AWEI
AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACE EQUALITY INDEX

A ROADMAP
AN AUDITING TOOL
AN ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

pride in diversity

PRACTICE POINTS . 2024 AWEI EMPLOYEE SURVEY

- For the first time in three years, both the number of active allies has decreased from 43.2% in 2023 to 41.7% in 2024 and the number of those who are not an ally at all has increased from 2.5% in 2022 to 4.1% in 2024.

- Despite a concerning trend in the number of active allies and non-allies, the visibility of allies has slightly increased as demonstrated in the increased respondents' knowledge about active allyship and the presence of active allies in their workplace.

- There is a consistent pattern in the reasonings of respondents in either LGBTQ+ or non-LGBTQ+ cohort as to why they are not being an active ally.

- Knowing an active ally in the workplace has a significant positive impact on the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ employees and influences their decision to be out and/or open about their sexuality and gender experience.

- Surprisingly, knowing of allies also has a positive impact on the wellbeing of non-LGBTQ+ employees, showing the broad reach of inclusion work on organisational culture.

Edition 4: Impact of Allies in the Workplace

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

This Practice Point looks at the importance of active allyship within organisations and its impact on culture, inclusion, and safety for all employees, particularly LGBTQ+ employees in comparison to non-LGBTQ+ employees.

Defining an Active Ally

Respondents are asked to define themselves as an:

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

We define allyship this way as active allies provide a clearly visible sense of support or inclusion to LGBTQ+ people, whereas passive allies do not – although they are happy to support, this is not visible to LGBTQ+ employees and therefore does not contribute, to the same extent, to a culture of inclusion.

Capturing data on those who are "not an ally" allows us to investigate the reasons why some employees do not support LGBTQ+ inclusion. It is important to remember that LGBTQ+ employees can also be active allies to other people in the LGBTQ+ community. Likewise, LGBTQ+ employees may not consider themselves to be an ally for various reasons.

When we talk about persons who are LGBTQ+, we are considering those who are of diverse sexuality, diverse gender and /or trans experience.
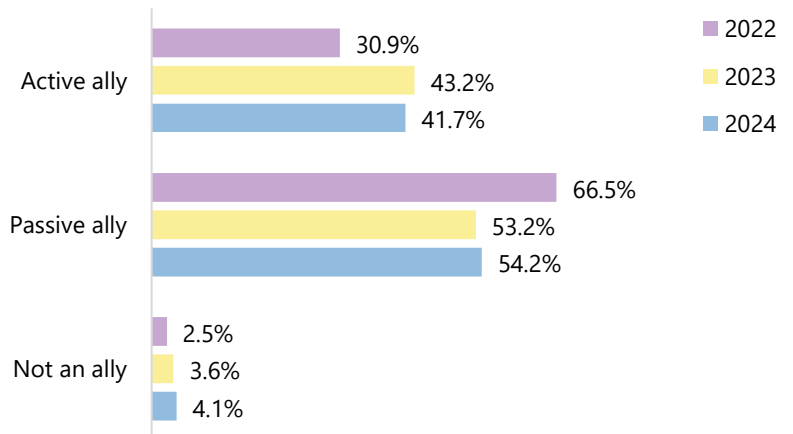
Allyship in 2024

In 2024, 89.4% of all respondents in Australia advised where they felt they sat regarding allyship.

Over the past three years, we have seen a 35.0% increase in respondents advising they are active allies. Between 2023 and 2024, this decreased by 3.6%.

41.7% of respondents (15,471), consider themselves active allies, 54.2% passive allies (20,131) and 4.1% (1,509) consider themselves not an ally at all.

39.0% more respondents have advised being not an ally in 2024 compared to 2022.

Concerningly, while we have seen a trend of increasing numbers of non-allies for the past three years, this is the first time those who identify as an active ally have decreased.
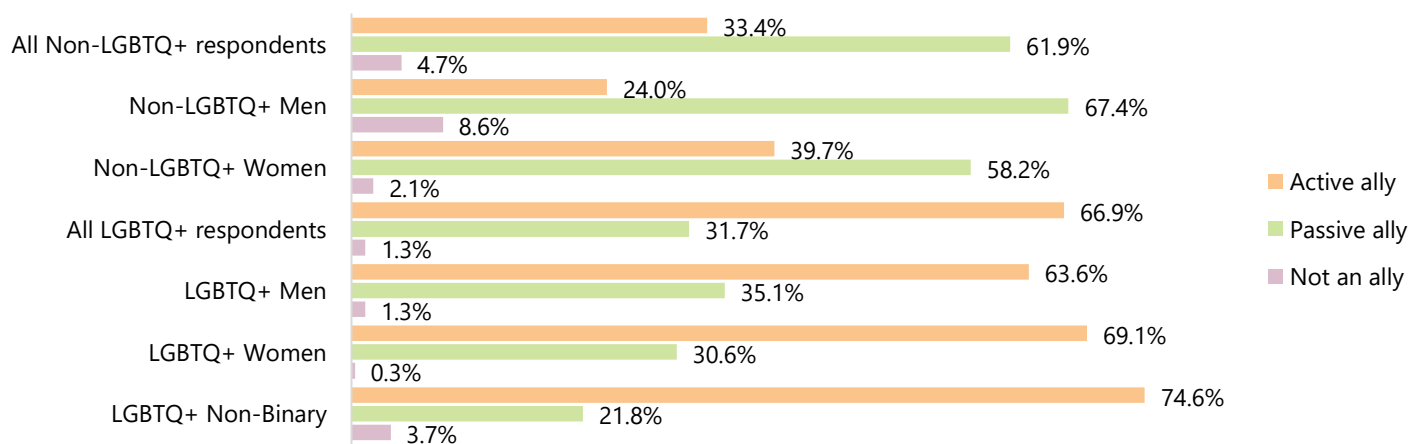
Active ally
- 2022: 30.9%
- 2023: 43.2%
- 2024: 41.7%

Passive ally
- 2022: 66.5%
- 2023: 53.2%
- 2024: 54.2%

Not an ally
- 2022: 2.5%
- 2023: 3.6%
- 2024: 4.1%

Who are the active allies?

