PRACTICE POINTS - **2025 AWEI EMPLOYEE SURVEY**

- 98% of participating organisations have one or more respondents who have witnessed workplace bullying behaviours.
- Trans and gender diverse respondents have experienced workplace incivility and serious bullying behaviours at over twice the rate of respondents of diverse sexuality
- LGBTQ+ employees who witness bullying are up to 10 times more likely to experience discrimination themselves - and report lower rates of wellbeing, belonging, and productivity
- Those who witness negative behaviours are less likely to trust reporting systems or believe leaders will act
- Being aware of the negative behaviours experienced by many LGBTQ+ employees increases the likelihood of becoming an active ally, suggesting education is a core driver for allyship programs

EDITION 6: Experiences of bullying & harassment in the Workplace

Insights from the 2025 AWEI employee survey

There is a significant cost to an organisation where discrimination, workplace incivility and serious bullying & harassment behaviours are present, both financial and cultural. Since the introduction of respect@work and the new positive duty, organisations have an even greater obligation to create psychosocially safe environments.

This can be contributed to through policy and procedure, active action, and creating a culture where employees are aware of what constitutes these behaviours, reinforcing that these are not acceptable in the workplace.

This year, we explore the impact on workplace culture and employee health and wellbeing across examining,

- the prevalence of witnessing negative behaviours targeting LGBTQ+ colleagues
- organisation culture regarding actions taken when behaviours are witnessed
- experiences of discrimination for LGBTQ+ respondents
- experiences of negative behaviours targeting LGBTQ+ respondents
- satisfaction toward the organisation's reporting mechanisms.

Prevalence of negative behaviours

In 2025, of the 147 organisations that participated,

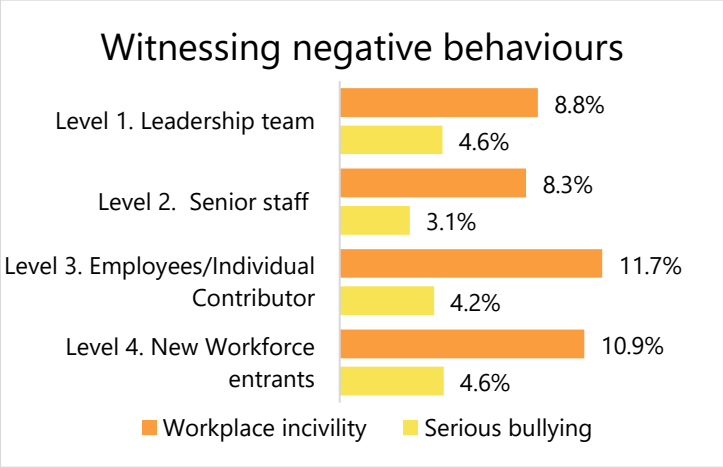
- 98.0 % had one or more respondents advise they had witnessed workplace incivility behaviours,
- 85.7% had employees advise they had witnessed serious bullying behaviours targeting LGBTQ+ employees.
- up to 27.9% of their employees witnessed workplace incivility,
- up to 11.1% of their employees witnessed serious bullying behaviours.
- 77.4% had employees advise they had experienced discrimination that they knew was directly attributed to being LGBTQ+
- 82.9% had employees advise they had experienced discrimination they suspect was attributed to being LGBTQ+

In relation to experiences of discrimination, bullying and harassment.

- LGBTQ+ respondents:
  - 833 individuals (10.6%) have been discriminated against because they are LGBTQ+
  - 1178 individuals (14.9%) have been discriminated against, which they suspect was because they are LGBTQ+
- Respondents of diverse sexuality:
  - 677 individuals (9.3%) have experienced workplace incivility &
  - 179 individuals (2.5%) have experienced serious bullying behaviours targeting their diverse sexuality
- Trans and gender diverse respondents:
  - 197 individuals (19.7%) have experienced workplace incivility &
  - 59 individuals (5.9%) have experienced serious bullying behaviours targeting their diverse gender.

Witnessing negative behaviours in the workplace.

Negative behaviours have been witnessed by 8.9% of respondents overall, with workplace incivility behaviours being witnessed by 2.1% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents, and 18.0% of LGBTQ+ respondents, while serious bullying behaviours being witnessed by 2.0% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents and 6.3% of LGBTQ+ respondents.



