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Research into the low visibility and engagement of same-sex attracted women in the workplace | *August 2018*

Where are all the women?

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Acknowledgments

This work has been jointly developed by GLEE@PwC Australia and Pride In Diversity.

GLEE@PwC

Since being established in 2010, our employee-led LGBTI network GLEE (Gay, Lesbian and Everyone Else) has been instrumental in driving change within PwC. Our purpose is to build trust in society by supporting wider Corporate Australia and the community to enable a more LGBTI inclusive society. We do this through inspiring our people, promoting role models and authentic leadership, and sharing our impact with society.

Pride in Diversity

Pride in Diversity is Australia's national not-for-profit employer support program for all aspects of LGBTI workplace inclusion and is a social inclusion initiative of ACON. ACON is Australia's largest LGBTI health organisation. Pride in Diversity was established by ACON to assist in the reduction of stigma, social isolation, homophobia, transphobia, intersexism and discrimination in the workplace thereby improving the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTI employees. Community for community.

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Disclaimer: Note on the terminology used within this research

This research uses the term same-sex attracted women. We acknowledge the limitations of this term and that not all women who experience same sex attraction will identify with the labels within. We understand that terminology can be contentious but we also understand the importance of a consistent language for employers. We use the term as a representative term for the women in our community with diverse sexual orientations, including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, and queer. Our definition of women includes all women, regardless of whether they are cisgender, transgender, or gender diverse. We acknowledge that there is a diversity of identities within our community and that no one term or acronym is capable of encompassing them all. We do not in practice, education, service delivery or intention exclude any same-sex attracted woman within this research.

Foreword

From the authors

GLEE@PwC and Pride in Diversity are both incredibly passionate about creating more inclusive working environments for all members of the LGBTI community. It has become clear that there is a lack of same-sex attracted women across LGBTI networks[1] within Australia. We wanted to understand what drives this imbalance and how organisations might start to address it.

We combined both our organisations' expertise and experience to create a strong collaborative effort that has generated unique insights into an important topic that to date has received little attention. Pride In Diversity's Sapphire Initiative[2] provided context on the unique challenges that Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (LBT) women face in the workplace. That context complimented the capabilities and expertise of PwC's Consulting teams, including the Leadership, Organisational Culture, Analytics, Economics and Policy and Workplace Inclusion practices. We have balanced the need for high-quality and credible findings with the need for practical, useful and fit-for-purpose actions.

Looking forward, we are particularly excited about using our research findings to help build an environment where same-sex attracted women can thrive as their authentic selves in the workplace.

Across PwC and Pride In Diversity, a number of people put significant effort into this report, including those within the LGBTI community and LGBTI allies. We would like to acknowledge them all for their support and guidance, and for volunteering their time to ensure the credibility of this research. In particularly, we would like to thank The May Group[3] for their support during the design and interview stages.

Finally, we want to thank all 1,270 women who completed the survey or participated in an interview. We have been overwhelmed by the attention our research has received and we are exceptionally proud of the way the LGBTI community has willingly risen to this challenge.

Thank you.

Kate, Sarah, Tanya, Laura and Marty

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[1] LGBTI networks are internal groups that provide support and promote LGBTI inclusivity through workplace initiatives and events.

[2] Sapphire is an initiative of Pride in Diversity that was developed to generate greater awareness of the unique challenges faced by Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (LBT) women in the workplace.

[3] The May Group are a niche consulting practice based in Canberra, Australia. Their expertise is in gender equity, diversity and inclusion, and equipping leaders to create inclusive cultures in all areas of our society.

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Executive summary

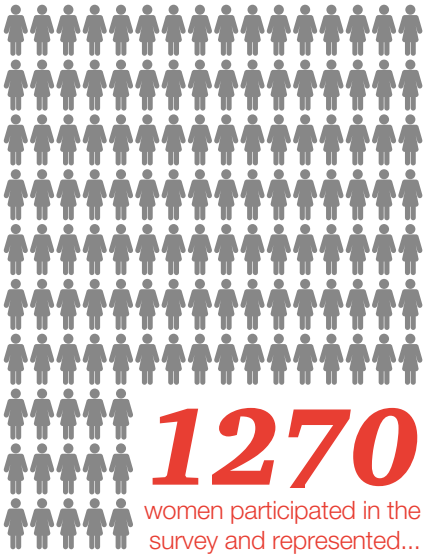
A sense of belonging and connection is missing for same-sex attracted women in the workplace. The slow and cumulative effect of day-to-day comments and unconscious bias impacts their confidence and willingness to be authentic in the workplace.

GLEE@PwC Australia and Pride in Diversity have partnered in this research to better understand the specific experiences of same-sex attracted women in the workplace as they were not clearly understood. This research provides data and insights to inform workplaces on the challenges that same-sex attracted women face in the workplace, related to two key research questions.

1. Why are same-sex attracted women less visible in the workplace?
2. Why are LGBTI networks not attracting many same-sex attracted women?

To collect data for this research, we used quantitative and qualitative inputs, including a survey of 1,270 same sex attracted women, and 18 in-depth structured interviews. This is one of the largest samples of same-sex attracted women in relation to workplace participation and visibility. We paired this research data with data collected through Pride in Diversity, and we also drew on extensive and complementary data sets to inform our report's findings.

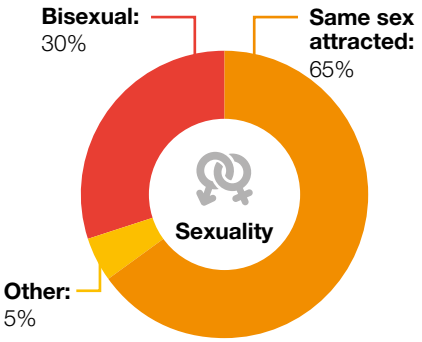
Figure 1: Survey participation

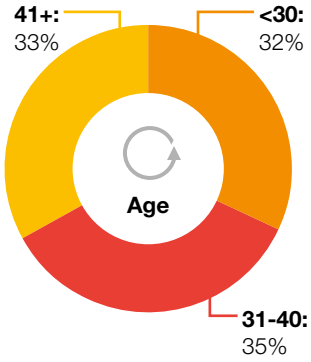


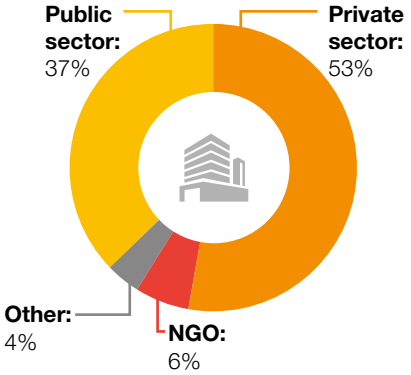
1270
women participated in the survey and represented...

7
states and territories

18
industries







Overarching survey results

The survey and interviews generated many results, but there were a number that had the greatest impact on our research findings:

- Some 65% of respondents are comfortable being out to most or all of the people they work with; 38% of the same-sex attracted women surveyed are out to all of the people they work with; and 35% are not out at all or only to few people in their workplace.
- 70% of respondents believe that it is important to be out at work. There was high correlation between likelihood to be out and the importance of being out.
- Younger same-sex attracted women were less likely to be out in the workplace (39% were comfortable being out) and were less likely to come out immediately after joining a workplace (53% are comfortable being out in their first year).
- The more senior a woman, the greater their level of comfort to identify as a same-sex attracted woman (60% for women in organisations with 5000+ employees to 72% for women with fewer than 100 employees in their organisation).
- Same-sex attracted women feel more comfortable coming out in smaller workplaces.
- Women with a partner are 21% more likely to be out (71% compared to 50%).
- 29% of respondents believe being same-sex attracted inhibits their ability to progress their career, whilst 51% believe that being female is an inhibitor. When asked which was more important, 79% said that both gender and sexual equality equally impacted on their career progression.

The survey respondents outlined a number of key benefits and risks of being out in the workplace:

- Benefits include 'being your authentic self' and 'having the freedom to talk about your life/ female partner/community'
- Risks include 'being judged negatively in any way' and the 'risk of being stereotyped or labelled'. In response to questions on stereotypes, survey respondents outlined their perception of words used to describe them as same-sex attracted women. These are summarised in the word cloud in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Word cloud on response to survey question asking for 3 words to describe the stereotype of same-sex attracted women in the workplace

Key themes for workplaces to consider

Five key themes were drawn from the survey and interviews that relate to the context of the two research questions:

1. A workplace's **micro culture** will largely determine how comfortable and safe same-sex attracted women feel at work. Authentic leadership and acceptance of difference will allow same-sex attracted women to feel they belong in their team.
2. The **dual impact of gender and sexuality** strengthens the gender-related glass ceiling and makes it even more challenging for same-sex attracted women to thrive and develop in their working environment.
3. The impact of the strength and narrowness of the perceived **stereotype** of same-sex attracted women compounds their fear of being negatively judged and labelled. The lack of visibly diverse same-sex attracted women and the micro culture within a workplace have the potential to exacerbate the stereotype.
4. **Role models** are critical to helping same-sex attracted women build a sense of belonging and vision for the future. The concept of a role model can be re-imagined to make it easier for women to understand how they can act as role models whilst being true to themselves and authentic.
5. Same-sex attracted women perceive the purpose of **LGBTI networks** as providing support to LGBTI colleagues and promoting a more inclusive workplace. The purpose they require is not necessarily being met through LGBTI network events, creating a disconnect between the perceived purpose of the network and participation.

"I find it incredibly isolating – in my job I have not met many other gay women who I connect with and can relate to. There does not seem to be diversity in the depth and breadth of gay or bi women, at work or elsewhere."

"What LGBTI+ people want most is acceptance and community."

"As a young gay woman, I was nervous about starting at a new workplace and thought I just wouldn't mention my sexuality for the first few months/year, but I felt so supported, safe and even celebrated due to visibility [of emails, lanyards, etc] that it's helped me be my true self at work much sooner, and I couldn't be happier."

