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2022 – Experiences and importance of Allies in the workplace

The annual Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) Employee Survey had its largest response to-date this year with 186 participating organisations and a response rate of 44,224 with an additional 746 employees working for Australian organisations overseas. Of all respondents, 21.87% individuals (n9,830) identified as being of diverse sexuality and/or gender (LGBTQ). This represents a significant increase in the number of LGBTQ responses from 2021 (n7,930, 18.84%) and 2020 (n 6,787, 21.71%)

All organisations participating in the survey were active in LGBTQ inclusion, whether they be in the early or developmental stages of their inclusion journey or leading practice.

This edition looks at some of the key findings within the 2022 response set of Australian based employees, their allyship and the impact of allies in the workplace.

DEFINING AN ACTIVE ALLY

In defining an ally as someone who supports LGBTQ inclusion in the workplace, we ask respondents to define themselves as an:

- Active ally (active in their support)
- Passive ally (supporting LGBTQ inclusion but wouldn't consider themselves active)
- Not at all (do not support LGBTQ inclusion)

We define allyship this way as active allies provide a clearly visible sense of support or inclusion to LGBTQ people, whereas passive allies do not – although they are happy to support, this is not visible to LGBTQ employees, and therefore does not contribute to a culture of inclusion. Capturing data on those who are “not an ally” allows us to investigate the reasons why some employees do not support LGBTQ inclusion.

It is important to remember that LGBTQ employees can also be Active Allies to other people in the rainbow communities. Likewise, LGBTQ employees may not consider themselves to be an ally for various reasons.

When we talk about persons who are LGBTQ, we are considering both those who are of diverse sexuality and /or diverse gender/trans experience.

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RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Who is an active ally?

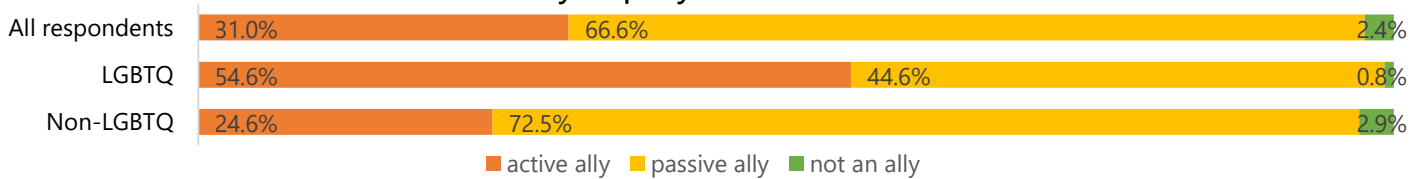
This year, 31.0% of respondents considered themselves an active ally (n11,571), a slight rise from 27.5% in 2021. Passive allies were down from 69.4% to 66.6% (n24,889), and people advising they are not an ally at all reduced from 3% to 2.5%.

NOTE: 2020 data is not available due to a change in how this question was asked.

As was discussed last year, this level of active allyship may be explained by a change in the way allies are participating in organisation culture due to the Covid 19 pandemic, and in some cases the continued working from home arrangements which may have reduced the capacity for employees to actively demonstrate their support in face-to-face environments.

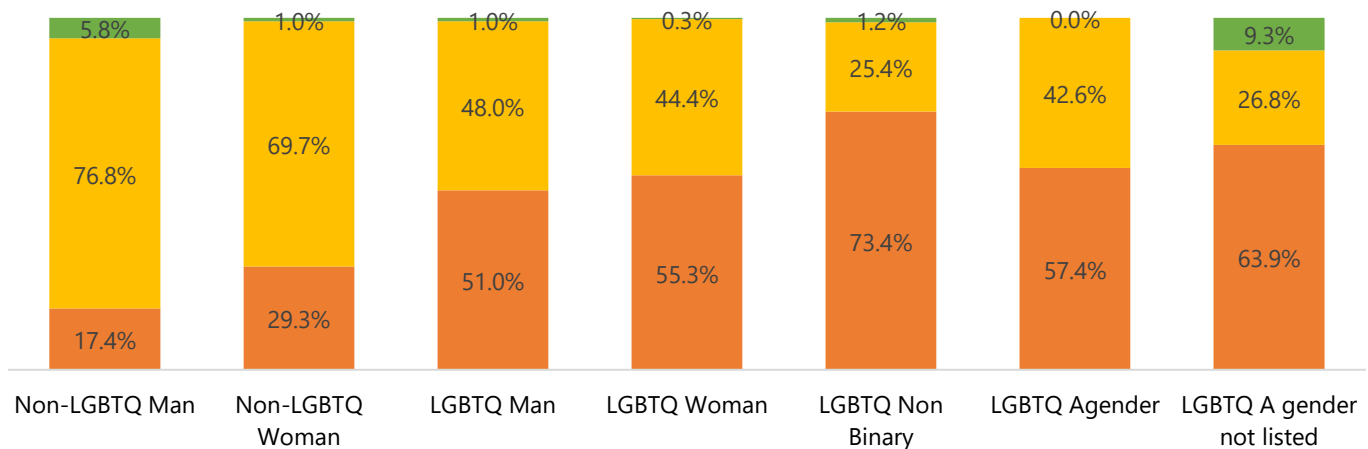
There are some considerable differences between cohorts who are active allies.