Proportionately, the respondents who are most likely to advise witnessing negative behaviours are

- Position: level 3 roles (workplace incivility 11.7%), level 1 or 4 (serious bullying 4.6%)
- Age: Under 25 years old (workplace incivility: 19.2%, Serious bullying: 8.3%)
- Gender Identity: Non-binary identities (workplace incivility: 39.1%, Serious bullying:18.5%)
- Sexual orientation: Queer (workplace incivility: 30.5%), Pansexual (serious bullying:11.2%)

The culture of the organisation where negative behaviours are witnessed can also be explored. Compared to respondents who have not witnessed any negative behaviours, respondents who have witnessed workplace incivility behaviours are:

- 22.3% less likely to feel there are identified confidential avenues to safely report bullying/harassment related to one's diverse sexuality and/or gender
- 33.8% less likely to feel that workplace incivility targeting people of diverse sexuality is acted on quickly
- 38.2% less likely to feel that workplace incivility targeting people of diverse gender is acted on quickly
- 32.5% less likely to believe that managers and leaders are willing to address workplace incivility targeting people of diverse sexuality
- 36.5% less likely to believe that managers and leaders are willing to address workplace incivility targeting people of diverse gender.

Respondents who have witnessed serious bullying behaviours are:

- 26.3% less likely to feel there are identified confidential avenues to safely report bullying/harassment related to one's diverse sexuality and/or gender

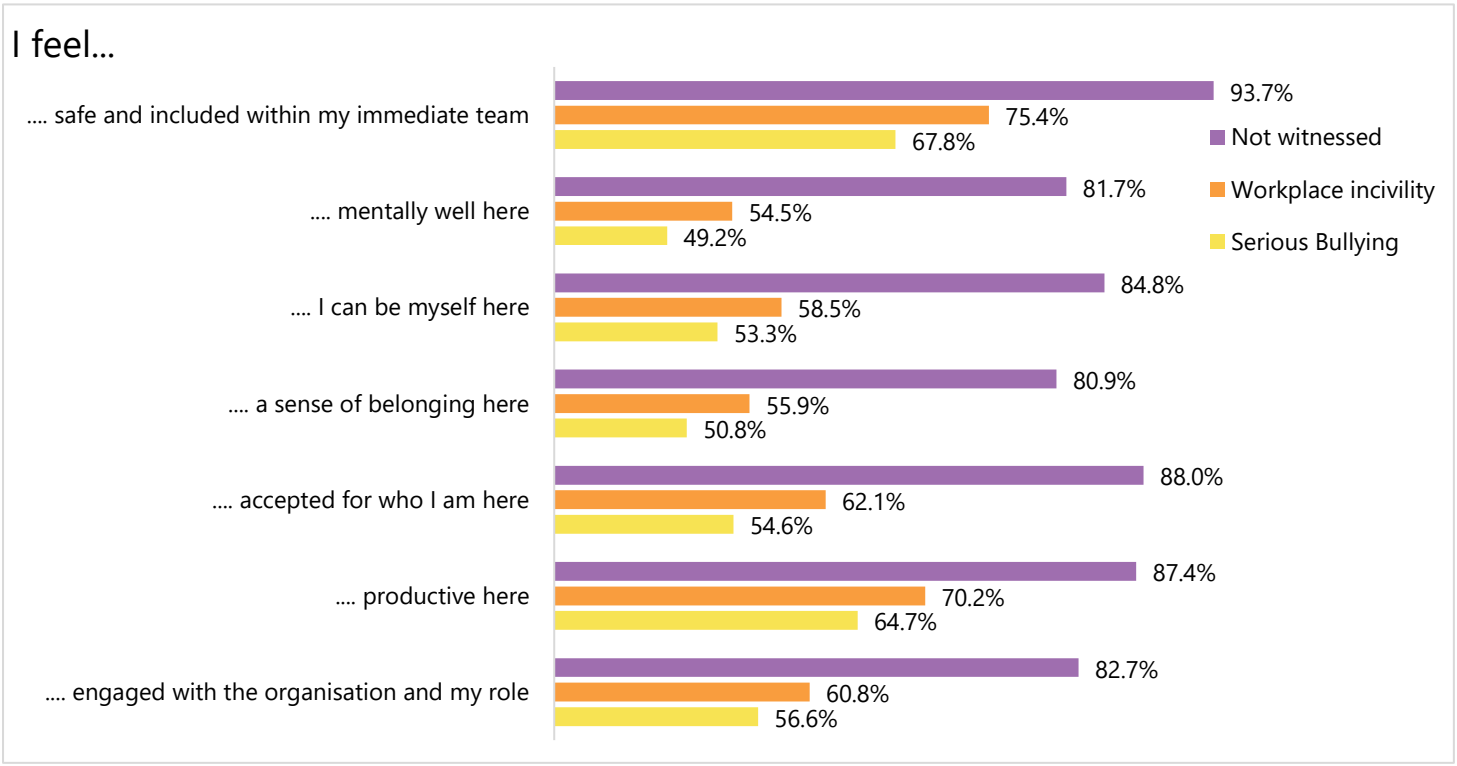
- 28.3% less likely to feel that workplace incivility targeting people of diverse sexuality is acted on quickly
- 27.9% less likely to feel that workplace incivility targeting people of diverse gender is acted on quickly
- 32.5% less likely to believe that managers and leaders are willing to address workplace incivility targeting people of diverse sexuality
- 34.0% less likely to believe that managers and leaders are willing to address workplace incivility targeting people of diverse gender.