"L&B [Lesbian and Bi-sexual] cis women are MASSIVELY under represented at LGBTQI events. Lesbians are invisible in my workplace even in the communities that should be caring about them."

"I started a new role recently and whilst there's no formal LGBTI+ group, I noticed many staff members are wearing "I do" badges for marriage equality... I can't describe how amazing that feels."

"Gay women experience a higher degree of discrimination than gay men, with the double impact of gender and sexuality discrimination."

"I'm bisexual but dating a man so feel it doesn't count."

"I have left a workplace due to it not being welcoming and inclusive to gay women, LGBTI spaces can be dominated by gay men which reduces the ability (and motivation) of gay women to get involved."

"Gay women just as all women come in all shapes, sizes and styles."

Practical actions to make change happen

Table 1 outlines these themes as well as actions for workplaces to enhance the inclusion of same sex attracted women.

Table 1: Summary of actions

Key theme	Actions to aid change
Influence macro and micro culture	• Continue to show clear leadership through consistent and explicit workplace messaging and behaviour to enhance macro culture • Empower your allies (both straight allies and other members of the LGBTI community) to influence the micro culture within the workplace • Educate people in the workplace on the importance of terminology and positive language • Build opportunities to reverse mentor your workplace leaders to build greater connection to the LGBTI community
Support same-sex attracted women to overcome barriers associated with dual effects of gender and sexuality	• Build connections across the workplace through gender-specific initiatives • Develop leadership coaching for same-sex attracted women as an investment in role models of the future • Create safe spaces for same-sex attracted women to come together and learn from each other
Break the stereotype through sharing stories	• Help allies influence others to understand how their words can be unconsciously reinforcing the stereotype • Challenge the stereotype from within the LGBTI community • Empower same-sex attracted women to define how they want to be known
Support same-sex attracted women through role models	• Demonstrate a re-imagined definition of a role model through highlighting examples of behaviours and day-to-day actions • Help connect same-sex attracted women through existing mentoring and networking channels
Create belonging through LGBTI networks	• Identify and build a group of 'early adopting' same-sex attracted women to help design and deliver initiatives that connects with an inclusive purpose and vision for the broader LGBTI network • Set a goal for gender balance within your network leadership team, including people in supporting roles within your network • Clearly articulate and share the purpose of your LGBTI network • Reinforce the broader purpose of your LGBTI network at events

Appendix 2 highlights how workplaces can build and develop a sustainable approach in response to this research.

Based on this research and the five themes outlined, workplaces can focus on supporting, guiding, building and enabling same sex attracted women so they can be their authentic selves. This model is detailed in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Model to make change happen for same-sex attracted women in the workplace

Who are they?

- New to their workplace or early in their career
- Still learning about their work environment and focused on building connections within their team
- Unlikely to be actively involved or participate in a network, but will still observe activities
- Less likely to be out and less likely to believe that it's important to be out
- Most worried about being judged based on their sexuality

- Comfortable in their role and have a good understanding of their workplace
- Highly influenced by role models and broader inclusivity
- Identifying the type of role they want to have within their workplace
- Most likely to be involved in networks and keen to become change makers

- Developing their leadership capability and profile within the workplace
- Eager to make a difference and bridge gaps within the workforce
- Developing greater levels of self awareness and understanding of their own beliefs and drivers
- Likely to be involved with networks and play an informal leadership role within a network

- Influential leaders within the workplace
- Clear level of self awareness, leadership confidence and ability to be authentic leaders
- Less inclined to be actively involved in an LGBTI network
- Most likely to be out at work and most likely to believe in the importance of being out at work

What might they need?

Support them by:

- Affirming that their workplace accepts and celebrates them as part of the LGBTI community (macro/micro culture)
- Creating greater awareness of the stereotype of same-sex attracted women and appropriate language across the workplace (stereotype)
- Highlighting role models and authentic leaders (stereotype and role models)
- Having an accessible same-sex attracted female contact within the network (networks)

Guide them:

- On how to make connections across the LGBTI network and broader LGBTI community (networks)
- Through clear access to and engagement with role models and examples of authentic leaders (role models)
- On how to get involved with LGBTI network events and support the network strategy (networks)

Build their:

- Leadership capability and profile through targeted leadership programs (gender and sexuality)
- Skills by providing opportunities to lead, present and develop key pieces of work through a network (networks)
- Skills to balance their responsibilities in the workplace and the network (gender and sexuality)

Enable them by:

- Providing opportunities for them to share their story with an LGBTI network (role models)
- Highlighting different ways that people can be role models (stereotype and role models)
- Helping them connect with the network and gain a better understanding of the role they can play in supporting and/or leading others (role models)

The concept of this model is to create a deeper sense of belonging and connection for same-sex attracted women in the workplace. To drive this change there are roles for workplace leaders, LGBTI networks, diversity and inclusion (or equivalent) teams, and colleagues across a workplace.

For the broader LGBTI community – being open and accepting to an approach that may look different to the status quo will be critical to creating experiences that are fully inclusive of same-sex attracted women.

Methodology

The primary aim of this research was to better understand the specific experiences of same-sex attracted women in the workplace as they were not clearly understood. This research provides data and insights to inform workplaces on the challenges of same-sex attracted women, particularly regarding visibility and engagement.

Rationale

The object of this research was to better understand why same-sex attracted women are less visible in the workplace and less engaged with LGBTI networks and initiatives, including:

- Why women are less involved with LGBTI networks and initiatives
- The impact of culture and leadership on the engagement of same-sex attracted women
- The stereotype associated with same-sex attracted women and how it impacts their experience in the workplace.

The research and associated actions can help workplaces to address these issues and provide inclusive support for their employees.

Overall, if same-sex attracted women continue to have lower engagement, workplaces could lose talented individuals. By contrast, improving engagement will positively affect both the individual and the workplace.

Audience

There are five core audiences for this research:

1. Workplace leaders who want to understand how to improve inclusion for same-sex attracted women
2. Workplace LGBTI networks who want to improve the participation of, and support for, women in their community
3. Workplace diversity and inclusion (D&I) teams working with leaders and businesses to build an inclusion approach that is both practical and relevant
4. Same-sex attracted women who are interested in better understanding some of the challenges that might exist and how they can help improve their experience in the workplace
5. Allies, including both straight allies and others in the LGBTI community (who are not same-sex attracted women) to better understand the role they can play in improving inclusion for same-sex attracted women.

Further details on the roles of each audience group can be found in Appendix 3.

Research limitations

The limitations of this research are common for its subject matter and analytical approach. As an example, same-sex attracted women are a hidden population within society and we therefore won't know if the sample is entirely representative.

Our use of snowball[4] sampling for initial interviews created a potential sample bias. However, these interviews informed the design of the survey and provided additional insights and experience, to inform the broader sample used for the survey.

The survey was initially focused on gay/lesbian women because one of our initial hypotheses was that their experiences were different to bisexual women. However, hearing from bisexual women during the interviews highlighted the importance of including this group in the survey. We therefore extended the scope of the survey to same-sex attracted women. References to gay women within the survey, despite intending to refer to same-sex attracted women, likely resulted in self-exclusion of other same-sex attracted women, including those who identify as bisexual or queer.

Although the total sample size is statistically significant, we collected an inadequate sample size of transgender and intersex people, and the findings within this report, as a result, do not represent their experiences and perspectives.

[4] Snowball sampling (or chain sampling, chain-referral sampling, referral sampling) is a nonprobability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances.

Method

In this research we carried out a cross-sectional study of the motivations and experiences of same-sex attracted women in the workplace. Our approach to the research included three stages.

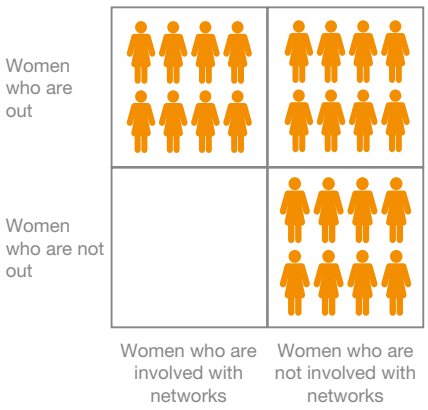
Stage one: Interviews and literature review

To identify the scope of existing work and the current context and landscape for this research, we conducted an in-depth literature review from which we generated a set of hypotheses:

- Same-sex attracted women will have a greater sense of psychological safety, belonging and confidence in the workplace if they have role models
- A stigma's impact in the workplace can be complex, subtle and difficult to manage if it is invisible (such as being same-sex attracted)
- When women are same-sex attracted, the combined effect of their gender and sexuality is multiplied and negatively impacts the likelihood of them progressing and succeeding in the workplace
- If there are not many women in a workplace LGBTI network, women are less likely to be involved

Snowball sampling was used to identify 18 interview respondents. In order to represent a range of same-sex attracted women, the sample represented women from groups 1, 2 and 3, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Snowball sampling approach and sample representation



Qualified organisational consultants conducted 18 face-to-face interviews across four different states and territories, using interview guides to ensure consistency, including questions on:

- A respondent's story and experience as a same-sex attracted woman in the workplace
- What it means to be out and the associated importance and risk in the workplace
- The relevance and importance of LGBTI initiatives/networks to them
- The impact of leadership and culture on their experience as a same-sex attracted woman in the workplace
- The impact of role models, the stereotype and gender on their experience as a same-sex attracted woman

All interviews were transcribed and six themes were generated from the findings.[5]

Stage two: Online survey

Using the findings from the interviews, we designed a set of questions to test the associated hypothesis. The survey was shared through a number of channels:

- Attendees at the Pride In Practice[6] and Better Together[7] conferences
- Out for Australia[8] and Joy 94.9[9] Facebook pages
- Members of workplace LGBTI networks and online groups

We received 1,270 survey responses. Some 116 individuals did not complete the full survey and their responses are only captured in the first three sections.