Allyship by gender identity and LGBTQ+ status

LGBTQ+ respondents are twice as likely to be active allies as non-LGBTQ+ respondents (LGBTQ+: 66.9% vs non-LGBTQ+: 33.4%). There has been a slight decrease across both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ respondents who identify as an active ally, from 70.0% and 34.3%, respectively, in 2023.
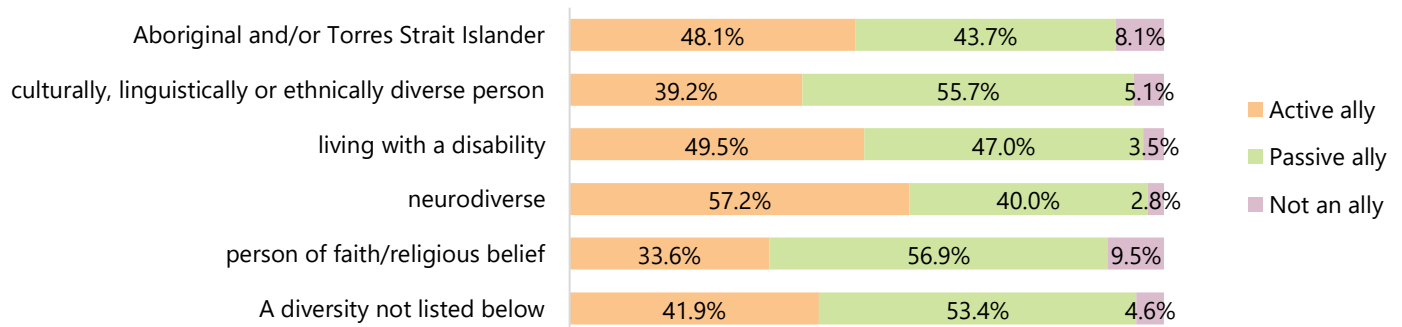
Men are less likely to be active allies than women, regardless of whether they are LGBTQ+ or not. Non-LGBTQ+ men are more likely to identify as *not an ally* than any other cohort.

The most likely cohort to be active allies is those who responded with non-binary gender identities. LGBTQ+ women are the least likely to identify as not an ally.

All Non-LGBTQ+ respondents
- Active ally: 33.4%
- Passive ally: 61.9%
- Not an ally: 4.7%

Non-LGBTQ+ Men
- Active ally: 24.0%
- Passive ally: 67.4%
- Not an ally: 8.6%

Non-LGBTQ+ Women
- Active ally: 39.7%
- Passive ally: 58.2%
- Not an ally: 2.1%

All LGBTQ+ respondents
- Active ally: 66.9%
- Passive ally: 31.7%
- Not an ally: 1.3%

LGBTQ+ Men
- Active ally: 63.6%
- Passive ally: 35.1%
- Not an ally: 1.3%

LGBTQ+ Women
- Active ally: 69.1%
- Passive ally: 30.6%
- Not an ally: 0.3%

LGBTQ+ Non-Binary
- Active ally: 74.6%
- Passive ally: 21.8%
- Not an ally: 3.7%

Allyship and other diversities

When considering the presence of other parts of respondents' background or identity, we can see that those who are neurodivergent, living with a disability, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, are more likely to be an active ally.

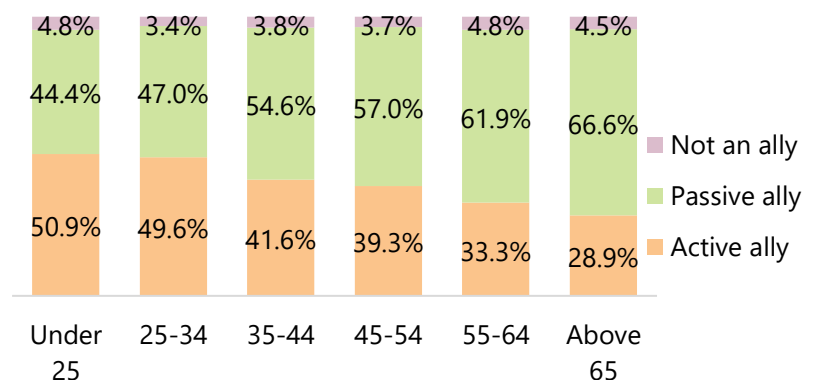| Diversity	Active ally	Passive ally	Not an ally
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	48.1%	43.7%	8.1%
culturally, linguistically or ethnically diverse person	39.2%	55.7%	5.1%
living with a disability	49.5%	47.0%	3.5%
neurodiverse	57.2%	40.0%	2.8%
person of faith/religious belief	33.6%	56.9%	9.5%
A diversity not listed below	41.9%	53.4%	4.6%

Allyship by age

The younger our respondents are the more likely they are to be active allies to the LGBTQ+ community.

Over 50.0% of respondents under the age of 25 are active allies. There is a slight decrease in the number of respondents aged between 25 and 34 who identify as an active ally from 50.1% in 2023 to 49.6% this year. For the over 45-year-olds this drops to 40.0% or under.

Concerningly, compared to 2023, respondents who identify as not an ally have relatively increased across age groups, except for those aged above 65. The greatest increase, by 53%, was seen among respondents aged under 25.

