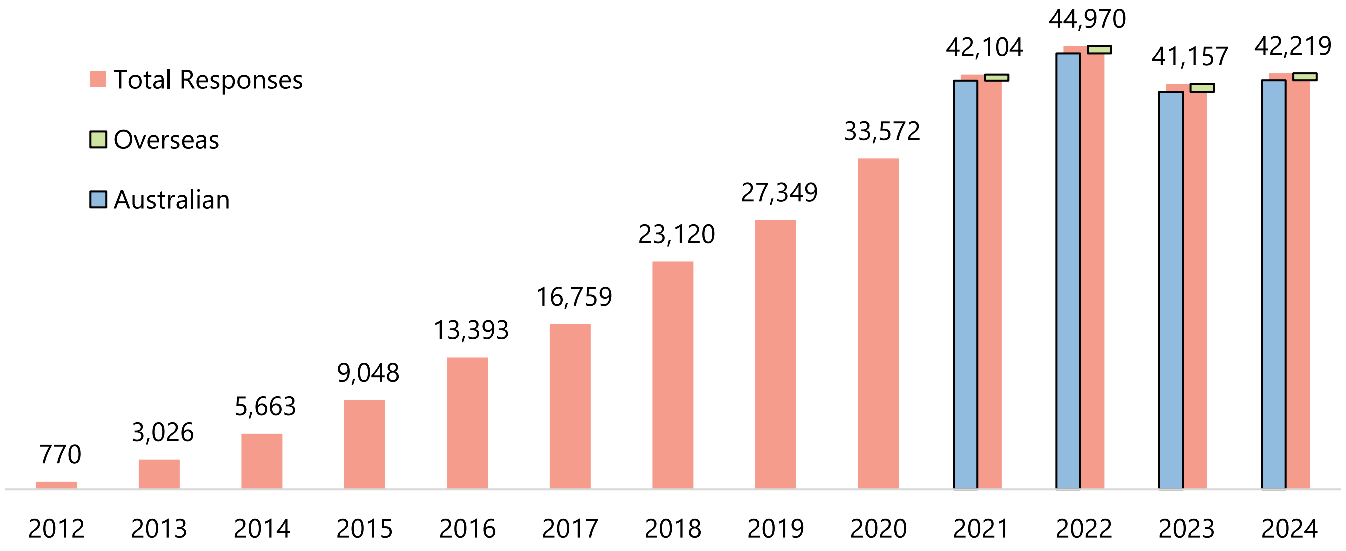
THE 2024 AWEI EMPLOYEE SURVEY EDITION 1: KEY INSIGHTS

The annual Australian Workplace Equality Index Employee Survey has been running for the past 13 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 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.

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



In this Practice Point, we will be focusing on the 2024 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.

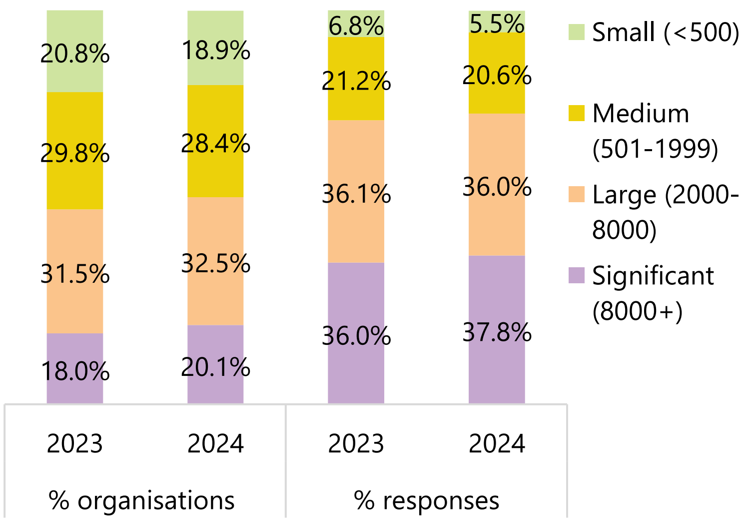
[1] Results reflect the attitudes and knowledge of respondents from organisations working in inclusive practices.

Demographics

Sector & Industry

Participation is spread across all organisation sizes. This year there has been an 11.8% increase in significant organisation participation. As expected, the spread of responses favours large and significant organisations with a 5.0% increase in individual participation from employees in Significant organisations. This year also saw a 9 .0% reduction in small organisation participation, and an 18.5% reduction in individual participation from small organisations.

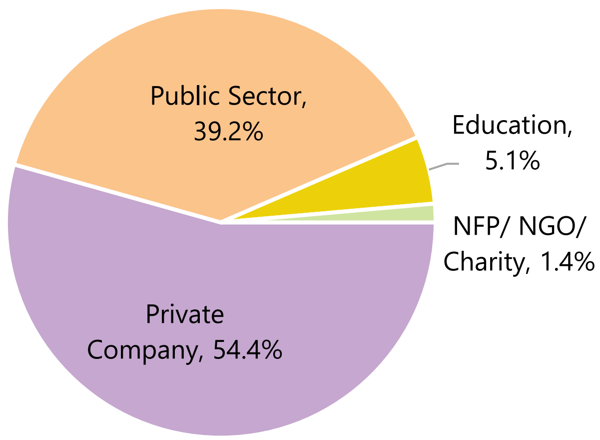
Participation by organisation size



Little change is noted regarding the participation spread by sector, with 65.1% of organisations identify as Private Companies 23.7% in the Public Sector (Federal, State or Local government), Higher Education providers making up 7.1% and the final 4.1% from Non-Profit / Non-government/ Charity organisations[2].

Like the past 2 years, over half of all respondents work in the Private Sector (2024: 54.4%, 2023: 55.6%). 2024 has had a 3.1% increase of responses from the Public sector (2024: 39.2%, 2023: 38.0%), though most significantly this has been within the Local Government sector which saw an 85.9% increase in participation (2024:2.6% v, 2023: 1.4%). NFP/NGO/Charity respondents have also increased by 99.0% from 0.7% to 1.4% this year.

% responses by organisation sector



In 2024, Organisations were asked to advise their Primary Industry based on the by using the ANZSIC standard list[3] This means that analysis of past year participation is not possible, though going forward we will have a clearer picture of the attitudes within various industries.

Detailed analysis will be provided on Sector and Industry data in future publications.

[2] 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.

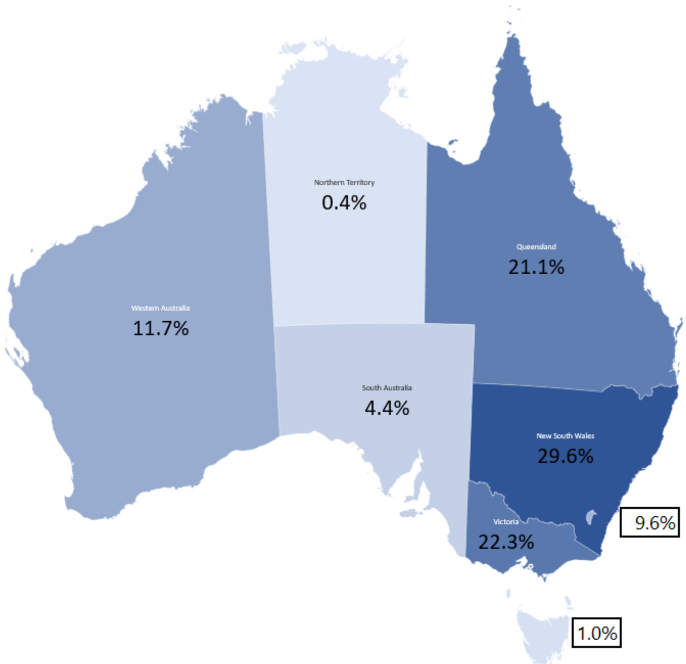
[3] [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), 2006 (Revision 2.0) | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)]

Location

All states and territories are represented by both organisations and respondents in 2024. Over the past three years we have seen a rise of 37.8% in respondents from Queensland, and 7.9% for Tasmania, with a 45.2% decrease in respondents from The Northern Territory.

