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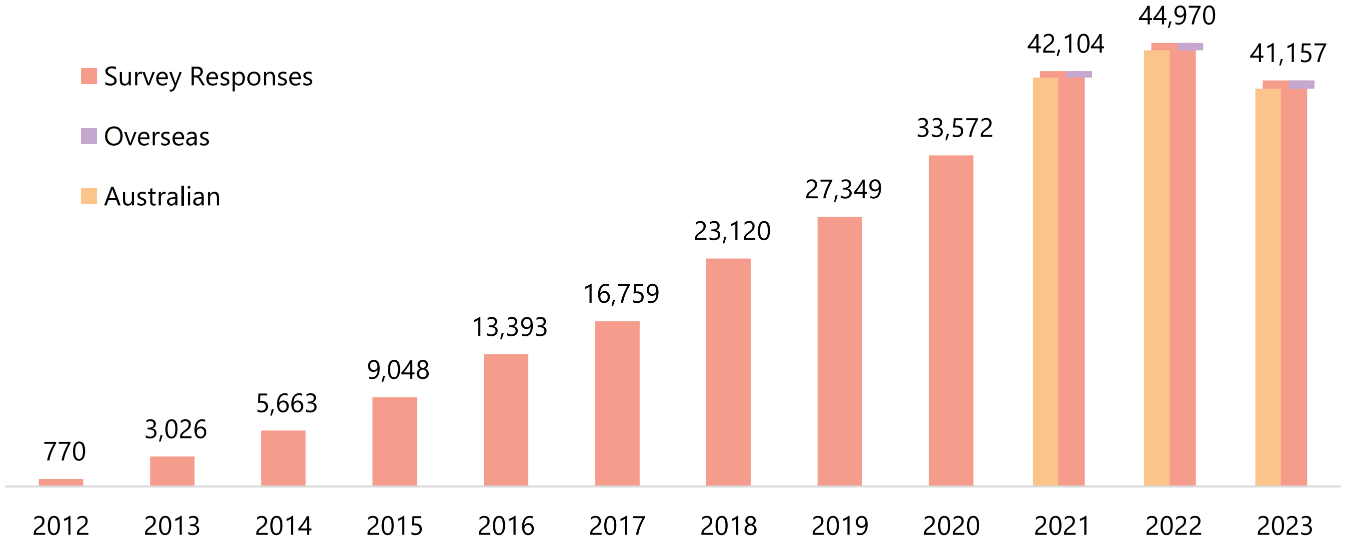
THE 2023 AWEI EMPLOYEE SURVEY EDITION 1: KEY INSIGHTS

The annual Australian Workplace Equality Index Employee Survey has been running for the past 12 years as part of the suite of offerings from Pride in Diversity.

Pride in Diversity is Australia’s first and only national not-for-profit employer support program for all aspects of LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion. Pride in Diversity are specialists in HR, organisational change and workplace diversity dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ people by reducing exclusion, invisibility, homophobia, and stigma in the workplace. The AWEI Employee Survey provides insights into organisational culture, employees’ beliefs, opinions, and knowledge about LGBTQ+ inclusion initiatives, and differences in experience between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ respondents.

In 2023, 178 organisations and 41,157 individuals took part in the survey. Of these, 40,331 respondents are Australian-based, and 826 work in overseas locations for Australian employers.

All organisations participating in the survey are working to increase and support LGBTQ+-inclusive practices within their organisations[1].



[1] Results reflect the attitudes and knowledge of respondents from organisations working in inclusive practices.

In 2023, a redesign of the survey instrument was undertaken to:

- streamline the survey,
- ensure that changes in best practice were integrated,
- create greater alignment with the other employee surveys within ACON's Pride Inclusion Programs (APIP)[2],
- maintain alignment with APIP strategic initiatives,
- maintain alignment with criteria within the AWEI Submission document.

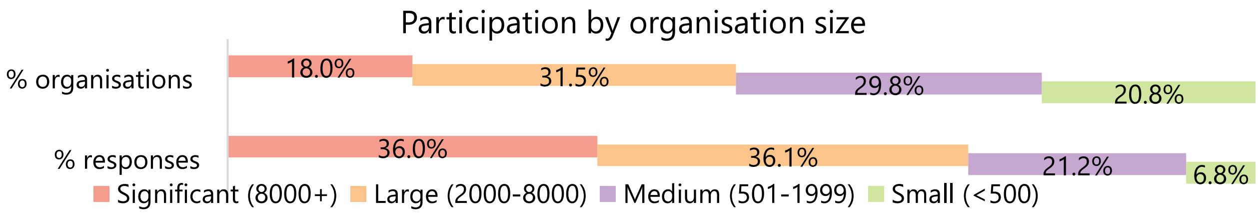
In this Practice Point, we will be focusing on the 2023 Australian employee results, where applicable comparing them to the past two years to show trends and highlighting relevant differences between cohorts of respondents. This practice point does not focus on any one cohort of respondents.

There have been some changes in how we report data this year. More information can be found at the end of this practice point[i].

Demographics

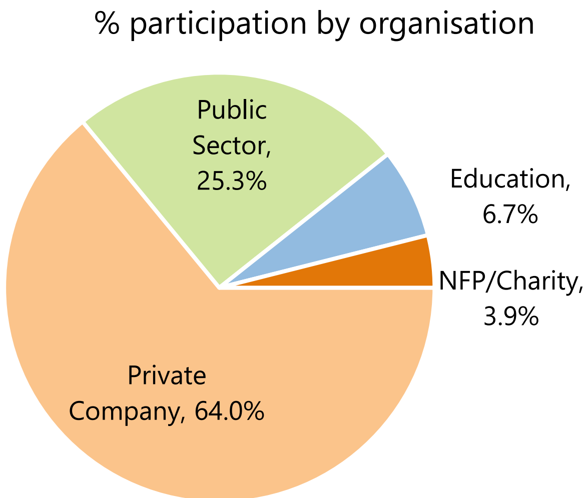
Sector & Industry

Participation is spread across all organisation sizes, with 20.8% of the 178 organisations classified as small employers (under 500 FTE). As expected, the spread of responses favours larger organisations.



64.0% of organisations identify as Private Companies, 25.3% in the Public Sector (Federal, State or Local government), with Non-Profit organisations and education providers making up the remaining 10.7%[3].

Similar to 2022, just over half of all respondents work in the Private Sector (2023: 55.6% vs. 2022: 53.8%), with the remaining respondents working within the Public Sector (Federal Government: 25.1%, State Government: 11.5%, and local Government: 0.7%), Higher education (5.7%), and Charity organisations (0.7%).



[2] ACON's Pride Inclusion Programs includes three membership programs, each with their own Indexy; Pride in Diversity runs the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) Submission and Employee Survey, Pride in Sport runs the Pride in Sport Index (PSI) Submission and National Survey, Pride in Health+Wellbeing runs the Health & Wellbeing Equality Index (HWEI) Submission and Employee Survey.

[3] In 2023, sector and industry determination has been via an organisation's expression of interest request rather than individual respondents being required to identify this information for their organisation.

Based on the primary industry provided, Banking and financial services organisations represented both the highest % of participating organisations (12.9%) and the highest number of responses (10.3%).

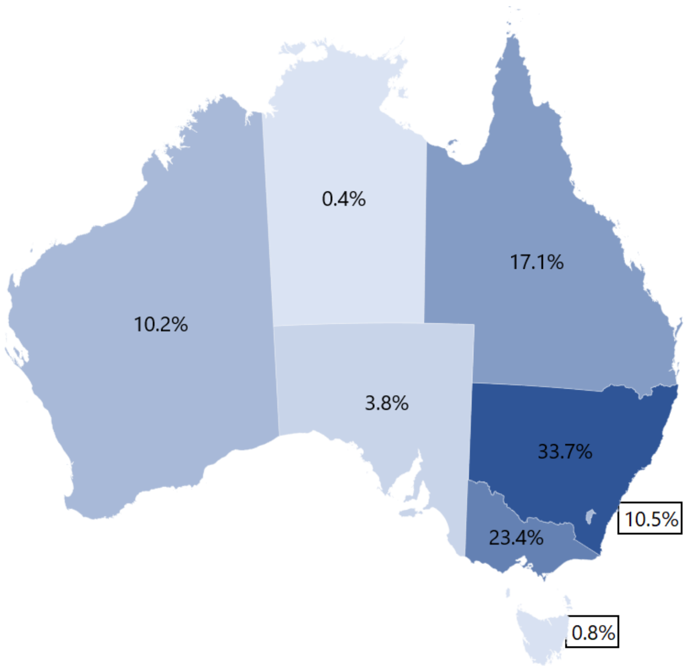
Industry	% orgs	# organisations	% total Aus responses
Banking & Financial Services	12.9%	23	10.25%
Legal	9.6%	17	7.12%
Education	9.0%	16	7.72%
Professional Services & Consulting	8.4%	15	7.97%
Community Services	6.7%	12	6.88%
Technology & Telco	6.7%	12	5.60%
Health & Wellbeing	5.6%	10	3.78%
Energy / Utilities	4.5%	8	5.48%
Law Enforcement	3.9%	7	7.65%
Engineering	3.9%	7	4.02%
Property	3.9%	7	3.34%
Insurance	3.4%	6	4.90%
Pharmaceuticals	2.8%	5	1.02%
Other (14)	18.5%	33	24.3%

Note: Other industries include transport, retail, hospitality etc., which had fewer than five organisations participating.

Location

All states and territories are represented by both organisations and respondents in 2023. An increase in the proportion of respondents of 11.6% for Queensland and 8.3% for New South Wales, and a 17.9% decrease in the proportion of respondents from Western Australia was seen this year.

These figures are mostly proportionate to Australia's population (as reported by the ABS in 2021[4],) although the AWEI sees higher representation from the ACT. This can be attributed to the large representation of Federal Government departments with Canberra-based employees, participating in the survey.

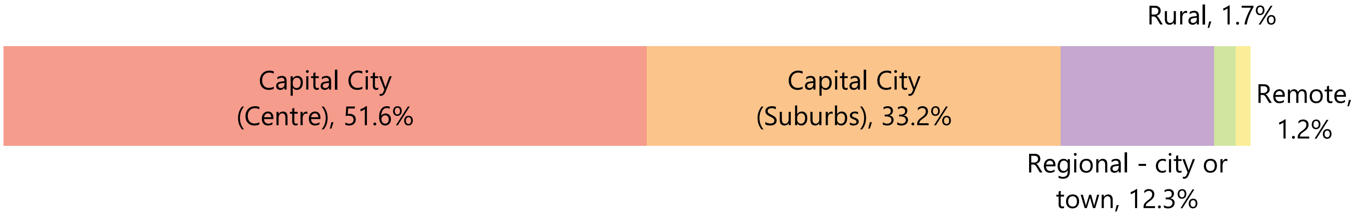


[4] National, state and territory population, December 2022 | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)

State	% of the national population (ABS)	% of respondents	% difference
ACT	1.7%	10.5%	84.1%
NSW	31.8%	33.7%	5.5%
NT	1.0%	0.4%	-165.5%
QLD	20.3%	17.1%	-18.4%
SA	6.9%	3.8%	-79.1%
TAS	2.1%	0.8%	-157.0%
VIC	25.9%	23.4%	-10.4%
WA	10.4%	10.2%	-2.1%

In 2023[5], we asked respondents to identify if they worked in a Regional, Rural, or Remote location, or in Capital city, city centre or suburbs area.

