PRACTICE POINTS - **2026 AWEI EMPLOYEE SURVEY**

- Organisations that actively support allyship create stronger cultures of inclusion, with employees significantly more likely to become active allies, identify visible allies, access allyship training, and recognise executive sponsors.
- Leadership allyship has a cascading effect across organisations. The presence of active executive and leadership allies increases active allyship at all levels, reinforcing the importance of visible role modelling.
- While understanding of allyship remains high, only 37.7% of respondents identify as active allies, highlighting a significant opportunity to move passive support into visible action.
- Employees in organisations that support allyship report substantially higher wellbeing, belonging, engagement, productivity, and psychological safety.
- Strong allyship cultures are associated with significantly lower rates of witnessed bullying, harassment, discrimination, and workplace incivility, alongside greater confidence that inappropriate behaviour will be addressed.
- For LGBTQ+ employees, supportive allyship environments increase authenticity, visibility, and positive inclusion experiences while reducing discrimination and the need to hide aspects of identity at work.

Edition 4: Impact of Supporting Allies in the Workplace

For many years, we have looked at the impact LGBTQ+ allies have on an organisation's culture, and more importantly, on the experiences of people of diverse sexuality and gender in the workplace.

This Practice Point considers the importance of active allyship within organisations a little differently than in previous years, specifically examining the impact organisations can have when respondents feel that employees who want to be active allies are supported in the workplace.

In 2026, 30,993 respondents provided insight into their level of LGBTQ+ allyship.

Defining an Active Ally

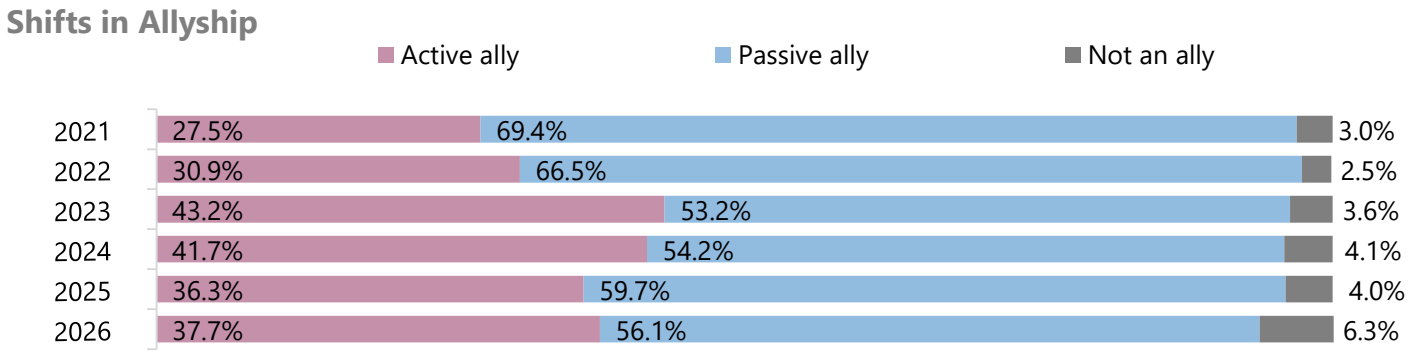
Understanding what makes an ally is imperative for enabling respondents to identify themselves on the ally spectrum accurately and to identify allies within organisations.

For our purposes, we define and offer three levels:

- **Active Ally:** someone who actively (not passively) supports an inclusive workplace culture for employees of diverse sexuality and/or gender. All outwardly visible activities are considered active allyship (including wearing pins, using pronouns on email signatures, attending events, belonging to committees, etc.).
- **Passive Ally:** someone who believes in the inclusion of LGBTQ+ people, but whose support is not readily visible through their actions and behaviours.
- **Not an Ally:** someone who does not support LGBTQ+ inclusion to any degree.

It is important to clearly define allyship in this way, as passive allies do not contribute to a culture of inclusion within the organisation to the same extent due to their lack of visibility.

This year, 86.6% of respondents agreed that they understand why active allies are important, and 75.1% believe they can list several behaviours expected of an active ally; however, only 37.7% of respondents are active allies.