Allyship by LGBTQ Status



- LGBTQ respondents are active allies (54.6%) at a significantly higher rate compared to non-LGBTQ respondents (24.6%)

Allyship by Gender identity and LGBTQ Status



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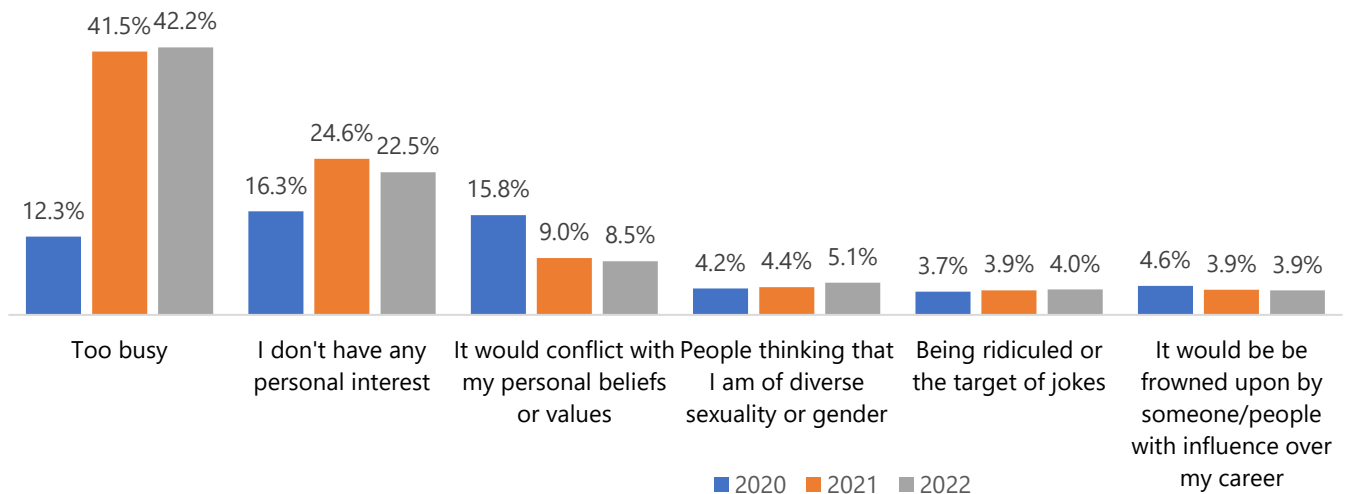
- Non-LGBTQ men are six times more likely than non-LGBTQ women (5.8% vs 1.0%) to not be an ally
- Those that identify as non-binary are more likely to be active allies than any other cohort
- LGBTQ respondents who identify with "a gender not listed" are more likely to not be an ally (9.3%) than any other group, with non-LGBTQ men following with 5.8%

Why not an active ally?

We asked both 'passive Allies' (n24,719) and those 'not an Ally' (n900) why they don't consider themselves an 'active ally'. As has been seen previously, the top two reasons for these respondents is that they are "too busy" (42.2%) or they "don't have any personal interest in this" (22.5%).

This year there has been a slight drop regarding personal interest, from 24.6% last year. Conflict with personal beliefs, has seen the biggest change in the past 3 years, dropping from 15.8% in 2020 to 8.5% in 2022.