The proportion of respondents aligns to the make-up of Australia's population in most instances[4]. The exceptions to this are:

- ACT - can be attributed to the large representation of Federal Government departments with Canberra-based employees, participating in the survey.
- TAS & NT – which is due to the small population proportion of Australia.



State	% of the national population (ABS 2021)	% of respondents	% difference
ACT	1.7%	9.6%	82.5%
NSW	31.8%	29.6%	-7.6%
NT	1.0%	0.4%	-169.5%
QLD	20.3%	21.1%	4.1%
SA	6.9%	4.4%	-58.1%
TAS	2.1%	1.0%	-108.9%
VIC	25.9%	22.3%	-16.0%
WA	10.4%	11.7%	10.8%

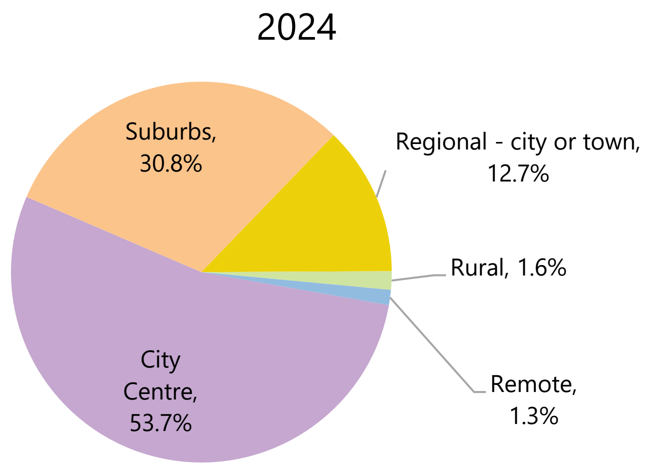
The location of the workplace within the state or territory has been divided to identify where respondents are working, Regional, Rural, or Remote location, or in Capital city, city centre or suburbs area.

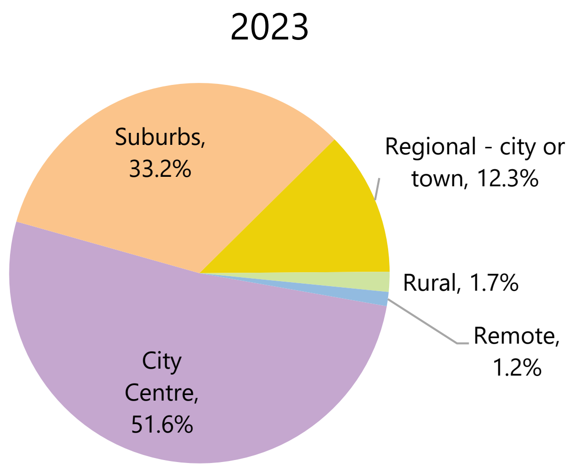
Of the 84.4% of people from metropolitan areas, there has been a 7.3% reduction of respondents in City Suburb locations from 33.2 to 30.8%. Within the non-capital city areas of the country there has been a 2.1% increase in respondents overall (3.5% for regional city or towns, and 3.2% for remote areas.

We note there has been an 8.7% reduction in respondents from rural areas.

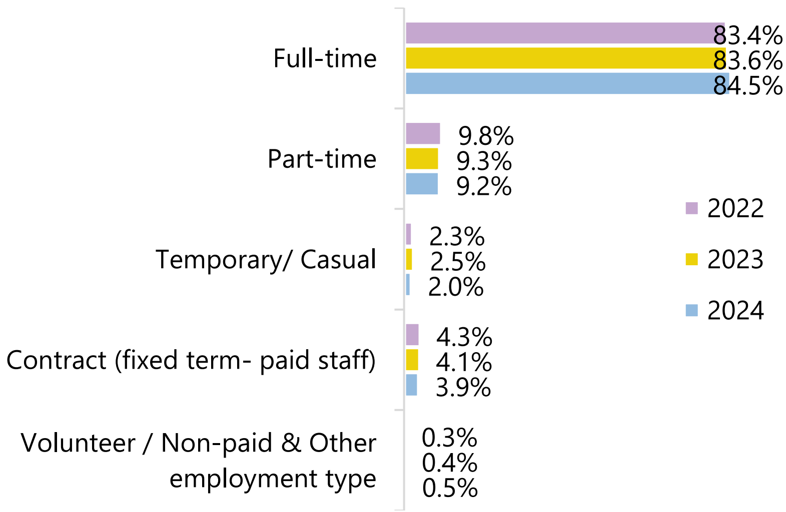
[4] National, state and territory population, December 2022 | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)

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





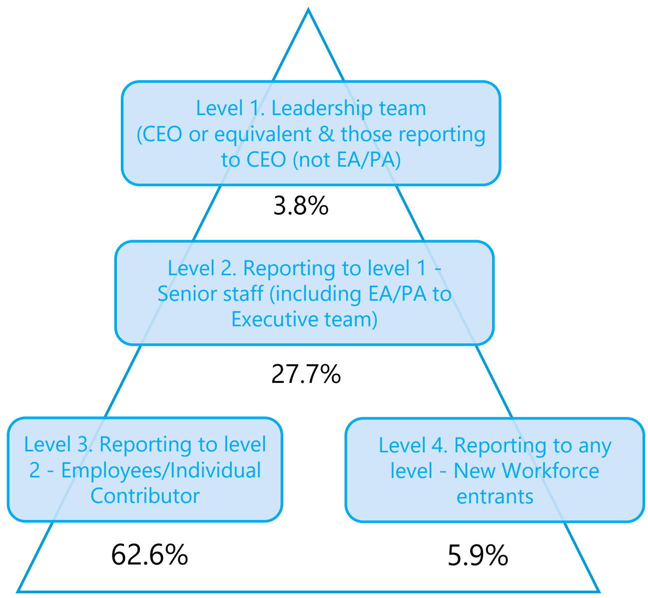
Roles within the organisation



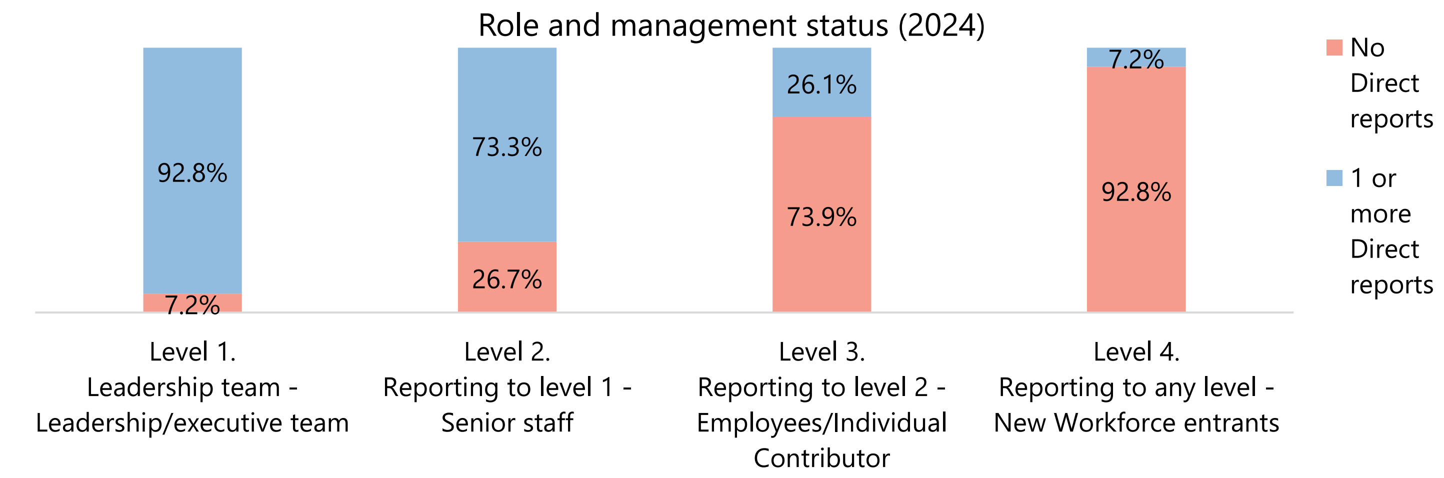
Overall, we are seeing a slight upward trend in full time employee respondents, and a decline in all other employment types. 84.5% are full time, 9.2% part-time employees. People on fixed-term contracts who responded to the survey have reduced by 6.4% to 3.9%. This may indicate more full-time employees overall, though historically we have received comments that being in non-full-time employment reduces the available time to participate in inclusion activities which may also relate to capacity to participate in the AWEI Employee survey.

