisation does for the inclusion of employees of diverse sexuality and/or gender (85%), trans and gender diverse employees felt slightly less inclined to agree that they would be supported and welcome. They were likely to agree that:

- “a colleague affirming their gender would be fully supported by their team” (88% vs 82%)
- “a gender diverse person would be welcome and treated no differently to anyone else” (93% vs 86%)

There was a 2% increase this year in employees who would be comfortable using new names or personal pronouns for colleagues. As one would expect, trans and gender diverse employees were more likely to be comfortable using:

- new names upon affirming their gender (88% vs 96%)
- they/their/them personal pronouns for a non-binary person (80% vs 83%)

While there was a 2% increase this year in all employees who “believe there are more than two genders,” 21% of trans and gender diverse respondents believe there are only two genders.

THE TOPIC OF BATHROOMS

A majority of employees (80%) continue to support having “all gender” or “gender neutral” toilets – presuming male/female facilities are still available. This support was higher among LGBTQ+ cisgender employees (90.6%) and even higher in trans and gender diverse employees (91%).

When looking at non-LGBTQ employee support for having “all gender” toilets, there still appears to be a misunderstanding regarding “all gender” toilets and facilities on premises:

- Non-LGBTQ Men:
 - 71% support having “all gender” toilets (presuming male/female still available)
 - 44% support if all facilities were changed to “all gender”
- Non-LGBTQ Women:
 - 82% support having “all gender” toilets (presuming male/female still available)
 - 37% support if all facilities were changed to all gender”

DIVERSE GENDER: BEING OPEN AT WORK

In regard to their gender diversity, 28% of employees said that their colleagues are aware of their gender diversity. This is 9% less than last year.

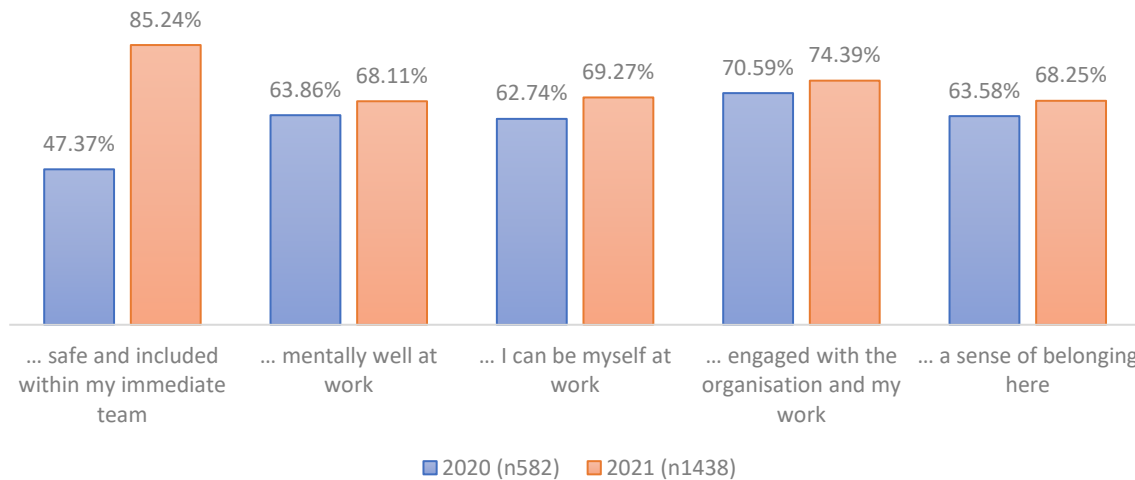
This decrease could be due to a number of reasons. We wonder if they could be:

- fears of discrimination and bullying
- the current social/political sphere and conversations
- working from home
- the significant increase in the number of trans and gender diverse respondents within this year’s Survey.

“SOME DAYS ARE HARDER THAN OTHERS - SOME DAYS I DON'T MIND THE MIS-GENDERING AND CAN COPE WITH CORRECTING COLLEAGUES. BUT SOME DAYS IT'S HARD, AND WHEN COLLEAGUES ARE ARROGANT ABOUT NOT RESPECTING PRONOUNS, IT CAN BE FRUSTRATING AND UPSETTING.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

When compared to last year, the mental health and wellbeing of trans and gender diverse employees saw positive shifts. These employees were more likely to feel...



Despite the above, when compared to last year, trans and gender diverse employees were less likely to “*feel fully supporting by their team in terms of their gender identity*” (46% vs 36%) and agree that “*inclusion initiatives have had a positive impact on how I feel about my own gender diversity*” (46% vs 34.5%).