Of the 84.8% of people from metropolitan areas, 33.2% work within the Capital City suburb locations, with the remaining 51.6% of these working in the Capital City centre areas.

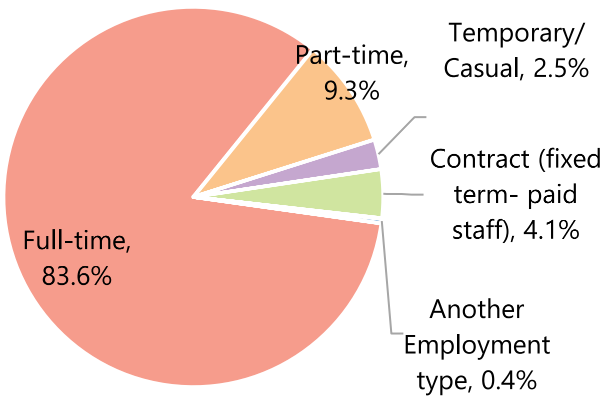


This year we received 69.6% reduction in responses from remote participants and 13.2% fewer rural respondents.

While the majority of respondents being from metropolitan regions is not surprising, we note that they do sway the overall statistics toward the experiences of metropolitan employees.

Roles within the organisation

After a large decline last year, respondents on temporary or casual contracts are up 11.8% to 2.5% of all respondents. 83.6% are full time, while 9.3% are part-time employees. People on fixed-term contracts account for 4.1% of respondents. 0.4% advised they were volunteers or unpaid staff[6], or identified a different employment type.



We have recently seen a reduction in respondents who have worked with their organisation for greater than 5 years, with a 11.8% drop from 2021 to 2022. For 2023 we provided three options, 5-10 years, 10-20 years,

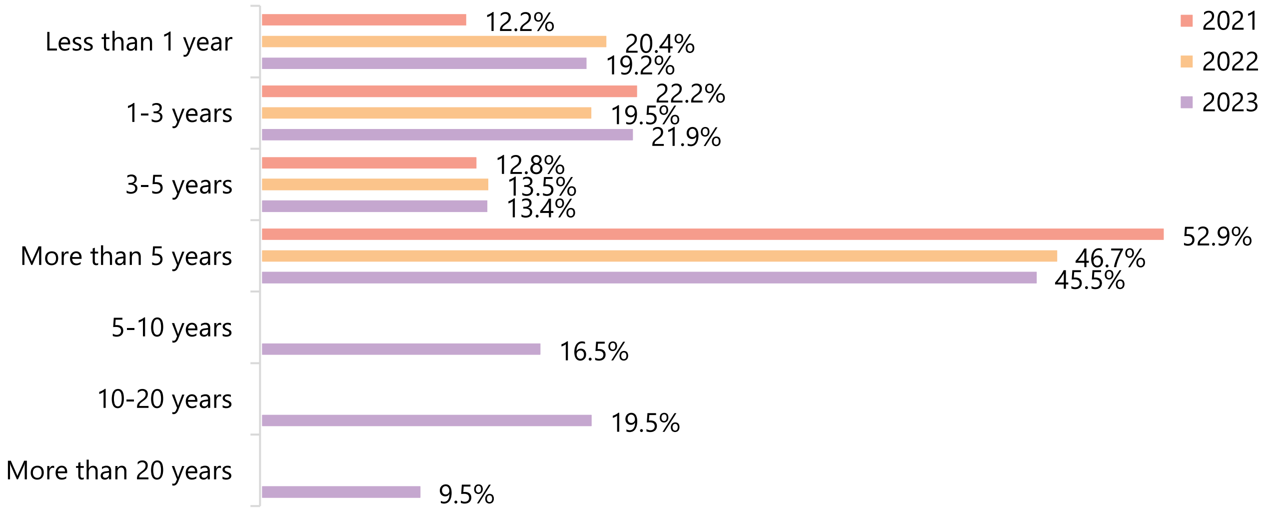
[5] A comparison from previous years is not possible due to a change in the definition of Metropolitan (moved to Capital City, and Regional to Regional-city or town) This was done to that non capital city respondents would be included in the regional, rural and remote data sets)

[6] The option of volunteer/unpaid staff member was introduced for the first time in 2023 but received less than .01% of responses and are included in "another employment type".

and more than 20 years, to break down this category further. This year we saw a further 2.5% drop in people having been with their organisation more than 5 years. 9.5% of respondents (n3840) have been with their organisation for over 20 years.

After a 67.5% rise in the 'less than 1 year' group last year, that has fallen by 5.6% this year.

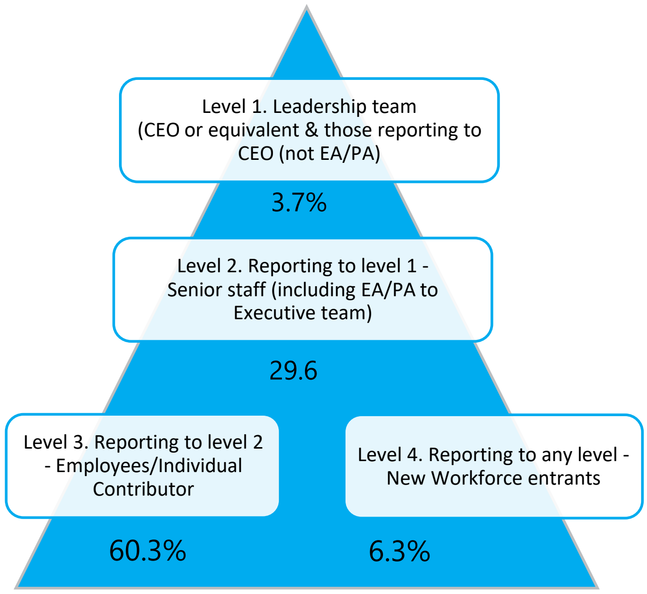
The percentage of respondents having worked within their organisation between 3-5 years has remained steady at around 13% each year.

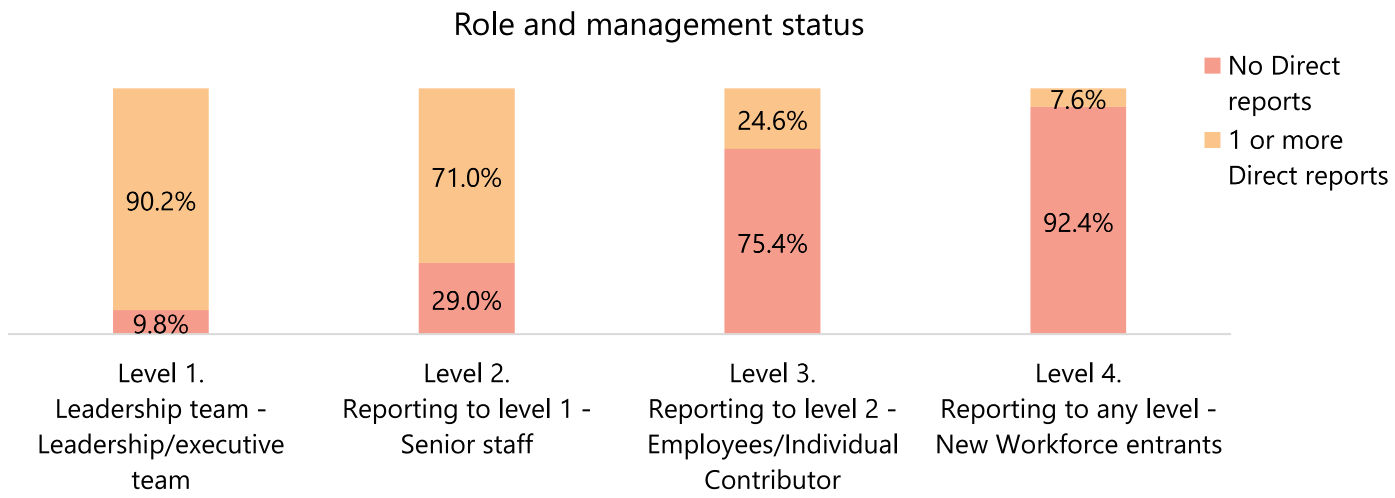


When looking at the position a respondent holds within their organisation, this year we have simplified this data point by implementing seniority positioning for respondents to identify with. This was done as we know that within organisations there are many titles and naming conventions depending on the size of the company, the industry it is representative of, and the management model which had been implemented. We have found previously that the position title data was difficult to analyse and compare for insight purposes.

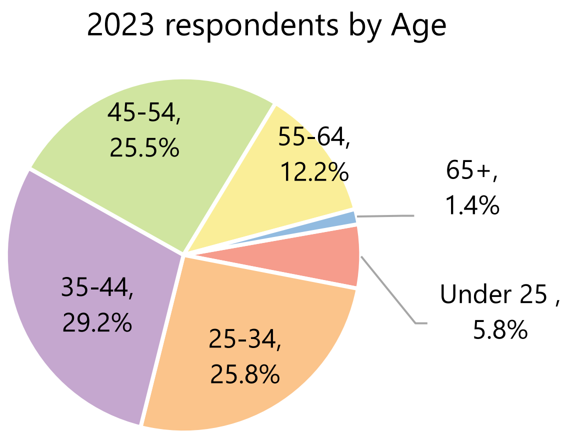
The seniority model simplifies this by asking respondents to identify at which of the four levels their role sits within their organisation when compared to the CEO or equivalent. In combination with this we are now asking respondents to identify if they have direct reports (i.e., are managers of other staff) within their organisation.

60.3% of respondents are level 3 employees, and of these, 75.4% manage other staff within their organisation. This proportion of respondents is who we would consider middle managers.





The correlation between organisational culture, and the visibility of allies and sponsors in the leadership and senior staff areas has previously been able to be considered, but this new model also allows us to further research the hypothesis that those in middle management may have the greatest impact on culture, as they are more likely to be responding to reports of bullying and harassment, and may need to call out uncivil behaviours. These new data points will enable further analysis of this and will be contained within a future Practice Point.



