

**FOUR WAYS
TO GET
ON POINT!**

**PRACTICE
POINTS**

EDITION 8: Applying an Intersectional Lens

INSIGHTS FROM THE 2023 AWEI EMPLOYEE SURVEY

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.

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 organisations¹.

This practice point focuses on the respondents who have an additional aspect of their background or identity that may affect their workplace experiences along with being LGBTQ+. We look at the difference in responses from LGBTQ+ respondents who have one or more additional aspects, compared the LGBTQ+ only population, and the impact this has on the opinions and experiences of the respondents. The data used includes only LGBTQ+ respondents who have agreed to one or more of the following statements:¹

- I identify as culturally, linguistically or ethnically diverse, a migrant, refugee or am a person of colour.
- I am someone living with a disability or long-term health condition (may be physical, mental, intellectual or sensory)
- I am neurodivergent (example Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia)
- I am a person of faith/religious belief.

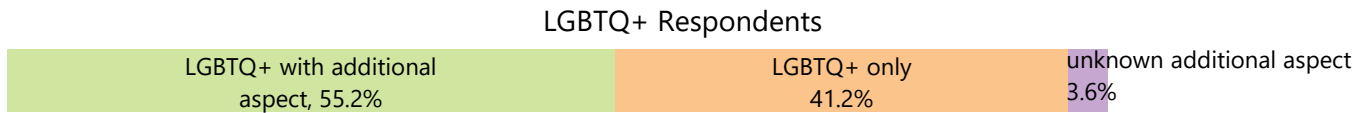
Within this question, we also ask if a respondent identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. We acknowledge the importance of LGBTQ+ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander within Australian workplacesⁱⁱ and the contribution they make to culture and as such publish a dedicated report in alternate years as part of the Practice point cycle ([2022 publication](#)). Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are not individually included in this practice point but may be represented within the data if a respondent also identifies with another aspect listed. We also ask if respondents identify with “a diversity not listed above,”. Due to the variety of responses that are received in this area, and the fact that respondents have used this section to identify as LGBTQ+, we don’t include these responses.

¹ For brevity within graphs the following will be used:

- LGBTQ+ Only – respondents without an additional aspect
- CALD/POC - culturally, linguistically or ethnically diverse, a migrant, refugee or am a person of colour & LGBTQ+
- Disability - living with a disability or long-term health condition & LGBTQ+
- Neurodivergent - neurodivergent (example Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia) & LGBTQ+
- Faith - faith/religious belief & LGBTQ+

How diverse are respondents?

Overall, 10,085 respondents to the survey are LGBTQ+, and 21,002, individual respondents advised they belonged to one or more of the listed additional groups. Just over 1/2 of all LGBTQ+ respondents (n5569) also have an additional aspect that may impact their workplace experience.²

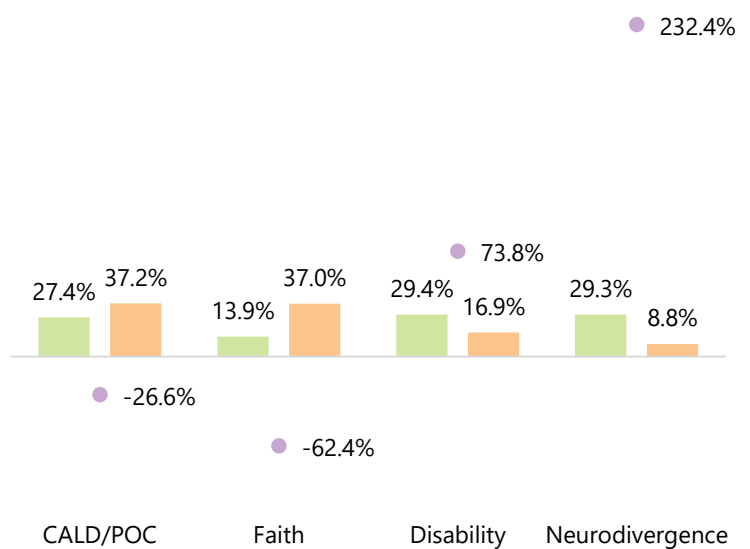
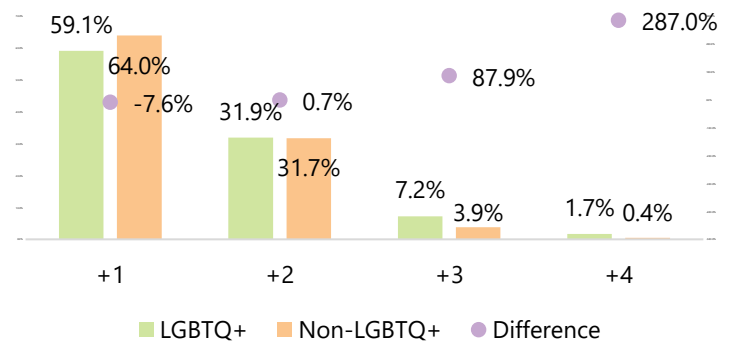


