

PRACTICE POINTS . 2024 AWEI EMPLOYEE SURVEY

- The presence of visible role models provides benefits to organisational culture, similar to the presence of active allies.
- The presence of visible role models for trans and/or gender diverse respondents has reduced by 18.3% in the past year.
- Organisations that encourage and support employees to be active allies are also more likely to have visible LGBTQ+ role models available
- Respondents with visible role models are over 35% more likely to feel they can be themselves and 47.4% less likely to spend time editing their conversations at work.

EDITION 7:

Impact of Visible Role Models

Insights from the 2024 AWEI employee survey

In 2024, 169 organisations and 42,219 individuals took part in the survey. Of these, 41,497 respondents are Australian-based, and 722 work in overseas locations for Australian employers.

In Edition 5: Impacts of Leadership Support, we discussed the importance of leadership role models and sponsors and the impact this can have on all employees. We have also discussed the importance of active allies in the workplace in edition 4.

This practice point is focused on the impact to 'out' and/or 'open' LGBTQ+ respondents based on whether they know of ANY visible role models in their organisation who are of the same or similar diverse sexuality or diverse gender as themselves, regardless of the seniority of that role model. Respondents with both a diverse sexuality and a diverse gender are asked about role models for each aspect to their identity separately.

This year 24.6% (n10,198) of responses were from LGBTQ+ employees which includes;

- 8,890 People only diverse sexuality (not diverse gender)
- 1,168 People BOTH diverse gender & diverse sexuality
- 140 People only diverse gender (not diverse sexuality)

Of all LGBTQ+ respondents;

- 5,220 of diverse sexuality are 'out'
- 546 with a trans and/or diverse gender experience are 'open'

Overall;

- 4,938 employees responded to the statement, "There are visible out role models within the organisation that have the same, or similar, sexuality as me", and
- 529 employees responded to, "There are visible open role models within the organisation that have the same, or similar, gender diversity as me."

NOTE: The data includes responses from people who identified as having a trans and/or gender diverse experience and a diverse sexuality, and so answered questions about role models related to each aspect of their identity.

We understand that having a role model is not the only predictor of inclusion, but we can see that there are significant differences between those who do and those who do not have a role model visible to them.

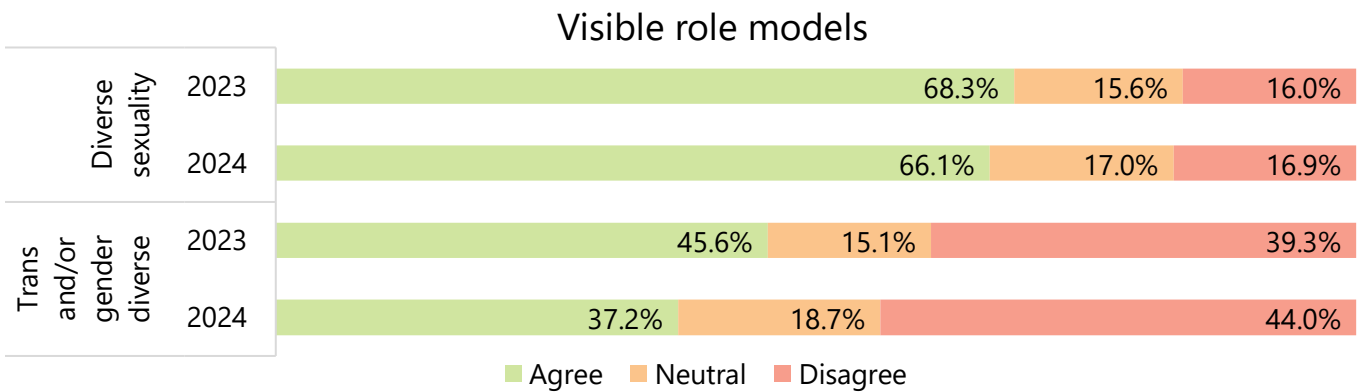
Who has visible role models?

An LGBTQ+ role model -is someone who is part of the LGBTQ+ community, is 'open' and/or 'out' about their identity, and is visible within their organisation. Each individual person may have a different idea of who is a role model for them.

Of the 5,063 unique respondents, 3,321 65.6% identified visible role model/s in their organisation, an increase from 64.3% in 2023. It is important to consider that having visible role models in an organisation relies on a commitment to diversity within the recruitment process and also the willingness and capacity for employees to feel that they can be 'out' and/or 'open' regarding their LGBTQ+ identity.

This year, we have received similar results for those of diverse sexuality to those in 2023, with only 3.3% fewer respondents agreeing to having visible role models.

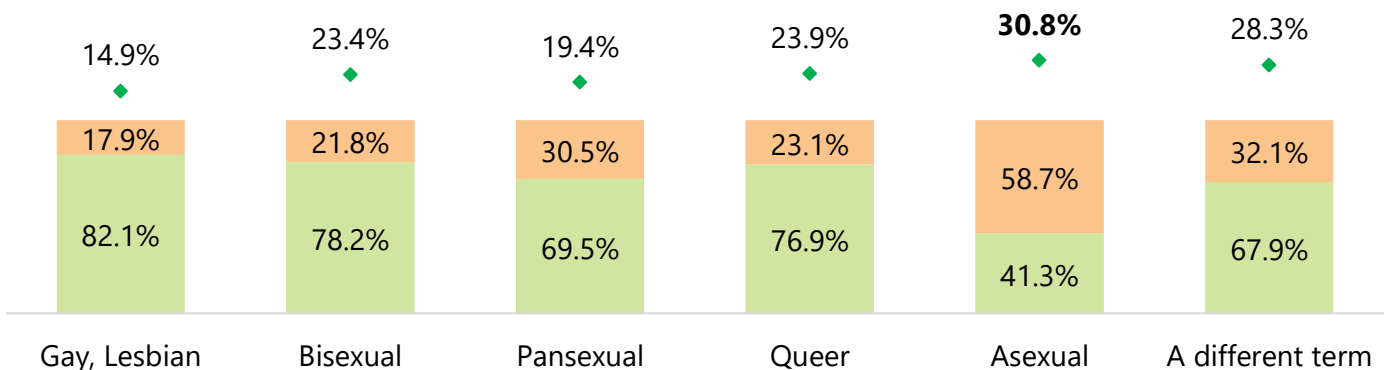
Unfortunately, there has been an 18.3% decline in respondents having visible role models of 'a same or similar' gender diversity this year. Respondents are 43.7% less likely to identify a role model who is trans and/or gender diverse than of diverse sexuality.