Stage three: Analysis

The analysis of the survey data included a suite of analytical tools to draw out key findings and statistics. The approaches used included:

- **Data cleansing:** We segmented the data into groups to identify the response and completion rate for all 54 questions. We removed any responses which were started but not completed, along with any responses with a low response rate between Q1 and Q23 (demographics questions).
- **Regression analysis:** We then carried out a regression analysis to find the variables that were significant predictors of how likely an individual is to be out in the workplace.
- **Data exploration:** By studying scatterplot matrices and column charts of all variables, we undertook an exploratory analysis of trends. As new findings and trends were established, the hypotheses were refined.
- **Hypothesis testing:** Finally, we used statistical analysis to test each hypothesis and assess its significance and weighting.

[5] 1)The experience of working as a same-sex attracted woman is first and foremost, grounded by gender; 2) Role models are important to everyone but women aren't ready to admit that they can be 'gay' role models; 3) It's easier to be out when you're in a relationship; 4) The fear of being stereotyped is a major barrier to being out; 5) LGBTIQ+ networks are seen as valuable but women are not engaging because they don't identify with the perceived purpose; 6) Organisation culture is critical: the Marriage Equality survey gave companies a chance to practise what they preach around inclusivity.

[6] Pride In Practise: annual, national conference dedicated to LGBTI inclusion across workplaces, sporting organisations and the health and human services sector.

[7] Better Together conference: National conference aiming to explore current issues facing the LGBTIQ+ movement, bringing together voices from indigenous communities, people with a disability, the Deaf community, as well as multicultural and multi-faith communities.

[8] Out for Australia: Independent organisation providing visible role models, mentors, content and targeted support to aspirating LGBTIQ professionals and to strengthen the sense of community among professionals and students.

[9] Joy Radio: JOY 94.9 is an LGBTI volunteer-based community radio station committed to providing a voice for the diverse LGBTI communities, enabling freedom of expression, the breaking down of isolation and the celebration of our culture, achievements and pride.

Survey overview

Key themes emerged from our analysis of the interviews and survey results. We outline these themes in the following chapters. To provide context to the survey sample and the following analysis, we also outline the key demographic findings.

Levels of personal disclosure

65% of respondents disclosed that they are comfortable being out to most or all of the people they work with. Figure 5 shows that 38% of the same-sex attracted women surveyed are out to all of the people they work with. Further, 35% are not out at all or only to a few people in their workplace.

As Figure 6 demonstrates, age, seniority, workplace size and tenure impacts how comfortable same-sex attracted women are to be out at work:

- Younger same-sex attracted women are less likely to be out in the workplace
- Senior women are more comfortable identifying as same-sex attracted
- Same-sex attracted women are less likely to come out immediately after joining a workplace
- Same-sex attracted women feel more comfortable coming out in smaller workplaces

Figure 5: Proportion of same-sex attracted women who are out at work

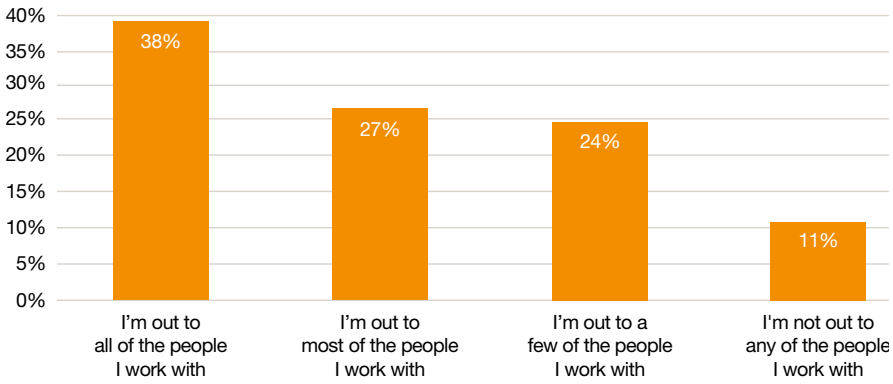


Figure 6: Demographic variance with comfort of identifying as same-sex attracted women

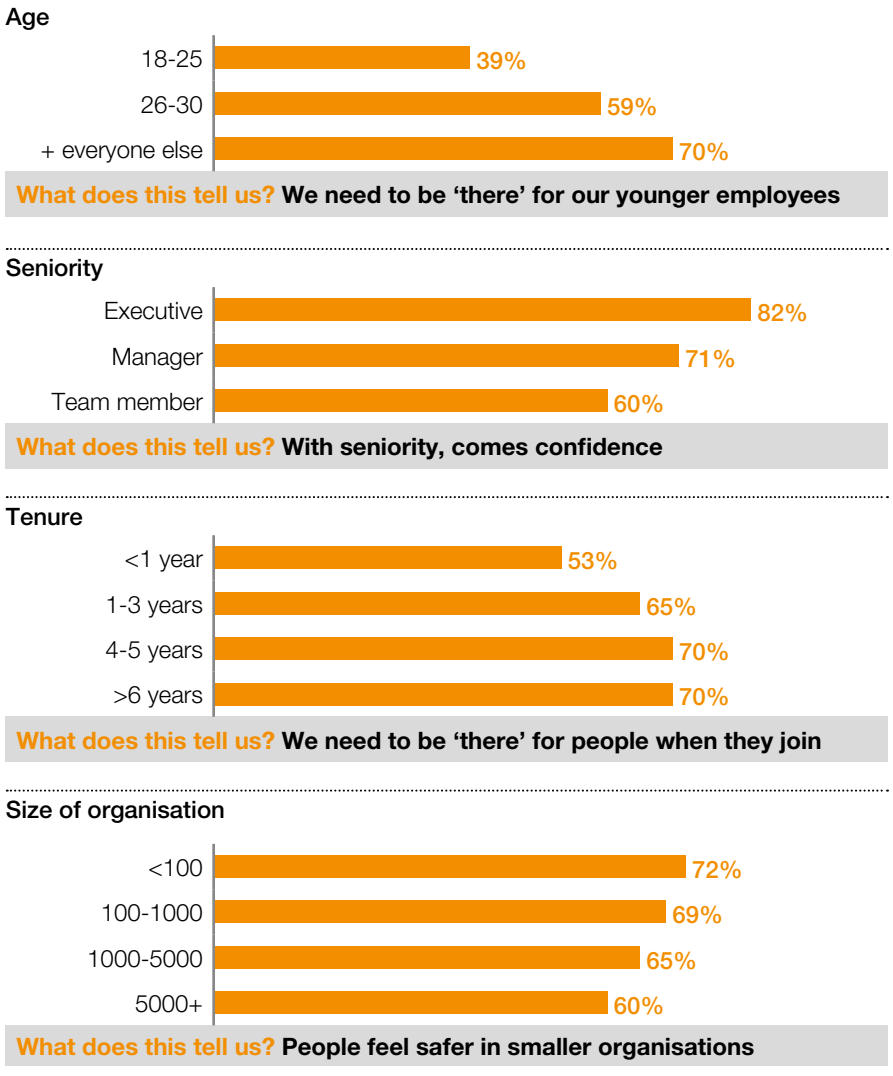


Table 2 demonstrates how levels of personal disclosure differ across sectors and industries. Respondents in the mining industry were least likely to be out, whilst those in healthcare and social assistance were most likely to be out at work.

Other significant variances to levels of disclosure include:

- Bisexual respondents were less than half as likely to be out compared to women attracted to only females (38% compared to 78%). Importantly, bisexual women were significantly less likely to believe that being out at work is important (50% to 80%). They also have one of the smallest gaps between being comfortable to be out within the workplace compared to outside of work, suggesting a broader societal challenge for this group of people (43% to 59%).
- Respondents in private sector were more likely to be out at work than those in the public sector (67% compared to 59%).
- Experiences across states and territories were different. Respondents in New South Wales and South Australia were most likely to be out, with respective rates of 70% and 79%. Respondents in Western Australia had the lowest level of comfort, with 50%of respondents being out, followed by Queensland at 58%, the Australian Capital Territory at 61% and Victoria and Tasmania at 66%.
- Respondents were 12% less likely to be out if English was their second language (54% compared to 66%).
- Women without a partner are 21% less likely to be out than those women with a partner (50% compared to 71%).

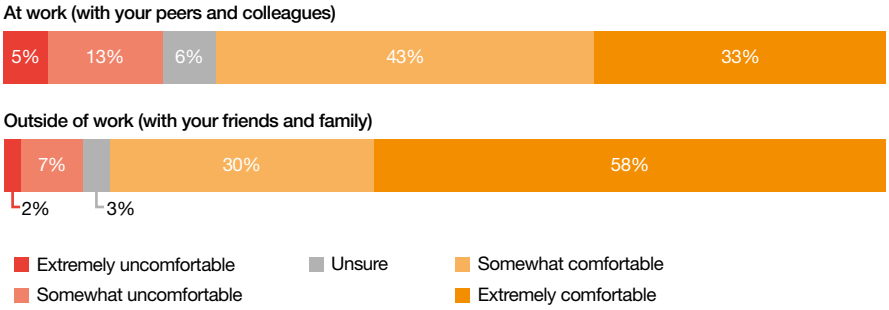
Table 2: Percentage of respondents who are out to most or all of their colleagues, by industry

Industry	Percentage out	Sample size
Health Care and Social Assistance	77%	133
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	74%	27
Retail Trade	72%	25
Arts and Recreation Services	68%	31
Construction	67%	12
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	67%	15
Financial and Insurance Services	66%	155
Public Administration and Safety	64%	159
Information Media and Telecommunications	63%	40
Education, Research, and Training	62%	230
Professional, technical and scientific services	56%	154
Administrative and Support Services	49%	77
Mining	43%	21

Further details - including an industry breakdown for specific questions - can be found in Appendix 1.

Respondents were less comfortable being out in the workplace compared to outside of work. Figure 7 demonstrates that 88% of respondents are extremely or somewhat comfortable being out outside of work, compared to 76% within work. One of the largest differences came from 18-25 year olds (59% at work compared to 81% outside of work). After them, respondents over the age of 50 had the next largest difference (76% at work compared to 92% outside of work).