The percentage of respondents who have advised being a part of one, two, three or four groups, is similar between the LGBTQ+ and Non-LGBTQ+ cohorts, when only one or two aspects are present, although LGBTQ+ respondents are 87.9% more likely to identify with 3, and 287% more likely to identify with all 4 of the 'aspect' options provided. This is important to note, and numerically each aspect is counted individually, and therefore the pool of responses looks larger than the individual respondents.

Respondents who are LGBTQ+ are 73.8% more likely to identify as living with a disability and 232.4% more likely to be neurodivergent, while those who are not LGBTQ+ have greater rates of being of faith/religious belief or being culturally, linguistically or ethnically diverse, a migrant, refugee or a person of colour.

For the remainder of this practice point we will be discussing the responses from those who are both LGBTQ+ and have an additional aspect, vs those who are only LGBTQ+, in order to investigate where the additional aspect of someone's background or identity has an impact on the experiences of LGBTQ+ respondents.

Respondent with one or more highlighted aspect



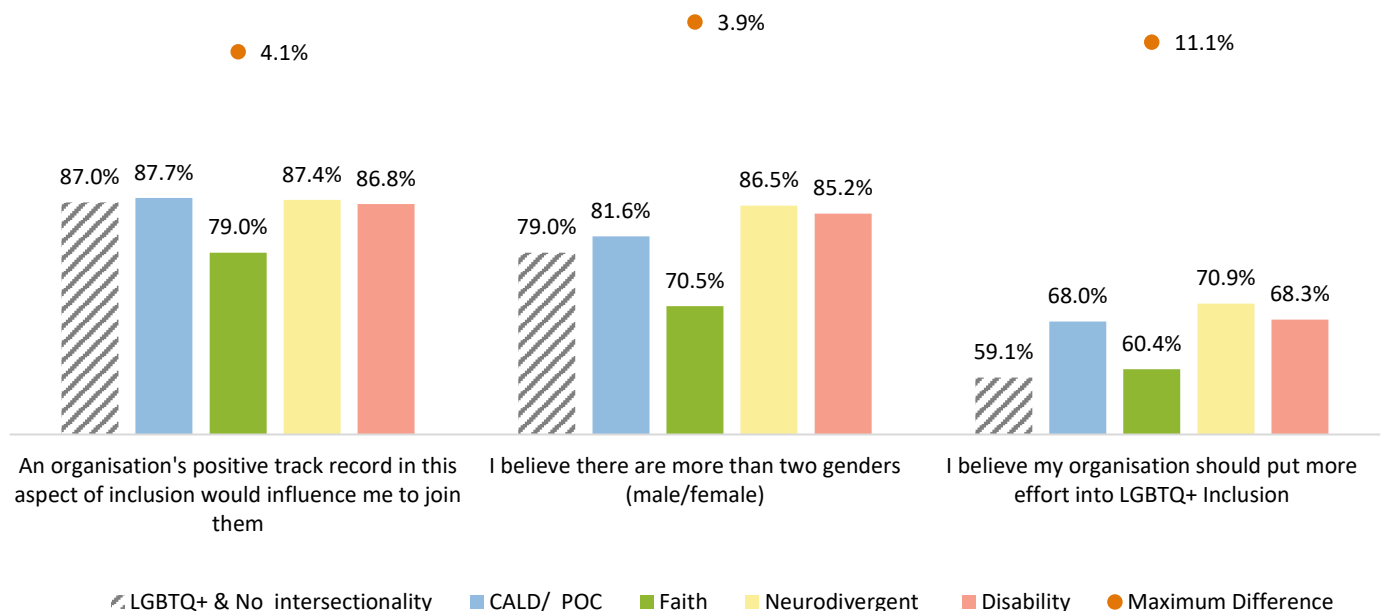
² 235 respondents preferred not to respond to the additional diversity questions and have not been included in this practice point.