LIVED EXPERIENCES OF INCLUSIVITY

Of the trans and gender diverse employees who affirmed their gender in their current workplace (n573), 60% were happy with the organisation's gender affirmation process.

Further, we saw a 5% increase from previous years in the percentage trans and gender diverse employees who felt their expectations had been met or exceeded regarding: support for TGD people in the recruitment process (47%) and acknowledgement of gender diversity beyond male/female/trans (47%). Likewise, there was a 9% increase in expectations of communicated policies on gender affirmation (58%).

However, the basics or foundations of inclusion for trans and gender diverse employees still seem to be the most overlooked. These areas saw a drop in those who said expectations were met or exceeded (2020 vs 2021):

- Use of toilets of choice without opposition (33% vs 26%)
- Alternatives to gendered uniforms or dress codes (49% vs 41%)
- Acknowledgement of diversity beyond m/f (54% vs 48%)
- Visibility of organisational inclusion for TGD employees (45% vs 34%)
- Organisational freedom to use toilets of choice (44% vs 42%)
- Availability of non-gendered or all gender toilets (36% vs 28%)

“EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATION AFFIRMING SGD INCLUSION, THOUGH INFREQUENT, IS HIGHLY VALUABLE.”

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Though trans and gender diverse employees were less likely to witness harmful workplace behaviours this year compared to previous years, they were more likely to compared to non-TGD employees.

Further, were twice as likely to witness negative behaviours and jokes (14% vs 31%) and three times as likely to witness more serious bullying (5% vs 15%). Despite this, they felt these negative behaviours would be quickly addressed (47%).

Trans and gender diverse employees were also less likely to be the target of such instances compared to last year in regard to negative behaviours and jokes (13% vs 8.4%) and more serious bullying (7% v 5.65%). This year, they also felt more positively about confidants reporting avenues (up 7%) and the willingness of managers to address such issues (up 8%).

However, there was a decline (16%) in those who would feel safe reporting this to their manager.

Of trans and gender diverse employees with a diverse sexuality (40.7%), employees said they were slightly more likely to be targets of bullying and harassment in regard to their sexual orientation.

IN CONCLUSION

While general views and perceptions on non-TGD employees continue to shift in a positive direction, there is still a considerable gap between:

- Those who believe there are more than two genders
- Using non-binary pronouns
- Those who believe a gender diverse person would be welcome in their team
- Those who witness negative behaviours or more serious bullying
- Comfort with (any degree) of gender neutral / all gender toilets and facilities

While trans and gender diverse employees had better experiences of health and wellbeing this year, they still believe their colleagues do not fully support their gender identity; nor do they feel full potential of positive impact that LGBTQ inclusion initiatives aim to curate for them.

Further, while recruitment practices and both gender affirmation communications and process have seen improvements compared to previous years, there is still a lack of policy and practice in a number of areas including:

- dress codes and uniforms
- organisational commitment and visibility
- availability of “all gender” toilets and facilities

While trans and gender diverse employees are less likely to witness or be the target of bullying and harassment this year, they still do not feel safe reporting such instances – especially to their managers.

“THE COMPANY I WORK FOR PROMOTE AND WELCOME DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, EQUALITY, AWARENESS. I FEEL VERY WELCOMED AND AM TREATED AS A VALUABLE ASSET.

I AM VERY HONORED AND GRATEFUL AND HOPE THAT OTHER ORGANIZATIONS CAN RISE TO THE CALIBER THAT MY COMPANY HAS SET.”

ACTION POINTS – WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Have you thought about the perspectives of your trans and gender diverse employees? How can they be certain, without question, that your organisation is inclusive and supportive of them?

Consider your policies and practices:

- Do you have a *gender affirmation policy*? If so, has it been communicated and obvious to your employees?
- Do you have “*all gender*” or “*gender neutral*” toilets and facilities at your office/s? This simple change to your premises can exemplify TGD inclusion. It’s important to know that “all gender” is different to “unisex.”
- How do your *applicants* know that your organisation is inclusion of LGBTQ people, especially trans and gender diverse people? You need to consider the barriers these communities face when applying for a role – think about how you can eliminate these valid concerns.

You can also celebrate many *Days of Significance*, held annually throughout the year. Among them are **Non-Binary People’s Day** (14 July), **Trans Day of Visibility** (31 March), and **Trans Awareness Week** which culminates in **Trans Day of Remembrance** (20 November).

Have your *executives or leaders* communicated their support of the trans and gender diverse community?

Does the *leadership structure of your employee Pride Network* reflect the diversity of the LGBTQ community and have trans or gender diverse representation – or both?

Doing any of the above will facilitate increased engagement and productivity as your trans and gender diverse employees are enabled to bring their whole self to work and realise their full potential.

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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