We see a reduction of 21.8% in responses from people who have been with their organisation less than 1 year, which has gone from 19.2% in 2022 to 15.9% in 2024 and an increase of 45.0% within the 1-to-3-year group. Those who have been in their organisation over 20 years has increased 9.4% since last year. round 45% of respondents have worked with their organisation between 4-20 years.

Compared to 2023, 3.7% more respondents are level 3 employees (2024: 62.6% vs 2023: 60.3%), and 1.7% more are level 1 employees. Level 2 and level 4 employees have reduced by 6.4% and 6.5% respectively.



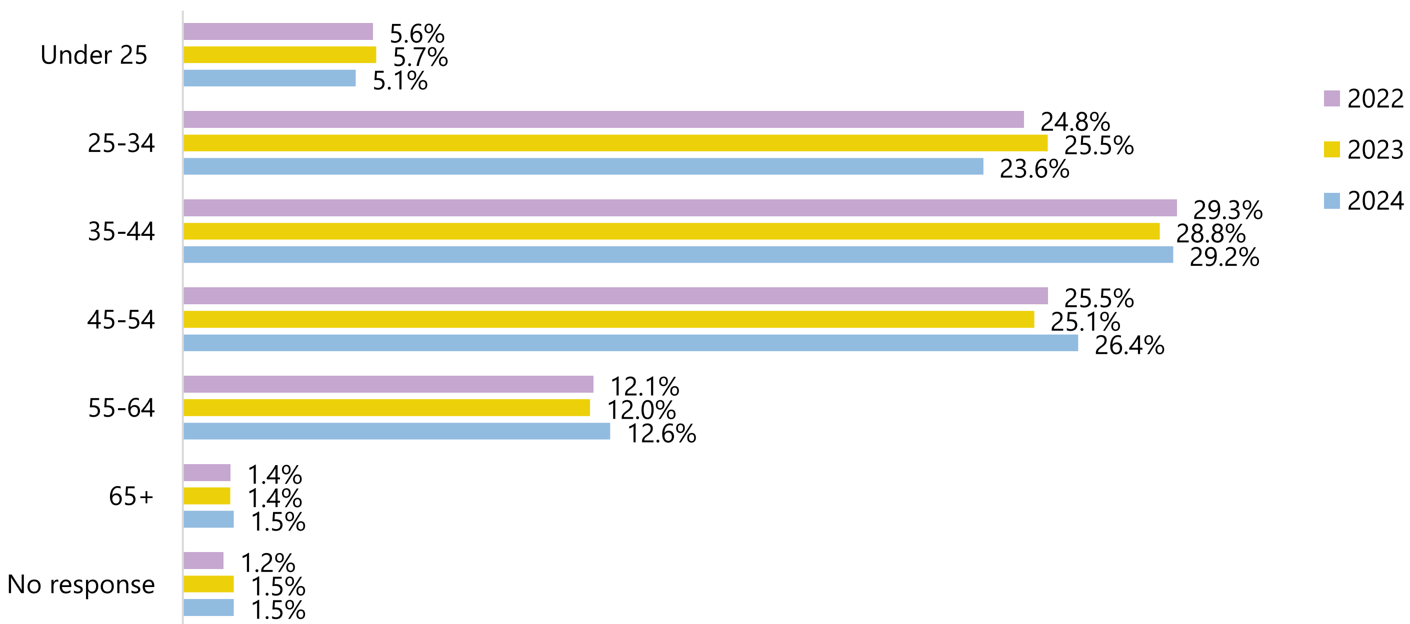
Within these we also record respondents who manage other staff, a cohort that has high impact on the experiences of people in their teams, and on the culture of the organisation.



Personal demographics

Age

Over the past three years we have witnessed a 9.4% decline in respondents under 25, and a 7.1% increase in respondents in the over 65+ category.



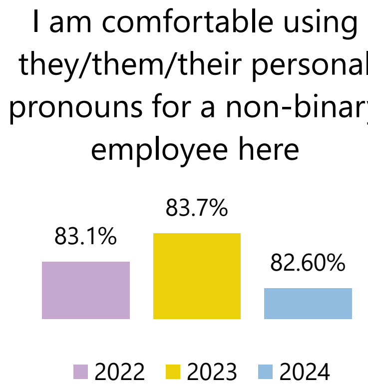
We know that age is a key influencer in attitudes towards LGBTQ+ inclusion, and we will see the impacts of this change in age demographics to the older generations further on.

Pronouns

95.7% of respondents exclusively use gendered pronouns (he/him or she/her). This year we have seen an increase of 6.2% of respondents exclusively using gender-neutral (they/them) pronouns. And 18.5% increase in using rolling pronouns with 2.5% of respondents selecting these options (he/they and she/they). 0.8% identified using pronouns other than he, she, or they. Overall, 4.3% of respondents use personal pronouns other than just she or he exclusively, compared to 3.7% in 2023.

When working with colleagues 82.6% of respondents are comfortable using gender-neutral pronouns.

Increasing 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.



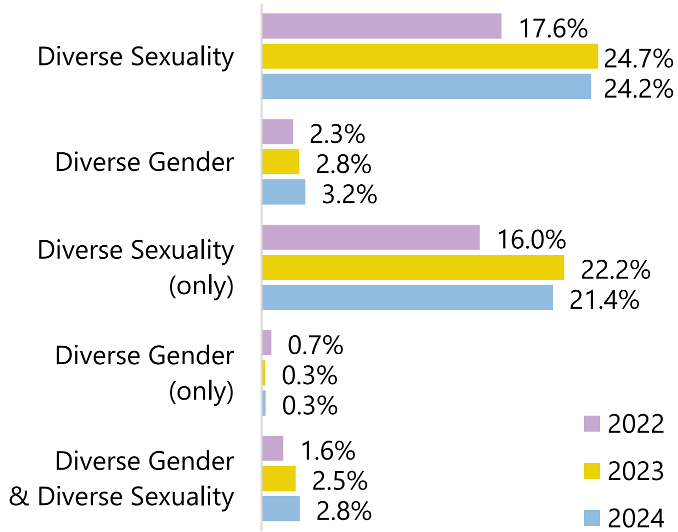
LGBTQ+ Respondents

In 2023, we implemented the standards set out by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)[i] regarding the collection and dissemination of data relating to sex, gender, and sexual orientation.

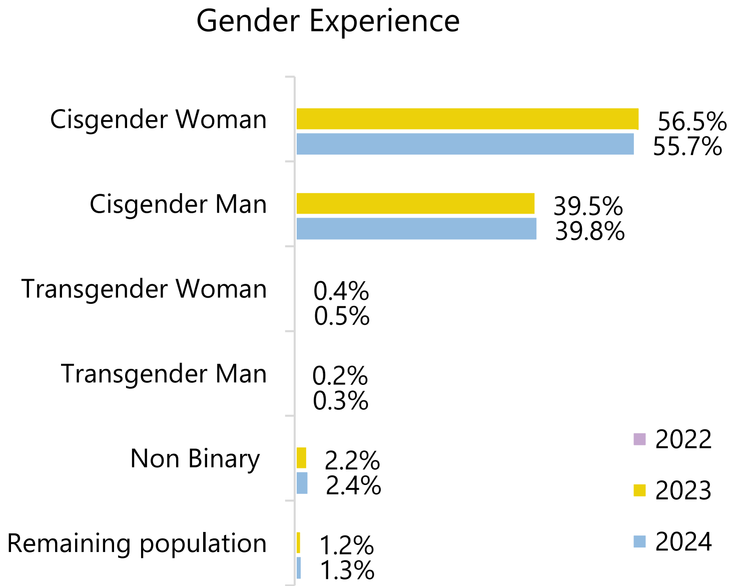
25.7% of respondents identify as being of diverse sexuality, diverse gender/trans experience or both (n10,189), with:

- 2.8% (n1,168) of respondents of both diverse sexuality and diverse gender/trans experience,
- 21.4% of respondents of only diverse sexuality (8,890),
- 0.3% of respondents of only diverse gender (n140).