An organisation that supports employees to be active allies is almost 60.0% more likely to have visible role models available to their LGBTQ+ staff.

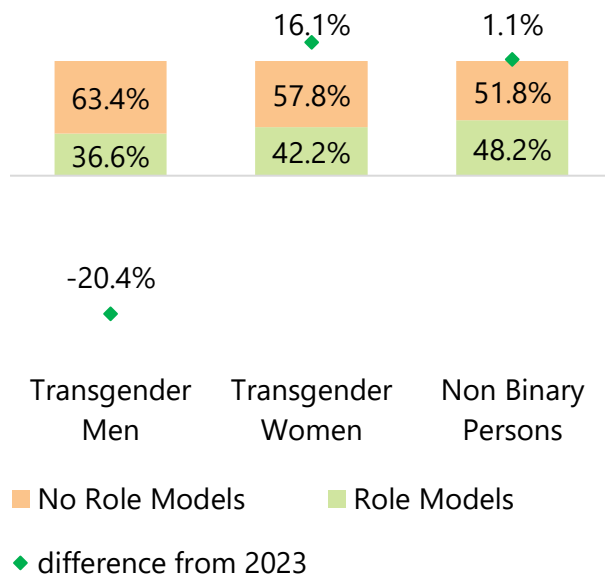
As discussed in practice point, Edition 4, LGBTQ+ respondents are already twice as likely to be active allies than non-LGBTQ+ respondents (LGBTQ+: 66.9% vs non-LGBTQ+: 33.4%). Within this group, non-binary respondents are the most likely to be active allies within the trans and gender diverse population, and gay/lesbian people are the most likely among the respondents of diverse sexuality.

Respondents of diverse sexuality are most likely to agree to have visible role models if they identify as gay/lesbian, bisexual or queer, which is consistent with our allyship data. Those saying they have visible role models has increased since last yearⁱⁱ across all sexuality cohorts by between 14.9% and 30.8%, with those identifying as Asexual having the most significant increase.

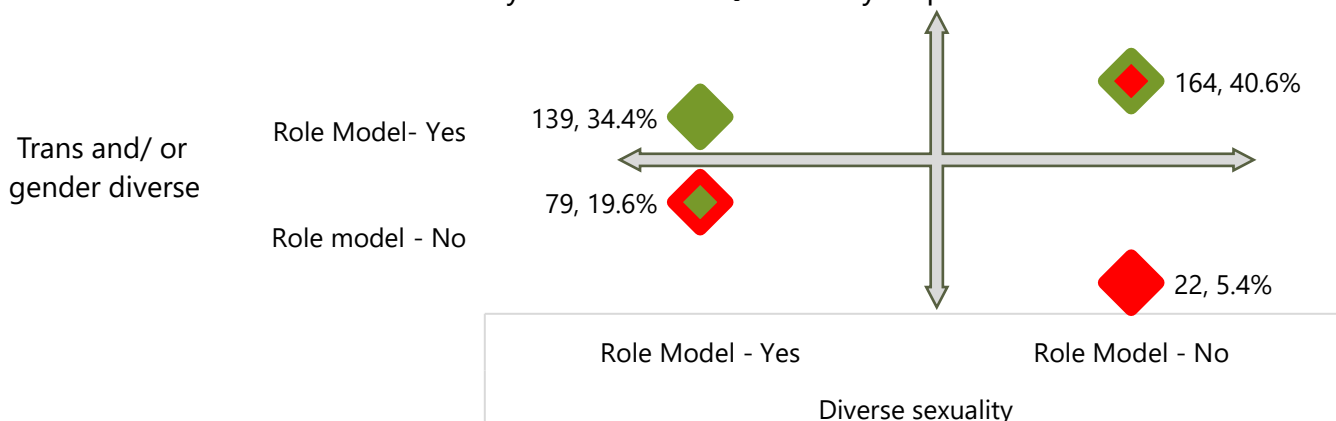


For those with a trans and/or gender diverse experience, respondents who identify as non-binary are the most likely to have visible role models in their organisation, and transgender men are the least likely. This is the only gender identity that is less likely this year than last to agree to having visible role models within their organisation.

Of the 1,153 respondents who are both trans and/or gender diverse and of diverse sexuality, only 404 individuals responded to both questions asked around role models. The most common response was knowing a person or persons who were a role for each aspect of their identity (34.4%, n139), followed by not knowing anyone for either aspect to their identity (23.5%, n95). Of the remaining, 128 responded they know of a role model for only one area of their identity (either sexuality or gender), and 36 respondents were neutral to both questions. In the below matrix, neutral responses are considered no's



Role model visibility for dual LGBTQ+ identity respondents



For the remainder of this practice point, we will discuss the experiences of LGBTQ+ respondents who have role models vs. those who do not based only on responses to the questions within the diverse sexuality and diverse gender sections of the survey. Respondents who were neutral in their agreement are not included.

Health and Wellbeing

As we have seen in previous practice points, the availability of active allies and leadership role models makes a significant impact on the culture of an organisation. It also increases the overall wellbeing of employees, particularly those who are able to see their own diversity reflected in the general employee population.

In line with last year's results, for respondents of diverse sexuality, those with role models are between 20.1% and 51.7% more likely to agree to positive measures of health and wellbeing, including;

- feeling a sense of belonging, 51.7% more likely than those without visible role models and
- feeling mentally well here, at 41.0% more likely than those without visible role models.

The overall statistics for those with role models have remained similar, with the exception of those who feel a sense of belonging decreasing by 7.4% from 92.9% in 2023 to 86.0% this year.