Personal beliefs

In general, we see similar rates of agreement within opinions and beliefs of LGBTQ+ respondents who have one of the 4 additional aspects vs those who do not. Of note is the difference in response to the belief there is more than two genders, where those with another aspect are more likely to agree by 5.2%.

LGBTQ+ respondents with another aspect are also 14.3% more likely to believe their organisation should put more effort in to this area of inclusion, and 8.5% less likely to believe their organisation is genuinely committed to LGBTQ+ inclusion.

When we look more closely at the individual groups, we can see that there are some more significant differences. LGBTQ+ people of faith/religion are the least likely to feel that their organisation needs to do more for LGBTQ+ inclusion.



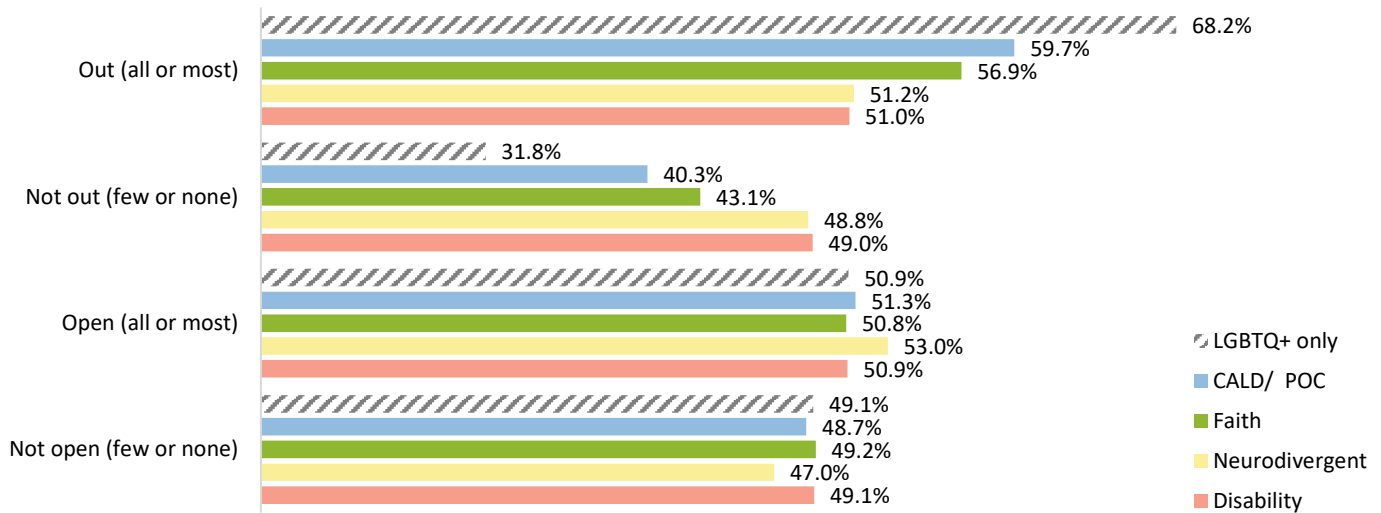
1 - Only questions with more than 7% discrepancy between the lowest and highest groups are included here.