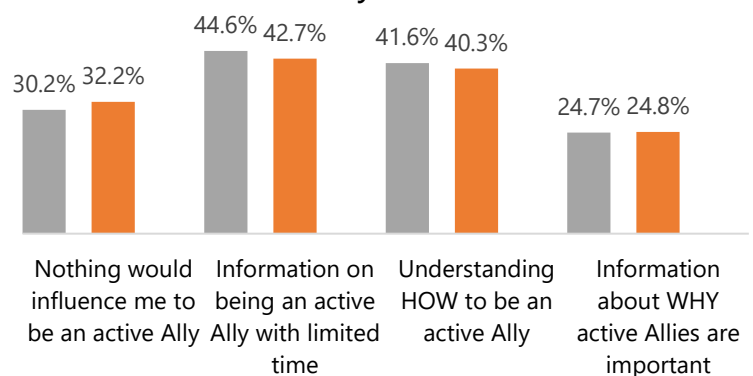
Why are you not an active Ally?



In 2021 & 2022 we asked, "would any of the following influence you to become an active ally". There has been a small rise in those who feel "information on being an Ally when their time is limited" and /or "a better understanding of HOW to be an active ally." may influence them.

Of those 'not an ally' (who do not support LGBTQ inclusion), 781, of 900 (86.8%) said that "nothing would influence me to be an active ally."

Active ally influences



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GENERAL VIEWS:

Support for LGBTQ People

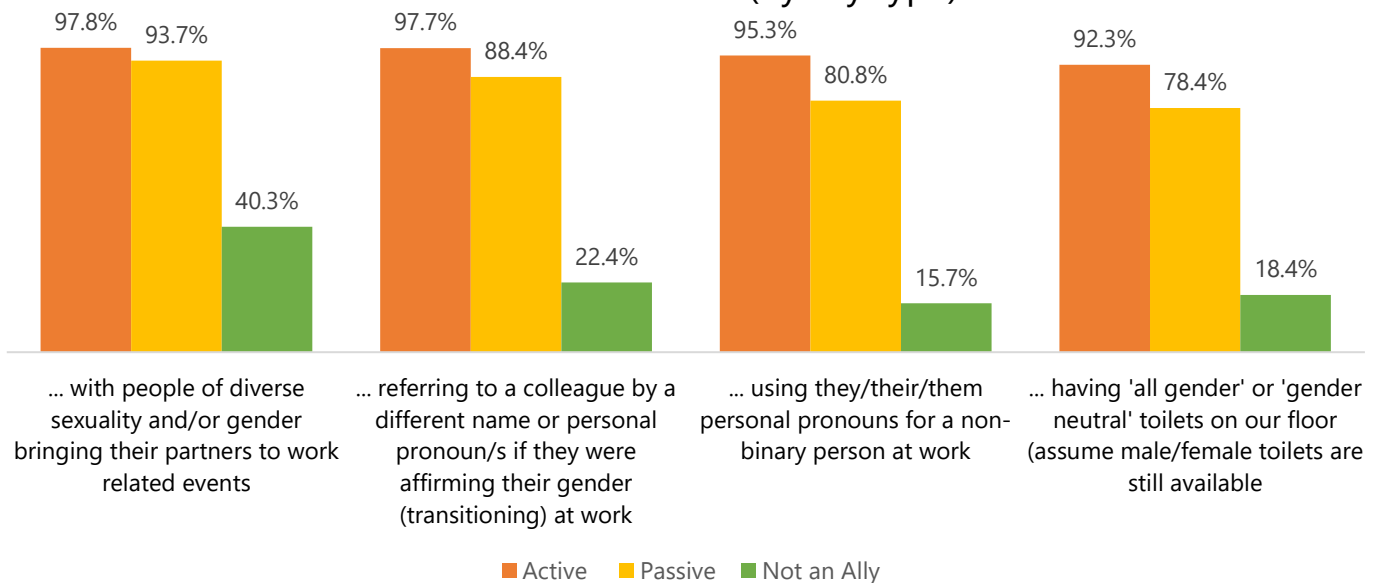
Whilst many respondents do not consider themselves active allies, workplace initiatives and inclusion are still supported by the majority of respondents.