Productivity and engagement with the organisation show the largest increases with a;

- 2.6% increase in productivity (2023: 88.4% vs. 2024: 90.7%) &
- 2.0% increase in engagement (2023: 86.0% vs. 2024: 87.7%)

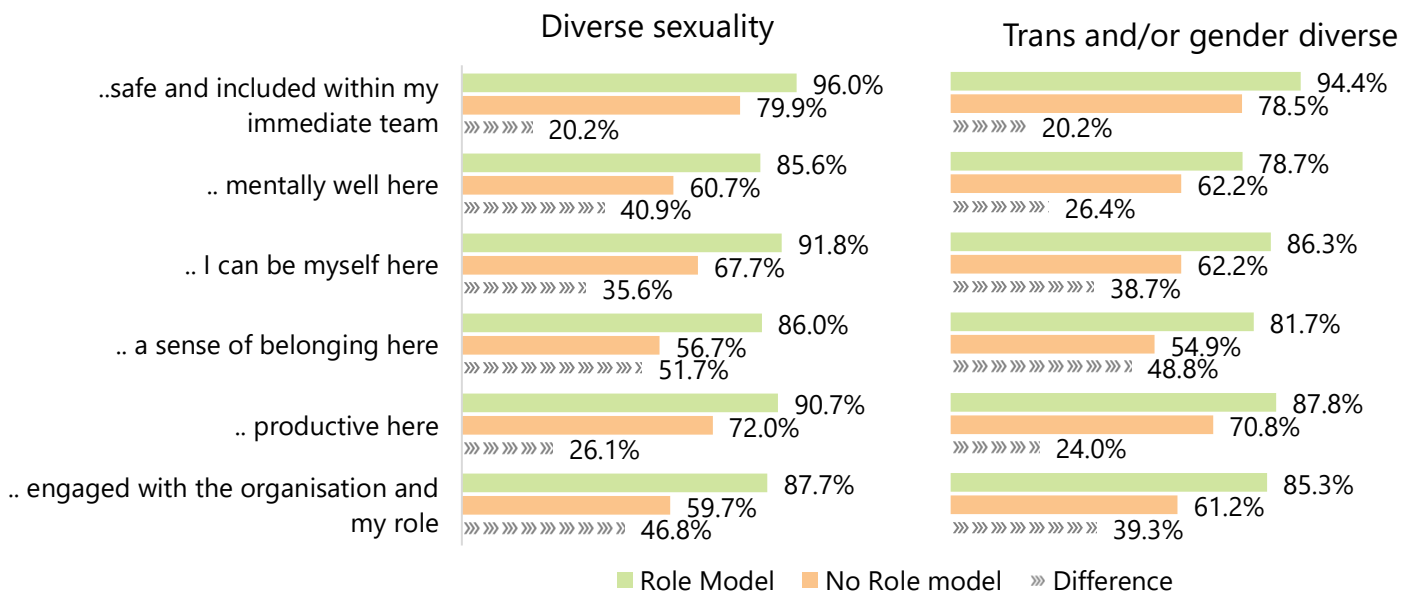
For respondents without role models, other than productivity, all measures have decreased including a;

- 28.4% decrease in the feeling of belonging (2023: 79.2% vs. 2024: 56.7%) &
- 10.5% decrease in feeling mentally well (2023: 67.8% vs. 2024: 60.7%) &
- 8.1% decrease in feeling that they can be themselves at work (2023: 73.7% vs. 2024: 67.7%)

Respondents with a trans and/or gender diverse experience are showing similar discrepancies between those with and without visible role models, with between 20.2% and 48.8% difference between cohorts. Again, feelings of belonging show the most significant difference, followed by a 38.7% difference in feeling that they can be themselves in the workplace.

Compared to last year, those without role models are 24.4% less likely to feel they belong (2023: 72.7%vs. 2024: 54.9%) and 5.3% less likely to feel they can be themselves (2023: 65.7%vs. 2024: 62.2%). All other measures have increased slightly including;

- 6.4% increase in productivity (2023: 66.5% vs. 2024: 70.8%)
- 2.0% increase in engagement (2023: 58.4% vs. 2024: 61.2%)



Organisation inclusion, LGBTQ+ awareness and visibility

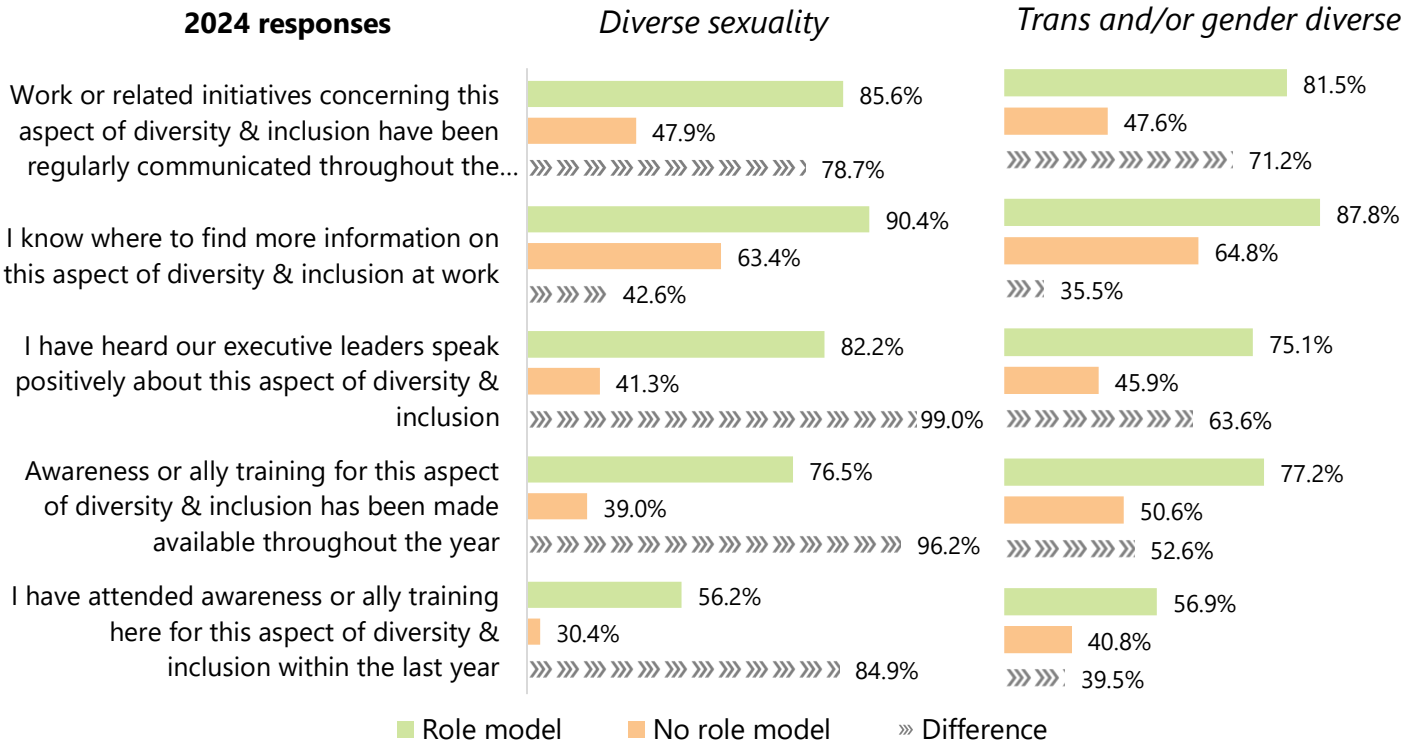
At a high level, respondents are asked to consider the overall culture of their organisation in relation to LGBTQ+ inclusion and its effect. Respondents with visible role models are:

- 13.7% more likely to believe a person of diverse sexuality would be welcome in their team and treated no differently to anyone else (Role models: 96.1% vs. No role model: 85.1%)
- 16.5% more likely to personally support the work their organisation does (Role models: 94.5% vs. No role model: 81.1%)
- 26.0% more likely to believe a person of diverse gender would be welcome in their team and treated no differently to anyone else (Role models: 90.4% vs. No role model: 71.7%)
- 59.4% more likely to believe their organisation is genuinely committed to inclusion (Role models: 91.4% vs. No role model: 57.4%)

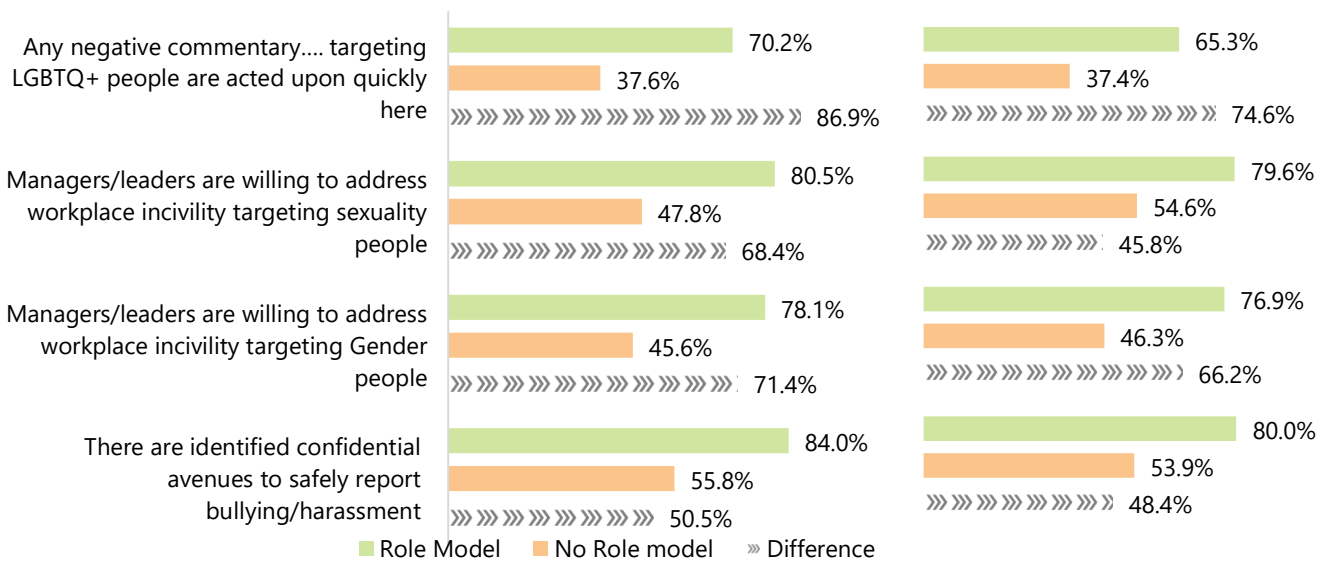
Looking into the visibility of LGBTQ+ inclusivity measures, we see respondents in organisations who agree they see role models are more likely to agree that their organisation is active in this space and is receiving greater recognition from respondents of their actions around visibility, promotion and training. This includes;

- **71.2%** more respondents of diverse gender and **78.8%** more respondents of diverse sexuality agreed that work or related initiatives concerning LGBTQ+ inclusion have been regularly communicated throughout the year.

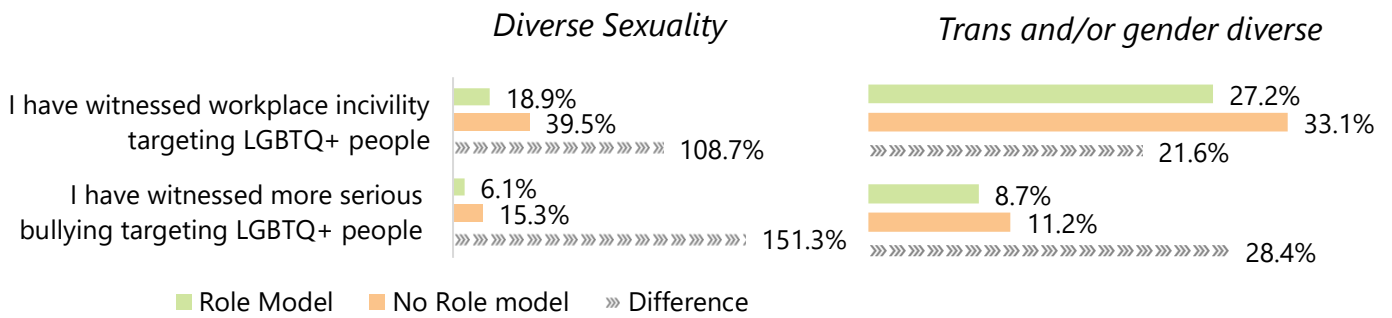
- **63.6%** more respondents of diverse gender and **98.8%** more respondents of diverse sexuality agreed they have heard executive leaders speak positively about LGBTQ+ diversity & inclusion.
- **52.4%** more respondents of diverse genders and **96.0%** more respondents of diverse sexuality agreed that awareness or ally training had been made available within the last year.