Out and open

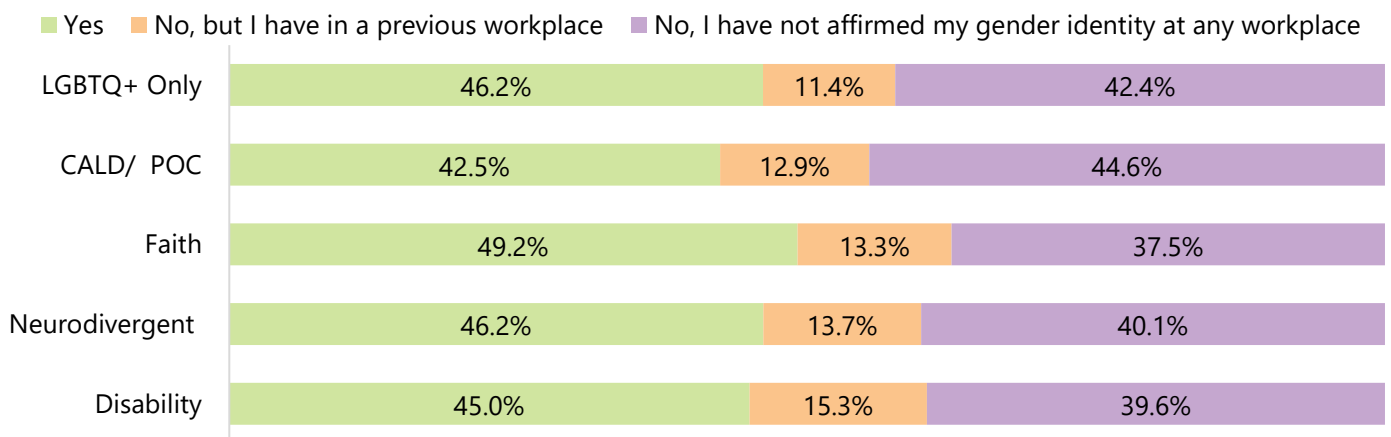
As has been seen in previous practice points, overall, 60.9% of people of diverse sexuality are 'out' to all or most in the workplace., and 50.7% of trans and/or gender diverse respondents are 'open' to all or most in the workplace.

When looking at individuals of diverse sexuality, with an additional aspect, only 55.7% are 'out' (compared to 68.2% of those without). The disparity is not as significant for trans and/or gender diverse respondents with 51.2% of respondents with an additional aspect being 'open', compared to 50.9% of those without.

When we analyse the experiences of LGBTQ+ respondents with the four aspects, we find that those who also identify with being culturally and linguistically diverse, or a person of faith, are more likely to be 'out' about their diverse sexuality than those who are neurodivergent or who are living with a disability or long-term health condition.

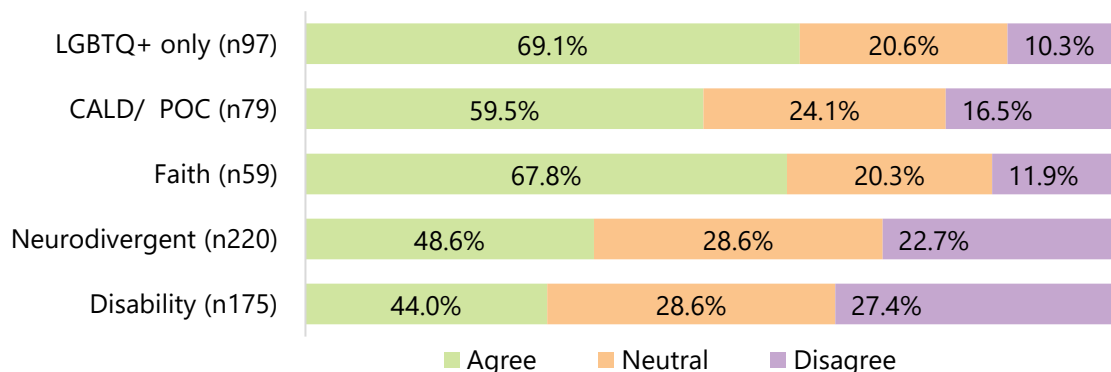


Undertaking gender affirmation in the workplace is lowest within the CALD cohort, with 44.6% having never undertaken any action in this workplace or previously.