Personal demographics

Age

Year on year, the age of respondents is similar across the past three years, with less than 2.0% difference in any group other than the 25–34-year group which has increased by 3.1% from 2022.

Pronouns

96.3% of respondents exclusively use gendered pronouns (he/him or she/her), with 0.9% exclusively using gender-neutral (they/them) pronouns. Of the remaining, 2.1% use rolling pronouns (a mix of pronouns response options were he/they and she/they) and 0.7% identified using pronouns other than he, she, or they.

Overall, 3.5% of respondents use personal pronouns other than just she or he exclusively.

When working with colleagues, 4.4% more respondents are comfortable using gender-neutral pronouns than advised in 2021.

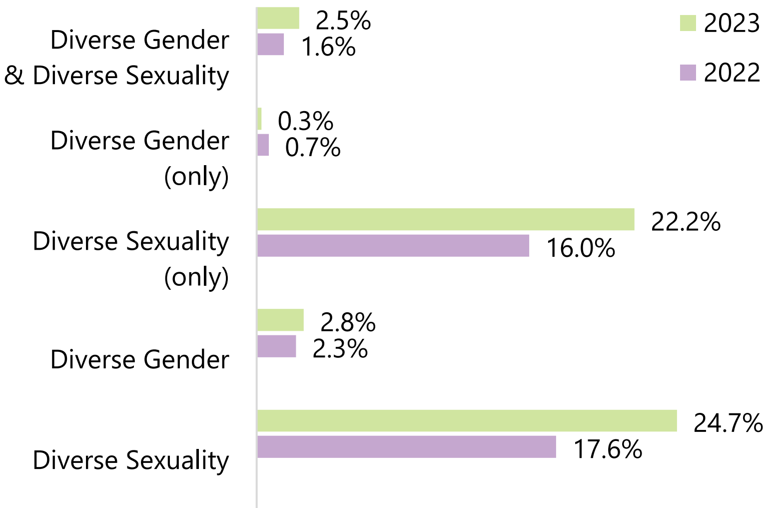
All employees being comfortable using gender-neutral pronouns is important to ensure that all employees feel they can ask to be addressed in a way that affirms them.

LGBTQ+ Respondents

In 2023, we implemented the standards set out by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)[ii] regarding the collection and dissemination of data relating to sex, gender, and sexual orientation. Respondents were not asked to self-identify as LGBTQ+. This enabled people who do not strongly identify as LGBTQ+ to still receive and answer questions relating to their diverse sexuality, diverse gender and/or trans experience or both, if appropriate.

97.4% of respondents provided personal demographic information which enabled evaluation based on the ABS criteria. 25.7% of respondents identify as being of diverse sexuality, diverse gender/trans experience or both (n10,085), with:

- 2.5% (n1006) of respondents of both diverse sexuality and diverse gender/trans experience,
- 22.2% of respondents of only diverse sexuality (8,966),
- 2.8% of respondents of only diverse gender (n113).

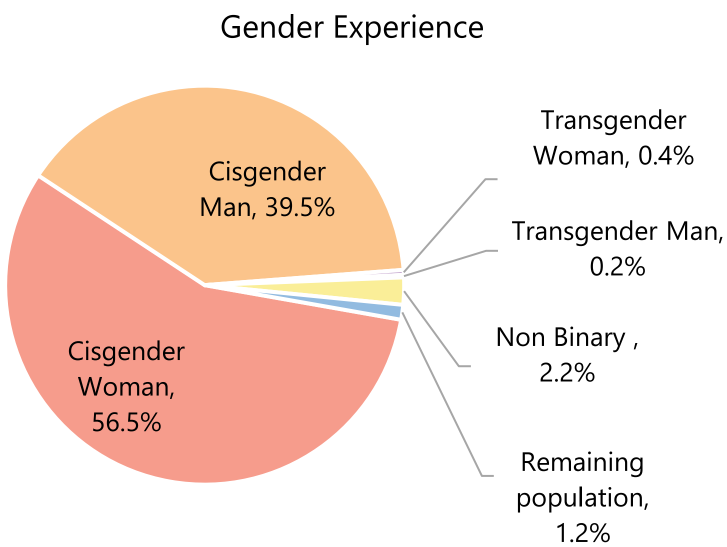


Compared to last year, we see 60.7% fewer respondents identified as having only a diverse gender or trans experience, and a 56.2% increase in people who are both of diverse gender and diverse sexuality.

Gender Identity

In 2023, 96.7% of respondents identified with binary identities (Man/Male or Woman/Female), and 2.2% with non-binary identities ('non-binary' or 'a gender identity not listed') compared to 97.3% and 1.7% in 2022. Over the past three years we have seen a 72.9% increase in respondents selecting non-binary identities as their gender identity.

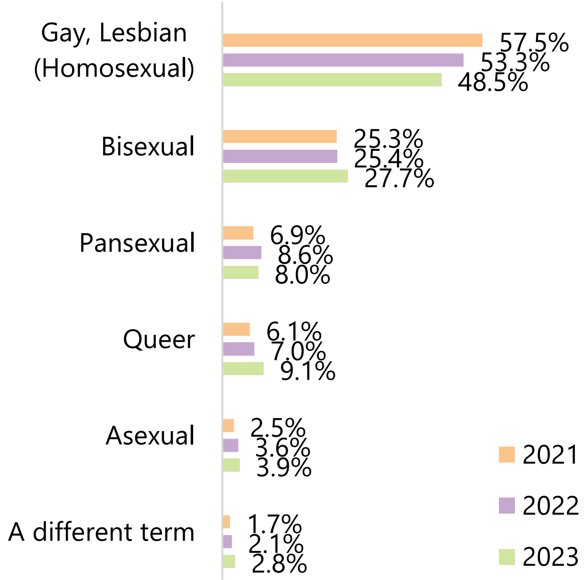
The gender experience of respondents is, in the most part, cisgender (96.0%). Of the remaining people, 2.8% of respondents advised having a gender identity which does not align with their sex recorded at birth (transgender). 1.2% of respondents did not provide enough information to determine their gender experience.



Sexual orientation

In 2023 all respondents were asked their sexual orientation, whereas previously this was only asked of people who identified as LGBTQ+. This was problematic as it did not allow for respondents who did not self-identify as being part of the LGBTQ+ community to provide information regarding their orientation.

People of diverse sexuality make up 24.7% of all respondents (n9,972). While a direct comparison is not advised due to the previous methodology of directing respondents to this question, we are continuing to observe an increase in respondents of diverse sexuality identifying with orientations other than gay/lesbian. In 2023, 51.5% of respondents of diverse sexuality identified other than gay/lesbian.



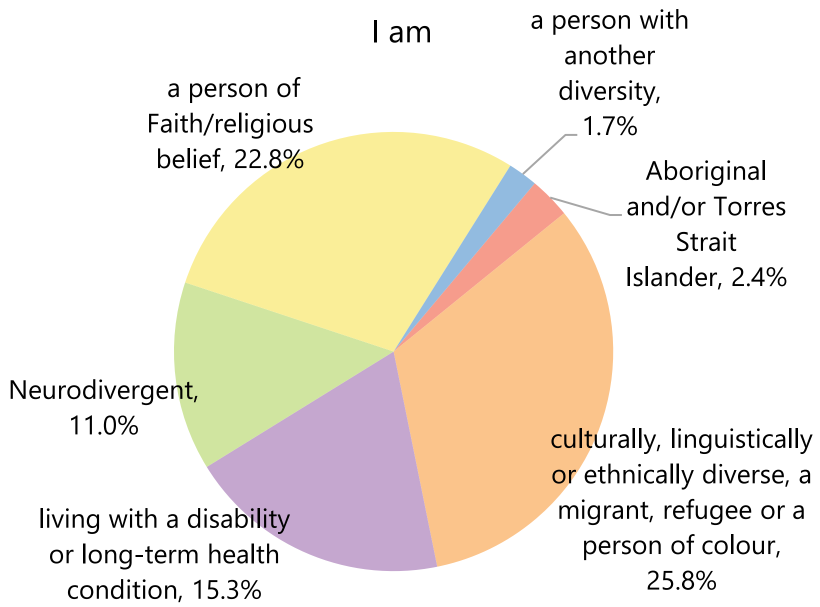
Other background or identity attributes

While the AWEI employee survey does not specifically focus on other areas of diversity, we do ask about other aspects of respondent's background or identity. We acknowledge that there are other factors that may affect workplace experiences or attitudes towards inclusion initiatives other than a person's diverse sexuality or diverse gender.

53.7% of all respondents said they have at least one attribute they feel contributes to their experiences (regardless of their LGBTQ+ status).

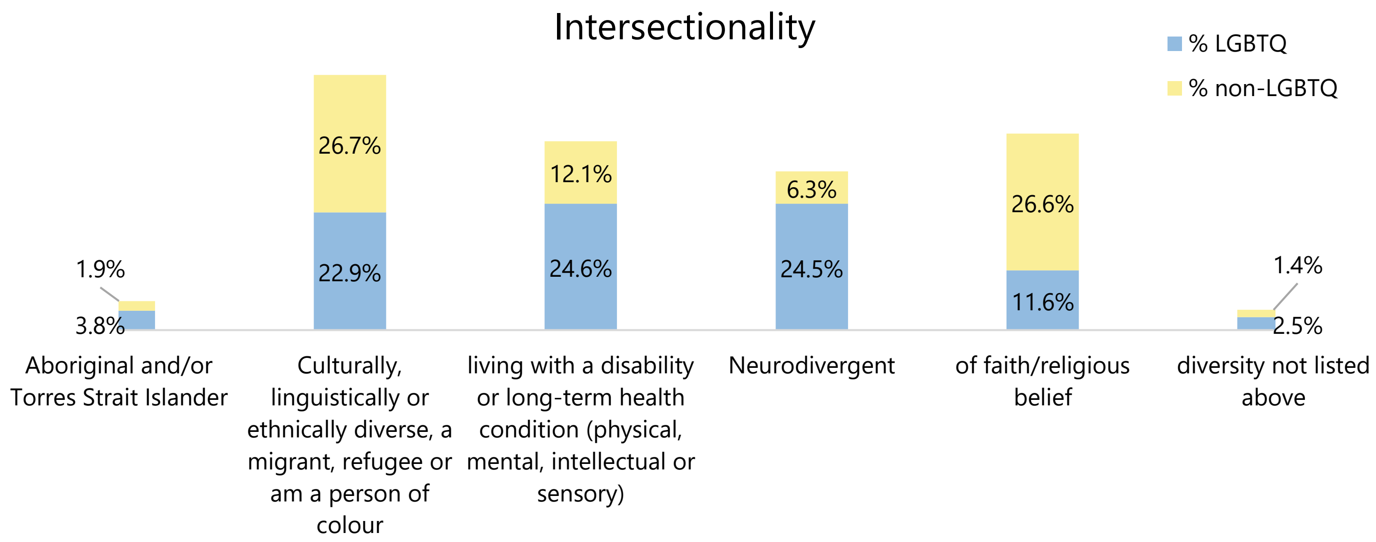
Responses relating to other background or identity attributes have all increased from last year. Most significantly, the number of respondents who identify as living with a disability or long-term health condition. We attribute this significant rise to a minor change in the question from "I am someone living with a disability" to "I am someone living with a disability or long-term health condition (may be physical, mental, intellectual or sensory)." This additional criterion has increased the percentage of respondents from 5.0% in 2022 to 15.3% in 2023, a 208.7% increase.