Compared to last year, we see a 13.6% increase in respondents of diverse gender, and a 41.7% increase since 2022.



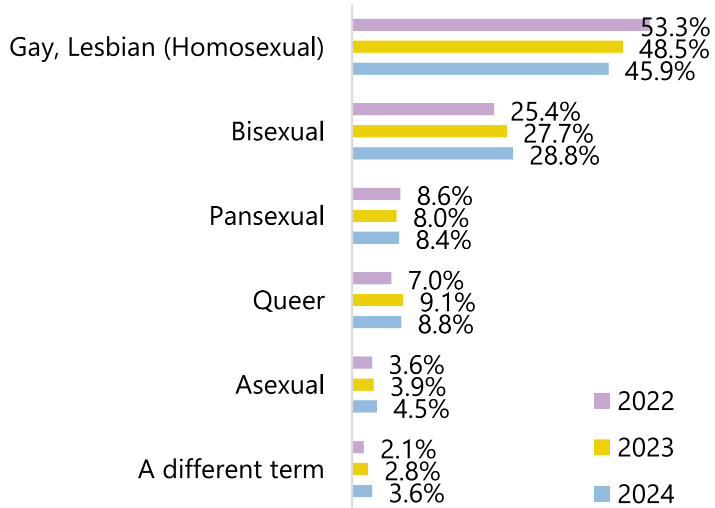
Gender Identity



In 2024, 96.3% of respondents identified with binary identities (Man/Male or Woman/Female) (2023: 96.7%), and 2.5% with non-binary identities ('non-binary' or 'a gender identity not listed') (2023: 2.2%). Over the past three years we have seen a 72.9% increase in respondents identifying as a non-binary identity.

The gender experience of respondents is, in the most part, cisgender (95.5%). Of the remaining people, 3.2% of respondents advised having a gender identity which does not align with their sex recorded at birth (transgender). 1.3% of respondents did not provide enough information to determine their gender experience.

Sexual orientation



People of diverse sexuality make up 24.2% of all respondents (n10,058). This year again, we continue to observe an increase in respondents of diverse sexuality identifying with orientations other than gay/lesbian. In 2024, 54.9% of respondents of respondents of diverse sexuality identified other than gay/lesbian compared to 51.5% in 2023, a 15.7% increase since 2022.

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 that may affect workplace experiences or attitudes towards inclusion initiatives.

59.2% of all respondents said they have at least one attribute they feel contributes to their experiences (regardless of their LGBTQ+ status).

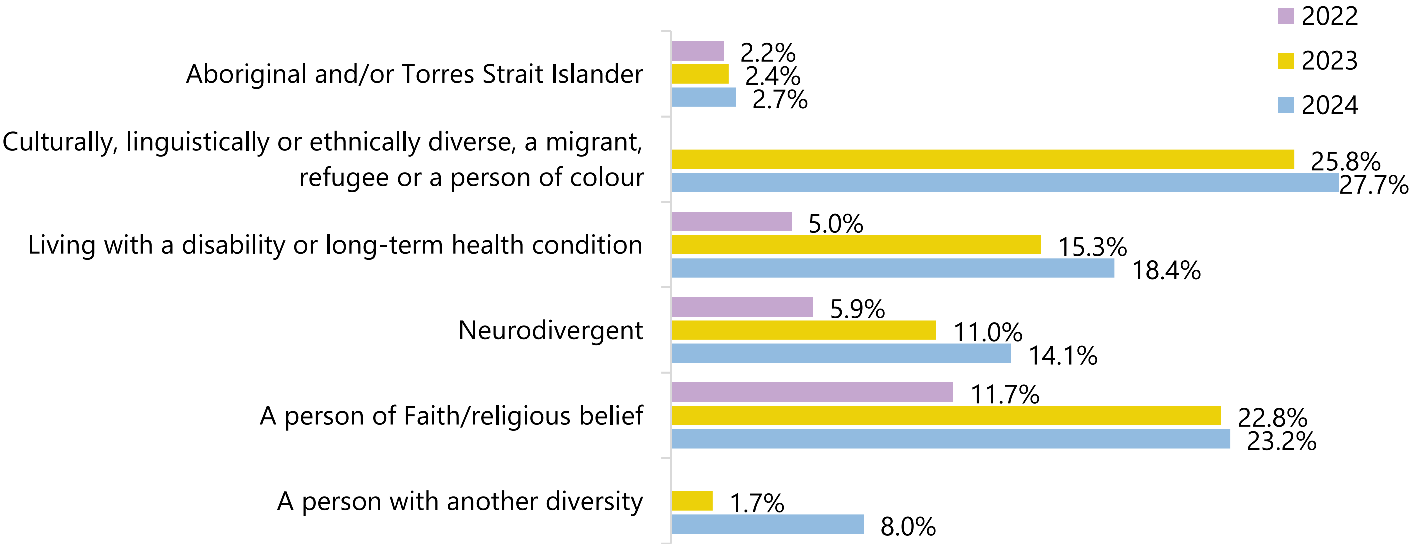
When we look at the intersection of LGBTQ+ respondents and other background or identity attributes, 66.3% of all LGBTQ+ respondents have identified one or more other diversity attribute, compared to 57.6% of respondents who are not LGBTQ+ and 64.3% of respondents where LGBTQ+ status is unknown.

This year, 2.7% identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both, a 25.1% increase in the past 3 years[5].

[5] In 2024 this question was asked separately to all other diversity questions in line with best practice to enable respondents to identify as one, both, or neither background. More detailed analysis will be able to be provided in future years.

Representation of other diversity elements have all increased with the most significant increases in those who have identified another part of their background, identity or life stage that could be a barrier to their career or being fully included at work increasing by 363.6% from 2023.

Since 2022, those responding who identify with a disability or long-term health condition has increased by 270.3%, neurodivergent respondents by 137.2% and those of faith/belief by 98.6%.



Further analysis on the impact of the intersectionality of LGBTQ+ respondents with other diversities will be a feature of a future Practice Point.

General Views

Personal beliefs on inclusion

Most beliefs on organisational inclusion have not significantly differed in the past three years. Respondents still maintain the belief that it is important that employees be active in this area of diversity and inclusion (2024: 85.7%, 2023: 88.6%, 2022: 84.9%), and the belief that their organisation is genuinely committed to LGBTQ+ Inclusion has stayed steady at 84.3% this year (2023: 85.2%), though there has been a further slight (2.1% over three years) decrease in the percentage of respondents who feel they understand why their organisation puts effort into this aspect of diversity and inclusion, down to 90.5%, the same rate we saw in 2020.

7.1% fewer respondents believe there are more than two genders (male/female), which is concerning after we had seen this rate steadily rise for the previous three years.(2024: 57.1%, 2023 62.6%, 2022: 58.9%, 2021: 54.6%).

Personal support for the work the organisation does for LGBTQ+ employee inclusion had dropped a further 2.0% this year, to 82.7% from 84.4% in 2023 and 86.7% in 2022.

There has been a further decline in all other questions around organisational inclusion, with a three-year reduction of:

- 5.7% a person of diverse gender would be welcomed (2024: 88.1%, 2023: 88.7%, 2022: 93.4%)
- 5.0% believing their organisation needs to put more effort into this aspect of inclusion (2024: 41.6%, 2023: 45.7%, 2022: 43.8%).