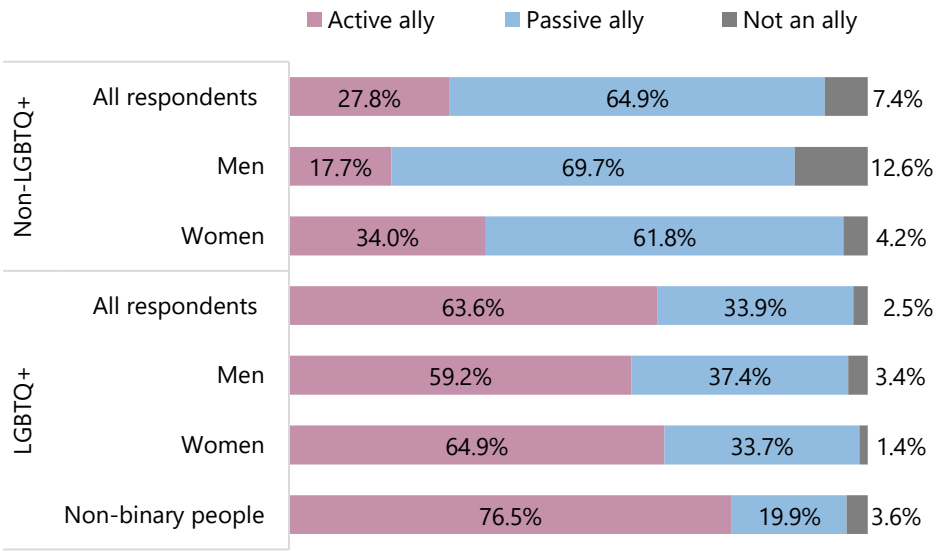


This year's respondents were 6.1% less likely to be passive allies, but 57.5% *more likely* **not** to be allies for LGBTQ+ people than last year's respondents, and only 3.7% more likely to be active allies.

LGBTQ+ status, gender identity & allyship

LGBTQ+ respondents are 129.3% more likely to be active allies than non-LGBTQ+ respondents, which highlights that LGBTQ+ individuals bear a significant, disproportionate, and sometimes unrecognised burden when supporting other members of their community.

Within the gender cohorts, the largest difference is within men, where LGBTQ+ men are 233.9% more likely to be active allies than non-LGBTQ+ men; LGBTQ+ women are 90.6% more likely than non-LGBTQ+ women.



Non-binary respondents are the most likely to be active allies, at 76.5%, 17.9% more likely than LGBTQ+ women and 29.3% more likely than LGBTQ+ men.

12.6% of this year's non-LGBTQ+ men are not allies at all, the highest proportion seen across all groups, 200% higher than that of non-LGBTQ+ women at 2.2%.

Management status, seniority, and allyship

Again, this year, the presence, or lack thereof, of leadership allies, role models, and executive sponsors shows a significant impact on the perception of inclusion within organisations, and data around this will be provided within the leadership impact practice point.

We also know that those in middle management roles significantly contribute to the culture of a large organisation, as they directly manage many more employees than those in leadership roles.

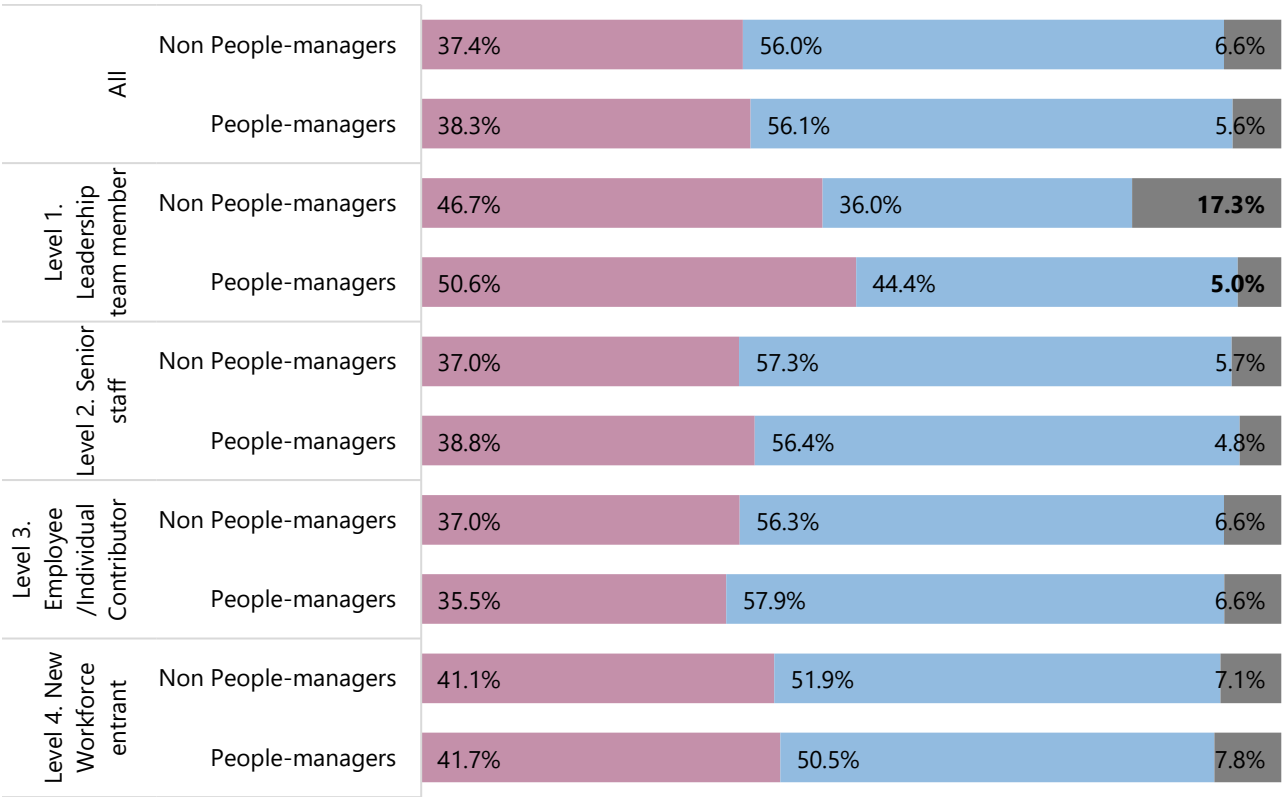
Overall, respondents with direct reports (people managers) are 2.4% more likely to be active allies, and 14.8% less likely to be not an ally at all.