Figure 7: Proportion of same-sex women who feel comfortable being out at work, compared to with their peers

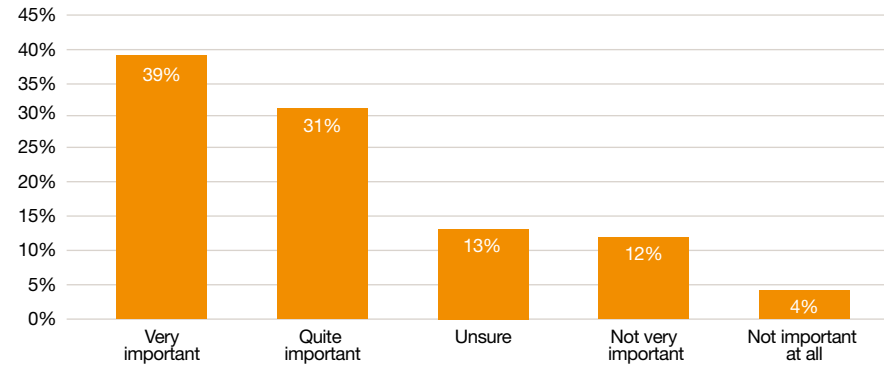


Importance of being out

Figure 8 demonstrates that overall, 70% of respondents believe that it is important to be out at work. The age of respondents had a significant impact on the importance of being out.

Of respondents over the age of 50, 72% reported being out as important compared to 56% of those aged between 18 and 25. The perceived importance of being out also strongly correlated with the likelihood of being out.

Figure 8: Importance of being out at work



Benefits and risks of being out

Benefits associated with being out

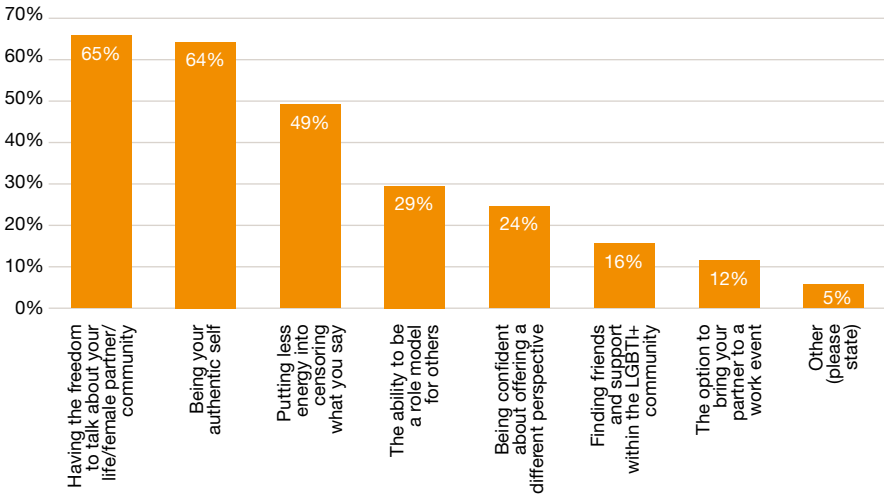
Figure 9 highlights that the top benefits associated with being out at work are 'having the freedom to talk about your life/female partner/community' and 'being your authentic self'.

The benefits associated with being out varied by certain demographic groups:

- Having the freedom to talk about your life is most important for respondents who were 26-30
- Being your authentic self becomes more important with age
- The willingness to be a role model increased significantly with seniority
- Finding friends and support within the LGBTI community becomes less important with age

These benefits also vary by industry. For example, the top benefit (Having the freedom to talk about your life/female partner/community) is important for 76% of respondents in Health Care and Social Assistance and 58% in public administration and safety.

Figure 9: Benefits of being out at work

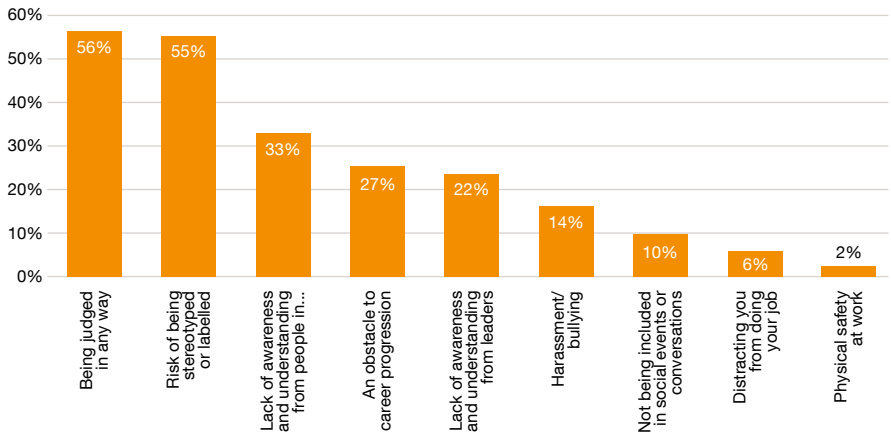


Risks associated with being out

Figure 10 highlights that the top risks associated with being out at work are being 'judged in any way' and the 'risk of being stereotyped or labelled'.

The top risks associated with being out were more consistent across demographic groups and industries than the associated benefits of being out. However, being judged and a lack of understanding were both slightly less important with age, and more important to respondents who are attracted to both sexes.

Figure 10: Perceived risks associated with being out at work



Five key themes

Based on the interviews and survey analysis, five key themes were determined. These themes significantly contribute to respondents levels of comfort in identifying as a same-sex attracted woman in the workplace:

1. A workplace's **micro culture** will largely determine how comfortable and safe same-sex attracted women feel at work. Authentic leadership and acceptance of difference will allow same-sex attracted women to feel they belong in their team.

2. The **dual impact of gender and sexuality** strengthens the gender-related glass ceiling and makes it even more challenging for same-sex attracted women to thrive and develop in their working environment.

3. The impact of the strength and narrowness of the perceived **stereotype** of same-sex attracted women compounds their fear of being negatively judged and labelled. The lack of visibly diverse same-sex attracted women and the micro culture within a workplace have the potential to exacerbate the stereotype.

4. **Role models** are critical to helping same-sex attracted women build a sense of belonging and vision for the future. The concept of a role model can be re-imagined to make it easier for women to understand how they can act as role models whilst being true to themselves and authentic.

5. Same-sex attracted women perceive the purpose of **LGBTI networks** as providing support to LGBTI colleagues and promoting a more inclusive workplace. The purpose they require is not necessarily being met through LGBTI network events, creating disconnect between the perceived purpose of the network and participation

With each theme, we have included a summary of the findings and actions for workplaces to create change. As further support, a series of documents are available in the appendices to provide practical tools and examples.

Macro and micro culture

1

Same-sex attracted women now largely expect broader workplace diversity and inclusion advocacy. However, they will only be authentic where they 'feel' their peers practice inclusive behaviours and language on a day-to-day basis.

Respondents told us that workplaces that actively promote broader diversity and inclusion were more likely to be places where same-sex attracted women felt comfortable to be out. This demonstrates the importance of having an inclusive workplace culture which encourages authenticity.

Micro cultures – social rules, expectations and norms – define the day-to-day work environment. Whilst the larger workplace will define macro culture, micro culture often sets an individual's sense of psychological safety[9]. Our research indicates that, whilst the impact of macro level support from workplaces cannot be underestimated, the extent to which different people, with different life experiences, are respected and accepted in the micro environment will significantly impact inclusion. To overcome the unconscious (and conscious) comments that lead to the subtle prejudice, discrimination and isolation of same-sex attracted women, the inclusive behaviours of managers and colleagues are critical.

This sense of safety is particularly important for same-sex attracted women who are more likely to monitor social situations and be negatively impacted by subtle stigmatisation.

Symbols like rainbow lanyards, ally stickers and supportive electronic email signatures also influence the local micro culture of teams. Our research found that women are less likely to worry about being judged where psychological safety is higher, and are therefore more likely to both be themselves and be more engaged in their work environment.