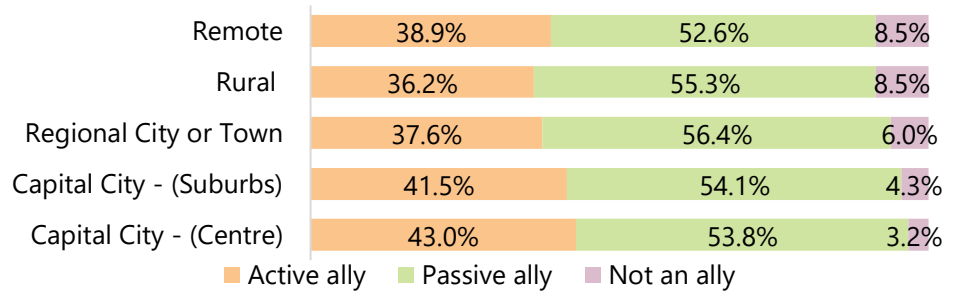|	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Above 65
Not an ally	4.8%	3.4%	3.8%	3.7%	4.8%	4.5%
Passive ally	44.4%	47.0%	54.6%	57.0%	61.9%	66.6%
Active ally	50.9%	49.6%	41.6%	39.3%	33.3%	28.9%

Allyship by location

Breaking down the results by state, we can see that Victorian respondents are most likely to be allies, closely followed by NSW, SA, the ACT, and TAS with over 40.0% of respondents identifying as an active ally.

Western Australia has the lowest percentage of respondents who identify as an active ally but has the largest proportion of passive allies.
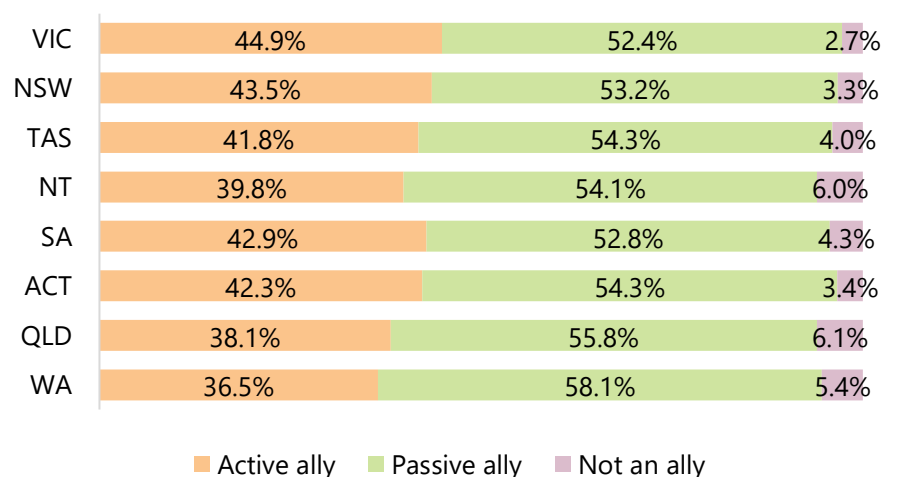
Meanwhile, Queensland and the Northern Territory have the greatest percentage of respondents who feel they are not allies at all.

State	Active ally	Passive ally	Not an ally
VIC	44.9%	52.4%	2.7%
NSW	43.5%	53.2%	3.3%
TAS	41.8%	54.3%	4.0%
NT	39.8%	54.1%	6.0%
SA	42.9%	52.8%	4.3%
ACT	42.3%	54.3%	3.4%
QLD	38.1%	55.8%	6.1%
WA	36.5%	58.1%	5.4%

There is a clear urban-rural divide indicated by the data. Those in capital city centres are most likely to identify as active allies and least likely to identify as not allies at all. Those in remote and rural areas are most likely to identify as not allies at all, and those in rural areas are least likely to identify as active allies.

	Active ally	Passive ally	Not an ally
Remote	38.9%	52.6%	8.5%
Rural	36.2%	55.3%	8.5%
Regional City or Town	37.6%	56.4%	6.0%
Capital City - (Suburbs)	41.5%	54.1%	4.3%
Capital City - (Centre)	43.0%	53.8%	3.2%

Allyship by position

Temporary or casual staff are the most likely to consider themselves active allies. Volunteers are least likely to consider themselves active allies. The percentage of volunteers who identify as not allies at all has decreased dramatically from 17.6% in 2023 to 5.3% in 2024.