Based on our four-level seniority system, while Level 1 respondents are the most likely to consider themselves active allies, overall, 5.9% advise that they are *not allies at all* to LGBTQ+ colleagues.

Level 1 respondents with no reports also show the most significant difference: those in people manager roles are 70.9% more likely than Level 1 managers to be not an ally at all, at 17.3% vs 5.0%.

Within all other cohorts, the proportions are more similar between people managers and those who don't manage people.

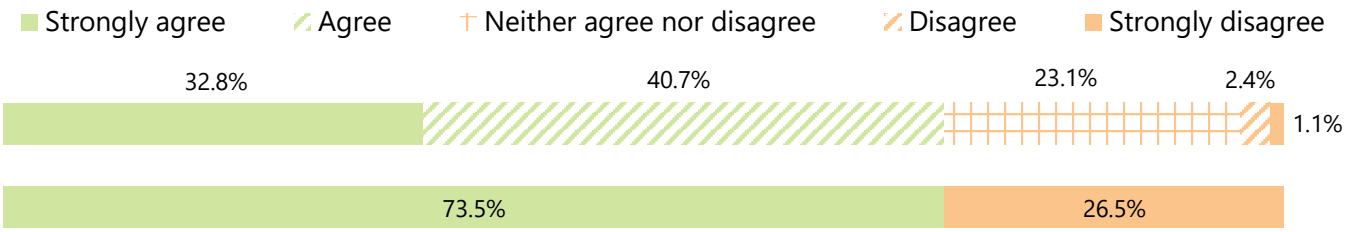
New workforce entrants are the second most likely to be active allies, and the second most likely not to *be allies* at all.



Additional allyship breakdown by demographics is provided at the end of this report.

Are employees who wish to be Active Allies supported?

An employee's perception of the organisation's response to allyship is the focus of the remainder of this practice point. In the survey, all respondents are asked to answer the statement "Employees who wish to be active allies are supported to do so here".



For simplicity, we compare the experiences of the 73.5% of respondents who believe their organisation would support employees in being active allies (who agree or strongly agree) with those of the remaining 26.5% who believe it would not.

It is important to note that among organisations that participated this year and received 40 or more responses, only one organisation had 100% of its respondents who believed that allyship is supported. Agreement across organisations ranged from 35.8% to 96.8% of respondents.