The belief that their organisation will address workplace incivility and/or bullying behaviours also increases when role models are known. Respondents are more likely to feel their organisation acts quickly or that their managers/leaders will address these behaviours. Similarly, more people feel that confidential reporting avenues are available to them.



Witnessing negative behaviours is also **more** significant for respondents who have no visible role models, with up to 151.3% more respondents of diverse sexuality and 28.4% more trans and gender diverse respondents witnessing serious bullying behaviours in their workplace.



Respondents of diverse sexuality with role models are;

- 35.0% less likely to advise that no one called out workplace incivility behaviours, and
- 2.8% more likely to have called it out themselves
- 57.0 % less likely to advise that no one called out serious behaviours in the workplace, and
- 16.3% more likely to have called it out themselves

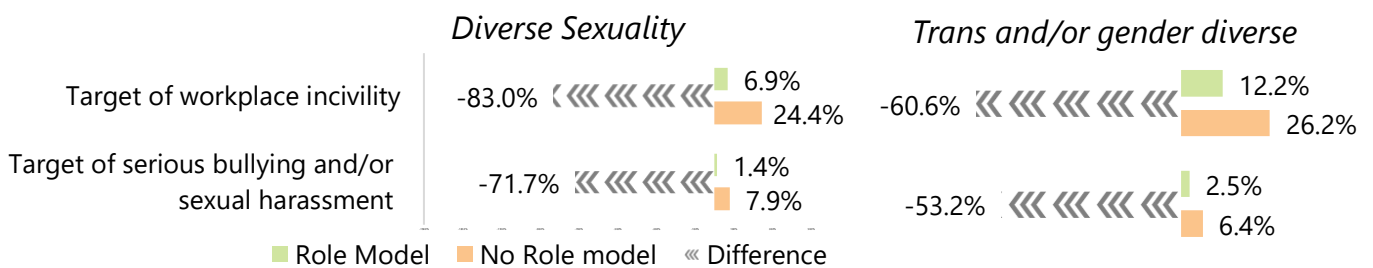
Trans and/or gender diverse respondents with role models are 21.7% less likely to advise that no one called out workplace incivility behaviours, though are

- 19.6% less likely to have called it out themselves
- 49.0 % less likely to advise that no one called out serious behaviours in the workplace, and
- 2% more likely to have called it out themselves

When considering instances of direct bullying and harassment targeting LGBTQ+ respondents, we are seeing significant differences between the cohorts and in comparison to last year.

For behaviours targeting sexuality, for those with role models, workplace incivility is 71.7% less likely (role model: 6.9% vs no role model 24.4%) and serious behaviours 83.0% less likely (role model: 1.4% vs no role model 7.9%). Of note is the increase in the difference from last year, which is 56.1% and 71.3%, respectively.

For behaviours targeting trans and gender diverse respondents, for those with role model's workplace incivility is 53.2% less likely (role model: 12.2% vs no role model 26.2%) and serious behaviours 60.6% less likely (role model: 2.5% vs no role model 6.4%). Again, these differences have significantly increased from last year which were 31.0% and 52.1%, respectively.



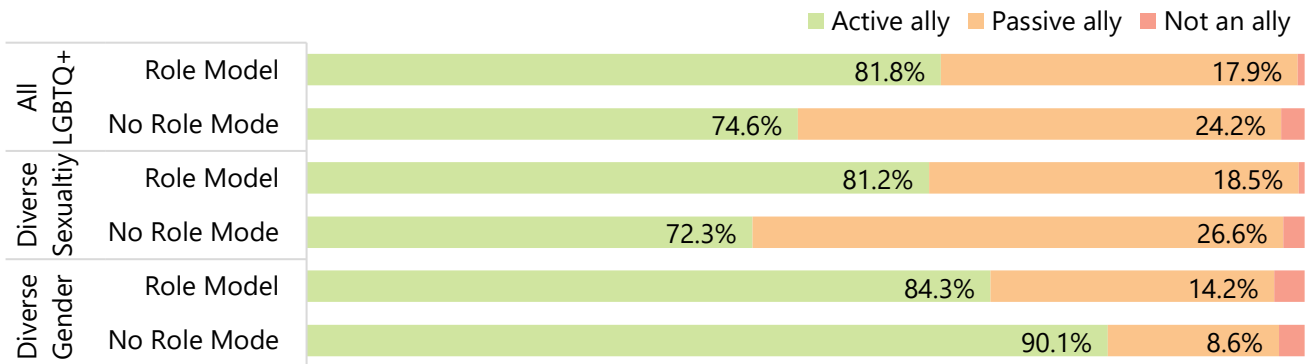
Allyship

Overall, LGBTQ+ respondents with role models are 6.7% more likely also to be active allies in the workplace and, therefore, likely to be role models for other LGBTQ+ employees.

Respondents of diverse sexuality are 12.2% more likely to be an active ally when they have role models (role model: 81.2% vs. no role model: 72.3%). However, trans and gender diverse respondents with **no visible role models** are 7.0% **more** likely to be an active ally (role model: 84.3% vs. no role model: 90.1%).