- 86.7% of respondents “personally support” the work their organisation is putting into this aspect of diversity and inclusion.
- 84.9% think it is important that employers be active in this area of diversity & inclusion
- 84.8% agree or strongly agree that work in this aspect of diversity & inclusion has a positive influence on organisational culture

Overall, 92.5% of respondents “understand” why their organisation puts effort into this aspect of diversity and inclusion; when we look at people who are not allies, this drops to 50.7%.

Marked differences are also seen within the data between the comfort levels of people who consider themselves active or passive allies, and those that are not allies in relation to LGBTQ colleagues, use of pronouns, toilet facilities and partner attendance at events. As seen below, for those who consider themselves an active ally, 97.8%, agree they are comfortable for their diverse colleagues bringing their partners to work, but for employees who report to not be an ally, only 40.3% reporting being comfortable.

I feel comfortable... (by ally type)



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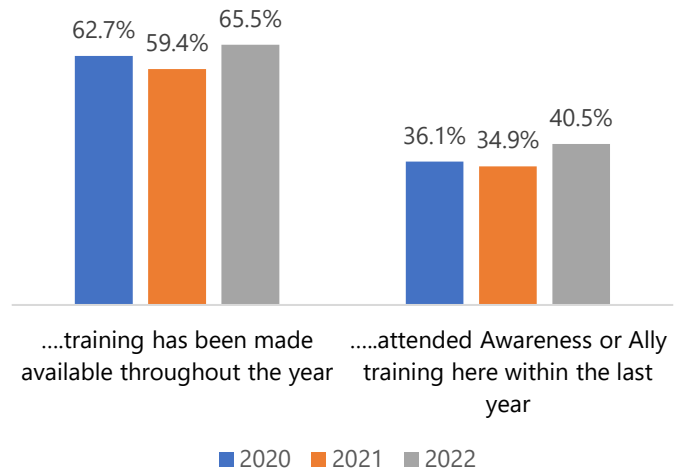
Awareness & Ally Training

The belief that training in this aspect of diversity and inclusion should be mandatory for people managers has stayed consistently high, with a small increase each year (2020: 78.0%, 2021: 79.3%, 2022: 80.9%)

Availability of awareness or ally training for employees has increased from 59.4% in 2021 to 65.5% in 2022, and attendance at training is also up from 34.9% to 40.5%.

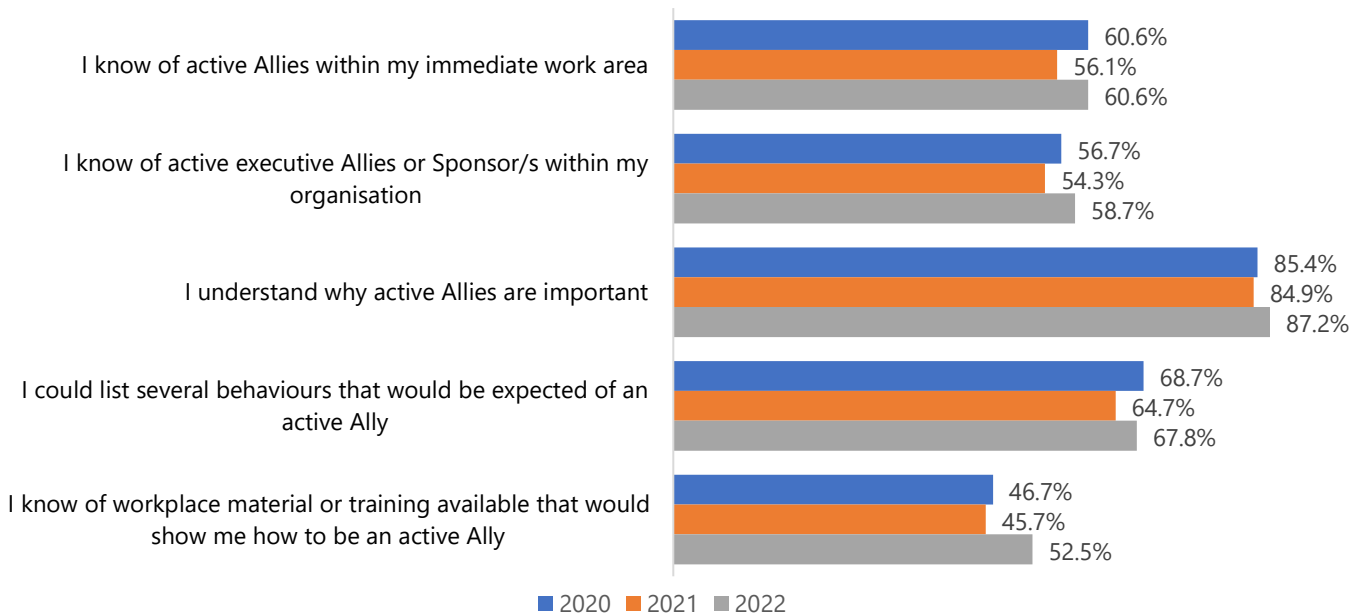
These rates are higher than in 2020, after both areas saw a drop in from 2020 to 2021 which may have been related to the pandemic lockdown, and work from home arrangements.