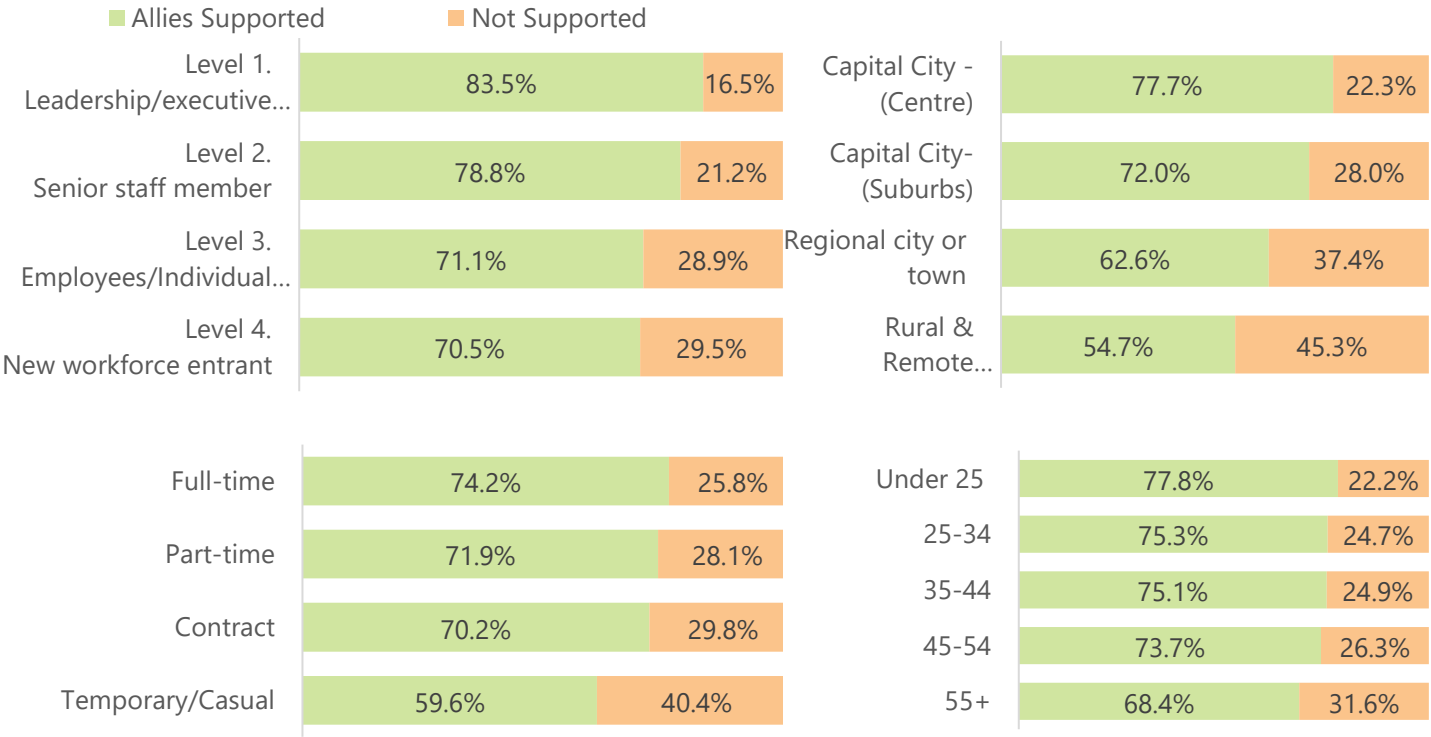
Who believes allies would be supported?

Within the data, there are significant differences in the demographics of who believes their organisation is supportive of employees being active allies.

Some of the main differences in agreement that their organisation is supportive of allies with the demographic cohorts are;

- Respondents over 55 are *12.1 % less likely* than respondents under 25,
- Respondents in level 3 roles are *14.8% less likely* to agree than those in level 1 positions.
- Temporary or casual staff are *19.6% less likely* than those in full-time roles,
- Respondents in rural and remote locations are 29.5% less likely than those working in capital city centres.

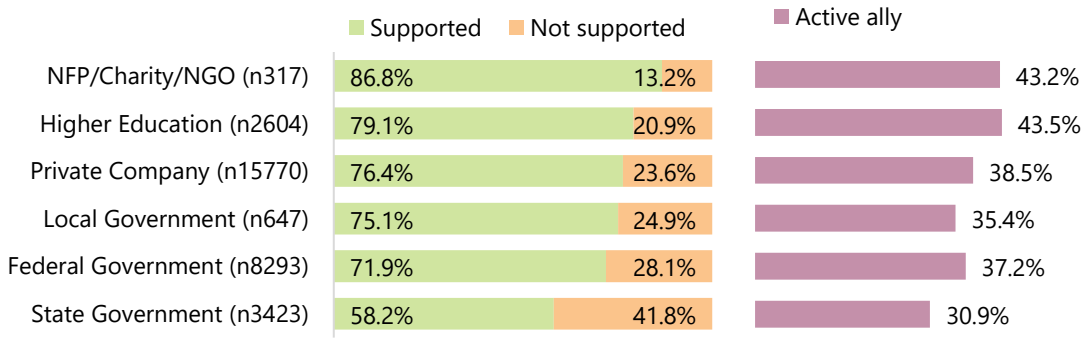
Ensuring that messaging around allyship support is key in ensuring that inclusion measures reach all areas, levels and employees within the organisation



Which sectors and industries are employees most likely to be supported to be allies?