84.9% more respondents have identified as neurodivergent (2022: 5.9% vs. 2023: 11.0%), and 95.4% more as a person of faith or religion (2022: 11.7% vs. 2023: 22.8%),



When we focus on the responses from people of diverse gender and/or sexuality, who have identified having these additional experiences, we can see the intersectionality. Respondents who are LGBTQ+, are:

- twice as likely to also identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander,
- twice as likely to be living with a disability and
- 287.2% more likely to be neurodivergent.



For those that have identified a diversity not listed, we acknowledge that many facets of identity impact workplace experiences. These include but are not limited to being middle or older in age, a parent, a veteran, large bodied, being intersex, an atheist, having a hearing impairment, low socio-economic status or having caring responsibilities.

General Views

Personal beliefs on inclusion

In 2023, 85.2% of respondents believe their organisation is genuinely committed to LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusion, 88.6% believe it is important their organisation is active in this area and 87.5% believe it has a positive impact on organisational culture.

Continuing the last two years' trend, 62.6% of respondents believe there are more than two genders (male/female), up 14.6% from 2021 (2022: 58.9%, 2021: 54.6%)

LGBTQ+ respondents are more likely than non-LGBTQ respondents by:

- 60.9% to believe their organisation should put more effort into LGBTQ+ inclusion. (LGBTQ+: 63.9% vs. non-LGBTQ+: 39.7%).
- 42.9% to believe there are more than two genders. (LGBTQ+: 81.2% vs. non-LGBTQ+: 56.8%).
- 29.3% to agree that an organisation's positive track record in this aspect of inclusion would influence them to join them. (LGBTQ+: 86.6% vs. non-LGBTQ+: 67.0%).
- 9.6% to agree that it is important for organisations to be active in this area (LGBTQ+: 95.4% vs. non-LGBTQ+: 87.1%).

Non- LGBTQ+ respondents are more likely than LGBTQ+ respondents by:

- 9.1% to believe that their organisation is genuinely committed to LGBTQ+ diversity & inclusion. (LGBTQ+: 80.3% vs. non-LGBTQ+: 87.6%).
- 8.7% to believe a person of diverse gender would be welcome in their team and treated no differently to anyone else. (LGBTQ+: 91.8% vs. non-LGBTQ+: 94.4%).
- 7.2% to believe if a member of their team were to affirm their gender, they would be fully supported by their team. (LGBTQ+: 82.8% vs. non-LGBTQ+: 88.8%).

Concerningly, after seeing growth across all areas last year, this year there has been a decline in all other questions around organisational inclusion, including:

- 2.6% fewer respondents personally support the work their organisation does for inclusion of LGBTQ+ employees (2023: 84.4%, 2022: 87%),
- 1.8% fewer believe that a person of diverse sexuality would be welcome in their team and treated no differently to anyone else (2023: 93.3%, 2022: 95.1%).
- 5.0% fewer believe that a person of diverse gender would be welcome in their team and treated no differently to anyone else (2023: 88.7%, 2022: 93.4%), and
- 3.0% fewer respondents believe that they understand some of the unique challenges that people of diverse sexuality and/or gender face in the workplace (2023: 82.7%, 2022: 85.3%).

Looking at the whole Australian data set we see declining agreement rates in many areas. In the most part, LBGTQ respondents are less likely to agree that LGBTQ+ people are welcomed or supported within the workplace.

Awareness & Ally Training

82.2% of respondents agree that there has been visibility and promotion of an internal employee network, and the majority of respondents also feel they know where to find more information about this inclusion activity in the workplace, though this is slightly lower than last year (2023: 79.2% vs. 2022: 79.8%).

68.0% of respondents have advised that training around LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusion has been made available to them in the past year, and 47.4 % have attended training, an increase of 35.9% on 2021 (2022: 40.5%, 2021: 34.9%). This year 49.0% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents reported attended training compared to 43.7% of LGBTQ+ respondents.

There has been a slight decline of respondents believing that training should be mandatory for anyone who manages or supervises other people, from 80.9% in 2022 to 78.4% this year. 88.9% of LGBTQ+ respondents felt this should be mandatory, compared to 75.7% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents.

Working with others

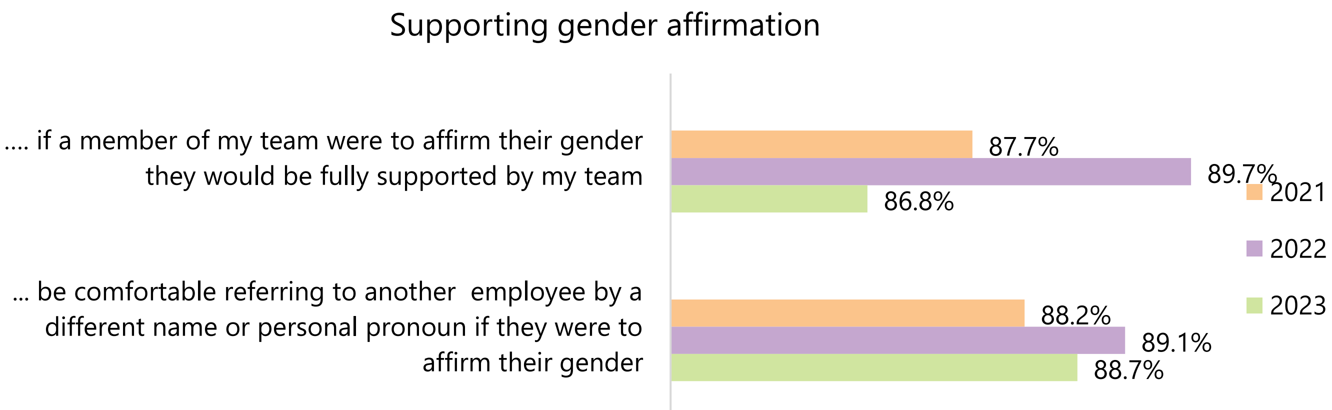
Being comfortable working with people of diverse gender or sexuality is high, with over 80.0% of respondents agreeing with the statements about colleagues talking about, or bringing, their same gender or gender diverse partner to work events. However, after an increase in agreement last year there has been a slight downturn.

Agreement rates for other questions regarding respondents' level of comfort is positive, staying relatively steady over the past three years. In 2023 the survey took a second step, asking not only if respondents would be comfortable with colleagues talking about their same-gender or gender-diverse partners at work, but also if they would be comfortable with colleagues bringing their partners to work events.

As has been seen previously, 4 out of 5 respondents are comfortable having 'all-gender' or 'gender-neutral' toilets on our floor/area (assume male/female toilets are still available). It is also important to note that a further 8.2% of respondents were neutral in their opinion, and only 11.3% of respondents disagreed to having I would be comfortable having 'all-gender' or 'gender-neutral' toilets available.

Regarding the belief that if a member of their team were to affirm their gender they would be fully supported by the team, after an increase in agreement year-on-year for the past three years, agreement rates have dropped by 3.3% from last year, almost returning to 2020 rates (86.2%), with fewer respondents agreeing to this statement (2023: 86.8%, 2022: 89.7%).

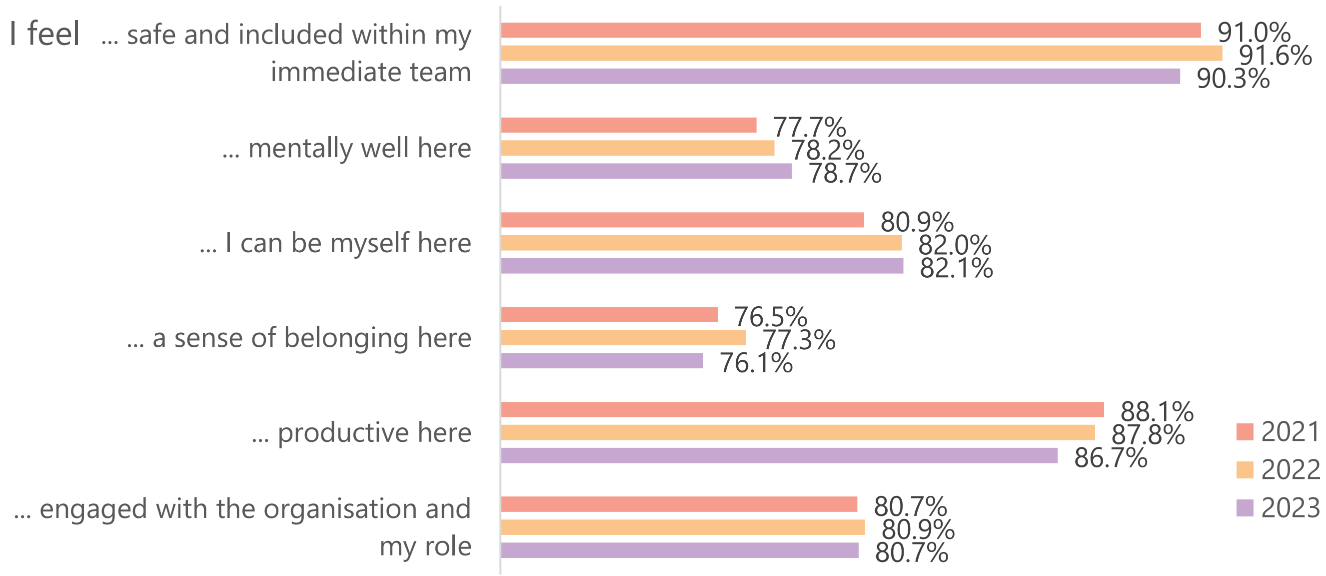
Comfort levels of using a new name or pronoun for a colleague who has affirmed their gender has declined, but not as significantly.



Health and Wellbeing

Each year one of the most important sections is employees' feelings of health and wellbeing within their organisation.