- 4.9% believing if a member of their team were to begin openly identifying as a gender which is different from their sex recorded at birth they would be fully supported by the team (2024: 85.4%, 2023: 86.8%, 2022: 89.7%)
- 4.4% believing they understand some of the unique challenges that people of diverse sexuality and/gender face in the workplace (2024: 81.6%, 2023: 82.7%, 2022: 85.3%)
- 2.4% believing a person of diverse sexuality would be welcome in their team with this agreement (2024: 92.9%, 2023: 93.3%, 2022: 95.1%).

Further analysis of these shifts has been undertaken, by comparing responses cross referenced with the age of the respondents. We have seen that the decline in agreement can be linked to the increase in older respondents.

Awareness & Ally Training

80.9% of respondents agree that there has been visibility and promotion of an internal employee network, and most respondents also feel they know where to find more information about this inclusion activity in the workplace, slightly higher than last year (2024: 80.9%, 2023: 79.2%, 2022: 79.8%).

67.7% of respondents have advised that training around LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusion has been made available to them in the past year, and 48.3 % attended training an increase of 19.2% over three years (2023: 47.4%, 2022: 40.5%).

A further small decline in respondents feeling that training should be mandatory for anyone who manages or supervises other people, has resulted in a 4.1% drop over three years from 80.9% in 2022 to 77.6% this year.

Working with others

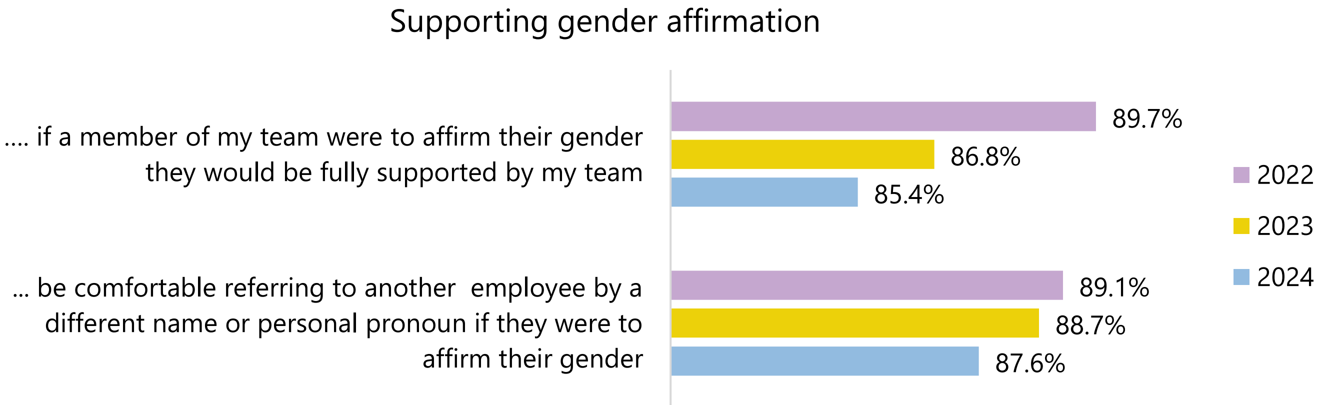
Being comfortable working with people of diverse gender or sexuality is high, with over 92.1% of respondents agreeing they would be comfortable about colleagues talking about their same-gender or gender diverse partner, however, this has reduced slightly for the second year running.

94.5% of respondents are comfortable with colleagues bringing their same-gender or gender diverse partner to work events.

Regarding having 'all-gender' or 'gender-neutral' toilets on our floor/area (assume male/female toilets are still available), this year 12.7% of respondents disagreed with this statement, which continues the trend of disagreement increasing over the past three years (2023: 11.3%, 2022: 10.5%).

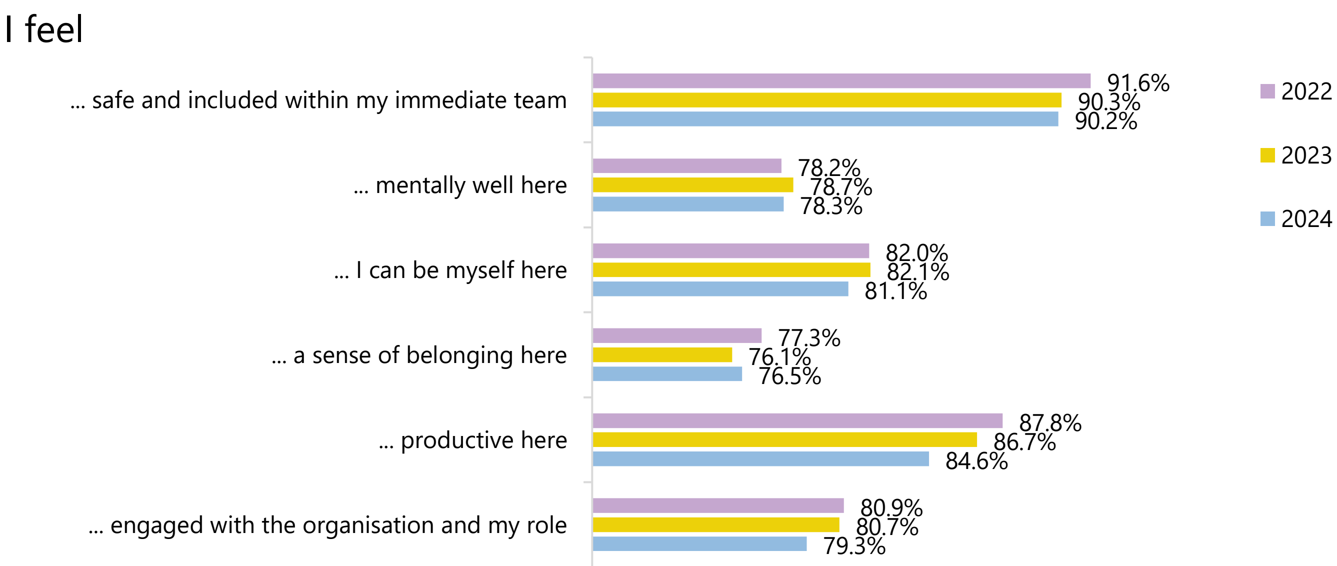
The belief that if a member of their team were to affirm their gender they would be fully supported by the team, has further decreased to from 89.1% to 87.6% since 2022.

Comfort levels of using a new name or pronoun for a colleague who has affirmed their gender has declined further to from 83.1% to 82.6% since 2022.



Health and Wellbeing

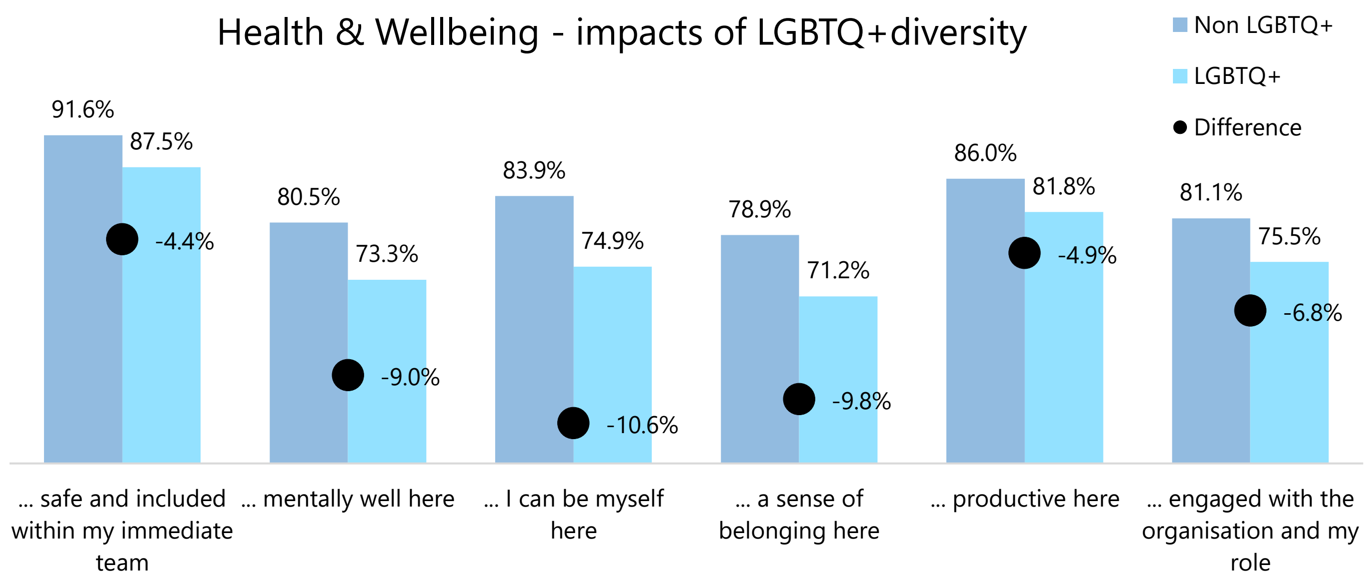
One of the most important measures is employees' feelings of health and wellbeing within their organisation. Agreement rates have remained relatively high over the past three years, though we see a steady decline across all indicators with the exception of "I feel mentally well here". The most significant being a 3.6% reduction in respondents feeling productive within their organisation.