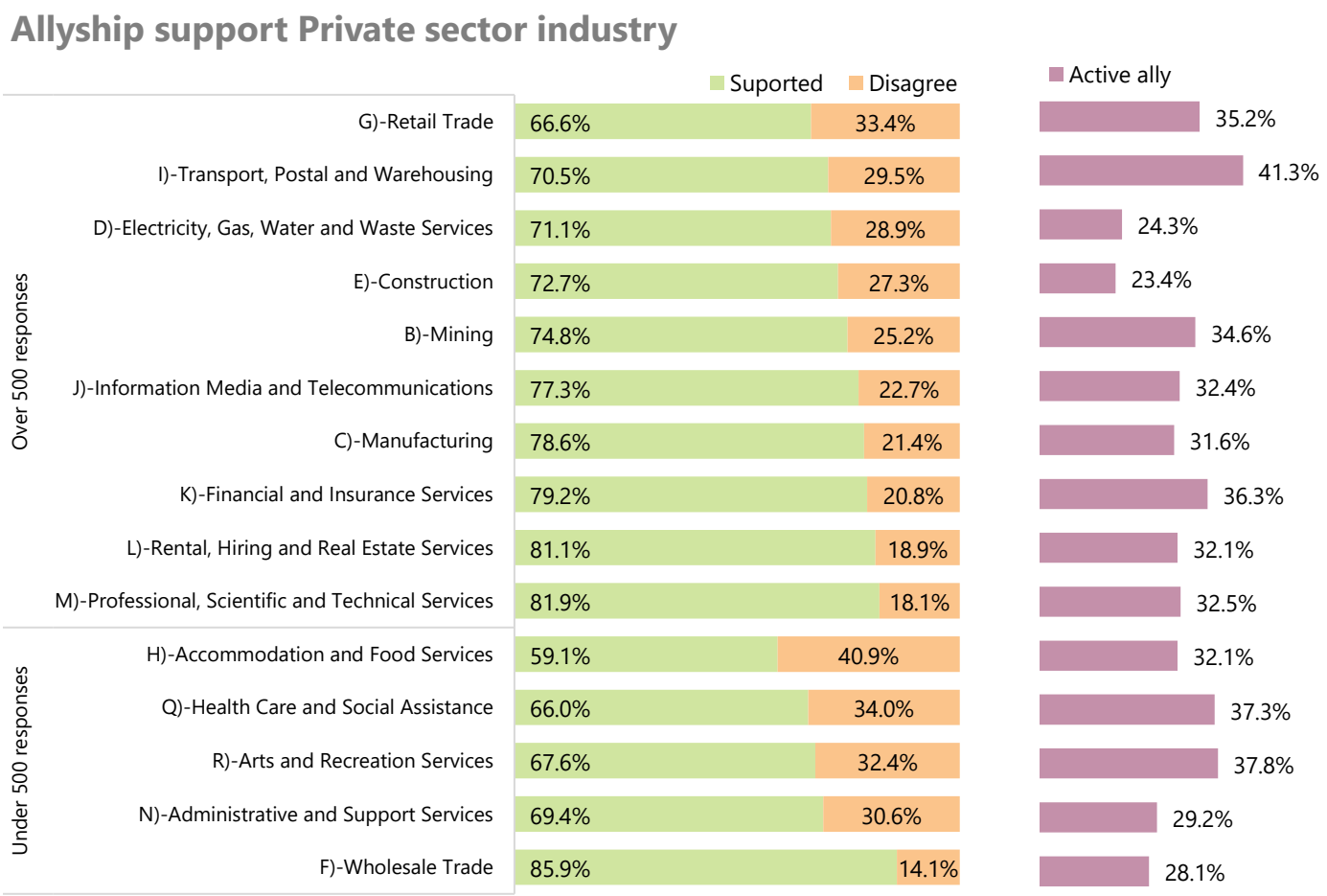
Within sector cohorts, comparing -respondents from the non-government sector to those in state government departments, non-government respondents are and 48.8% more likely to agree that allyship is supported, and 39.8% more likely to be active allies.

Allyship supported by sector



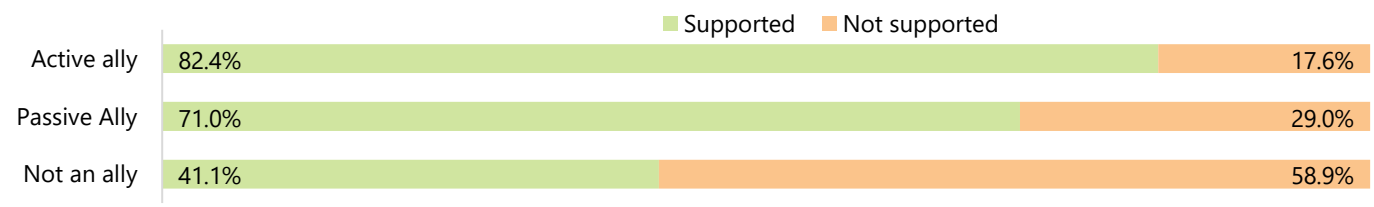
Within the private sector, we can break down further by industry cohorts. There is a 25.8% difference, with only 60.8% of respondents from the electricity, gas, water and waste services industry feeling that employees would be supported in being allies, compared to 82.0% in the Professional, scientific and technical industry. [1]