While rates of agreement have remained relatively high and stable over the past three years, we do not see an increase in feelings of safety and belonging. In fact, only one area increased slightly in 2023, "I feel mentally well here".

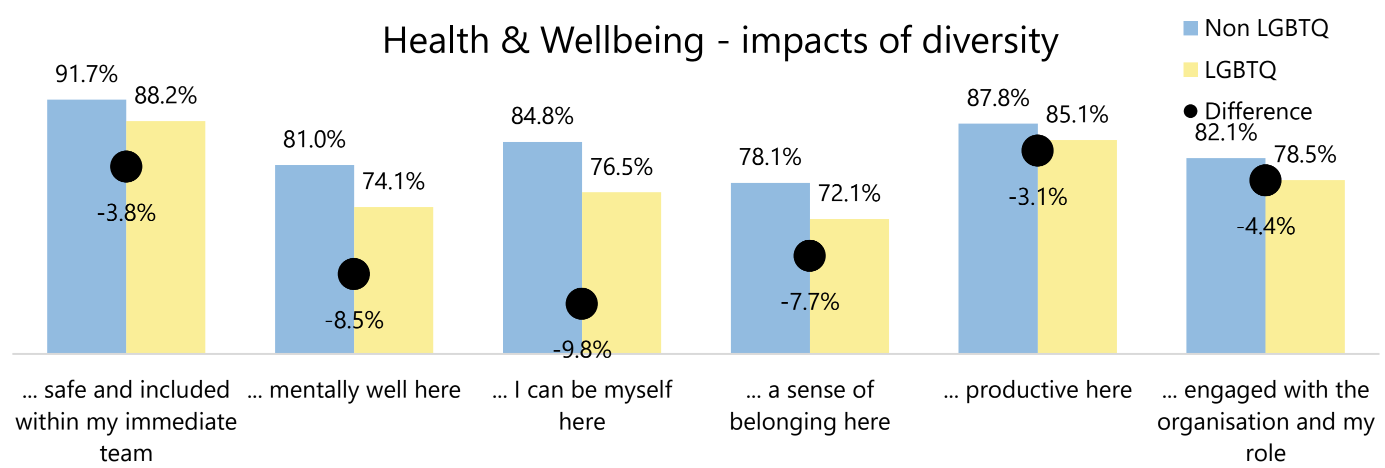


While these rates are high, in 2023 we still see that being LGBTQ+ has an impact on feelings of health and wellbeing in the workplace.

LGBTQ+ respondents are:

- 9.8% less likely to feel they can be themselves at work,
- 8.5% less likely to feel mentally well,
- 7.7% less likely to feel they belong.

These feelings are further affected by a person's ability or willingness to be out or open about their diversity at work, which will be explored in future practice points.



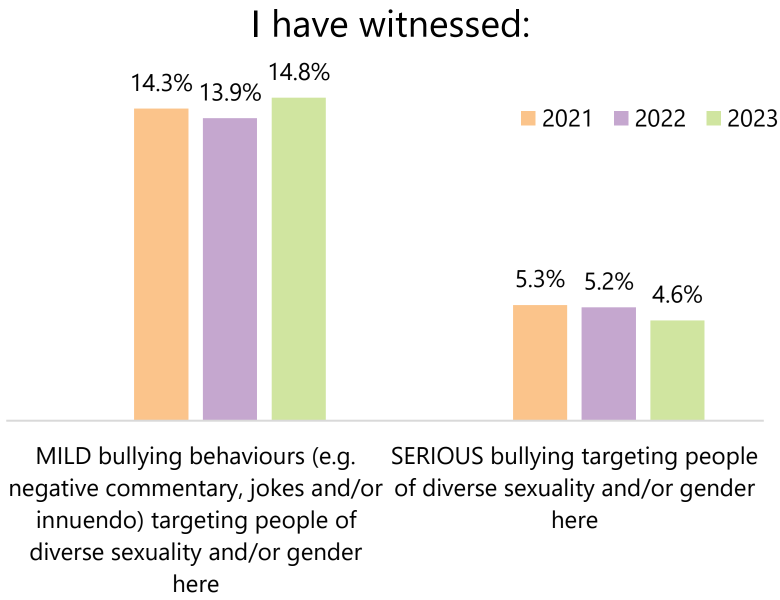
Bullying and harassment behaviours

In 2023, a greater focus was placed on bullying and harassment behaviours within the workplace in the survey, particularly regarding where respondents would feel comfortable reporting these behaviours if they were witnessed.

75.9% of respondents are aware of confidential avenues to report bullying/harassment related to one's diverse sexuality and/or gender.

Regarding managers / leaders being willing to address bullying behaviours such as negative commentary, jokes and/or innuendo, exactly two-thirds of respondents agree there is a willingness to address these behaviours targeting people of diverse sexuality, and 65.1% regarding targeting people of diverse gender.

There has been an increase in respondents agreeing that they have witnessed these behaviours overall, but most significantly to witnessing 'mild' behaviours such as negative commentary, jokes and/or innuendo (in comparison to 'serious' behaviours).

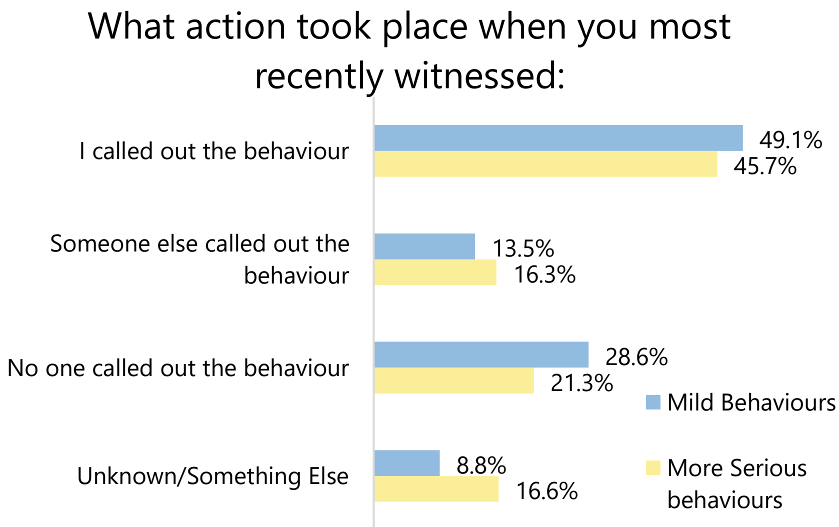


The actions taken after witnessing behaviours also differ, based on the severity of the bullying behaviours. Respondents are more likely to call out mild behaviours personally, and more likely to identify that someone else called out more serious behaviours.

Unfortunately, over 20% of respondents advised that there was no action taken in either instance.

For those that identified that something else occurred, responses ranged from positive to negative. On the positive, these included actions such as multiple people calling the behaviour at the time, offering the victim support after the incident, or having action taken by managers after the incident due to reporting the harassment.

Negative experiences included attempting to report after the fact and being told to "not raise attention to the issue," not feeling comfortable acting because no one else seemed to notice the behaviour, right through to feeling that the behaviour was "less 'mild bullying' more, arguably, inappropriate jokes. Consequently, people never really called out the behaviour as it was never clear whether it was inappropriate or not."



There are also reports that employees are not feeling safe to report behaviours within their organisation or are being discouraged from reporting due to possible repercussions.

Was told "The person can get away with it because that's their 'personality'".

"I tried to call out about it, but was shut down and harassed for saying it"

"I discussed the behaviour with another colleague and a report was discouraged."

"Given that I was alone with my manager and they were the one misbehaving it was not sensible to report the behaviour especially because they are likely to be retributive."

"Bully was " supposedly reprimanded" and the victim was then not allocated to any work for more than a year"

"The behaviour was called out and management did not act upon it. It took the workers to send a letter to HR in order for something to"

"There is a punitive culture in our workplace which punishes staff for reporting bullying by superiors."

"I recently have witnessed indirect mild bullying which came from a manager and nothing will be done, because of the perception of the Boys Club at the helm and the lack of real support for Women in the workplace"

For others, they needed to seek external support to have the matter addressed.

> *"It was directed at me and I took it to the TL [team leader], and nothing happened and was told by the TL and the EL1 [executive level 1] that I would have to sort it out with the person personally so I put in a bullying and harassment claim with the union and then they did something about it"*
>
> *Respondent – 2023 AWEI Employee Survey*

Comments like these do not tell the whole story, but they do provide insight into some of the barriers to reporting people are feeling when witnessing bullying and harassment activities within the workplace.

Being 'out' or 'open' at work.

For people of diverse sexuality, diverse gender or who have a trans experience, the survey looks at the rates at which they are able to bring their whole self to their workplace. When discussing a person's diverse sexuality, we talk about them being 'out' or 'not out'. When discussing a person's diverse gender or trans experience we use the terms 'open' or 'not open', acknowledging that many people with a trans experience are living authentically and bringing their whole selves to work, without their colleagues having to be aware of their gender history.

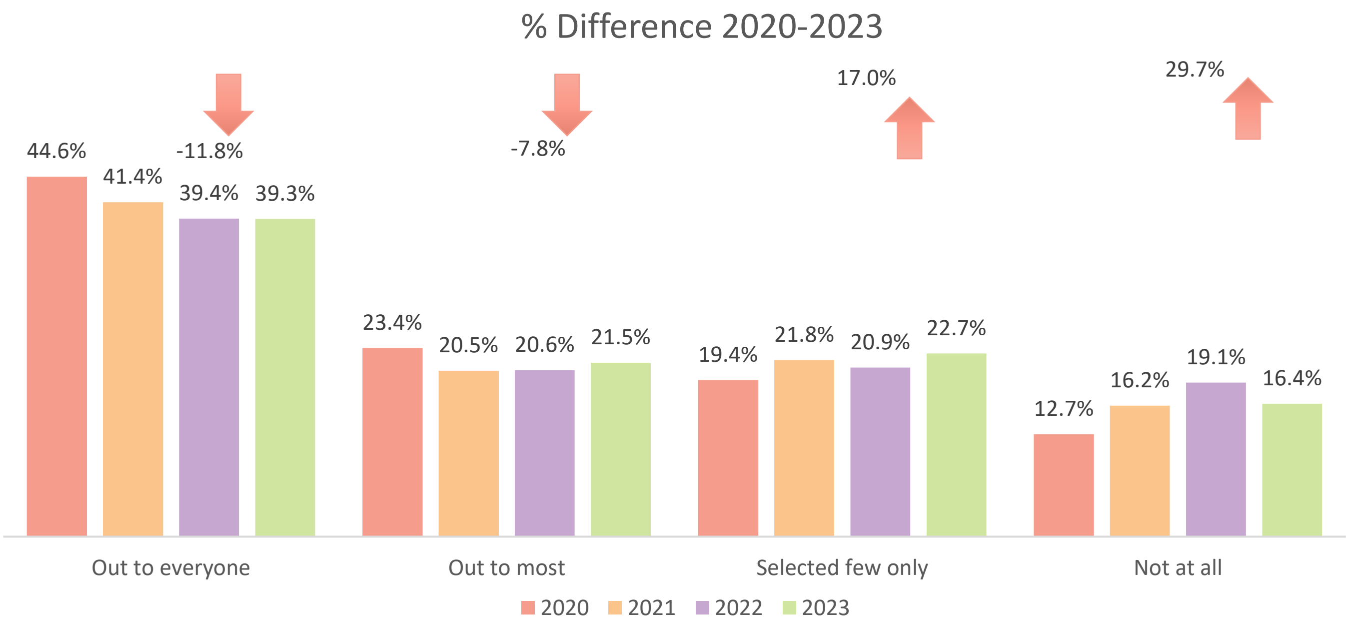
While we see that 91.0% non-LGBTQ+ respondents feel that a person of diverse sexuality or gender would be welcomed by their team , this does not seem to be translating to people of diverse sexuality or gender being out (57.9%) or open (47.8%) about their diversity within the workplace.