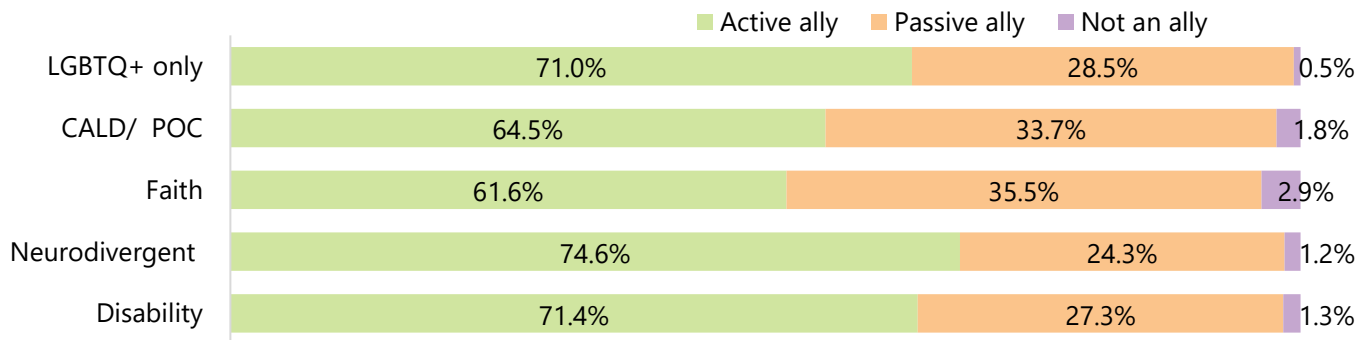
Being happy with the affirmation process which are undertaken within the current workplace, is overwhelmingly more significant for LGBTQ+ only respondents. Only 10.3% of respondents disagreed within this cohort compared to 27.4% of respondents living with a disability.

Respondents of faith were the most similar to the LGBTQ+ only group, while less than half of neurodivergent or those living with disability were happy with the process available to them.



Allyship

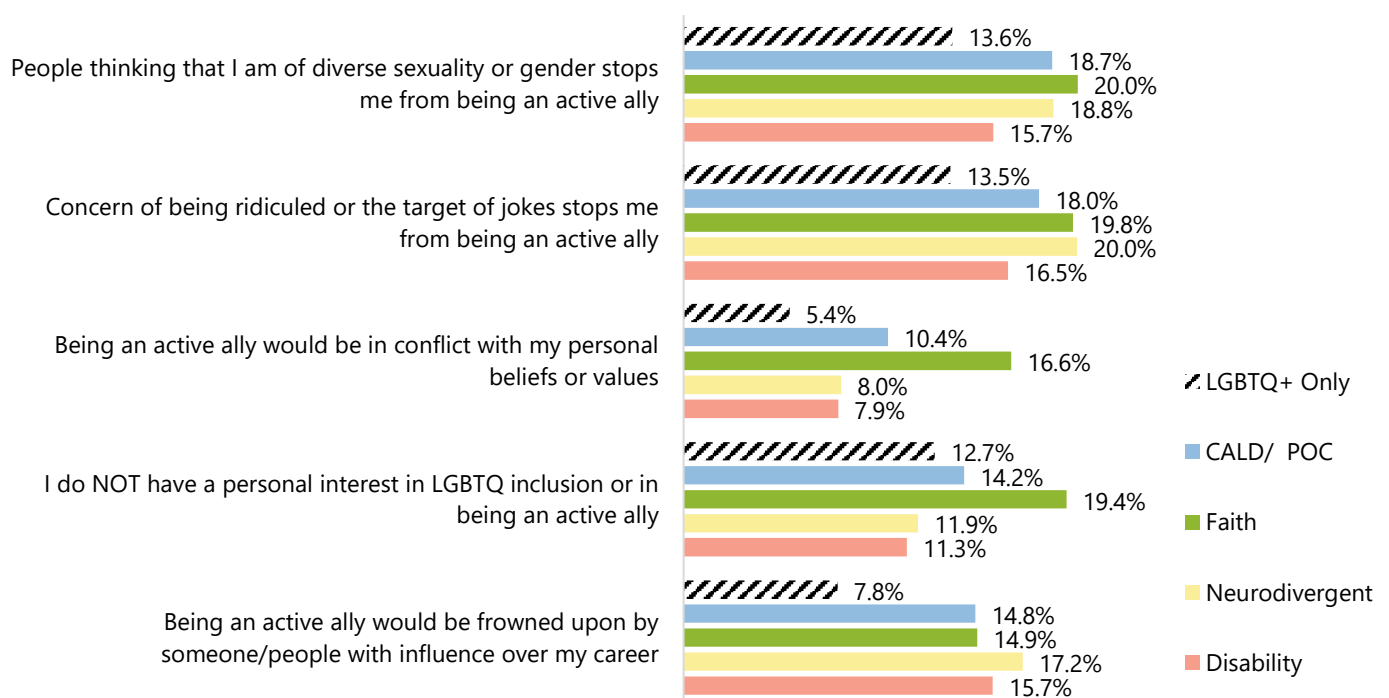
Allyship also seems to be influenced by the presence of an additional aspect. 71% of LGBTQ+ only respondents consider themselves an active ally. Comparing this to all other groups, those who are culturally and linguistically diverse or those who are a person of faith are less likely to consider themselves active allies. Respondents who are neurodivergent are more likely by 5.1% to be an active ally.