This year, 29.9% of respondents who witnessed workplace incivility advised they called out these behaviours (but did not report), and 23.3% advised no one called out the behaviour.

When serious bullying behaviours are witnessed, 21.0% of respondents advised they called it out (and did not report), & 19.1% advised that no one called it out.

Serious bullying is more likely to be reported to a manager/grievance officer or equivalent than workplace incivility, regardless of whether the respondent also called it out at the time or not.

Compared to respondents who have not witnessed any behaviours, those who have witnessed negative behaviours experienced lower rates of health and wellbeing, with rates between 19.5% and 33.3% lower for those who have witnessed workplace incivility, and between 26.0% and 39.8% lower for those who have witnessed serious behaviours. The most significant difference, regardless of which behaviour is witnessed, is feeling mentally well within the workplace.



Respondents who have witnessed negative behaviours are also less likely to:

- know of active executive allies or sponsors in their organisation (11.1% less when they have witnessed workplace incivility; 10.9% less for serious bullying)
- feel employees who wish to be allies are supported to do so (18.1% less when they have witnessed workplace incivility; 24.2% less for serious bullying)

Interestingly, only 34.2% of respondents who have not witnessed any negative behaviours are active allies.

Respondents are *more likely* to be active allies by:

- 73.8% when they have witnessed workplace incivility (witnessed 59.4%) &
- 69.8% when they have witnessed serious bullying behaviours (witnessed 58.0%)

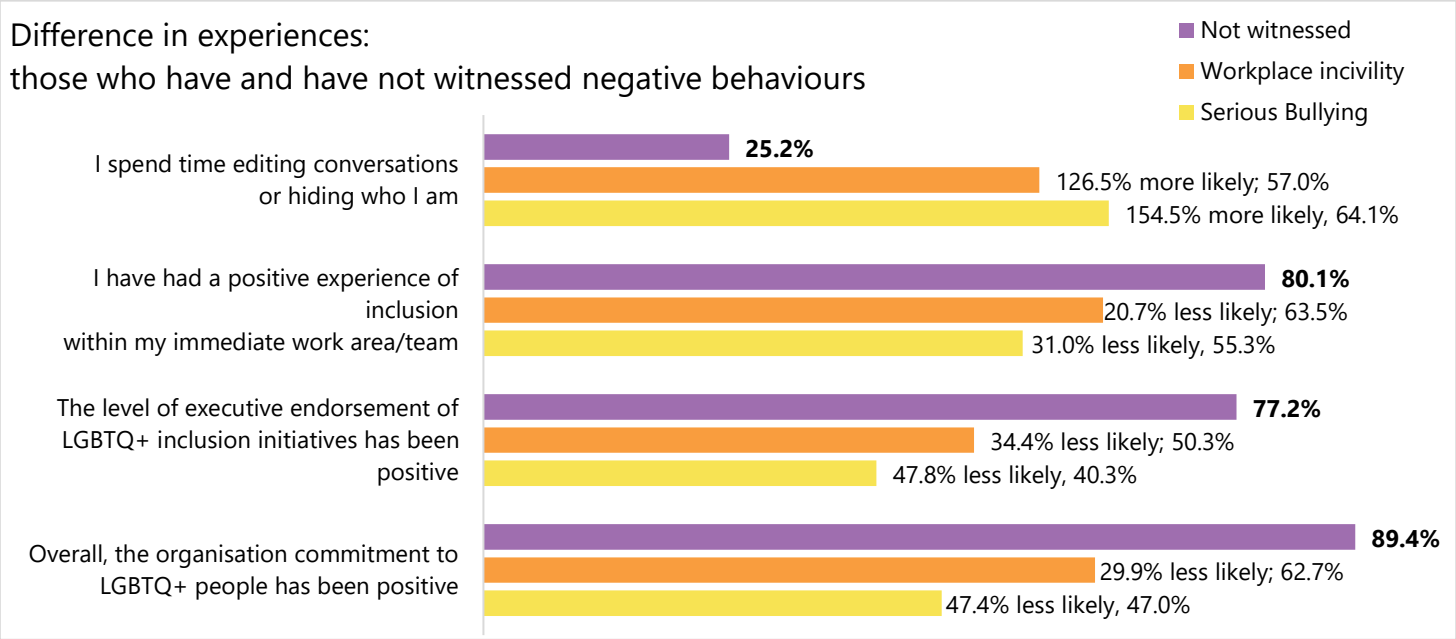
In relation to impacts on the workplace, those who have witnessed negative behaviours are less likely to:

- recommend the organisation as a good place to work
  (not witnessed: 86.1% vs. workplace incivility: 64.2%, serious bullying behaviours: 55.5%)
- feel their opportunities for advancement are high
  (not witnessed: 61.7% vs. workplace incivility: 45.7%, serious bullying behaviours: 43.8%)
- have no intention to leave in the next 12 months
  (not witnessed: 71.5% vs. workplace incivility: 58.2%, serious bullying behaviours: 55.1%)
- feel the culture within the organisation will allow them to reach their full potential
  (not witnessed: 66.4% vs. workplace incivility: 41.6%, serious bullying behaviours: 40.8%)

Impact of negative behaviours on LGBTQ+ employees

LGBTQ+ respondents who have witnessed workplace incivility are 126.5% more likely to spend time editing conversations or hiding who they are, and 154.5% more likely when serious bullying behaviours are witnessed.

Witnessing of negative behaviours has a negative impact on a number of inclusivity experience metrics



LGBTQ+ respondents witnessing workplace incivility are over 10 times more likely to have experienced discrimination directly attributed to being LGBTQ+, and over 7 times more likely to have experienced discrimination they suspect was attributed to being LGBTQ+. For respondents witnessing serious bullying, these rates increase.

Respondents of diverse sexuality who have witnessed workplace incivility are:

- over 12 times more likely to have been the target of workplace incivility &
- over 23 times more likely to have been the target of serious bullying.

Respondents of diverse sexuality who have witnessed serious bullying are:

- over 20 times more likely to be the target of workplace incivility &
- over 65 times more likely to have been the target of serious bullying themselves.