When we talk about being 'out' or 'open' at work it is important to recognise that this is generally not something that happens once and is finished. People of diverse gender, sexuality or who have a trans experience often feel they are constantly evaluating if they need to edit their language, personality, presentation or style to maintain their safety with the workplace.

> *...my experience as a lesbian working in the department has been fairly easy. However, I think the most difficult thing is having to come out again and again and again in the workplace. While I don't necessarily fear people's response, ... it's just mentally exhausting sometimes. Straight people don't have to have an awkward conversation about their partner's pronouns. For each colleague I have a sustained working relationship with I have to mentally plan out when I will start dropping in 'she' or 'her' in a context that will mitigate everyone's awkwardness as much as possible. Bracing for impact and interpreting their facial expressions is always part of it.*
>
> *Respondent – 2023 AWEI Employee Survey*

Being Out at Work

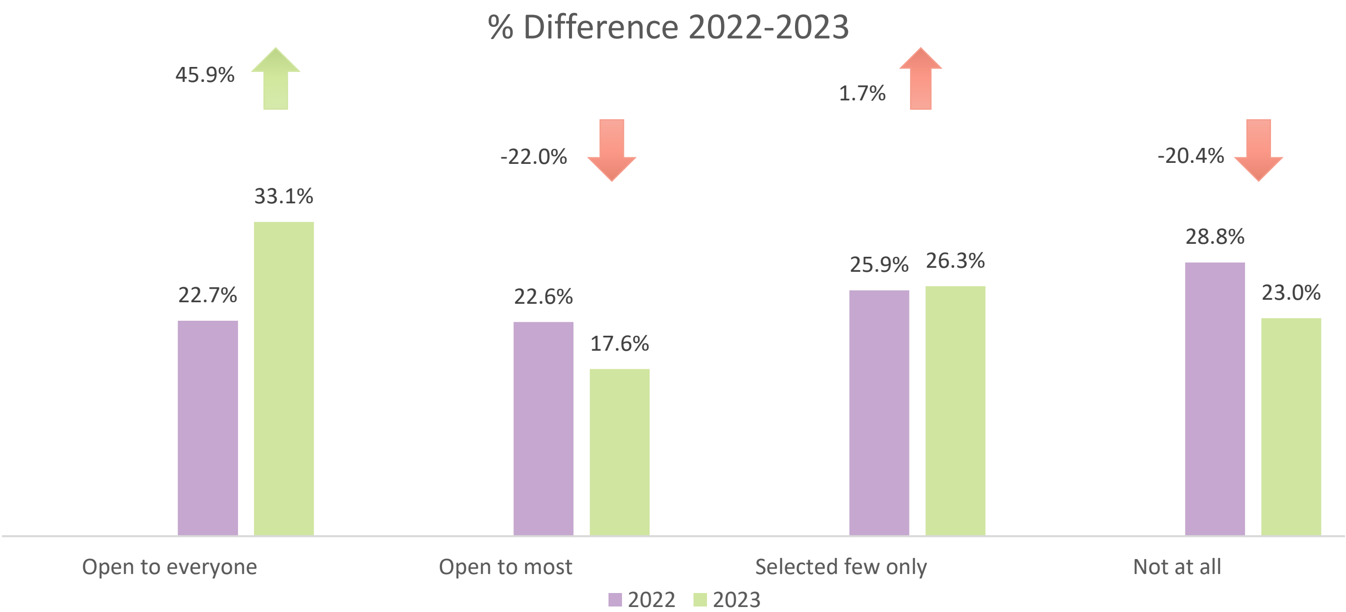
This year, for the fourth year in a row, fewer respondents of diverse sexuality are out to everyone or most within their workplace.



Overall, we have seen a 10.4% decline in respondents being out to everyone or most, and a 22.0% increase in those out to few or not at all, since 2020. We also note that there has been a 196.6% increase in people of diverse sexuality preferring not to respond to this question, and therefore not receiving any further questions regarding their experiences within the workplace regarding their diverse sexuality.

NOTE: Prefer not to respond answers are not included.

Being Open at work.



We are only able to compare the past two years' data regarding the experience of people of diverse gender and/or trans experience being open in the workforce after standardising the way we asked this question in 2022. In 2023 we see 45.9% more respondents being open to everyone regarding their diverse gender and/or trans experience, and 20.4% fewer respondents being not open at all.

NOTE: Prefer not to respond answers are not included.

Overall, there has been a 12% increase in respondents being open (to everyone or most) (2023: 50.7% vs. 2022: 45.3%), and a 10% decrease in those not open (selected few or not at all) (2023: 49.3% vs. 2022: 54.7.%)

Further details regarding being 'out' or 'open' in the workplace will be explored in future Practice Points.

Allyship

Allies in the workplace have always had a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of employees, regardless of the area they are supporting. Visibility of LGBTQ+ allies are no different in this respect.

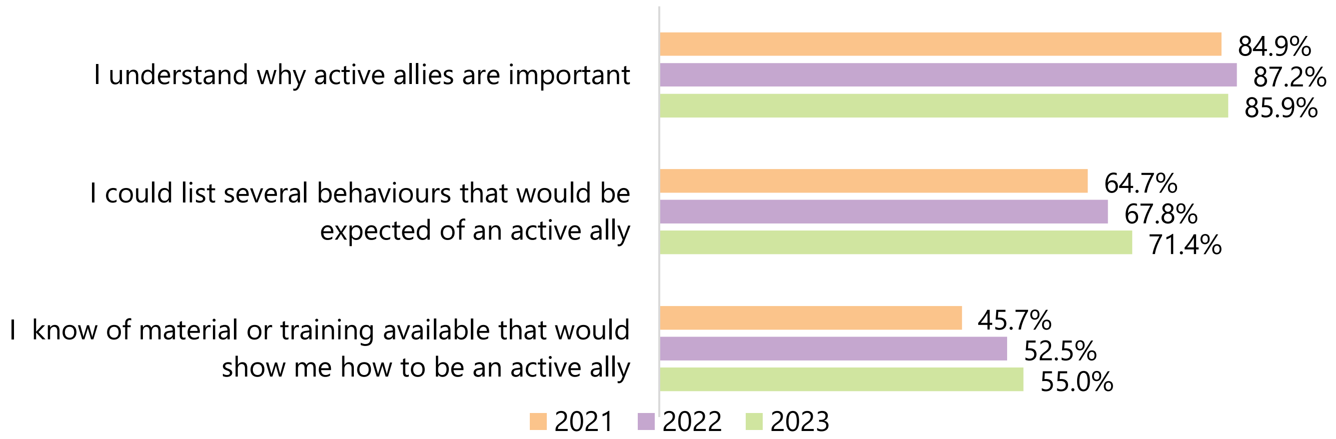
For survey purposes we discuss allyship in three ways:

- Active Ally: someone who actively (not passively) supports an inclusive workplace culture for employees of diverse sexuality and/or gender. All activities which are outwardly visible are considered active allyship (includes wearing pins, using pronouns on email signatures, belonging to committees, etc.).
- Passive Ally: someone who does not provide a visible and obvious sense of support or inclusion to LGBTQ+ people, regardless of intention.
- Not an Ally: someone who does not support LGBTQ+ inclusion

Respondents who are passive allies, or not allies at all are asked further about this experience.

Visibility of allies

85.9% of respondents understand why allies are important. Knowledge of the behaviours of being an active ally or finding material / accessing training on being an active ally has increased from last year (5.4% and 4.7% higher respectively).

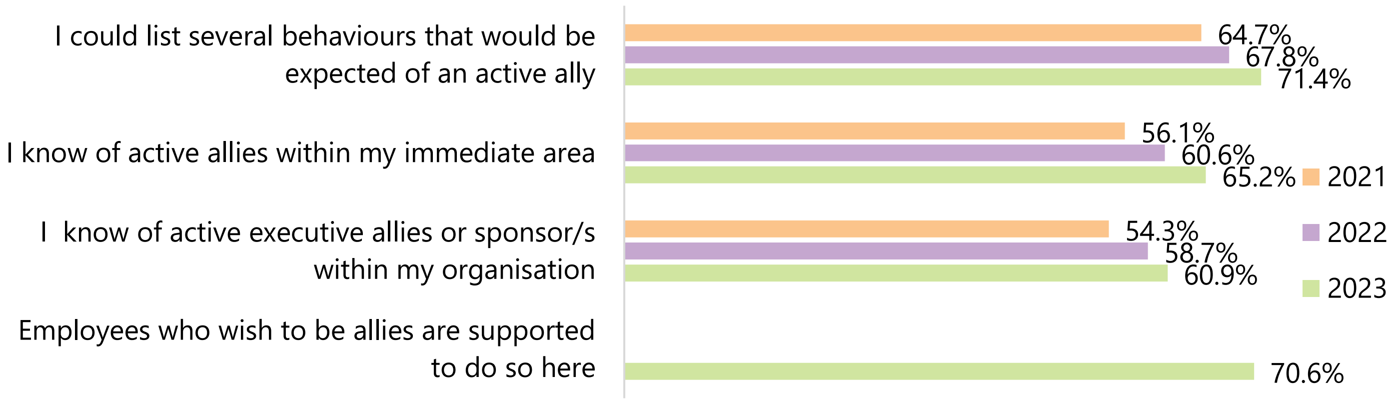


For an LGBTQ+ person, knowing there is someone in the workplace who is actively willing to support them, call out behaviours and enable them to speak about their lives without guarding or censoring, supports them to feel comfortable and secure both in the workplace and their team.