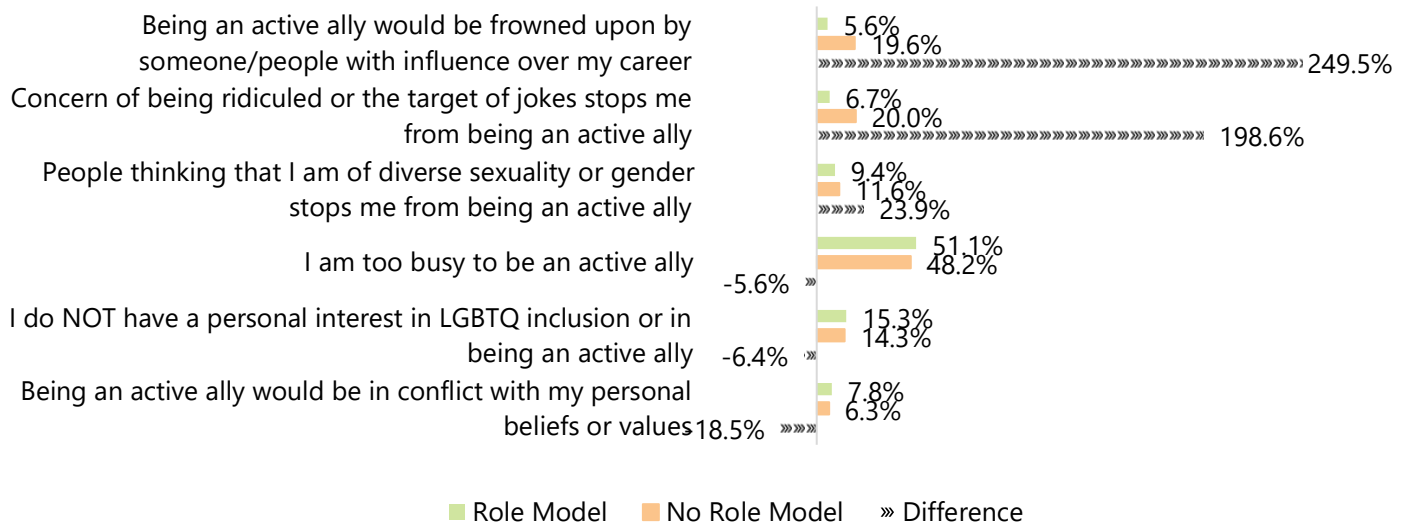
Our understanding of this is for people with trans and gender diverse experiences who are seen, heard and recognised for who they are, are more likely, than people of diverse sexuality, to decide to be the visible role model they wanted to see that was not available through their own journey.

Remembering that all these respondents are 'out' or 'open' in their organisation, 20.0% of respondents who



are not active allies and do not have visible role models are concerned they would be ridiculed or be the target of jokes, and 19.6% feel that it would be frowned upon by someone with influence over their career. These rates are 198.6% and 249.5% higher than those of respondents with visible role models. While being

Reasons why not an Active ally

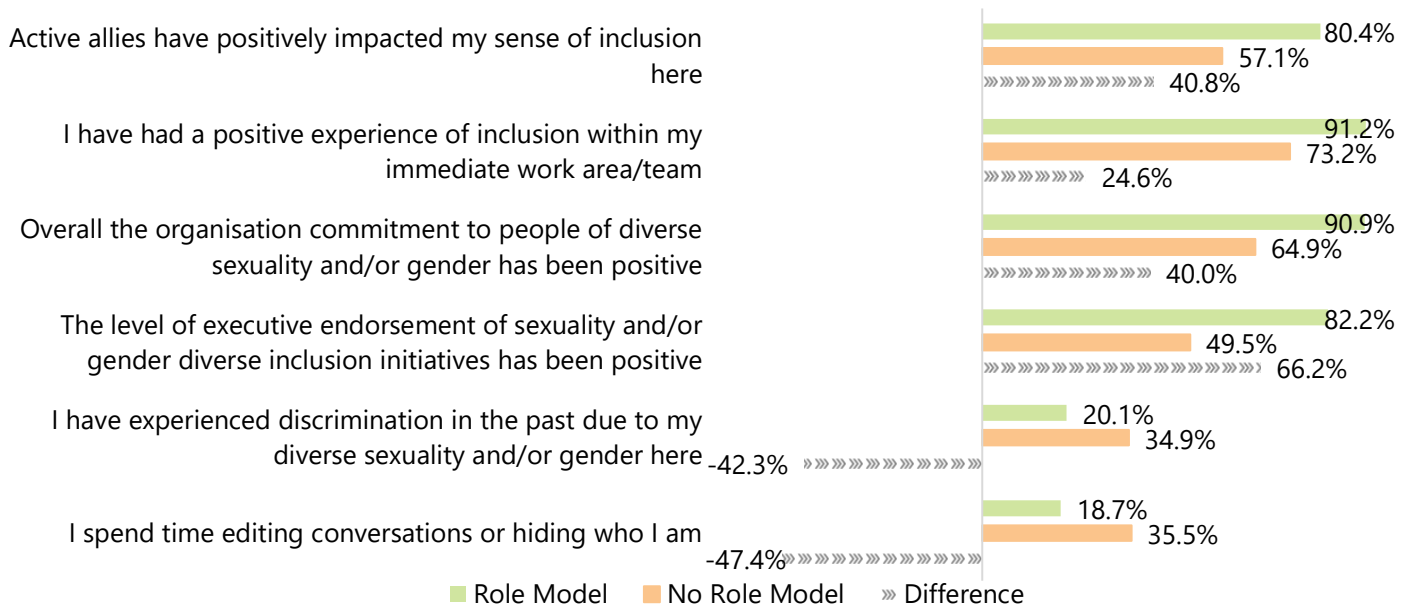


too busy is still the highest reason, it also shows the least difference between cohorts.

Experiences of organisation inclusion

The overall experiences for LGBTQ+ respondents with role models show they are more likely to have had positive impacts and experiences and less likely to have experienced discrimination or spend time editing conversations within the workplace.

The most significant difference relates to positive executive endorsement, which is agreed to be 66.2% more among those with role models. The correlation between a positive LGBTQ+ inclusion culture and support within the leadership and executive team cannot be underestimated.