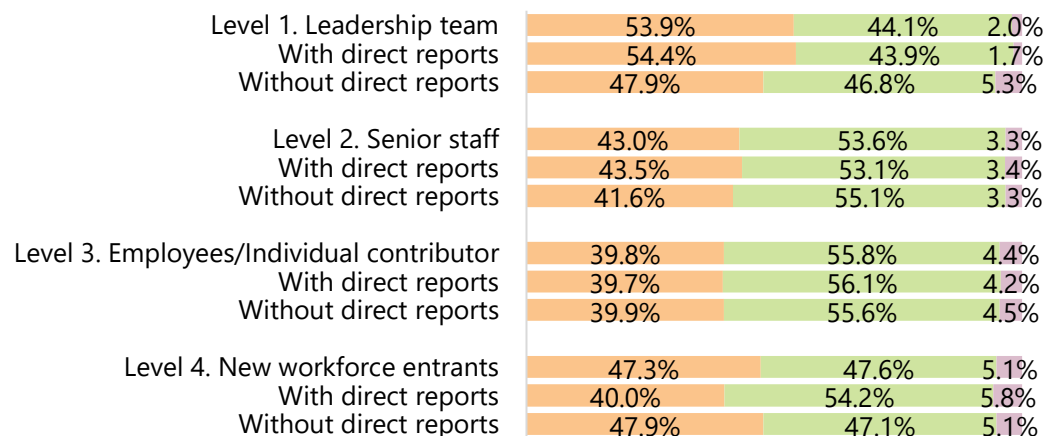|	Active ally	Passive ally	Not an ally
Full time (paid staff)	41.8%	54.0%	4.2%
Part time (paid staff)	40.1%	57.0%	2.8%
Contract (fixed term - paid staff))	40.7%	55.5%	3.8%
Temporary/casual	46.4%	48.0%	5.5%
Volunteer	31.6%	63.2%	5.3%
Another employment type	42.0%	50.7%	7.2%
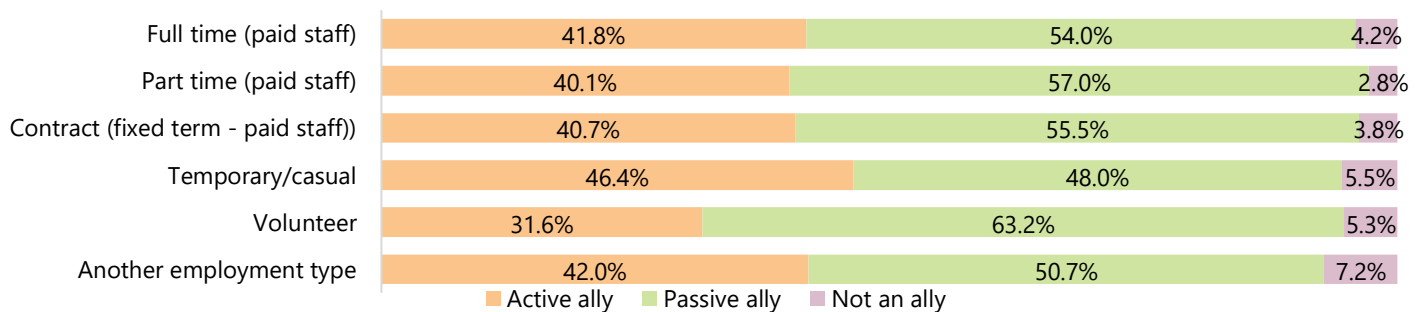
Allyship by seniority and management position

In 2023 a 4-tier seniority system has been used to provide an understanding of experiences and beliefs at different levels within organisations.

- Level 1. Leadership team - Leadership/executive team (CEO or equivalent and senior executive reporting to CEO not including EA/PA)
- Level 2. Reporting to level 1 - Senior staff (including EA/PA to Executive team)
- Level 3. Reporting to level 2 - Employees/Individual contributor
- Level 4. Reporting to any level - New workforce entrants

In addition to this, we asked if the respondent managed other employees. Overall, level 1 respondents are most likely to be active allies, followed by new workforce entrants, however, new workforce entrants are most likely to *not be allies* at all.
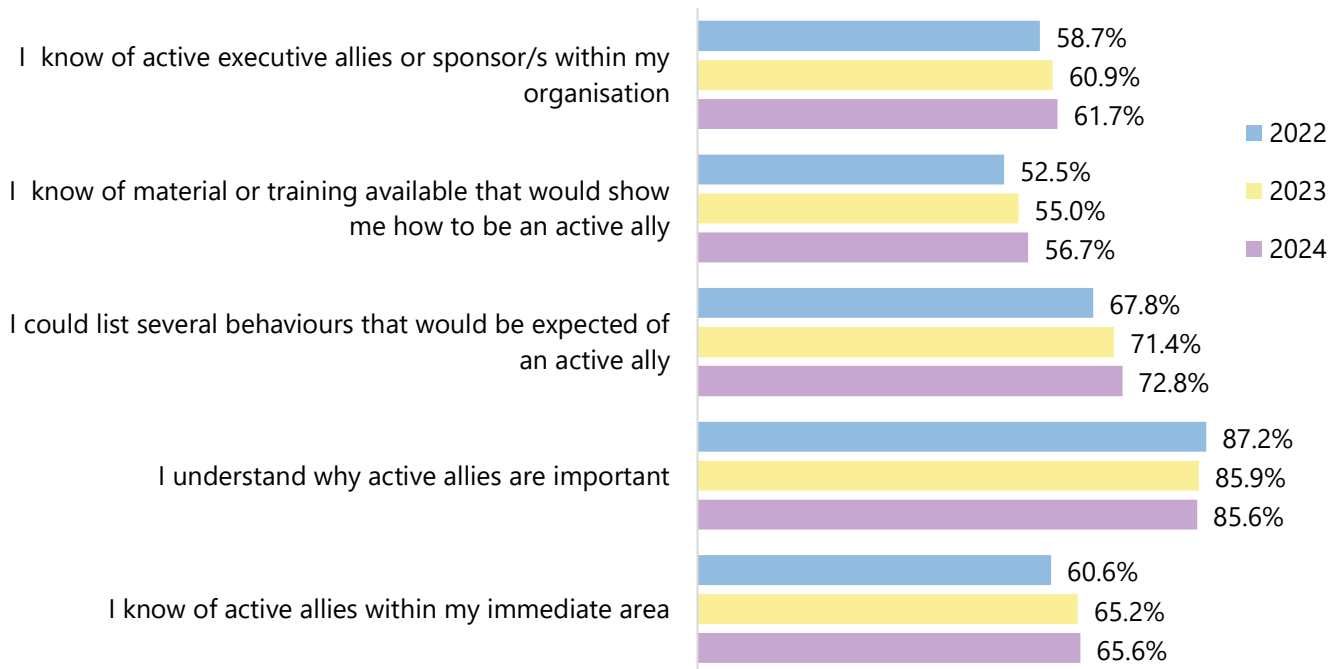
For those at level 1 and 2, respondents with direct reports are more likely to be active allies than those without direct reports, but for those