While these rates are high, in 2024, there is still discrepancy around feelings of health and wellbeing in the workplace between those who are LGBTQ+ and those who are not.

LGBTQ+ respondents are:

- 10.6% less likely to feel they can be themselves at work,
- 9.8% less likely to feel they belong,
- 9.0% less likely to feel mentally well.



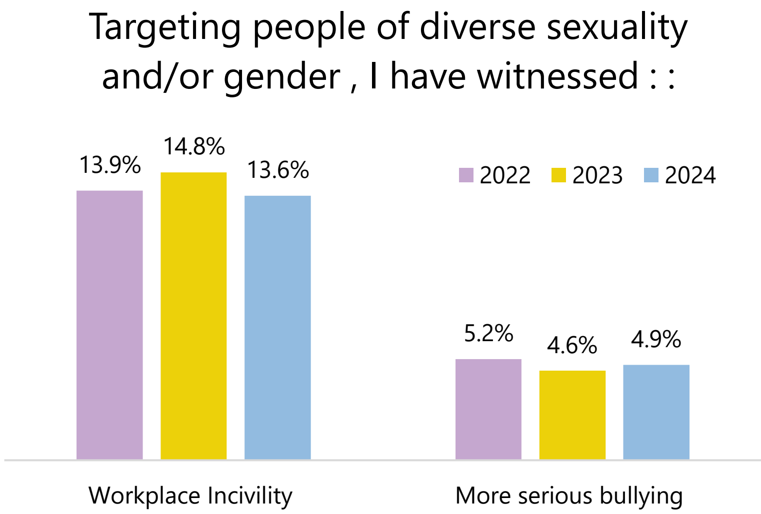
These feelings are further affected by a person's ability or willingness to be out or open about their diversity at work, which will be explored in future practice points.

Bullying and harassment behaviours

In 2024 we continue to focus on bullying and harassment behaviours within the workplace, particularly where respondents would feel comfortable reporting these behaviours if they were witnessed or experienced.

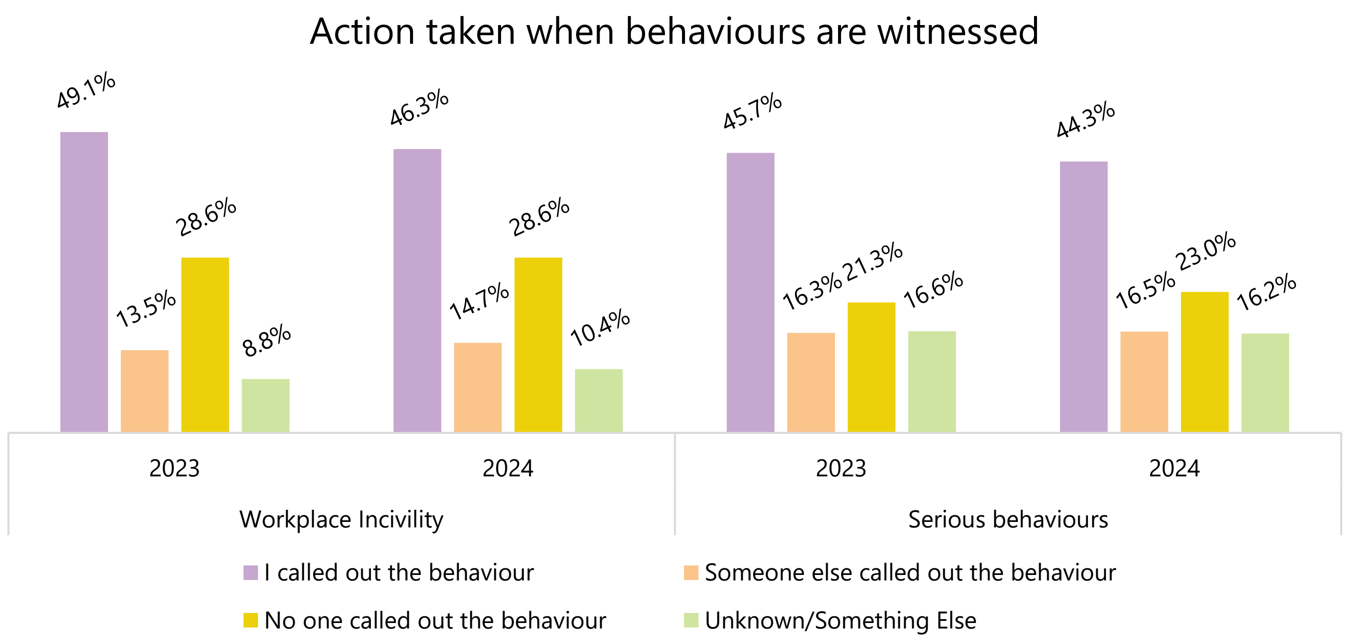
77.5% of respondents are aware of confidential avenues to report bullying/harassment related to one's diverse sexuality and/or gender.

71.0% of respondents feel their managers/ leaders are willing to address workplace incivility behaviours such as negative commentary, jokes and/or innuendo, targeting people of diverse sexuality, and 69.9% regarding targeting people of diverse gender, an increase of over 7.0% from 2023.