LGBTQ+ respondents have agreed 63.0% of the time that active allies have positively impacted their sense of inclusion within their organisation, a 17.3% increase from 2022 and 27.6% increase since 2021.

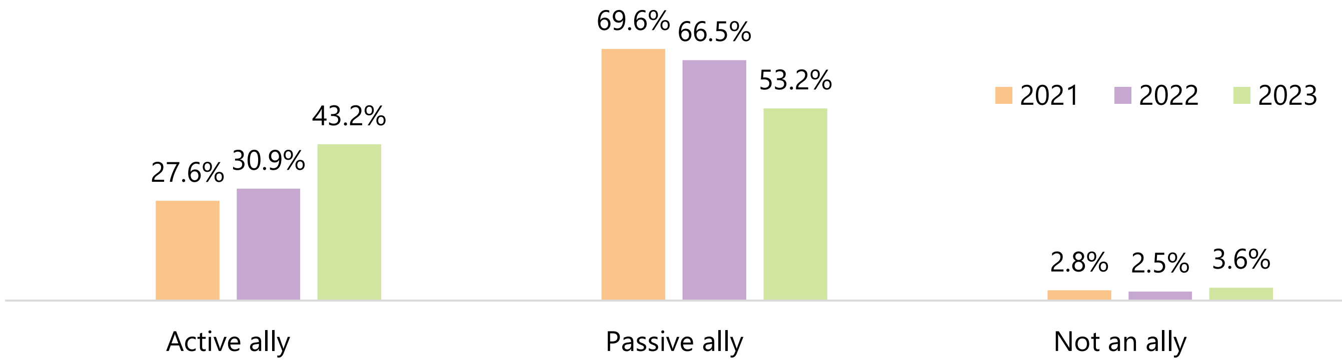
Knowledge of active allies within the workplace has increased year-on-year. Since 2021, 16.1% more respondents are aware of allies in their work area, and 12.1% know of executive allies or sponsors.

Encouragingly 70.6% of respondents feel that their organisation will support them to be an active ally.



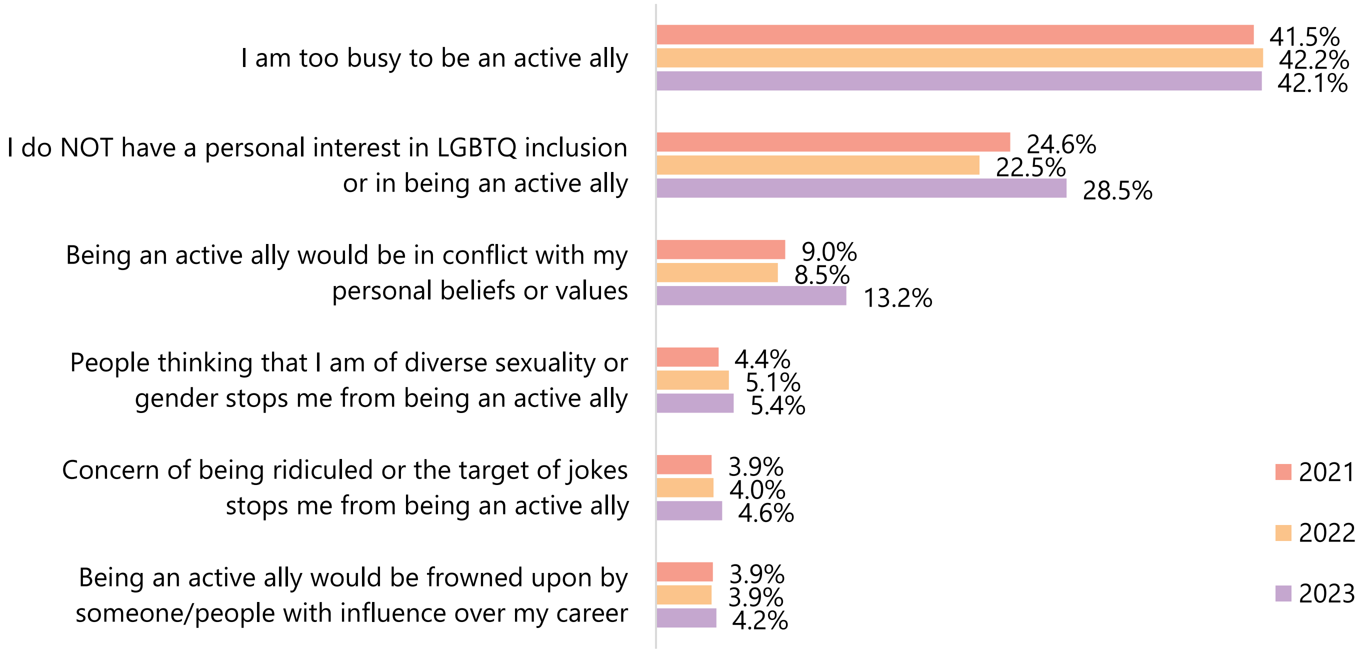
Active allyship has continued to increase in 2023. Since 2021 there has been a 56.6% increase in respondents who feel they are active allies. Respondents are still more likely to be passive in their allyship, though this has decreased year on year, with 53.2% happy to support but do not consider themselves active in this space.

Concerningly, this year we have also seen a 41.7% increase in respondents who are not an ally at all (those who do not support LGBTQ+ inclusion) from 2.5% to 3.6%. This percentage is small, though can significantly decrease a person's feeling of safety and comfort in the workplace, particularly if those employees are vocal regarding their disagreement with LGBTQ+ inclusion initiatives.



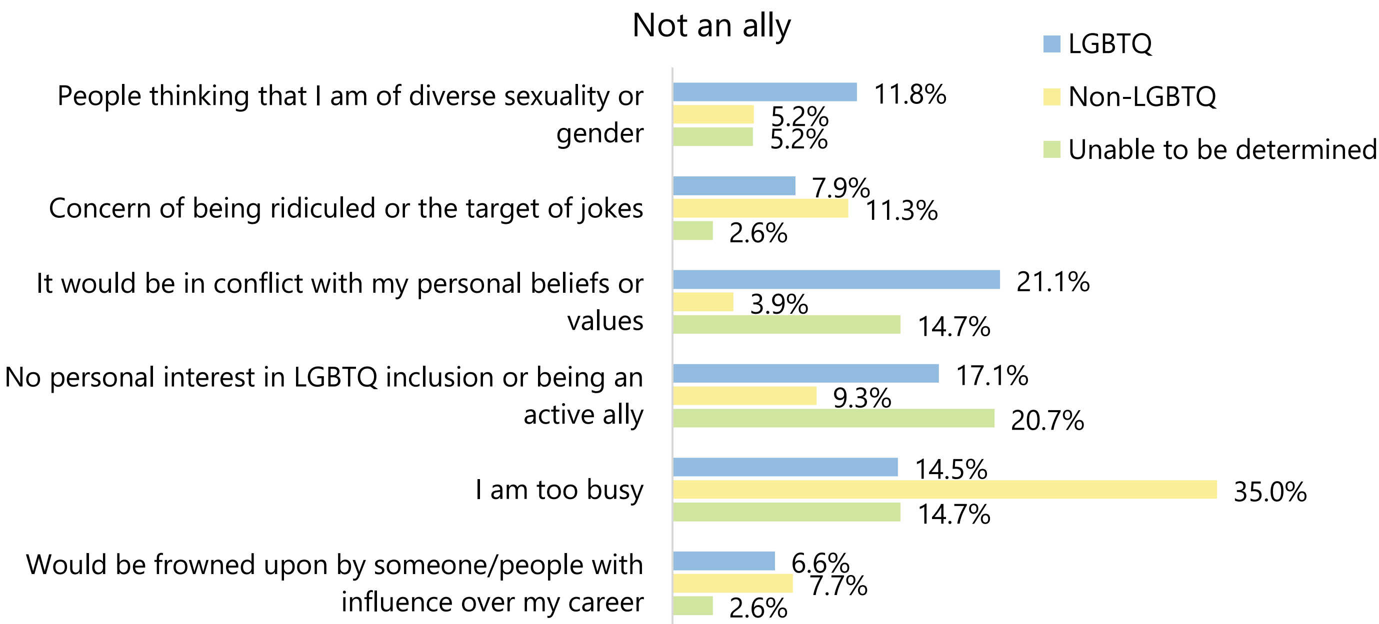
Why are you not an active ally?

For those who are passive or not an ally (n21,170), being too busy is still the main reason. When we look at this and the knowledge of if the respondent is LGBTQ+ or not, we see significant differences in the reasons why a person is choosing not to be an active ally.



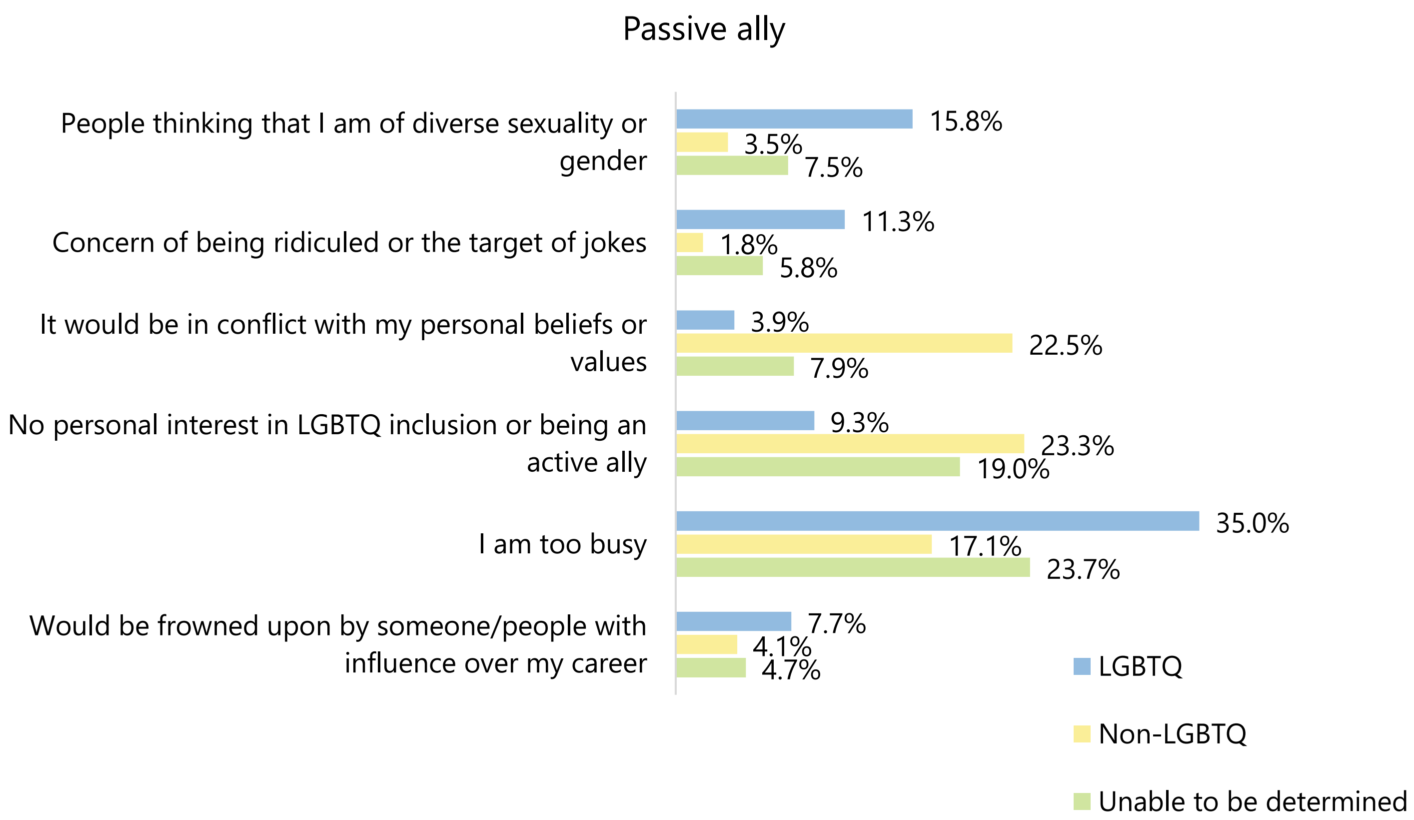
For respondents who are **not allies at all**, the highest reason for