	Active ally	Passive ally	Not an ally
Level 1. Leadership team	53.9%	44.1%	2.0%
With direct reports	54.4%	43.9%	1.7%
Without direct reports	47.9%	46.8%	5.3%
Level 2. Senior staff	43.0%	53.6%	3.3%
With direct reports	43.5%	53.1%	3.4%
Without direct reports	41.6%	55.1%	3.3%
Level 3. Employees/Individual contributor	39.8%	55.8%	4.4%
With direct reports	39.7%	56.1%	4.2%
Without direct reports	39.9%	55.6%	4.5%
Level 4. New workforce entrants	47.3%	47.6%	5.1%
With direct reports	40.0%	54.2%	5.8%
Without direct reports	47.9%	47.1%	5.1%

at level 3 and 4, having direct reports makes one less likely to be an active ally.

Visibility of allies

Respondents were asked to reflect upon the active allies in their workplace, across five statements. This year, the impact and visibility of allies have slightly increased again across most statements. The exception is a slight decline in the number of respondents who 'understand why active allies are important'. This demonstrates that active allies have become more visible in the workplace and highlights the significance of this Practice Point in supporting the understanding of allyship to all employees.

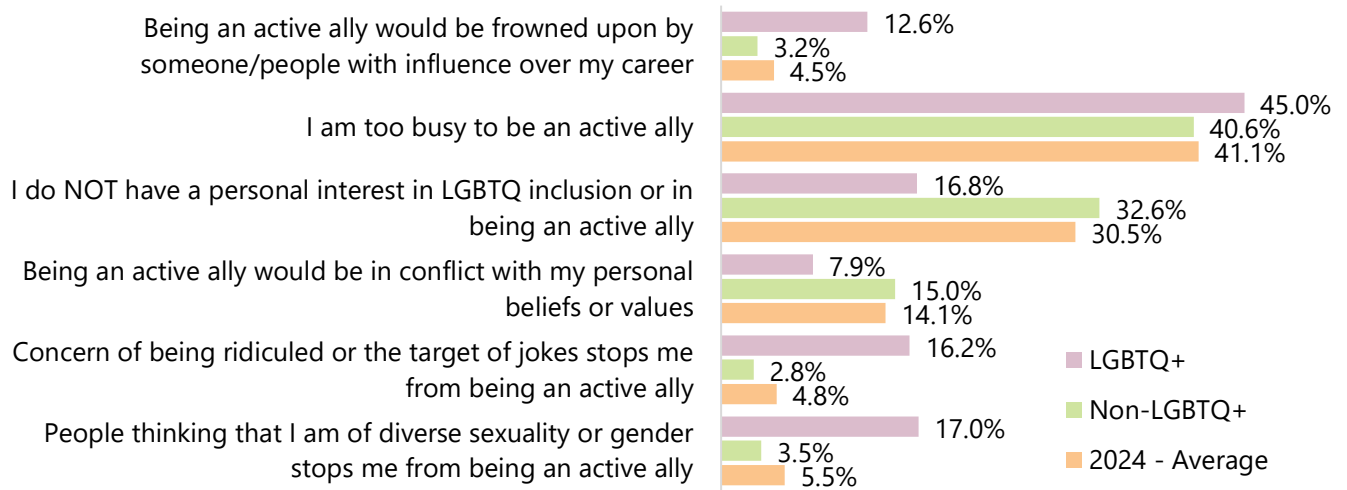| Statement	2022	2023	2024
I know of active executive allies or sponsor/s within my organisation	58.7%	60.9%	61.7%
I know of material or training available that would show me how to be an active ally	52.5%	55.0%	56.7%
I could list several behaviours that would be expected of an active ally	67.8%	71.4%	72.8%
I understand why active allies are important	87.2%	85.9%	85.6%
I know of active allies within my immediate area	60.6%	65.2%	65.6%

Barriers to Active Allyship

Across both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ groups, the most common reason for not being an active ally was being too busy, with 41.1% of respondents citing this as a reason.

LGBTQ+ respondents are much more likely than non-LGBTQ+ respondents to cite being frowned upon by those with influence over their career (LGBTQ+:12.6% vs non-LGBTQ+: 3.2%) and concern of being ridiculed (16.2% vs 2.8%) as reasons for not being an active ally.

Non-LGBTQ+ respondents are more likely than LGBTQ+ respondents to agree that they have a personal interest in being an ally (LGBTQ+: 16.8% vs non-LGBTQ+: 32.6%) or that being an ally would be in conflict with their beliefs or values (LGBTQ+: 7.9% vs non-LGBTQ+: 15.0%).

Barrier	LGBTQ+	Non-LGBTQ+	2024 - Average
Being an active ally would be frowned upon by someone/people with influence over my career	12.6%	3.2%	4.5%
I am too busy to be an active ally	45.0%	40.6%	41.1%
I do NOT have a personal interest in LGBTQ inclusion or in being an active ally	16.8%	32.6%	30.5%
Being an active ally would be in conflict with my personal beliefs or values	7.9%	15.0%	14.1%
Concern of being ridiculed or the target of jokes stops me from being an active ally	16.2%	2.8%	4.8%
People thinking that I am of diverse sexuality or gender stops me from being an active ally	17.0%	3.5%	5.5%

For respondents who are **passive allies,** the main reason for either cohort is being too busy to be an active ally (LGBTQ+: 45.0% vs non-LGBTQ+: 41.0%).