Across the board those within the four additional aspect categories are far more likely to advise to “not be an ally” than those without.

Being too busy is the top response for all groups as the reason for not being an active ally, but the secondary reason differs. People thinking that I am LGBTQ+ is the top reason for culturally and linguistically diverse respondents (18.7%) and those of faith and religion (20.0%). For the neurodiverse cohort concern of being ridiculed or the target of jokes was agreed to by 20.0% of respondents, and 16.5% of those living with a disability.

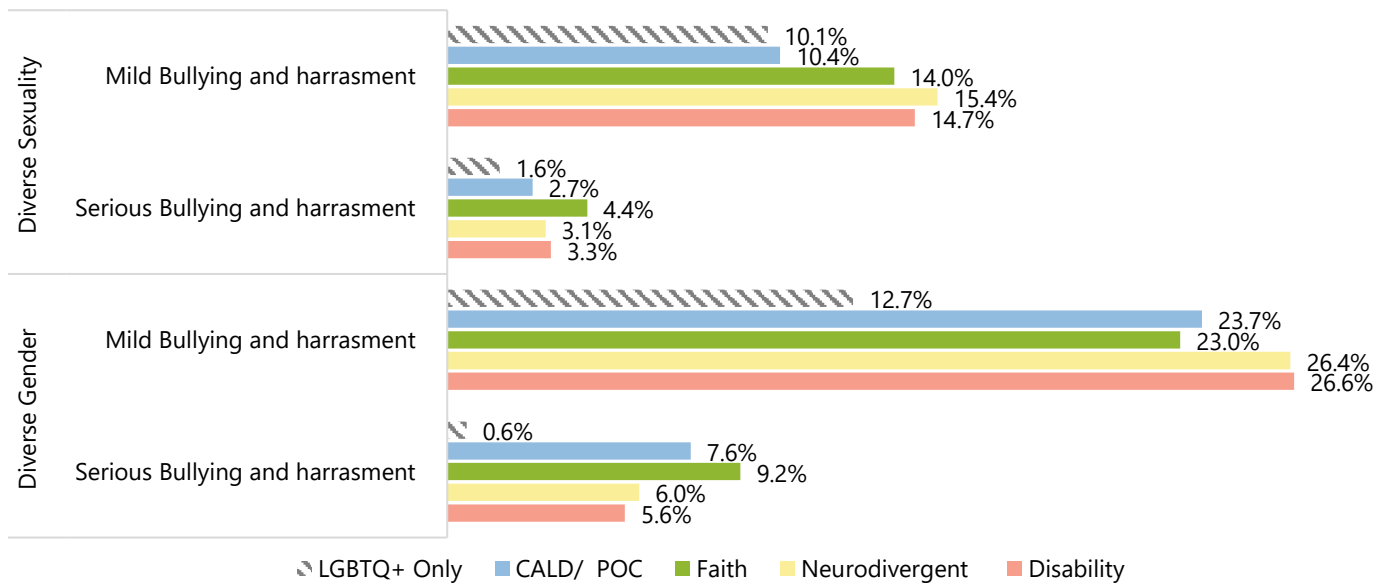
People of faith are the most likely to cite conflict with personal beliefs as stopping them being an active ally. The most likely group to feel it would be frowned upon by someone with influence over their career are those who are neurodivergent.



Bullying and Harassment experiences

A correlation between the presence of additional background or identity aspects and increased experiences of bullying and harassment is also visible within the data. All cohorts are more likely to advise they have experienced mild or serious behaviours than LGBTQ+ only respondents.