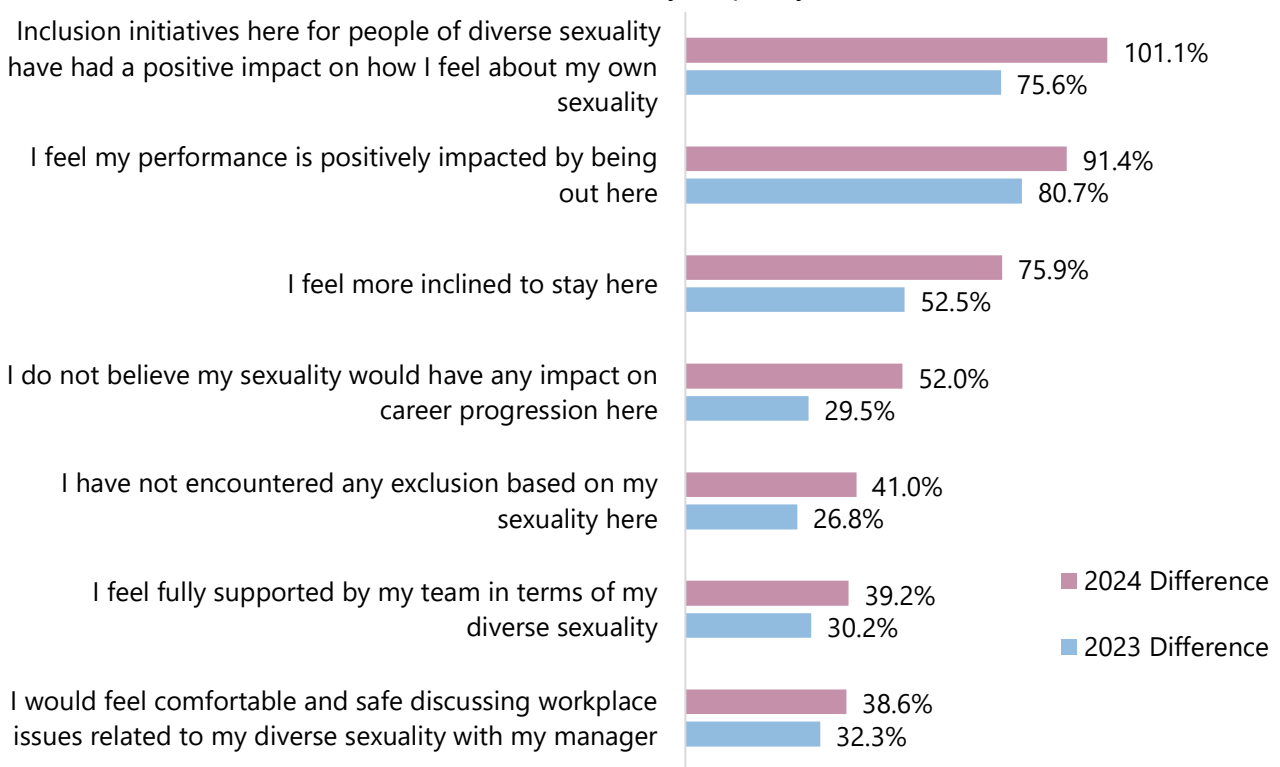
Role model impact on employees of diverse sexuality

Individual workplace experiences for those 'out' or 'open' also show a more positive lean for those with role models. The difference in the impact has increased across all statements.

Most significantly, those with role models are more likely to;

- feel inclusion initiatives here for people of diverse sexuality have had a positive impact on how they feel about their own sexuality (role model: 81.9% vs no role model 40.7%)
- feel their performance is positively impacted by being out (role model: 68.7% vs no role model: 35.9%)
- feel more inclined to stay at their organisation (role model: 83.2% vs no role model 47.3%)

Diverse Sexuality disparity



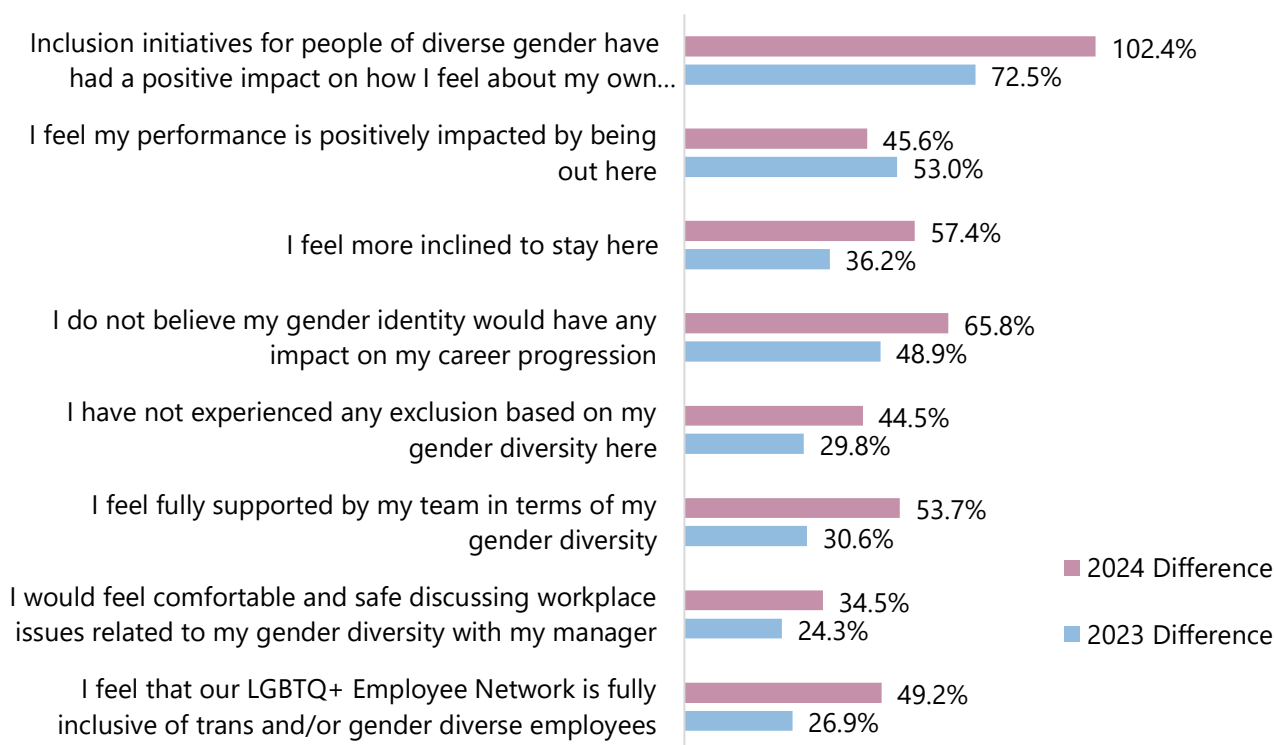
Role model impact on trans and gender diverse employees

Data relating to employees with a trans and/or gender diverse experience, show between 34.5% and 102.4% difference when comparing those with and without role models. Those without are agreeing less across all items than last year.