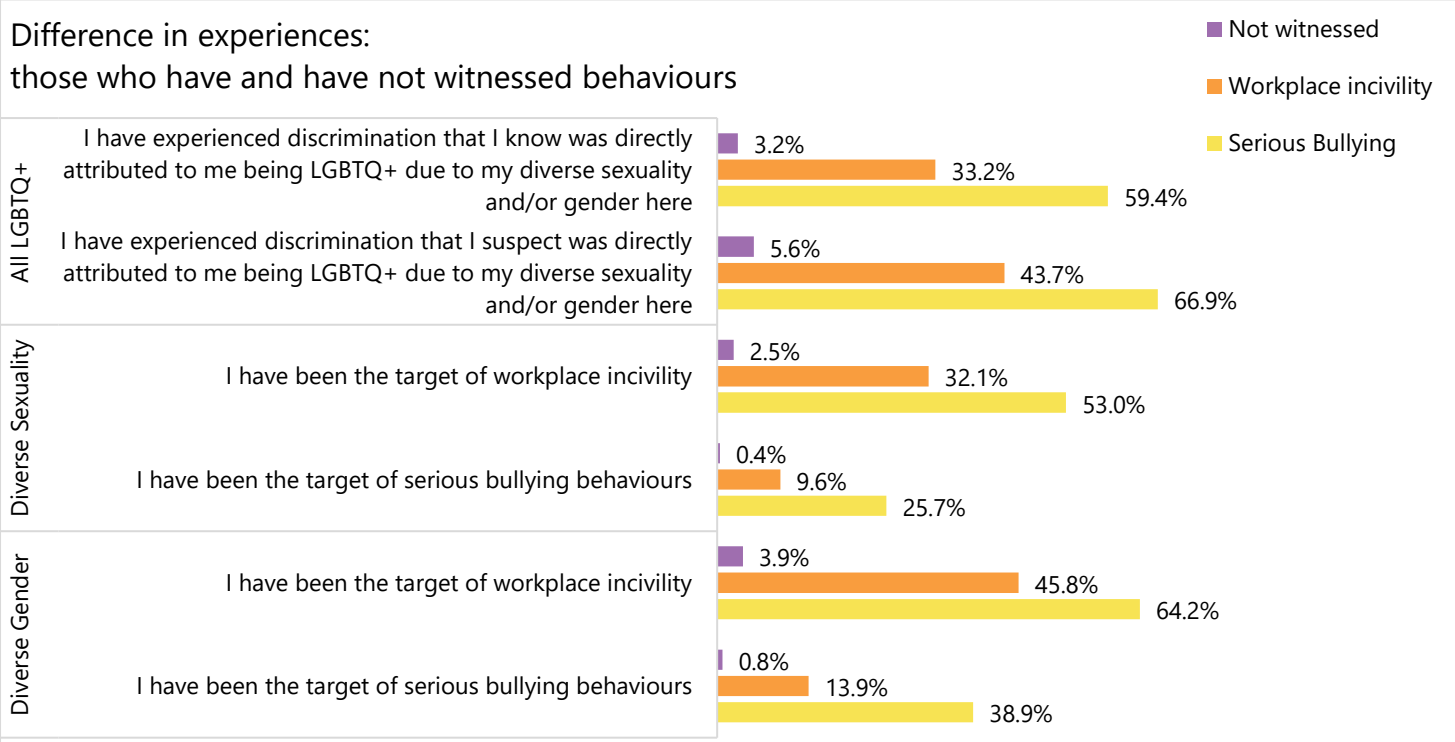
Trans and gender diverse respondents who have witnessed workplace incivility are:

- over 10 times more likely to have been the target of workplace incivility &
- over 17 times more likely to have been the target of serious bullying.

Trans and gender diverse respondents who have witnessed serious bullying are:

- over 16 times more likely to be the target of incivility &
- over 48 times more likely to have been the target of serious bullying themselves.

Overall, experiencing these behaviours in the workplace leads to significantly lower rates of health and wellbeing, and workplace inclusion, which is then compounded for LGBTQ+ respondents by personal experiences of bullying and harassment behaviours.



ACTIONS

1. Ensure your organisation is meeting its obligations relating to respect @ work, positive duty and psychosocial safety, acknowledging that LGBTQ+ and other marginalised populations are most at risk of experiencing negative behaviours.
2. Embed psychosocial safety into leadership accountability through KPI's and tie leadership performance reviews and bonuses to inclusive culture metrics
3. Ensure there are formal processes to extract and report on LGBTQ+ related incidents of bullying and harassment for the leadership team to increase recognition and action.
4. Provide training to leaders to increase awareness of subtle forms of workplace incivility and methods to intervene early.
5. Embed training into your onboarding process for all employees, ensuring that LGBTQ+ examples are included alongside other marginalised groups to increase understanding of specific barriers that can be faced
6. Increase visibility of confidential reporting mechanisms through education and training, including having visible LGBTQ+ confidential contacts and LGBTQ+ trained grievance officers to support appropriate reporting of LGBTQ+ targeting, bullying and harassment behaviours.
7. Create a strategy to increase participation in LGBTQ+ awareness /ally training by actively promoting opportunities. Increasing the awareness of why inclusion is important and understanding the challenges faced by employees are the drivers for an inclusive culture within workplaces.
8. Participate in the AWEI Submission – it gives a wealth of information about your company culture; it will help to detect early signs of cultural erosion.

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Pride in Diversity (2025). Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) Employee Survey. ACON's Pride Inclusion Programs