Ally training



IMPACT AND VISIBILITY OF ALLIES: LGBTQ RESPONDENTS

Respondents were asked to reflect upon the active allies in their workplace, across five statements. This year, the **impact** and **visibility** of allies is back to pre-pandemic levels in most areas.



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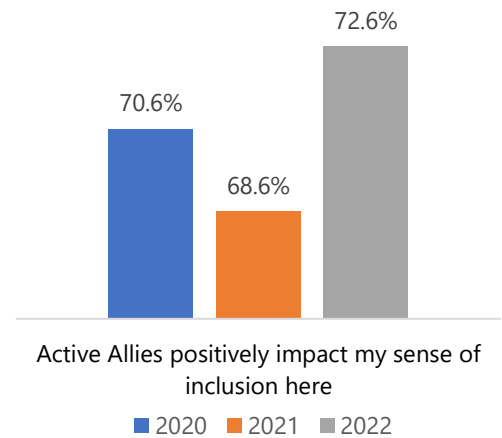
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For employees of diverse sexuality and/or gender, who know of active allies in their immediate work area, agreement that active allies have a positive impact on their sense of inclusion within workplace has increased to 72.6%

The same trend is seen in regard to employee expectations of their workplace practices. In relation to meeting or exceeding expectations it was reported:

- Visibility of Active allies 62.3% in 2022 (2021:57.4%, 2020: 62.6%)
- Visibility and promotion of an internal employee network for sexuality & gender diverse employees and allies 72.7% in 2022 (2021:68.2%, 2020: 72.4%)



While the pandemic and remote working may have played a factor in the last 2 year's responses, it is unlikely to represent the entirety of this significant decline in allies' impact on LGBTQ employees.

IN CONCLUSION

Having visible active allies in a workplace contributes to a culture of inclusion; 72.6% of LGBTQ people who have allies agree that they have positively impacted their sense of inclusion in their workplace.

The number of visible 'active allies' has increased 2022 vs 2021, with LGBTQ people far more likely to be allies than non-LGBTQ, and non-LGBTQ women 1.7 times more likely to be allies than non-LGBTQ men.

Despite there being only 30% of employees who agree they are 'active allies', generally support for LGBTQ inclusion initiatives and LGBTQ employees is high. If organisations could find ways to leverage this support and empower the non-active employees to become more active, this would contribute to a more inclusive culture.

The biggest reason for employees to not be active allies is that they consider themselves too busy. However, since it is possible to show active allyship without it having any impact on time, organisations should help employees understand some ways to show allyship that require no or minimal time.

A significant proportion of those who are not 'active allies' agree they could be influenced to become more active with the provision of educational resources about HOW to be an active ally, particularly HOW to be an ally with limited time.

The second biggest reason for employees to not be active allies is that they "do not have any personal interest". This could mean that the employee is not aware that they know any LGBTQ people, or they are not aware of the impacts

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LGBTQ people experience. Again, organisations can consider ways to highlight LGBTQ employees or experiences, in easily digestible formats, to give those who are not active allies this insight.

ACTION POINTS – WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Create a library of LGBTQ Lived experience short stories for allies to watch/listen to (*perhaps the You can't ask that series applicable to LGBTQ experiences*)
- Complete PID E-learning module (20 mins)
- Ally buddy – Someone who is an experienced ally to recruit a colleague to share their Ally experience.
- Create a resource booklet on the 3 things you can do to kick off your Ally journey

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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