Most significantly, those with role models are more likely to:

- feel inclusion initiatives for people of diverse gender have had a positive impact on how they feel about my own gender diversity (role model: 83.3% vs no role model: 41.1%)
- feel that their gender identity would not have any impact on their career progression (role model: 74.0% vs no role model: 44.6%)
- feel more inclined to stay at their organisation (role model: 83.1% vs no role model: 52.8%)

Trans and gender diverse disparity



For trans and gender diverse individuals we hear that the use of the correct name and pronouns can be euphoric and the ultimate sign of acceptance within their organisations and team. With the survey, we ask if the respondents feel that people make an effort to use their pronouns correctly and if they feel they have been deliberately misgendered within the last year.

Respondents with visible role models are:

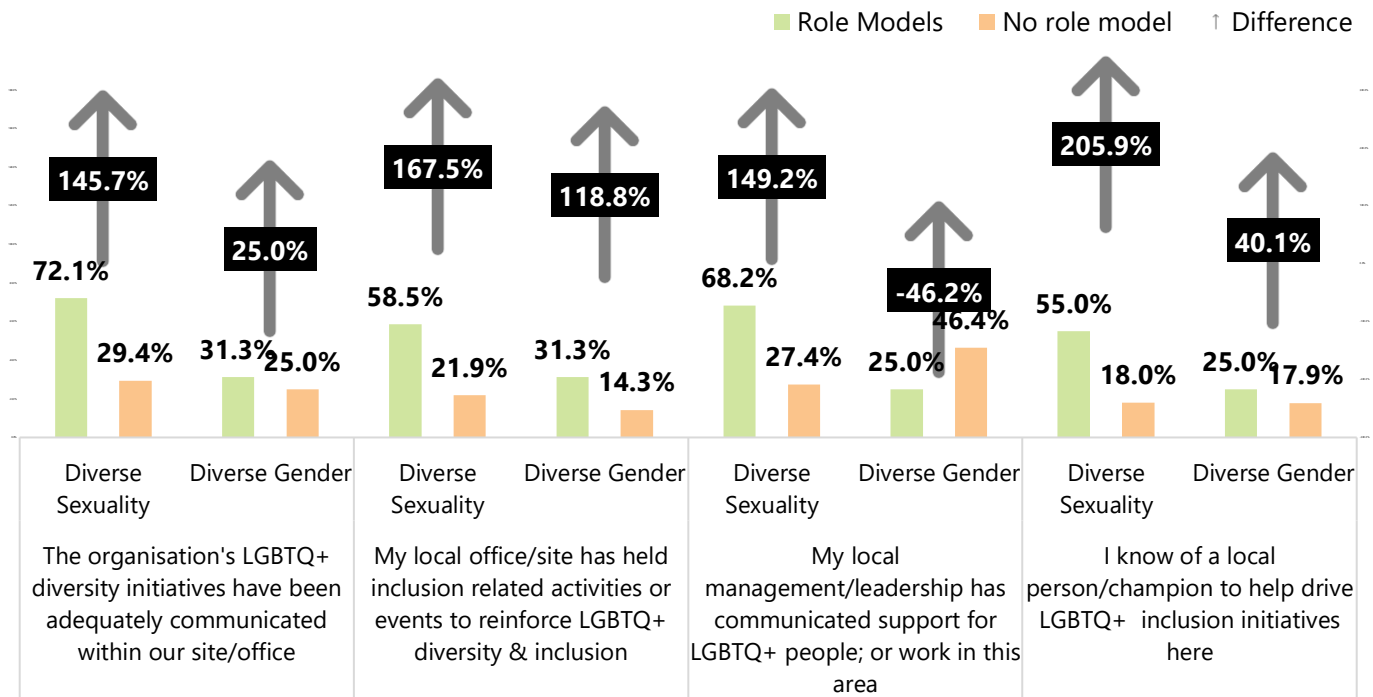
- 30.4% **more** likely to feel that people make an effort (role model: 75.9% vs no role model: 58.2%)
- 49.1% **less** likely to feel they have been deliberately misgendered in the last year (role model: 14.9% vs no role model: 29.2%)

93.3% of respondents with visible role models would recommend their organisation to other LGBTQ+ people, a 39.7% difference (no role model: 66.8%).

In relation to undertaking the affirmation process within their current organisation, there is only a 4.7% difference (role model: 79.0% vs no role model: 75.4%). Still, there is a 52.3% difference in being happy with the process undertaken (role model: 77.9% vs no role model: 51.2%).

Role model impact on regional employees

Role models being available for employees sitting outside of capital city locations show a significant impact on LGBTQ+ employees. In most cases, those with role models agree to statements at more than double the rate of those who are not able to identify role models. Trans and gender diverse respondents do not see the same levels of communication overall, but those with visible role models are still witnessing greater levels of organisation commitment to LGBTQ+ activities.



Actions

1. If you have other employee-led networks, consider cross-network events to allow greater inclusion and visibility of LGBTQ+ role models across the organisation.
2. If you are in a small organisation or know you do not have a role model for a diversity group, consider how you can provide this visibility through the use of external resources.
3. Partnership with key external stakeholders can support your organisation to increase diversity within the organisation and also increase opportunities for role model visibility
4. Diversity of representation is key – you can't be what you can't see. This includes talent development and ensuring all employees have equitable opportunities for leadership and management roles.
5. In non-metropolitan areas, consider support and having a visible presence at local events to increase opportunities for visibility and to support other organisations and groups in the community.
6. Participate in the AWEI Index process, particularly the annual survey, in order to evaluate your organisation's performance in this area
7. Determine who the under-represented LGBTQ+ populations within your organisation are, and identify some of the unique challenges faced by that group in order to develop appropriate plans for involvement

ⁱ NOTE: we are aware that same or similar is a subjective term and may be interpreted in different ways by respondents. For some it will mean someone who identifies 'exactly' the same as them, for other it may be broader and relate to any another person with a diverse sexuality or gender.

ⁱⁱ See 2023 Practice point for data - http://www.pid-awei.com.au/content/uploads/2023/12/2023-AWEI-Employee-Survey-Practice-Points_Edition-7_Importance-of-Visible-role-models.pdf