Survey findings and research

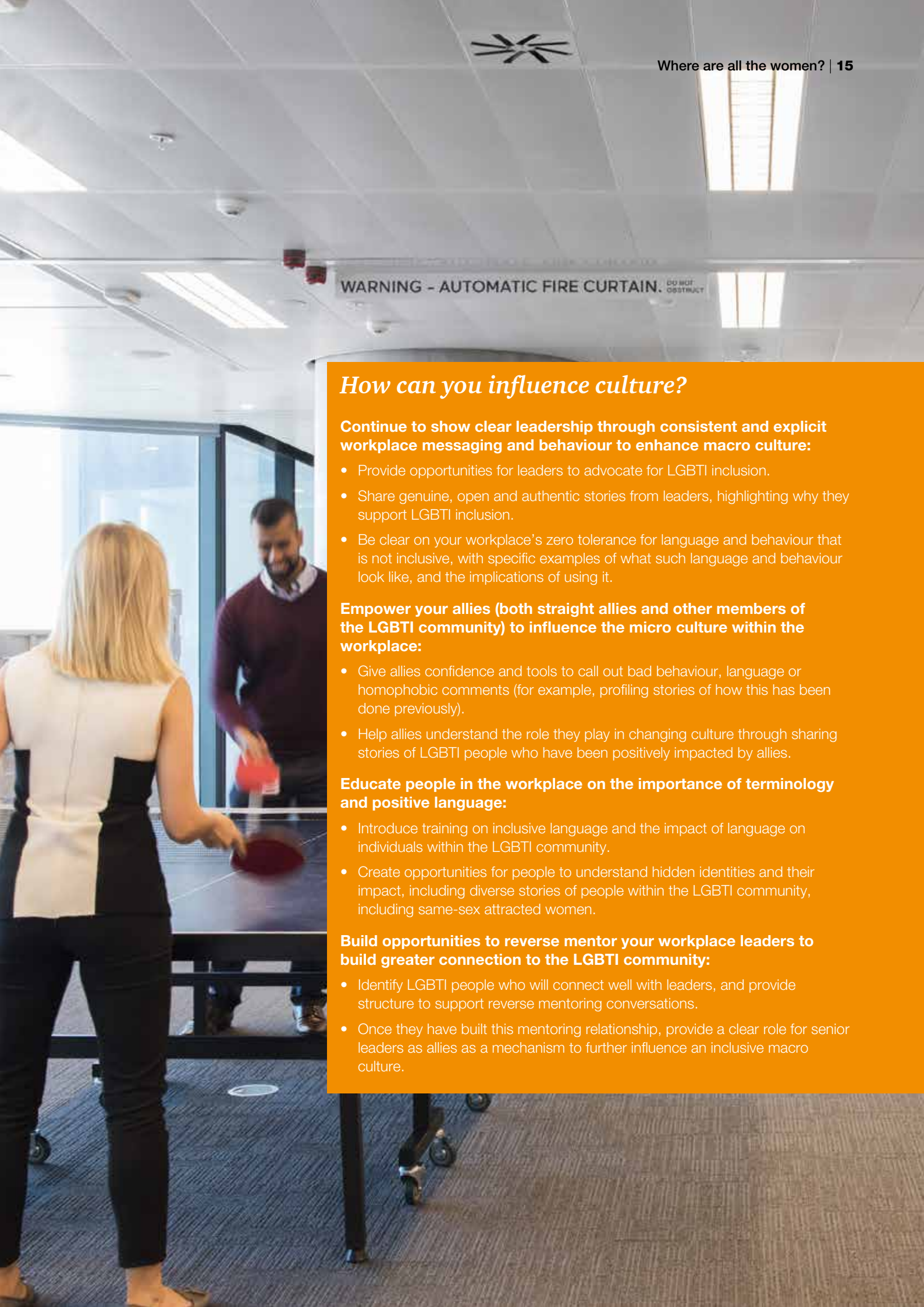
- 81% of respondents stated that active leadership support impacted how they felt about being out at work and 80% highlighted that visible support of LGBTI inclusion was important when looking for a new job.
- Many respondents referenced the negative impact of 'derogatory talk', 'casual homophobic jokes' and 'inappropriate questions' in their local teams. They also referenced how inclusive behaviours of Managers and colleagues created psychological safety, as did symbols like rainbow lanyards, ally stickers and signatures.
- 72% of respondents said that it was easier to frame a conversation about being same-sex attracted when in a relationship and referencing a partner. This was also supported by respondents being 21% more likely to be out if they are in a relationship (71% compared to 50%).

> "My desk had an 'ally' postcard left on it from previous employee and most co-workers keep one visible too."

> "Often, big corporates have the right LGBTI policies in place, but without active promotion by Managers this falls short to just lip service."

- Over half of respondents said that being judged about their sexuality was a risk to them being out at work.
- 33% of respondents believe that lack of awareness of the LGBTI community within the workplace is a risk to being out at work. They feared creating awkward situations with colleagues may make it difficult to build or retain a meaningful connections.
- Key benefits of being out are 'having the freedom to talk about your life/female partner' and 'the ability to be your authentic self'. Again, this related to an ability to connect and build meaningful relationships with peers. This may be that psychological safety is easier to build in more intimate workplaces that have a smaller gap between leadership and teams.

[9] Psychological safety is a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking. It can be defined as "being able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences of self-image, status or career"



How can you influence culture?

Continue to show clear leadership through consistent and explicit workplace messaging and behaviour to enhance macro culture:

- Provide opportunities for leaders to advocate for LGBTI inclusion.
- Share genuine, open and authentic stories from leaders, highlighting why they support LGBTI inclusion.
- Be clear on your workplace's zero tolerance for language and behaviour that is not inclusive, with specific examples of what such language and behaviour look like, and the implications of using it.

Empower your allies (both straight allies and other members of the LGBTI community) to influence the micro culture within the workplace:

- Give allies confidence and tools to call out bad behaviour, language or homophobic comments (for example, profiling stories of how this has been done previously).
- Help allies understand the role they play in changing culture through sharing stories of LGBTI people who have been positively impacted by allies.

Educate people in the workplace on the importance of terminology and positive language:

- Introduce training on inclusive language and the impact of language on individuals within the LGBTI community.
- Create opportunities for people to understand hidden identities and their impact, including diverse stories of people within the LGBTI community, including same-sex attracted women.

Build opportunities to reverse mentor your workplace leaders to build greater connection to the LGBTI community:

- Identify LGBTI people who will connect well with leaders, and provide structure to support reverse mentoring conversations.
- Once they have built this mentoring relationship, provide a clear role for senior leaders as allies as a mechanism to further influence an inclusive macro culture.

Dual effect of gender and sexuality

2

Same-sex attracted women are more likely to doubt themselves and less likely to have a strong sense that they belong in the workplace. This doubt compounds the effect of the gender-related glass ceiling because confidence and belonging are critical traits in overcoming the gender challenges all women face.

The challenges faced by same-sex attracted women cannot be separated from the challenges of being a woman – the majority of survey respondents identified that gender and sexuality had a dual effect on their career progression. Our research highlighted the compounded effect of gender and sexuality: same-sex attracted women told us they do not necessarily have the traits to overcome gender prejudice, such as a sense of belonging and self-confidence.

With same-sex attracted women facing even greater challenges than straight women, our research suggests that same-sex attracted women are not only struggling to progress to senior roles but also more likely to leave a workplace. 17% of survey respondents had already left a workplace before the age of 26 due to a lack of inclusion.

The challenges same-sex attracted women face, therefore, extend beyond their time in a workplace and affect their decisions to both choose an employer and whether to stay with an employer or within a specific industry.

Our research shows that being authentic drives and inspires same-sex attracted women in the workplace. Authenticity requires being open about yourself including your sexuality, belief system, purpose and your vulnerabilities so you can build meaningful connections. Where same-sex attracted women fear judgement or subtle discrimination, they are less likely to be open and connect with colleagues.

Survey findings and research

- 29% of respondents believe being same-sex attracted inhibits their ability to progress their career, whilst 51% believe that their gender is an inhibitor. When asked which was more important, 79% said that both gender and sexual equality equally impacted on their career progression.
- Existing research suggests that to overcome the gender-related glass ceiling you need a sense of belonging, self-confidence and vision[11]. Being judged based on sexuality (which 56% of respondents told us is a risk of being out) increases self-doubt and lowers confidence. Similarly, same-sex attracted women will have less sense of belonging and overall vision for their careers when there is a lack of role models.

> "Gay women experience a higher degree of discrimination than gay men, with the double impact of gender and sexuality discrimination. The economic impact of being a gay woman is very different to that of a gay man. The mateship networks favour men that are perceived as providers to their family."

> "Allow women to be themselves (soft, hard, feminine, masculine, funny, kind) and gay women won't have to fear how gay stereotypes will impact their careers in addition to the stereotypes of just being a woman in the workplace."

- 17% of respondents under the age of 26 have left an organisation because they did not think that it was supportive of LGBTI inclusion.
- Many respondents commented that they would actively choose an industry or company if it was safe,open and supportive of same-sex attracted women.

[11] Johns, M.L, 2013. Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Structural, Cultural, and Organizational Barriers Preventing Women from Achieving Senior and Executive Positions. Perspectives in Health Information management, [Online]. Vol. 10. Available at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3544145/ [Accessed 31 July 2018

How to support same-sex attracted women to overcome barriers associated with the dual effect of sexuality and gender

Build connections across the workplace through gender-specific initiatives:

- Connect with your women's network and work with them to share experiences of gender, sexuality and explore the combined effect of both.
- Continue supporting and driving gender equality to demonstrate inclusivity and to communicate the experiences of same-sex attracted women within this group.

Develop leadership coaching for same-sex attracted women as an investment in role models of the future:

- Provide opportunities to develop authentic leadership and storytelling skills across same-sex attracted women.
- Responses to the challenges highlighted in this report are embedded in any LGBTI-specific leadership courses and female-specific leadership courses. This will not only positively impact same-sex attracted women but also further inform straight and LGBTI allies.

Create safe spaces for same-sex attracted women to come together and learn from each other:

- This space should be specifically for same-sex attracted women so they can focus amongst themselves on personal development and create a sense of belonging and connection.

Impact of the perceived stereotype

3

Across the LGBTI population, the most common fear in relation to coming out is to be negatively judged and labelled.[12] People want to be treated on the merits of their work, and on the person they are, rather than being judged based on a stereotype.

The stereotype of same-sex attracted women is narrow and not indicative of the whole population. The power and strength of the stereotype impacts the likelihood of same-sex attracted women to come out in the workplace. Figure 11 illustrates the words that respondents associate with their own stereotype of same-sex attracted women in the workplace. The most common were masculine, butch, man-hater and aggressive. Some of these words suggest internalised homophobia and whilst they aren't all negative to everyone, many have negative connotations to different people.

The impact of this stereotype negatively affects 72% of our respondents, who mostly do not believe they fit the stereotype. Further, this stereotype is reinforced through comments and remarks within the micro culture of a workplace.

Changing the narrative requires a complex balance between sharing the stories and experiences of past LGBTI movements, but also allowing new generations to contribute to the future image of the LGBTI community. The term 'butch', for example, was originally created by radical lesbians in the 20th century to define an unknown group within society. That group needed to be defined then, but younger generations rebel against being defined and often dislike terms such as 'butch'. Respondents who identify with the stereotype were less likely to believe that there is a stereotype and are also more likely to be out at work. This highlights the stereotype has more impact on same-sex attracted women who do not identify with the stereotype itself.