There is less correlation between industry responses and active allyship among private-sector respondents, which may indicate that organisations in these industries could look at other demographic data correlations. For instance, in the construction industry, while 72.7% agree that allies would be supported, only 23.4% of respondents are active allies. This could be due to fewer respondents holding in-office roles or to respondents' age, which may provide organisations with insight into cohorts or areas that would benefit from more support.



Allyship within "supportive" organisations

Of all active allies, 82.4% agree that their organisation is supportive of employees who wish to be active allies. This indicates a strong connection between employees' comfort at being an active ally and the perception that the organisation is supportive.

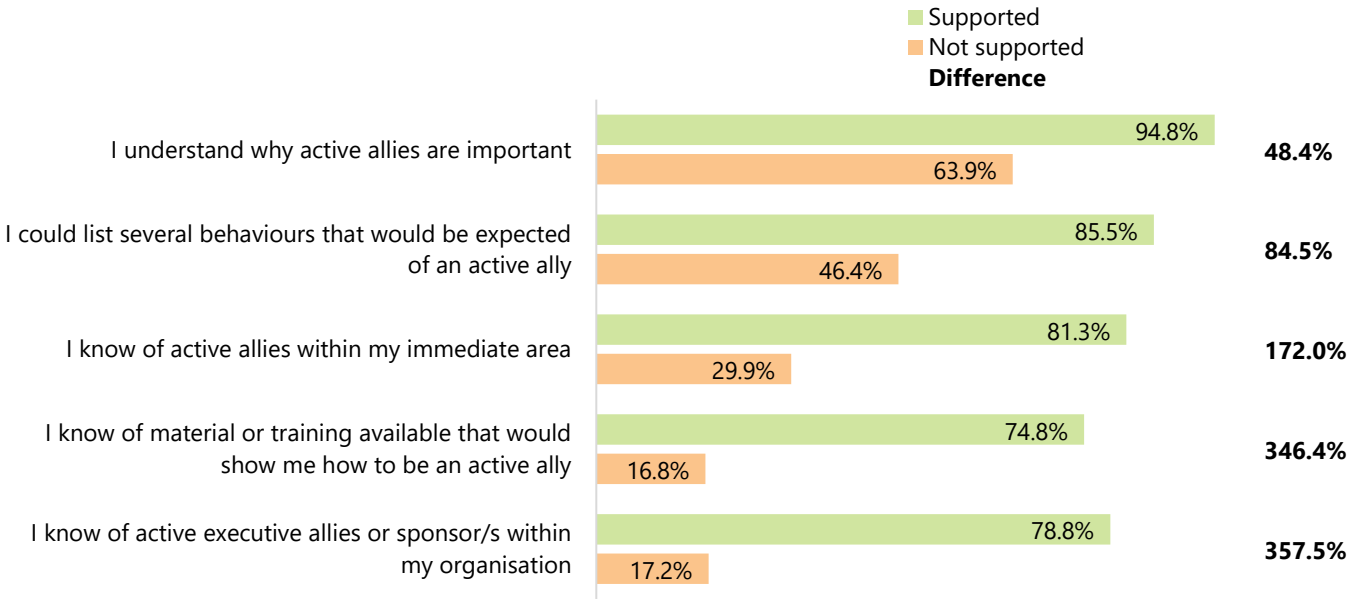


[1] Industries with less than 500 responses are included

Respondents who agree that employees would be supported are;

- 357.5% more likely to know of active executive allies or sponsors within their organisation
- 346.4% more likely to know of material or training that would show how to be an active ally
- 172.0% more likely to know of active allies within their immediate area