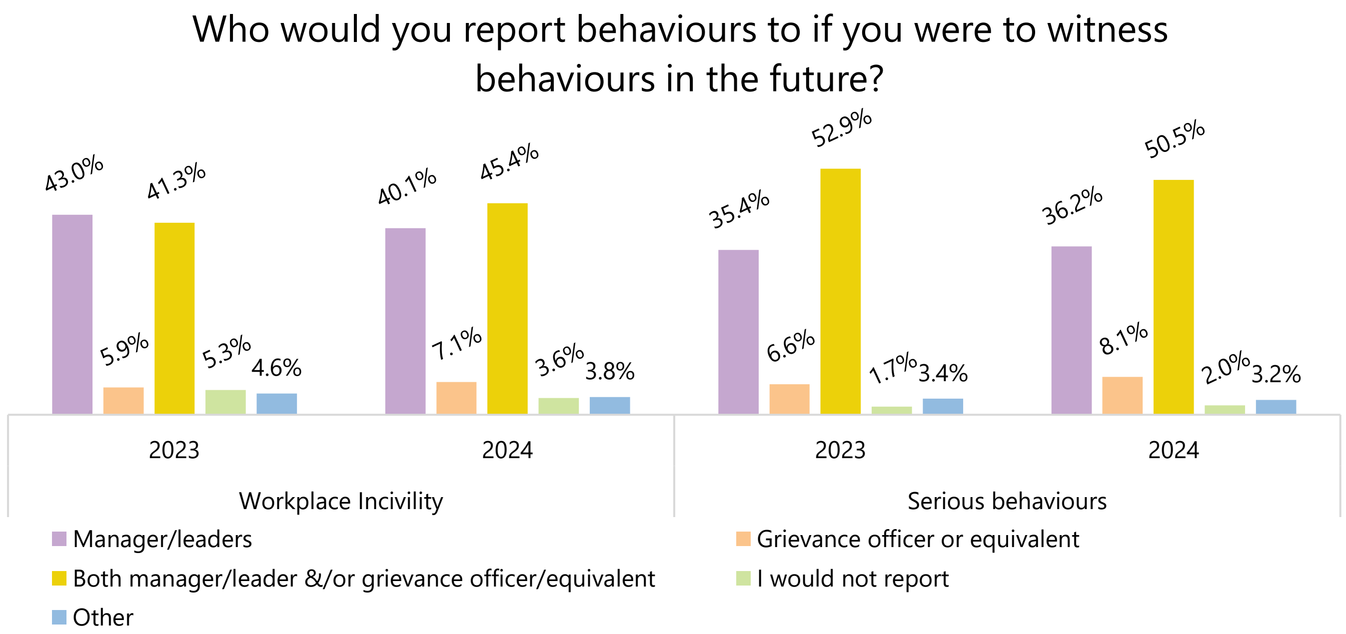


There has been an 8.1% decrease in respondents agreeing that they have witnessed workplace incivility. Unfortunately, there has been a 5.3% increase in respondents witnessing more serious behaviours.

Witnesses' actions differ based on the severity of the bullying behaviours. 46.3% of respondents said that they called out workplace incivility, and 44.3% called out more serious behaviours. Unfortunately, nobody calling out serious behaviours has increased by 7.9% from 2023.



40.1% of respondents believe they would report workplace incivility to a manager/leader (vs. 43.0% in 2023), and 7.1% believe they would report it to a grievance officer or equivalent (vs. 5.9% in 2023). 45.4% believe they would report to both.



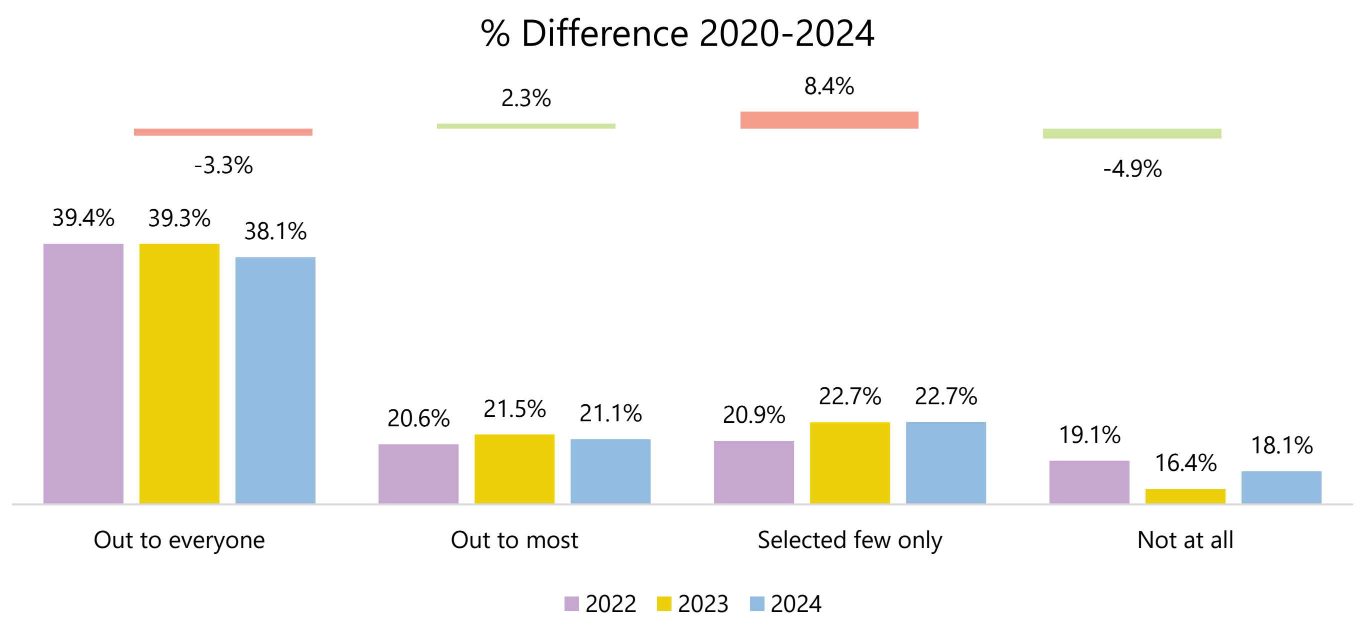
Being 'out' or 'open' at work.

For people of diverse sexuality, diverse gender or who have a trans experience, the survey looks at the rates at which they can 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.

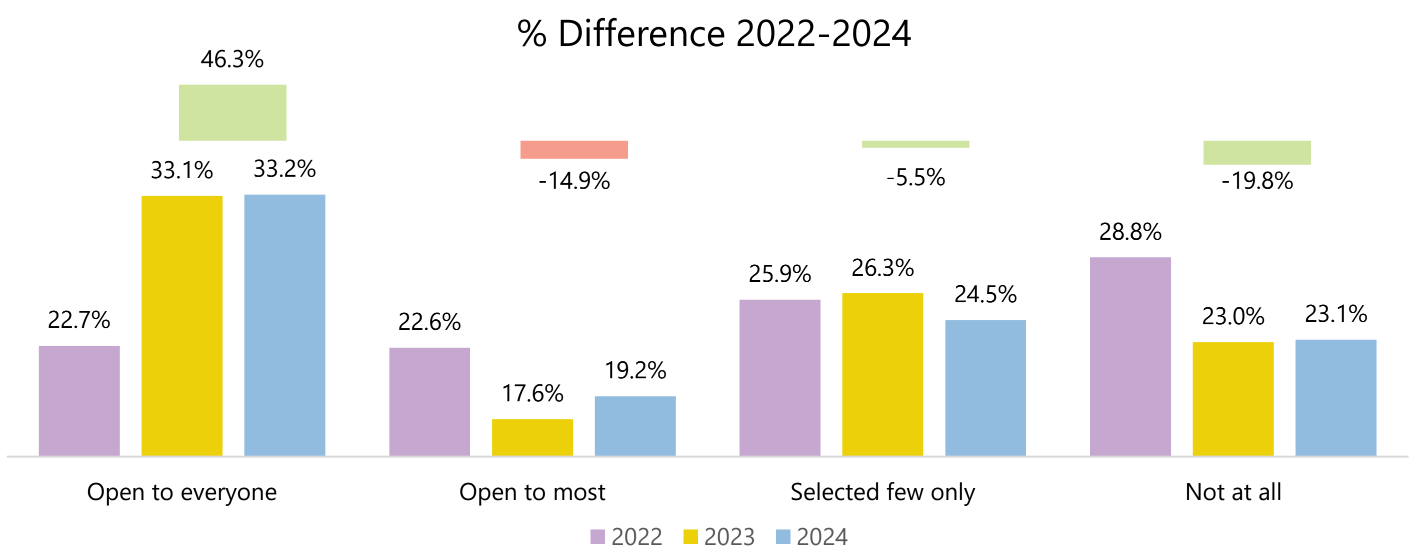
When we talk about being 'out' or 'open' at work it is important to recognise that this is generally not something that happens once and is finished. People of diverse gender, sexuality or who have a trans experience often feel they are constantly evaluating if they need to edit their language, personality,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

Being Out at Work

For the fourth year in a row, fewer respondents of diverse sexuality are 'out' in their workplace. Between 2020 and 2024 there has been a 12.9% reduction in those 'out' and a 27.4% increase in those not out.



Being Open at work.



In 2024 we continue to see an increase in respondents who are open to everyone, and this year a 24.2% increase in those open to most, though over the past three years those open to most has reduced by 14.9%.