For respondents who are **not allies at all**, the main reason for either cohort is a lack of personal interest in LGBTQ inclusion or in being an active ally (LGBTQ+: 79.5% vs non-LGBTQ+: 84.4%)

By looking at the 2023 AWEI survey on barriers to active allyship, we see a consistent pattern in the reasoning of respondents as to why they are not being an active ally.

Impact *of Active Allies*

The impact of active allies on the 71.3% of LGBTQ+ respondents who know of active allies in their immediate work area growth has been increasing consistently. 8.1% more respondents have agreed with this statement over the past three years (2024: 65.6%, 2023:65.2%, 2022: 60.6%)

Agreement that the presence of active allies has positively impacted their sense of inclusion within their organisation has increased again, to 74.3% this year. This trend has been seen for the past 3 years and equates to a 13.7% increase since 2022, though we do note that this declined 3.1% from 2023 to 2024. (2024: 61.1%, 2023:63.0%, 2022: 53.7%)

Year	%
2022	72.6%
2023	73.8%
2024	74.3%

% of respondents who said 'active allies positively impact my sense of inclusion here'
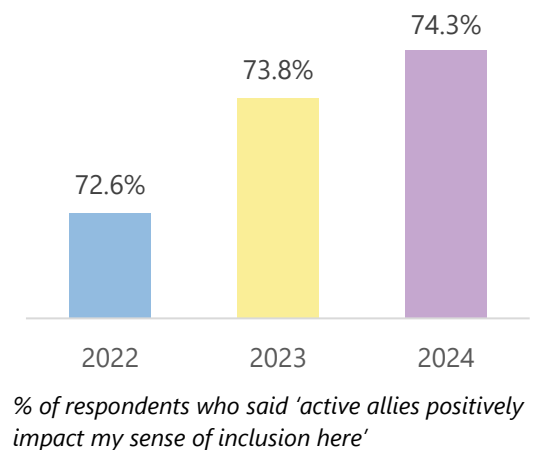
Personal impacts for employees

Knowing allies in the workplace increases wellbeing on every measure, for both LGBTQ+ and to a lesser extent non-LGBTQ+ respondents. Thus, while non-LGBTQ+ employees also benefit from the presence of known allies, the extent of the impact on wellbeing is greater for LGBTQ+ respondents.

When there are no known allies in a workplace, less than half of LGBTQ+ employees feel a sense of belonging (LGBTQ+: 47.9% vs non-LGBTQ+: 66.7%). This number increases by 60.4% among LGBTQ+ respondents when there are known allies and 24.9% among non-LGBTQ+ respondents. Similarly, the presence of known allies in a workplace increases the likelihood that an LGBTQ+ employee feels they can be themselves by 51.6% and 19.0% among non-LGBTQ+ respondents.
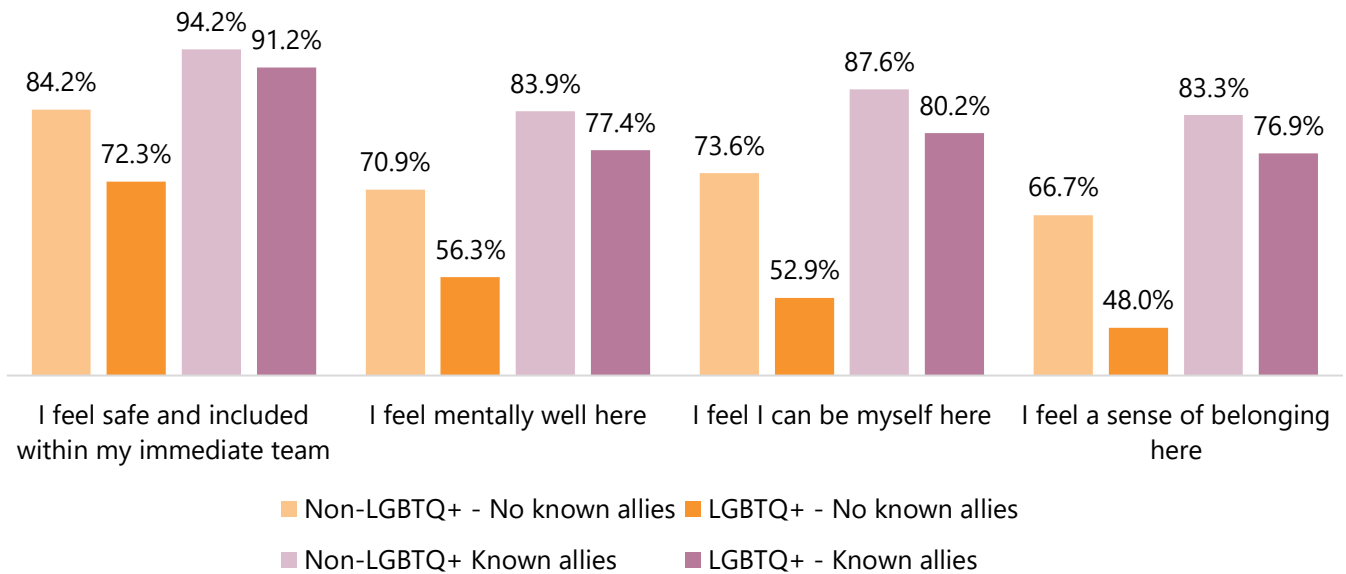
Working within an organisation with active allies also increases the likelihood of a respondent bringing their whole selves to work.
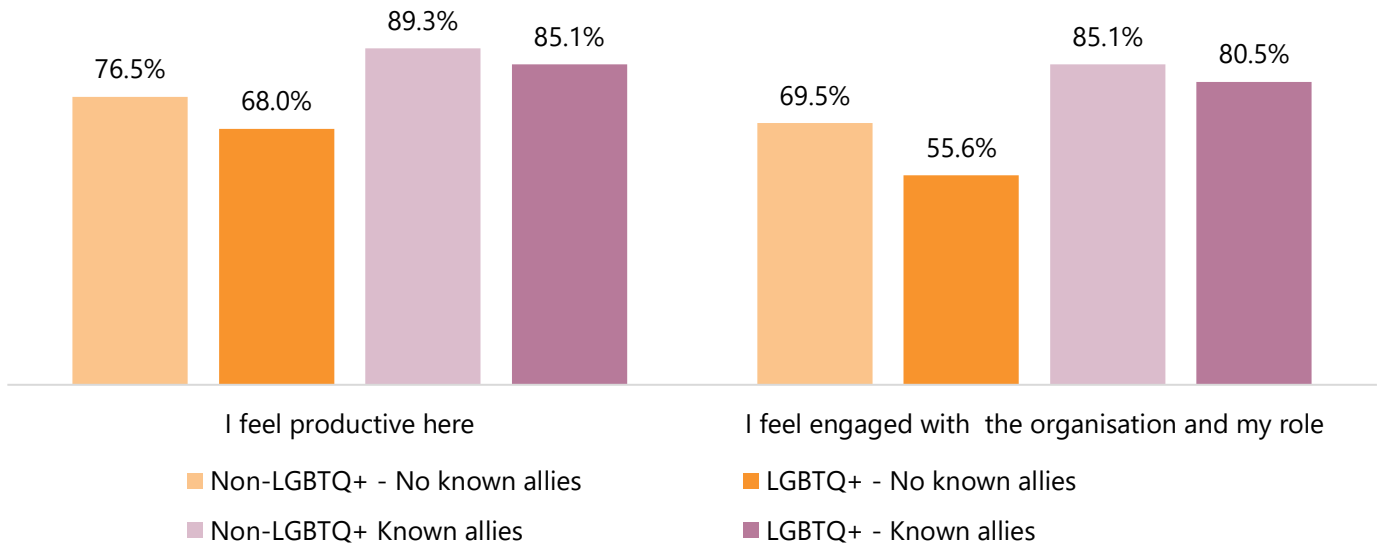
Both respondents of diverse sexualities and trans employees are more likely to be out (62.9%) and open (57.2%) in workplaces with known allies.