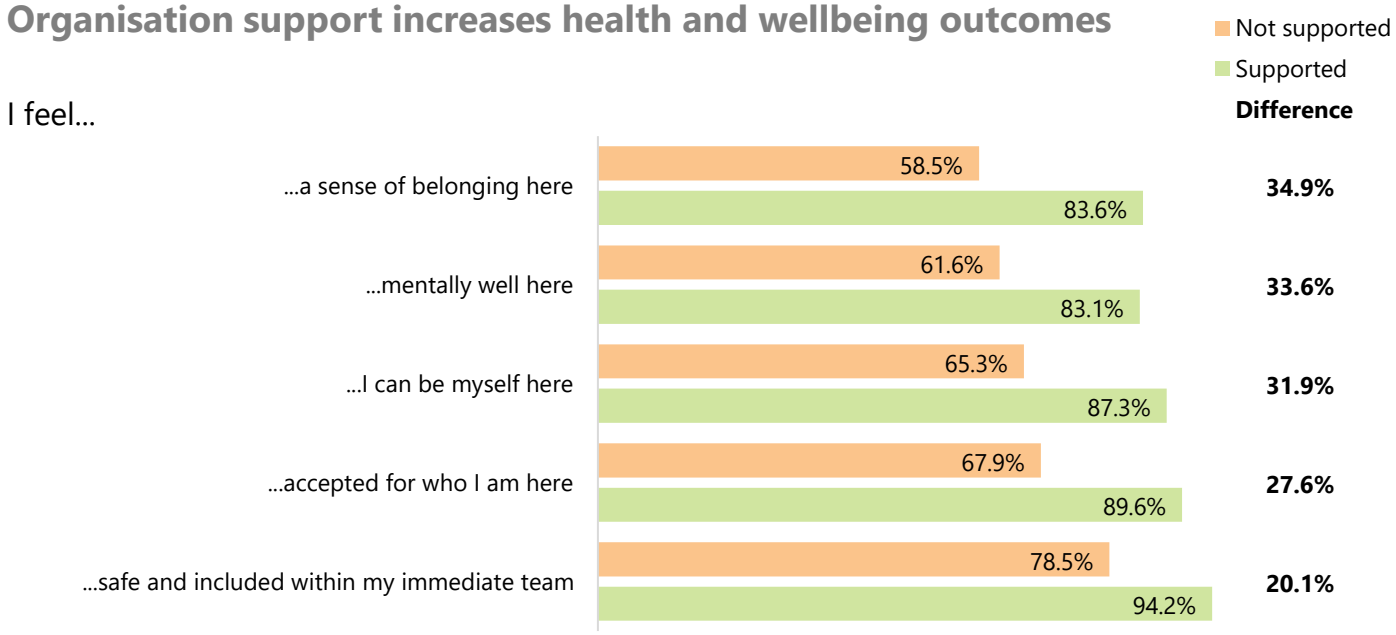
Organisation support increases presence of allyship visability



Impact of the perception that active allies would be supported

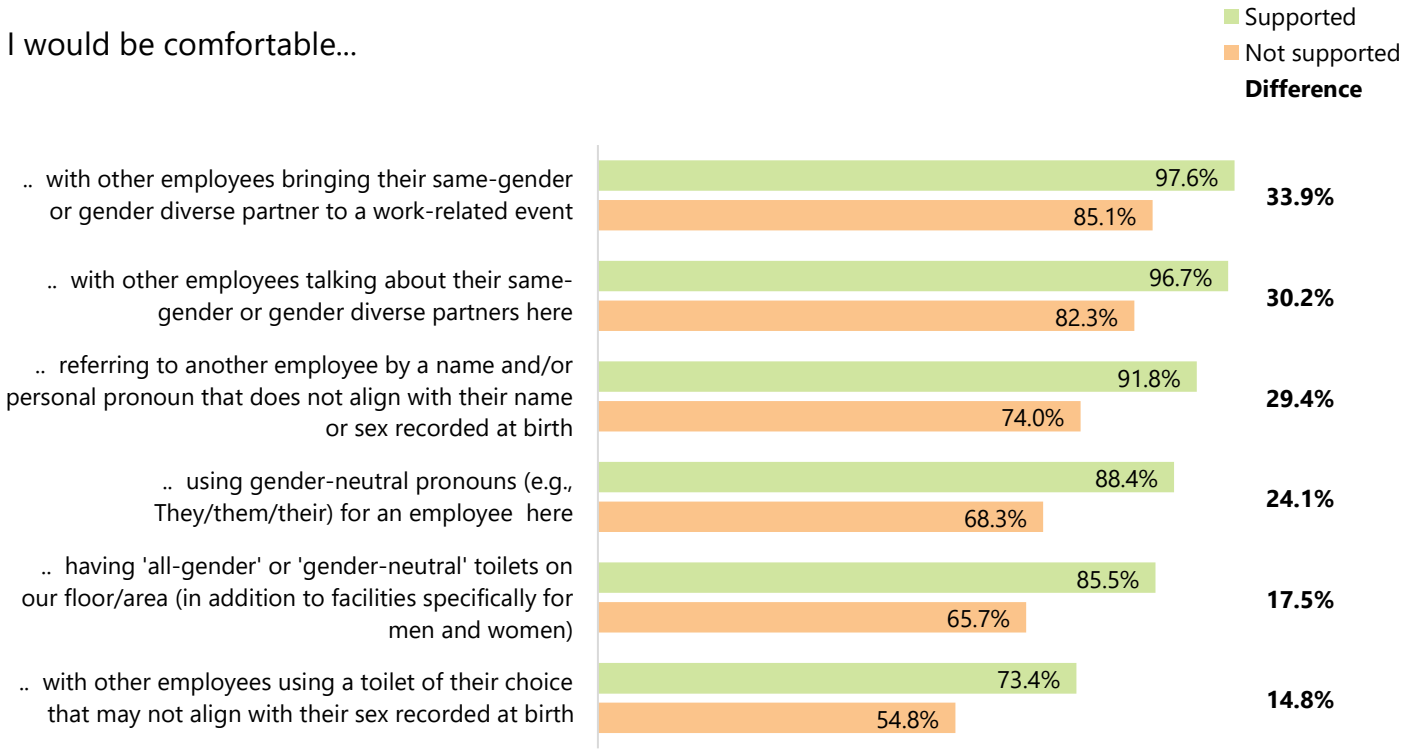
Health and wellbeing measures are between 20.1% and 43.1% higher among those in the cohort who perceive their organisation as supportive.