Figure 11: Word cloud on response to survey question asking for 3 words to describe the stereotype of same-sex attracted women in the workplace

Survey findings and research

- With only 23% of respondents identifying with the three associated attributes that they identified, 72% of respondents say that this stereotype influences them negatively and is the biggest barrier to them being out at work.
- Many same-sex attracted women gave examples of colleagues making comments suggesting that they 'don't look gay'. Comments of this kind remind us of the misconceived image of same-sex attracted women and the stereotype that drives this image.
- Within the comments of the survey, respondents highlighted that this stereotype is perpetuated through day-to-day language and behaviour in the micro culture of a workplace.

Many respondents suggested that to overcome the single stereotypical dimension of same-sex attracted women, more diverse stories and images of same-sex attracted women should be shared.

> "We need to destroy the stereotypes and make all the appearance of gay women visible (particularly those who don't fit stereotypes)."

[12] Of the reasons for not wanting to be out, the two highest ranked were not wanting to be labelled (42.5%) and just not comfortable enough to come out at work (41.05%)

How we can begin to break the stereotype?

Help allies influence others to understand how their words can be unconsciously reinforcing the stereotype:

- Share a document that includes the top comments that same-sex attracted women do not like being asked or told, the statistics that highlight the impact these comments have, and alternative ways of asking questions.
- Highlight the language that reinforces the stereotype and ask people to call it out if they hear it within the workplace.

Challenge the stereotype from within the LGBTI community:

- Consider running open forums to discuss words within the stereotype. For example, bring together different same-sex attracted women to discuss the history of the word 'butch' and how it can be considered a strong word.
- Allow a space for people to challenge different perspectives in a positive and informed way.

Empower same-sex attracted women to define how they want to be known:

- Run a campaign to redefine how same-sex attracted women want to be known within the workplace.
- Share stories that focus on the strong relationships between men and same-sex attracted women to reinforce the idea that being a same-sex attracted woman does not negatively impact relationships with men.

Reimagine role models

4

Role models are critical to helping same-sex attracted women build a sense of belonging and vision for the future. The concept of a role model can be re-imagined to make it easier for women to understand how they can act as role models whilst being true to themselves and authentic.

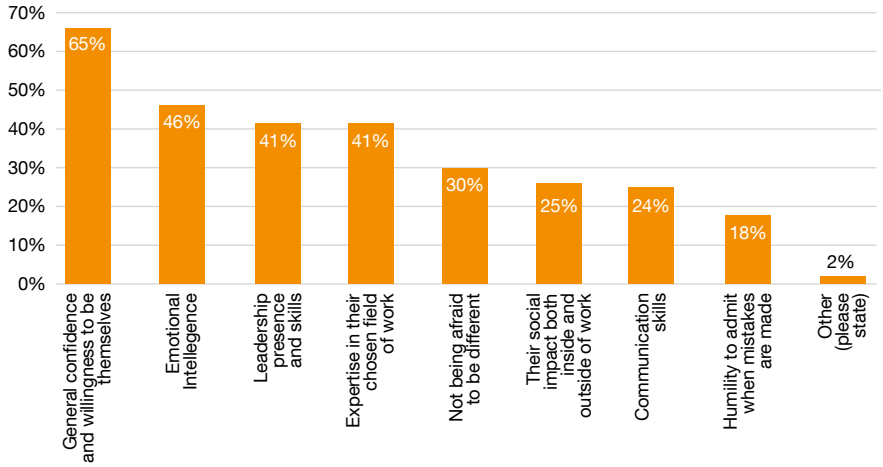
Same-sex attracted women with professional same-sex attracted female role models are significantly more likely to be out at work. Role models can help unlock the potential of same-sex attracted women and inspire them to bring their whole selves to work. They can also act as behavioural role models, representing what is possible and sharing their own stories to inspire others. They are particularly important because they show the unique and diverse characteristics of different same-sex attracted women, and therefore also play a critical role in debunking the narrow stereotype discussed above.

"There are so few LGBT women in leadership it is hard for women to find role models to look up to. Out women need to be made more visible in senior management."

Role models can take various forms and influence same-sex attracted women in different ways. Everyone can be a role model – you can be a visible and prominent figurehead, or someone who is a role model through day-to-day actions and authentic behaviours. Respondents were willing to be role models, but were limited in their understanding of what defines a role model, or had a traditional view of what a role model should be.

Figure 12 highlights the most important attributes that respondents consider when selecting a role model. Authenticity is the most important attribute and likely to be a key differentiator. Further, a role model inherently demonstrates leadership and emotional intelligence.

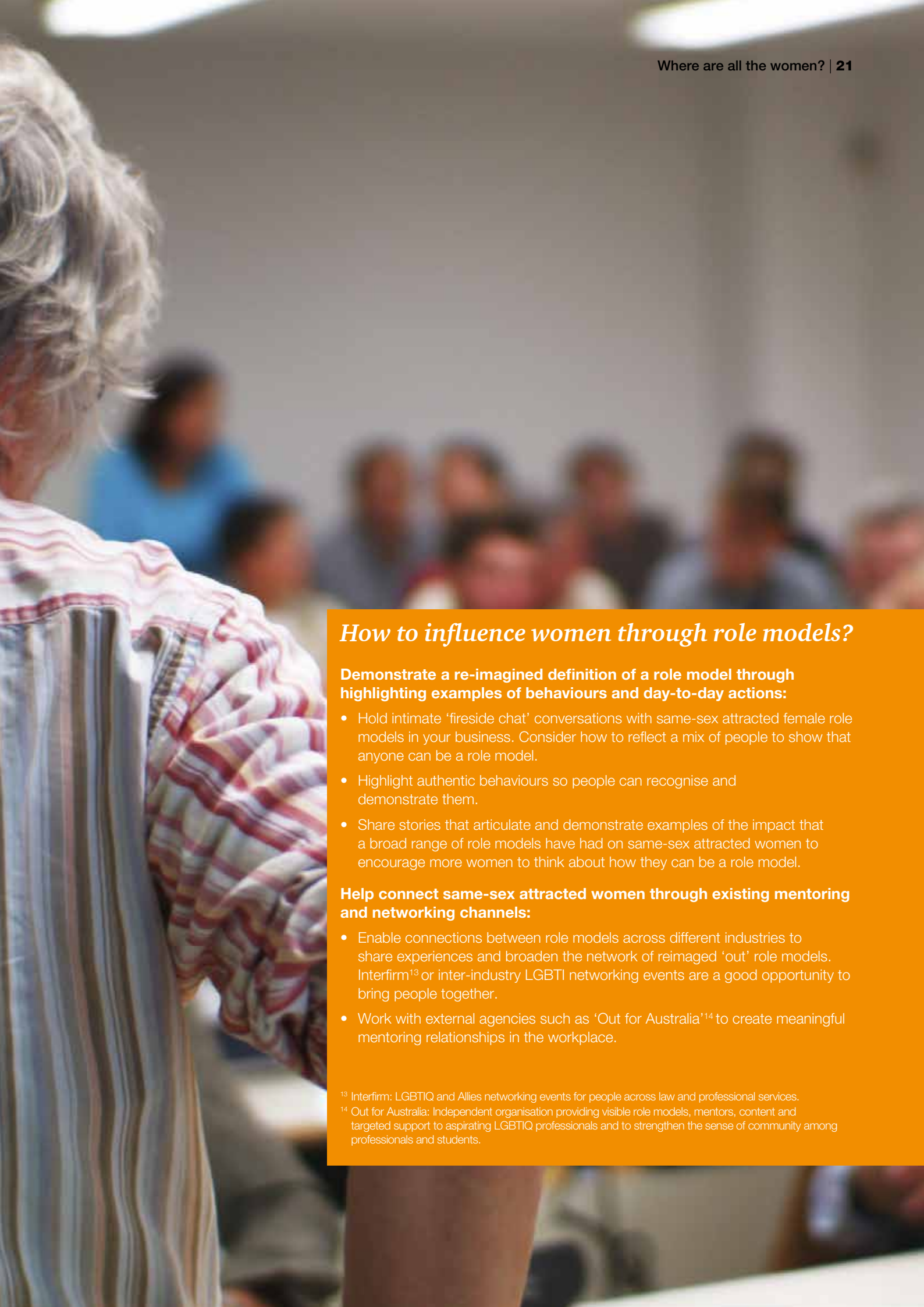
Figure 12: Most important personal attributes of role models



Survey findings and research

- 84% of respondents believe that role models are important and 74% of respondents believe it is important to have same-sex attracted women as role models at work.
- Whilst 84% of respondents have same-sex attracted women as role models outside of work, only 49% have same-sex attracted women as role models in the workplace in the workplace.
- 78% of respondents said from a role model perspective, they believe being a same-sex attracted woman is something that others might connect with, and 65% said they would consider or be happy to be a role model within the workplace.
- Based on key driver analysis, same-sex attracted women who have professional same-sex attracted women as role models are significantly more likely to be out to a greater proportion of colleagues.

"If you have gay women in senior positions, encourage them to be visible. It's important that we have strong leadership role models in order to help us succeed in our own careers."



How to influence women through role models?

Demonstrate a re-imagined definition of a role model through highlighting examples of behaviours and day-to-day actions:

- Hold intimate 'fireside chat' conversations with same-sex attracted female role models in your business. Consider how to reflect a mix of people to show that anyone can be a role model.
- Highlight authentic behaviours so people can recognise and demonstrate them.
- Share stories that articulate and demonstrate examples of the impact that a broad range of role models have had on same-sex attracted women to encourage more women to think about how they can be a role model.

Help connect same-sex attracted women through existing mentoring and networking channels:

- Enable connections between role models across different industries to share experiences and broaden the network of reimaged 'out' role models. Interfirm[13] or inter-industry LGBTI networking events are a good opportunity to bring people together.
- Work with external agencies such as 'Out for Australia'[14] to create meaningful mentoring relationships in the workplace.

[13] Interfirm: LGBTIQ and Allies networking events for people across law and professional services.
[14] Out for Australia: Independent organisation providing visible role models, mentors, content and targeted support to aspirating LGBTIQ professionals and to strengthen the sense of community among professionals and students.