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

Allyship

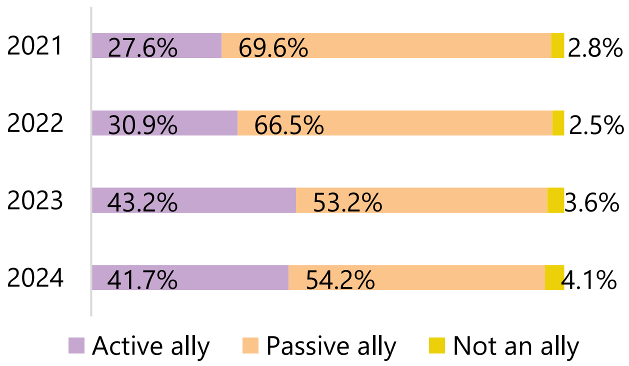
Allies in the workplace have always had a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of employees, regardless of the area they are supporting. Visibility of LGBTQ+ allies are no different in this respect. 61.1% of LGBTQ+ respondents agree that active allies have positively impacted their sense of inclusion within their organisation.

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 supports LGBTQ+ inclusion, but not through actions that 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 agreeing to being active allies has fallen by 3.6% this year. Though since 2022 overall there has been a 34.8% increase.

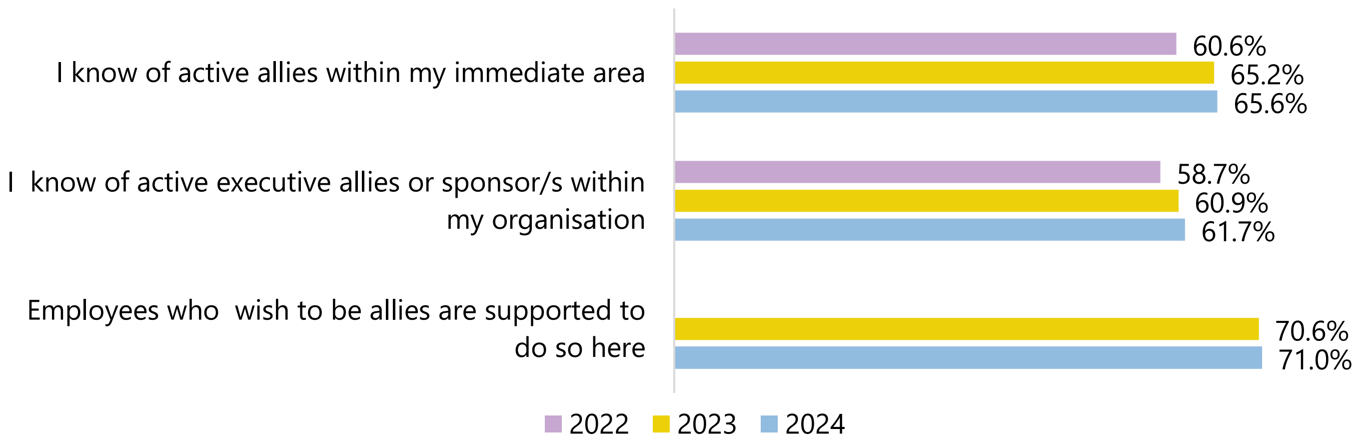
Respondents are still more likely to be passive in their allyship, and after several years of decreased passive allyship has increased by 2.0% this year. Most concerning is a 4.1% increase in respondents who are advising they are not an ally at all, which from 2.5% in 2022 to 4.1% in 2024 equates to a 60.6% increase overall.



Visibility of allies

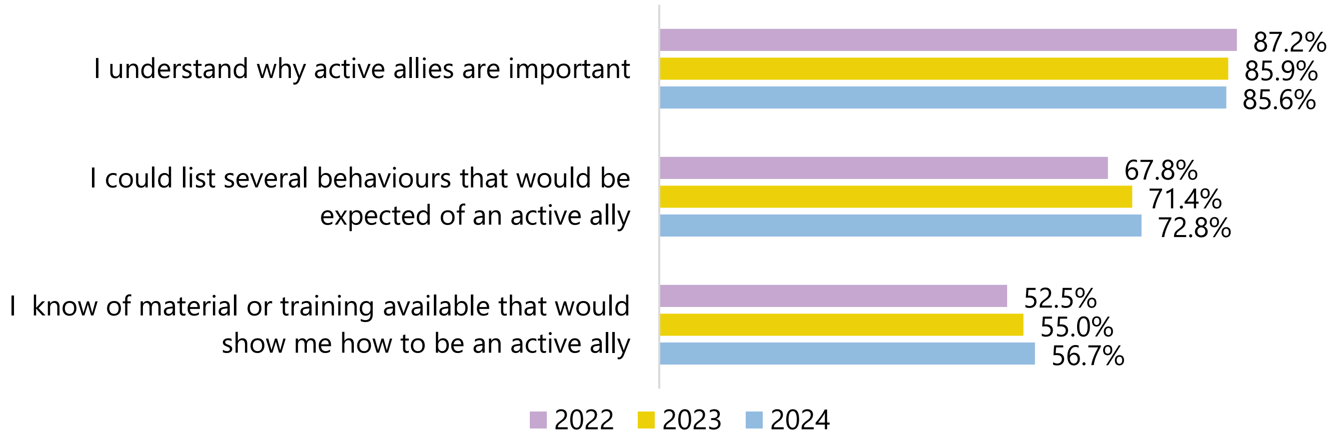
Ensuring that employees are aware of why allies are important is imperative for the success of any ally program. For an LGBTQ+ person, knowing there is someone in the workplace who is actively willing to support them, call out behaviours and enable them to speak about their lives without guarding or censoring, supports them to feel comfortable and secure both in the workplace and their team.

Knowledge of active allies within the workplace has increased year-on-year. Since 2022, 8.1% more respondents are aware of allies in their work area, and 5.2% more know of executive allies or sponsors.



Encouragingly we have also seen a slight increase in respondents who feel their organisation will support them to be an active ally.

Knowledge and understand why allies are important, behaviours which make up an ally and the availability of training material to show how to be an active ally have all stayed steady this year. Importantly the three-year trend of being aware of available training materials continues with more people knowing this is available, and more respondents also feeling they can name expected behaviours.



IN CONCLUSION

Overall, while it remains very high, we are seeing a slight decline across the board in support for LGBTQ+ inclusion. This can be explained by the difference in make up by age of the participants; older employees are generally less supportive and have lower levels of knowledge about LGBTQ+ people and the barriers they face, and they are over-represented compared to previous years.

We continue to see discrepancies between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ respondents in measures of health and wellbeing.

Respondents continue to witness bullying and harassment behaviours targeting LGBTQ+ people at shockingly high rates, and no action was taken for many of these incidents, particularly worrying for ‘serious’ bully behaviours, over 16% of which nobody called out. However, people’s confidence in reporting theoretical negative behaviours they may witness in the future is improving.

We have seen a slight decline in people describing themselves as ‘active allies’, however there is increased knowledge about presence of active allies in organisations, therefore those active allies appear to be more visible.

The rate at which individuals are out to all of their colleagues about their diverse sexuality continues to decline, however the rate at which people are open about their diverse gender is continuing to rise, almost to the same level.

Astonishingly, two thirds of LGBTQ+ people have an additional attribute that may impact on their workplace experiences, highlighting the need for organisations to review their inclusion initiatives with an ‘intersectional lens’.

ACTIONS

1. Create a visible DEI 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 organisation's particular challenges for LGBTQ+ inclusion.
9. Acknowledge that certain groups within the LGBTQ+ population are less visible/represented and/or face additional/different barriers and review your LGBTQ+ inclusion initiatives to ensure they are relevant and meaningful for those populations.
10. Acknowledge that LGBTQ+ people may be represented in other populations covered in your organisation's DEI strategy (e.g. gender equity, accessibility, multicultural, etc.) and review those initiatives to ensure they are relevant and meaningful for LGBTQ+ people.

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

Pride in Diversity (2024). THE 2024 AWEI EMPLOYEE SURVEY PRACTICE POINTS EDITION 1: KEY INSIGHTS. ACON's Pride Inclusion Programs.