- Non-LGBTQ+ - being too busy (35.0%),
- LGBTQ+ - that it would conflict with personal beliefs (21.1%).
- For respondents where LGBTQ+ status is unknown, non-allies agree that personal interest is the greatest barrier to active allyship (20.7%)



For respondents who are **passive allies**

- Non-LGBTQ+ - conflict of personal belief (22.5%) and no personal interest (23.3%)
- LGBTQ+ - being too busy (35.0%),
- For respondents where LGBTQ+ status is unknown, it is again time constraints. (23.7

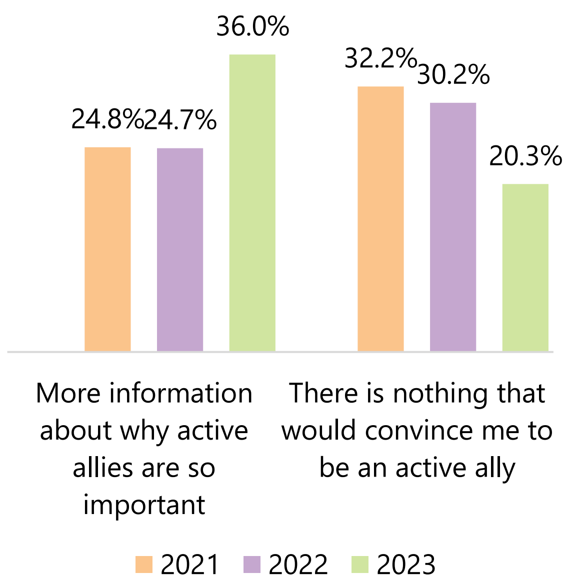


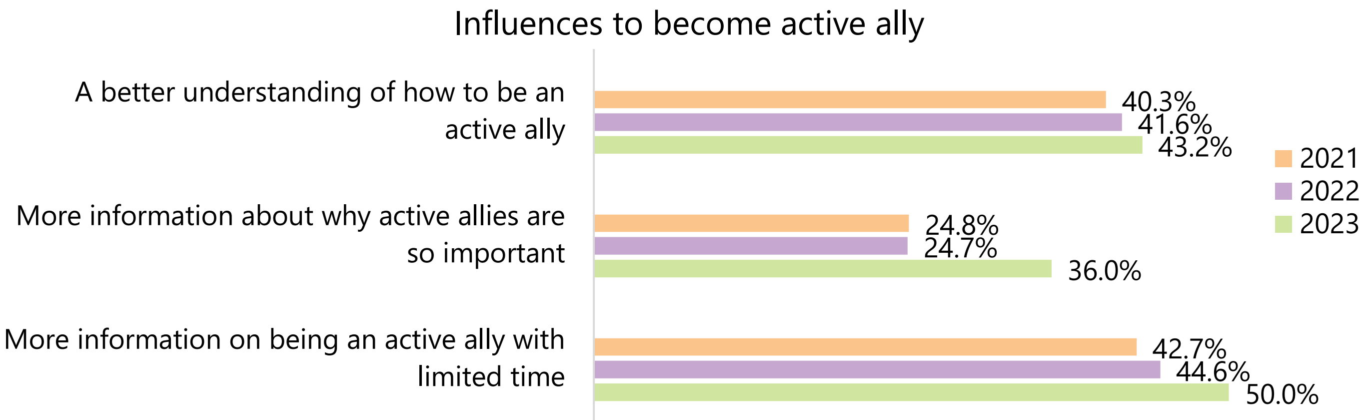
Influences to being an active ally.

Of non-active allies (passive and not at all), 20.3% of respondents have agreed that nothing would influence them to be an active ally.

The scale for this question was changed in 2022, from "would any of the following influence you in becoming an active ally". In 2021, 30.2% stated that nothing would convince them. This year's results represent a significant downward trend in this area, which is valuable knowledge for those organisations who have or are developing programs to empower employees to become more active and visible as allies.

Needing more information about the importance of active allies was agreed to by 36.0% (up 46.1% from 2021) and needing more information on how to be an active ally was up 12.1% from last year.





8.2% of respondents agreed that there were other ways to encourage them to be an active ally. Some suggestions were:

- "Implementation of a buddy ally system. Whereby if you are a new ally, you could be buddy'd up with a more experienced ally that you could reach out to if you have any questions or need guidance."
- Supervisor promoting training for members of the team and encouraging us to become allies. It's difficult to figure out where/how to complete the training, and difficult to convince supervisors that it is something important to me."
- "I do not think my employer organization appreciates how different the workplace is for contract …. staff and does not tailor activities support and training for us."
- "Role modelling of active allyship by mid-level managers above me. The top execs talk the talk, but the middle don't do anything at all……I do not feel there is adequate representation of diversity or allyship in them or generally in the company leadership teams."

It is important to recognise that not all non-Active allies (passive or not at all) are anti-LGBTQ+. Comments in this area show that many employees have connections to other diversity and inclusion activities and do not feel that they have the time to be "active" in the LGBTQ+ space as well. Some respondents are unsure whether the activities they take part in make them a passive or active ally.

"I am already an ally for people with a disability and do not have time to also be an active LGBTQ+ ally".

All people should feel welcome and included - but what does active really mean -do I need to label myself as an ally - I encourage and care for all people - does that make me active? I don't know.

There were also comments regarding individuals not seeing any reason to need to be active in their allyship, or they do not feel their organisation has a culture which requires them to be more active and promote inclusivity in this area.
And finally, for some who are not out in the workplace, this is a barrier to being active.

"Demonstrated poor homophobic behaviours would make me become active. There are no exclusionary behaviours happening in my area that require me to be 'active' and fired up. ….. I would step up if someone was bullied…"

IN CONCLUSION

The rate at which individuals are bringing their whole selves to work is still distressingly low despite efforts in LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion practices.

While it is pleasing to see active ally numbers increase, the effectiveness and impact of the allyship has not seen the same improvement, this needs to happen in order for organisations become truly LGBTQ+ inclusive.

Overall, fewer respondents feel that a person of diverse sexuality and/or gender would be welcome in their team and treated no differently to anyone else.

> *As long as you keep secrets and suppress information, you are fundamentally at war with yourself. Hiding your core feelings takes an enormous amount of energy, it saps your motivation to pursue worthwhile goals … Meanwhile., stress hormones keep flooding your body. ignoring your inner reality also eats away at your sense of self, identity and purpose.*
>
> *(Van Der Kolk, B., The Body Keeps Score (2014))*

Access to, and attendance at LBGTQ training, provision of internal resources, and the presence of active allies in leadership roles are recurrent themes which are affecting feelings towards being 'out' or open in the workplace.

Activities toward LGBTQ+ inclusion are not siloed, as can be seen with the intersectionality of diversities, employees are likely to have more than one diversity and /need for inclusion within the workplace. Creating an inclusive culture whereby employees are able to feel they do not need to monitor, hide, or be selective about natural parts of their lives due to concern of bullying, harassment or workplace incivility will support all employees, increase workplace satisfaction and may impact all areas of business productivity, engagement and retention.

ACTIONS:

1. Create a visible strategy and action plan to increase LGBTQ+ inclusion and have executive leaders openly speak about it and its importance.
2. Have very visible Pride symbols in all workplaces. These can include banners, Pride flags, rainbow stairs, Pride lanyards, pins and technology backgrounds that people can use.
3. Promote LGBTQ+ awareness and ally training to all employees and have senior leaders role model attendance and introduce them.
4. Have senior allies tell their ally stories and publish them on internal media.
5. Publish examples of allyship, and how it has supported employees. These can be anonymous.
6. Create ally guides, so that employees know what they can do to be a visible, active LGBTQ+ ally.
7. Promote LGBTQ+ days of significance and ensure senior leaders attend and participate.
8. Participate in the AWEI Employee Survey to understand and act on your organisations particular challenges for LGBTQ+ inclusion.

[i] NOTE: Prior to release of the 2023 AWEI Employee survey, we undertook a significant evaluation and restructure of the survey to ensure the survey was aligned to best practice and the NEW AWEI Submission documents.
We have:
Removed the need for people to identify as LGBTQ+ and implemented the ABS Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables,
Created additional answer options where appropriate to capture more nuanced information,
Consistently used the 'strongly agree to strongly disagree' Likert scale, removing the expectations scales used in some questions previously,
Divided questions where respondents were being asked to reflect on experiences of organisation approach to both sexuality and gender within the same question as we were aware this was providing inaccurate results,
Used consistent questions for people of diverse sexuality who are 'out' or 'not out', and people of diverse gender who are 'open' or 'not open' to be able to accurately compare the differences,
Restructured questions for Overseas respondents so they receive the same questions as all other respondents to further support organisation who have staff working remotely overseas.

Percentage reporting: previously we were reporting on the % point difference which was not showing significant changes. By showing the % difference we can show more clearly changes in response rates. (more information can be found here Difference Between a Percent & a Percentage Point | Sciencing).

[ii] Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables, 2020 | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)