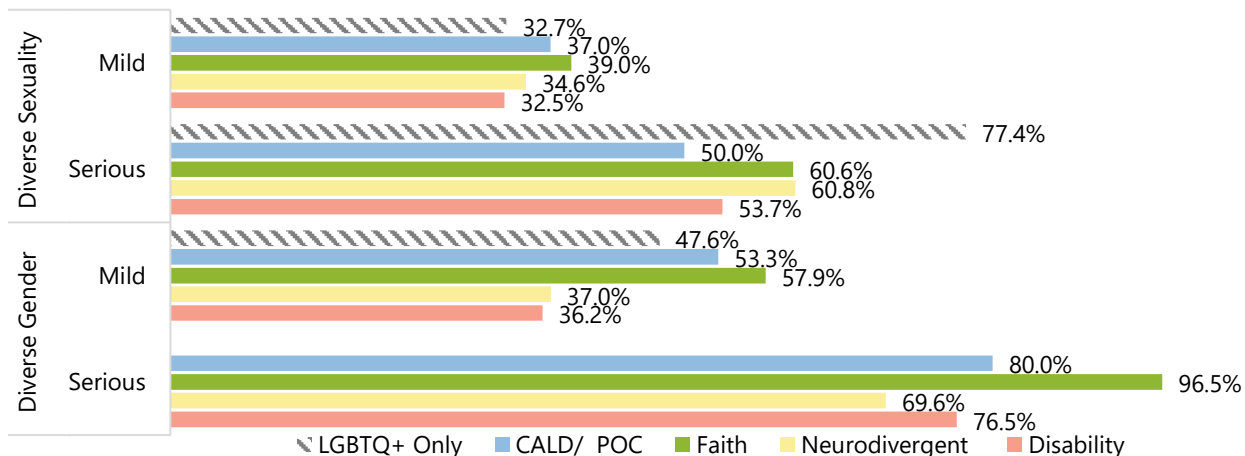
The most significant discrepancy is a 1417.2% increase in people of faith and religion experiencing serious bullying and harassment targeting their diverse gender and/or trans experience (9.2%), compared to those who do not have any additional aspects (0.6%). Even with the four groups, there is a 65% increase between those who are living with a disability (5.6%), the lowest reporting cohort and those of faith or religion.



For those that have experienced negative behaviours, reporting also differs depending on the level of harassment experienced and if it is directed at the individual’s diverse sexuality or gender. In this regard we are looking at small numbers of respondents, but this data shows that these additional aspects may have a significant impact on an individual’s comfort level of reporting LGBTQ+ targeted bullying and harassment.

In all cases, people of faith are more likely to report than any other cohort, with the only exception being LGBTQ+ only respondents, who are more likely to report serious bullying directed at their diverse sexuality.

Respondents who reported behaviours



Conclusion

As the experts in LGBTQ+ inclusion, we do not want to presume to provide advice around the steps which may need to be undertaken to support employees with other aspects of their background or identity which may impact their workplace experiences. However, Pride in Diversity is aware that, at times, employees who are LGBTQ+, and have an additional aspect, may feel they do not belong to any particular network. PID research from 2020 showed that some LGBTQ+ culturally diverse people experienced racism in LGBTQ+ spaces, and homophobia in cultural diversity spaces. Sapphire research from 2018 and 2023 showed that many LGBTQ+ women do not feel comfortable in gender equity initiatives but felt the LGBTQ+-inclusion initiatives were geared towards men and didn't address their challenges.

Looking at this data through an intersectional lens shows us that having multiple aspects can exacerbate the negative experiences which LGBTQ+ respondents face. It is important that organisations work collaboratively across all diversity and inclusion networks and groups when developing policies, procedures and actions around inclusion initiatives.

Of most importance is to understand the barriers that people may experience due to their additional diversity aspects have a greater impact on their workplace experience, than the impact of being part of the LGBTQ+ community alone.

Actions

1. Organisations should consider designing inclusion initiative across multiple diversity strands, so people who identify with several aspects can feel seen.
2. Organisations should focus on boosting visibility of a range of LGBTQ+ people, with different experiences, backgrounds and identities, in events, storytelling platforms, imagery, etc.
3. Ensure that LGBTQ+ networks have diverse leadership teams, so the voices of different people are represented.

ⁱ Results reflect the attitudes and knowledge of respondents from organisations working in inclusive practices.

ⁱⁱ In 2024 the question regarding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity has been updated and rather than including it in the intersectionality matrix with 3 options (yes, no, prefer not to respond) has been given a dedicated question and enables respondents to choose one of 5 options based on best practice answers (Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander, Neither, Prefer not to respond)