LGBTI networks and support

5

Respondents felt that LGBTI networking events are often dominated by gay men and that LGBTI networks largely focus on social activities. As a result, respondents commented that events and initiatives do not necessarily appeal to same-sex attracted women which impacts their willingness to prioritise them.

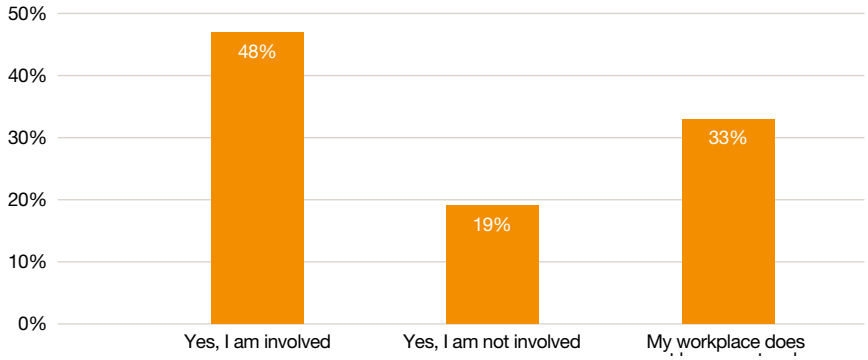
Through enabling same-sex attracted women to take equal leadership roles in the design and delivery of their LGBTI strategy and initiatives, they can target core activities which connect with all members of the LGBTI community. Same-sex attracted women perceive the purpose of LGBTI networks as providing support to LGBTI colleagues and promoting a more inclusive workplace. Respondents commented that the purpose they require is not necessarily being met through LGBTI network events, creating disconnect between the perceived purpose of the network and participation.

This research identified that the needs of same-sex attracted women change during their career, therefore networks should create opportunities for them to lean in and out as their needs change and develop. For example, whilst young women or new joiners require support, those women that have progressed in their career may want to take more of an active leadership role within their LGBTI network.

Survey findings and research

Figure 13 shows that 48% of respondents are involved with their LGBTI network, 19% are not involved and the remainder of respondents either don't have access to a network or don't know if they have a network in their workplace.

Figure 13: Percentage of respondents whose workplace have an LGBTI network and are/are not involved



The likelihood of same-sex attracted women to be involved with LGBTI networks changes with age and seniority. Figure 14 shows the impact of age on the likelihood for same-sex attracted women to be involved with their LGBTI network. Figure 15 shows the impact of seniority on the likelihood for same-sex attracted women to be involved with their LGBTI network.

Figure 14: Respondents likelihood to be involved with LGBTI networks, by age

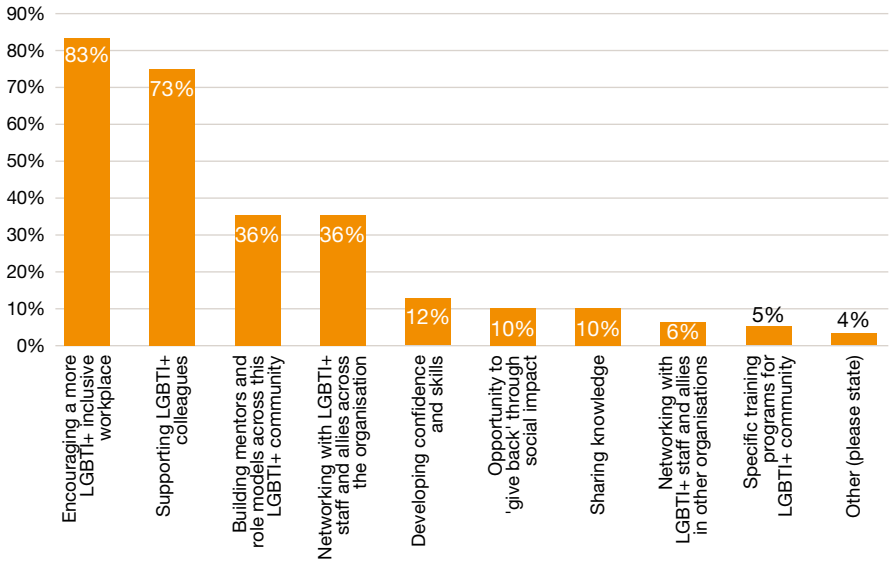
Does your workplace have a formal LGBTI+ network?	18 – 25	26 – 30	31 – 40	41 – 50	51+
I don't know	9%	4%	5%	4%	1%
No	28%	25%	31%	30%	25%
Yes, and I am involved	37%	53%	46%	48%	52%
Yes, and I am not involved	25%	17%	18%	18%	21%

Figure 15: Respondents likelihood to be involved with LGBTI networks, by seniority

Does your workplace have a formal LGBTI+ network?	(blank)	Executive/ leader	Manager	Team member
I don't know	–	2%	2%	6%
No	–	31%	30%	27%
Yes, and I am involved	–	57%	47%	47%
Yes, and I am not involved	–	10%	21%	19%

Figure 16 demonstrates that 'encouraging a more LGBTI inclusive workplace' and 'supporting LGBTI colleagues' are the highest perceived purposes of LGBTI networks from the perspective of same-sex attracted women. Many respondents want to give support people within their network, and they see receiving support as a secondary outcome.

Figure 16: Respondents believed purpose of LGBTI networks (choice of 3)



42% of respondents stated that their LGBTI networks did not affect their engagement in the workplace (negatively or positively). Whilst not many respondents gave reasons for not being involved, those who did stated that it was not a priority or they weren't sure what they would get from it. This suggests that networks are not necessarily connecting with same-sex attracted women.

However, employees with LGBTI networks were more likely to have same-sex attracted role models at work, suggesting networks have a strong role in bringing together members of the LGBTI community.

> "The biggest issue by far is that ALL of the networking events are in the evenings. I am never able to attend as I am a single mother with family responsibilities."

> "I don't know if its necessary to be honest. I find being a part of a specific group at work makes it harder to be 'just like everyone else.'"

> "I believe it should be inclusive and not exclusive to really address issues, breakdown barriers and not having to be part of a 'special' group."

How can you create belonging through LGBTI networks?

Identify and build a group of 'early adopting' same-sex attracted women to help design and deliver initiatives that connects with an inclusive purpose and vision for the broader LGBTI network:

- Connect with female-focussed initiatives such as International Women's Day in line with the dual effect of gender and sexuality.
- Build opportunities for same-sex attracted women to network informally amongst themselves, findings connections to bring into the broader LGBTI network.

Set a goal for gender balance within your network leadership team, including people in supporting roles within your network:

- Continue to reiterate the importance of broader perspectives to ensure that strategies are aligned with the needs of the whole LGBTI community, which may result in changes to the way the network operates over time.

Clearly articulate and share the purpose of your LGBTI network:

- Create an opportunity for same-sex attracted women to participate in the development or refresh of the network purpose and strategy and endorse agreed outcomes.

Reinforce the broader purpose of your LGBTI network at events:

- Share stories that demonstrate the positive experiences of all parts of the LGBTI community participating in your network. Demonstrate the positive impact of same-sex attracted women becoming actively involved in LGBTI networks.
- Demonstrate the impact that individual same-sex attracted women can have by encouraging other same sex attracted women to get involved in their network.
- Highlight how membership of your LGBTI network provides opportunities to meet and learn from other women and the broader LGBTI community.

Conclusion

A sense of belonging and connection is missing for same-sex attracted women in the workplace. The slow and cumulative effect of day-to-day comments and unconscious bias impacts their confidence and willingness to be authentic in the workplace.

This research shows that there are five key areas in which a workplace can invest to improve the participation and experience of same-sex attracted women. Each of these themes are connected and an approach that covers the breadth of these topics can drive belonging, connection and confidence for same-sex attracted women in the workplace.

Our first research question was why are same-sex attracted women less visible in the workplace?

A workplace's **micro culture** will largely determine how comfortable and safe same-sex attracted women feel at work. Authentic leadership and acceptance of difference will allow same-sex attracted women to feel they belong in their team.

The **dual impact of gender and sexuality** strengthens the gender-related glass ceiling and makes it even more challenging for same-sex attracted women to thrive and develop in their working environment.

The impact of the strength and narrowness of the perceived **stereotype** of same-sex attracted women compounds their fear of being negatively judged and labelled. The lack of visibly diverse same-sex attracted women and the micro culture within a workplace have the potential to exacerbate the stereotype.

Role models are critical to helping same-sex attracted women build a sense of belonging and vision for the future. The concept of a role model can be re-imagined to make it easier for women to understand how they can act as role models whilst being true to themselves and authentic.

Our second research question was why are LGBTI networks not attracting many same-sex attracted women?

Same-sex attracted women perceive the purpose of **LGBTI networks** as providing support to LGBTI colleagues and promoting a more inclusive workplace. The purpose they require is not necessarily being met through LGBTI network events, creating disconnect between the perceived purpose of the network and participation.

Further, respondents also felt that LGBTI networking events are often dominated by gay men and that LGBTI networks largely focus on social activities. As a result, events and initiatives do not necessarily appeal to same-sex attracted women which impacts their willingness to prioritise them.

A model to make change happen

Based on this research and the five themes outlined, workplaces can focus on supporting, guiding, building and enabling same sex attracted women so they can be their authentic selves. This model is detailed in Figure 17.

Figure 17: Model to make change happen for same-sex attracted women in the workplace

Who are they?

1

- New to their workplace or early in their career
- Still learning about their work environment and focused on building connections within their team
- Unlikely to be actively involved or participate in a network, but will still observe activities
- Less likely to be out and less likely to believe that it's important to be out
- Most worried about being judged based on their sexuality

2

- Comfortable in their role and have a good understanding of their workplace
- Highly influenced by role models and broader inclusivity
- Identifying the type of role they want to have within their workplace
- Most likely to be involved in networks and keen to become change makers

3

- Developing their leadership capability and profile within the workplace
- Eager to make a difference and bridge gaps within the workforce
- Developing greater levels of self awareness and understanding of their own beliefs and drivers
- Likely to be involved with networks and play an informal leadership role within a network

4

- Influential leaders within the workplace
- Clear level of self awareness, leadership confidence and ability to be authentic leaders
- Less inclined to be actively involved in an LGBTI network
- Most likely to be out at work and most likely to believe in the importance of being out at work

What might they need?