When there are no known allies in a workplace, both respondents of diverse sexualities and, to an even greater extent, trans respondents are more likely to be not out (56.4%) and not open (64.9%) than they are out and open.

Impacts for organisations

Not only do LGBTQ+ respondents have a greater sense of health and wellbeing when there are known allies in a workplace, but in workplaces with known allies *all* respondents, including to a lesser extent non-LGBTQ+ respondents, are more likely to feel engaged with their organisation and to feel productive within their role.

The impact of having known allies in a workplace is very significant for LGBTQ+ people's feelings of engagement with their organisation and role: it increases from only 55.6% with no known allies, to 80.5% with known allies which equates to a 44.8% increase. Additionally, there is a 22.5% increase among non-LGBTQ+ respondents.
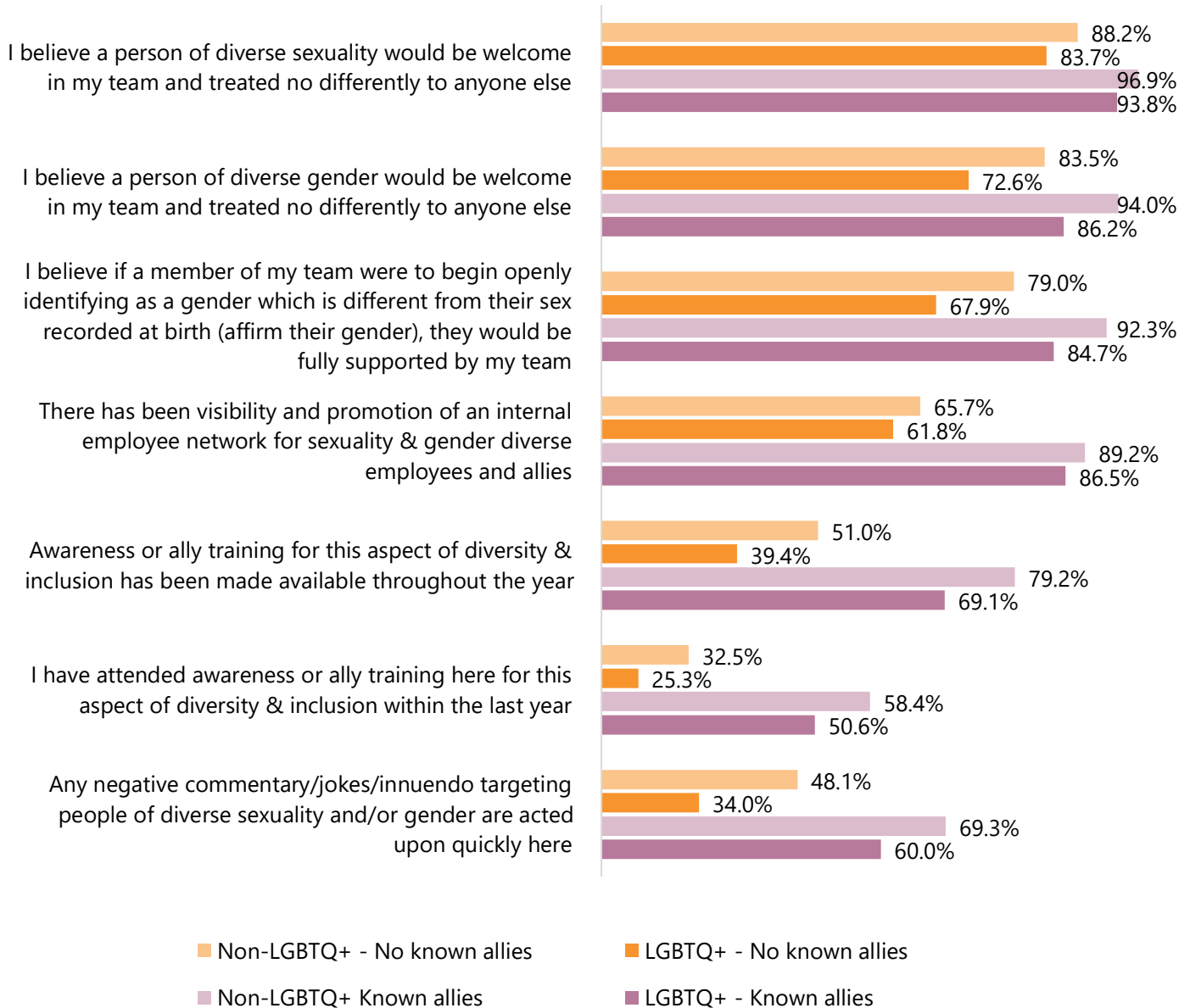
Chart data:

I feel productive here
- Non-LGBTQ+ - No known allies: 76.5%
- LGBTQ+ - No known allies: 68.0%
- Non-LGBTQ+ Known allies: 89.3%
- LGBTQ+ - Known allies: 85.1%

I feel engaged with the organisation and my role
- Non-LGBTQ+ - No known allies: 69.5%
- LGBTQ+ - No known allies: 55.6%
- Non-LGBTQ+ Known allies: 85.1%
- LGBTQ+ - Known allies: 80.5%

Legend:
- Non-LGBTQ+ - No known allies
- LGBTQ+ - No known allies
- Non-LGBTQ+ Known allies
- LGBTQ+ - Known allies

Organisation inclusion culture

Across all metrics of an inclusive organisational culture, workplaces perform better when there are known allies, and not just for LGBTQ+ staff. For example, when there are no known allies in a workplace less than half of both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ respondents believe that jokes targeting employees with diverse sexualities and trans people would be acted upon quickly. This number increases significantly when allies are present in a workplace, with 60.0% of LGBTQ+ respondents and 69.3% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents believing that action would be taken quickly in this circumstance.

Across all statements, for workplaces with and without known allies, non-LGBTQ+ respondents are more likely to evaluate their workplace as performing better on inclusion metrics than LGBTQ+ people. This suggests that the impacts of a lack of inclusion are not always visible to non-LGBTQ+ people.

Organisations, where employees are aware of active allies, are far more likely to also have visibility and promotion of an internal employee network for sexuality and gender diverse employees and allies. According to LGBTQ+ respondents, 86.5% of respondents in organisations with known allies agreed their organisation had an internal employee network compared to 61.8% of those without known allies.

Question	Non-LGBTQ+ - No known allies	LGBTQ+ - No known allies	Non-LGBTQ+ Known allies	LGBTQ+ - Known allies
I believe a person of diverse sexuality would be welcome in my team and treated no differently to anyone else	88.2%	83.7%	96.9%	93.8%
I believe a person of diverse gender would be welcome in my team and treated no differently to anyone else	83.5%	72.6%	94.0%	86.2%
I believe if a member of my team were to begin openly identifying as a gender which is different from their sex recorded at birth (affirm their gender), they would be fully supported by my team	79.0%	67.9%	92.3%	84.7%
There has been visibility and promotion of an internal employee network for sexuality & gender diverse employees and allies	65.7%	61.8%	89.2%	86.5%
Awareness or ally training for this aspect of diversity & inclusion has been made available throughout the year	51.0%	39.4%	79.2%	69.1%
I have attended awareness or ally training here for this aspect of diversity & inclusion within the last year	32.5%	25.3%	58.4%	50.6%
Any negative commentary/jokes/innuendo targeting people of diverse sexuality and/or gender are acted upon quickly here	48.1%	34.0%	69.3%	60.0%

■ Non-LGBTQ+ - No known allies ■ LGBTQ+ - No known allies
■ Non-LGBTQ+ Known allies ■ LGBTQ+ - Known allies

Conclusion

The visible presence of active allies within workplaces is one of the most important factors in improving organisation culture and inclusion for employees, not only for health and wellbeing, but also demonstrating significant improvements in productivity and employee engagement within the organisation and their teams. On this basis, we also think that it is important to identify the contributing factors that hinder employees to be allies. More research needs to be done in this area so that we could develop proper strategies to increase allyship in the workplace.

This is the first time in three years that both the number of active allies has decreased, and the number of those who are not an ally at all has increased. These facts point to the need for concerted efforts from individuals and organisations to promote allyship and inclusion in their workplaces. Continuing to increase visible active allyship within organisations requires positive leadership, active engagement with days of significance and concerted efforts to implement policies and strategies that reinforce positive inclusion and behaviours.

Actions

1. Increase the number of campaigns on the importance of inclusive workplaces and specifically target groups who are less likely to be allies to reduce negative bias against active allies.

2. Encourage employees in all levels of management positions, to join the DEI training that emphasises active allyship as beneficial for everyone and the organisation.

3. Promote that active allyship is not an 'extra' job to do while incentivising active allies who have contributed to the creation of an inclusive workplace (e.g., monthly awards, acknowledgement from senior leaders). Encourage them to tell their ally stories on days of significance, record them, promote them and have them available on your intranet.

4. Have your senior allies be role models who set examples of good ally practices and behaviours.

5. Have visible signs of inclusion available for all allies who want them.

6. Establish a proper mechanism to deal with any forms of harassment and bullying, including against diverse sexuality and trans and gender-diverse employees.