Support them by:

- Affirming that their workplace accepts and celebrates them as part of the LGBTI community (macro/micro culture)
- Creating greater awareness of the stereotype of same-sex attracted women and appropriate language across the workplace (stereotype)
- Highlighting role models and authentic leaders (stereotype & role models)
- Having an accessible same-sex attracted female contact within the network (networks)

Guide them:

- On how to make connections across the LGBTI network and broader LGBTI community (networks)
- Through clear access to and engagement with role models and examples of authentic leaders (role models)
- On how to get involved with LGBTI network events and support the network strategy (networks)

Build their:

- Leadership capability and profile through targeted leadership programs (gender and sexuality)
- Skills by providing opportunities to lead, present and develop key pieces of work through a network (networks)
- Skills to balance their responsibilities in the workplace and the network (gender and sexuality)

Enable them by:

- Providing opportunities for them to share their story with an LGBTI network (role models)
- Highlighting different ways that people can be role models (stereotype & role models)
- Helping them connect with the network and gain a better understanding of the role they can play in supporting and/or leading others (role models)

The concept of this model is to create a deeper sense of belonging and connection for same-sex attracted women in the workplace. Further details on the roles of each audience can be found in Appendix 3. To drive this change:

- Leaders will set the vision and macro culture for others to follow
- LGBTI networks will provide the support and mechanism to bring same-sex attracted women together
- Diversity & Inclusion teams will reinforce the importance of authenticity and acceptance
- Team members and colleagues will determine the micro culture

For the broader LGBTI community – being open and accepting to an approach that may look different to the status quo will be critical to creating experiences that are fully inclusive of same-sex attracted women

Appendix

Appendix 1

Specific questions split by industry and workplace size

Industry

	Industry	Average
Education, Research and Training		
% of participants who are out to most or all colleagues at work	62%	65%
How important is it for you to be out at work? (quite important/ very important)	70%	70%
How much does active leadership support for LGBTI+ inclusion impact how you feel about coming out or being out at work?	81%	81%
Does your workplace have a formal LGBTI+ network?	66%	71%
Are role models important to you?	84%	84%
Do you believe that there is a stereotype about being a gay woman in the workplace?	81%	80%
To what extent (if any) do you perceive your sexuality as a barrier to your career opportunities/progression?	40%	34%
Professional, technical and scientific services		
% of participants who are out to most or all colleagues at work	56%	65%
How important is it for you to be out at work? (quite important/ very important)	71%	70%
How much does active leadership support for LGBTI+ inclusion impact how you feel about coming out or being out at work?	84%	81%
Does your workplace have a formal LGBTI+ network?	66%	71%
Are role models important to you?	88%	84%
Do you believe that there is a stereotype about being a gay woman in the workplace?	82%	80%
To what extent (if any) do you perceive your sexuality as a barrier to your career opportunities/progression?	35%	34%
Health Care and social assistance		
% of participants who are out to most or all colleagues at work	77%	65%
How important is it for you to be out at work? (quite important/ very important)	82%	70%
How much does active leadership support for LGBTI+ inclusion impact how you feel about coming out or being out at work?	84%	81%
Does your workplace have a formal LGBTI+ network?	83%	71%
Are role models important to you?	88%	84%
Do you believe that there is a stereotype about being a gay woman in the workplace?	78%	80%
To what extent (if any) do you perceive your sexuality as a barrier to your career opportunities/progression?	33%	34%
Financial and Insurance Services		
% of participants who are out to most or all colleagues at work	66%	65%
How important is it for you to be out at work? (quite important/ very important)	70%	70%
How much does active leadership support for LGBTI+ inclusion impact how you feel about coming out or being out at work?	81%	81%
Does your workplace have a formal LGBTI+ network?	69%	71%
Are role models important to you?	79%	84%
Do you believe that there is a stereotype about being a gay woman in the workplace?	77%	80%
To what extent (if any) do you perceive your sexuality as a barrier to your career opportunities/progression?	33%	34%
Public administration and safety		
% of participants who are out to most or all colleagues at work	64%	65%
How important is it for you to be out at work? (quite important/ very important)	70%	70%
How much does active leadership support for LGBTI+ inclusion impact how you feel about coming out or being out at work?	86%	81%
Does your workplace have a formal LGBTI+ network?	78%	71%
Are role models important to you?	88%	84%
Do you believe that there is a stereotype about being a gay woman in the workplace?	79%	80%
To what extent (if any) do you perceive your sexuality as a barrier to your career opportunities/progression?	31%	34%

Workplace size

	Industry	Average
< 100 employees		
% of participants who are out to most or all colleagues at work	72%	65%
How important is it for you to be out at work? (quite important/ very important)	75%	70%
How much does active leadership support for LGBTI+ inclusion impact how you feel about coming out or being out at work?	79%	81%
Does your workplace have a formal LGBTI+ network?	78%	71%
Are role models important to you?	83%	84%
Do you believe that there is a stereotype about being a gay woman in the workplace?	82%	80%
To what extent (if any) do you perceive your sexuality as a barrier to your career opportunities/progression?	38%	34%
100 – 1000 employees		
% of participants who are out to most or all colleagues at work	69%	65%
How important is it for you to be out at work? (quite important/ very important)	72%	70%
How much does active leadership support for LGBTI+ inclusion impact how you feel about coming out or being out at work?	82%	81%
Does your workplace have a formal LGBTI+ network?	75%	71%
Are role models important to you?	87%	84%
Do you believe that there is a stereotype about being a gay woman in the workplace?	75%	80%
To what extent (if any) do you perceive your sexuality as a barrier to your career opportunities/progression?	28%	34%
1000 – 5000 employees		
% of participants who are out to most or all colleagues at work	65%	65%
How important is it for you to be out at work? (quite important/ very important)	70%	75%
How much does active leadership support for LGBTI+ inclusion impact how you feel about coming out or being out at work?	82%	81%
Does your workplace have a formal LGBTI+ network?	70%	71%
Are role models important to you?	84%	84%
Do you believe that there is a stereotype about being a gay woman in the workplace?	81%	80%
To what extent (if any) do you perceive your sexuality as a barrier to your career opportunities/progression?	32%	34%
5000+ employees		
% of participants who are out to most or all colleagues at work	60%	65%
How important is it for you to be out at work? (quite important/ very important)	67%	75%
How much does active leadership support for LGBTI+ inclusion impact how you feel about coming out or being out at work?	82%	81%
Does your workplace have a formal LGBTI+ network?	70%	71%
Are role models important to you?	82%	84%
Do you believe that there is a stereotype about being a gay woman in the workplace?	82%	80%
To what extent (if any) do you perceive your sexuality as a barrier to your career opportunities/progression?	37%	34%

Appendix 2

Bringing your actions to life in the workplace

Research into the low visibility and engagement of same-sex attracted women in the workplace

Review the report and identify problems, causes, and solutions **relevant to your workplace**

The size, history, industry and existing culture of your workplace will determine the most appropriate response

Run **focus groups** with same-sex attracted women in your workplace to **test assumptions and solutions**

Encourage same-sex attract women to co-design your approach to drive ownership and advocacy

Establish a group of **early adopters** to help the **lead and embed the initiatives**

This group will help enable and drive much of the focus, they should be incorporated into existing structures to avoid isolation

Develop a **series of initiatives** and associates goals/outcomes **endorsed by senior leadership**

Alignment of goals across your workplace will enable your leaders to support and drive both macro and micro influences.

Build a **set of principles** that will help people make **inclusive decisions**

Embedding an inclusive way of working to all aspects of your workplace is critical to influence micro culture

Determine a 6, 12 and 24 month plan with **clear deliverables and metrics**

Goals should be real, achievable and related to the outcomes that you're trying to drive

Appendix 3

Your role

Workplace leaders

I want to understand what I can do to improve inclusion and role model good leadership

- Show clear leadership through consistent and explicit messaging and behavior
- Be authentic with your team so others can feel comfortable being themselves
- Be an inclusive role model and ensure your workplace has diverse role models
- Seek opportunities for reverse mentoring to open your own perspectives
- Find opportunities to share stories of diversity from within the LGBTI community

Workplace Diversity & Inclusion teams

I want to ensure that our inclusion approach is both practical and relevant

- Support and formalise connections between gender and LGBTI initiatives / networks
- Go beyond 'strategy' and consider how to influence micro culture
- Profile same-sex attracted women by providing opportunities to share their diverse stories
- Ensure that leadership programs include nuances relevant to same-sex attracted women
- Profile different types of role models and encourage leaders to re-imagine what type of role-model they want to be

Same-sex attracted women

I want to understand some of the challenges that might exist and how I can achieve the best experience for myself, and other same-sex attracted women

- Define how you want to be known in the workplace and share this (if comfortable) with colleagues and peers
- Have a voice and be part of the conversation – which could be through a role in your LGBTI network
- Consider how you can support other same-sex attracted through being your own type of role model
- Help design the vision and strategy of your LGBTI network

Allies outside the LGBTI community

I want to better understand the role that I can play and how I can influence the micro culture of the workplace

- Show support and influence the micro culture through lanyards, pins and supportive email signatures
- Question the status quo and drive change – one way to do this it to influence others through using inclusive language and calling our poor behaviour
- Attend LGBTI events and encourage others to do the same
- Provide help and time to support LGBTI initiatives

Allies within the LGBTI community

I want our network to be inclusive for the whole LGBTI community, including women

- Role model behavior through being open to different ways of working and ideas in your LGBTI network
- Actively engage in actions related to this research that are being implemented in your workplace
- Challenge stereotypes from within the community, reminding peers how they can influence micro culture

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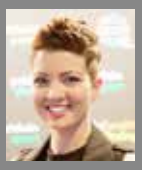

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