Organisation support increases health and wellbeing outcomes



Respondents are between 14.8% and 33.9% more likely to be comfortable with LGBTQ+ colleagues bringing their whole self to the workplace, including using the correct pronouns, having gender neutral facilities available and being comfortable that their colleagues talk about their same gender or gender diverse partners at work or bring them to work events.

Organisation support increases employee comfort



Responses to bullying and harassment behaviours

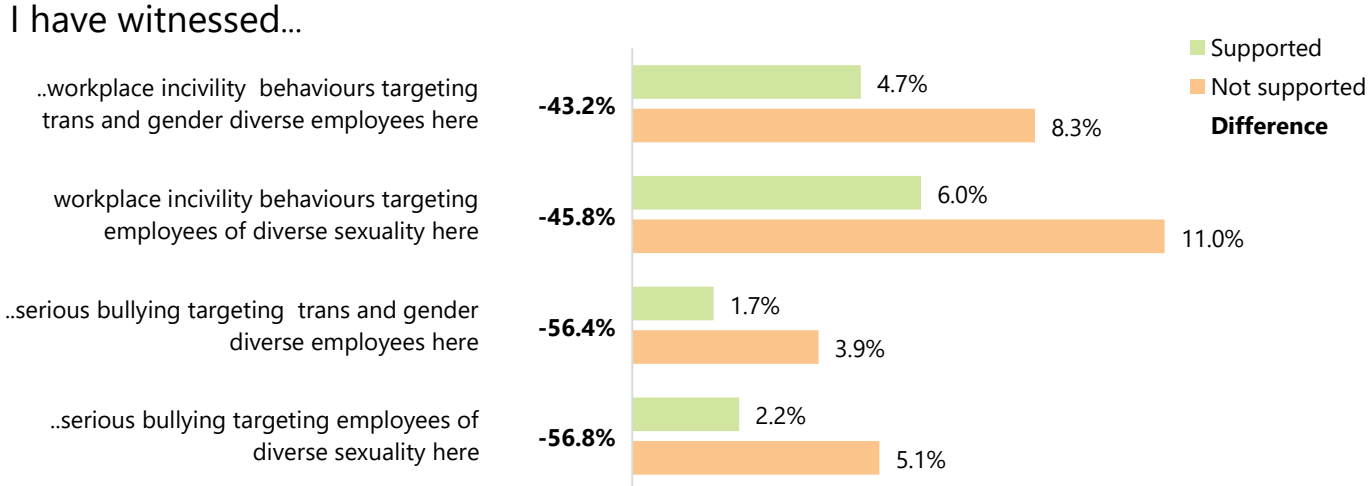
This year's respondent data paints the picture that organisations that are supportive of active allyship are also more likely to be perceived positively regarding LGBTQ+ targeted bullying and harassment.

Visibility of clearly communicated confidential avenues to address LGBTQ+ bullying and harassment is 60.4% higher among respondents in supportive organisations.

Compared to respondents who do not believe employees would be supported to be active allies, those in supportive organisations are more likely by;

- **113.4%** to agree that workplace incivility targeting employees of *diverse sexuality,* &
- **122.0%** to agree that workplace incivility targeting *trans and gender diverse employees* would be acted upon quickly
- **92.1%** to agree managers/leaders are willing to address workplace incivility behaviours that target employees of *diverse sexuality*, &
- **91.7%** regarding incivility behaviours that target *trans and gender diverse employees*

Organisation support reduces witnessing bullying & harrasment

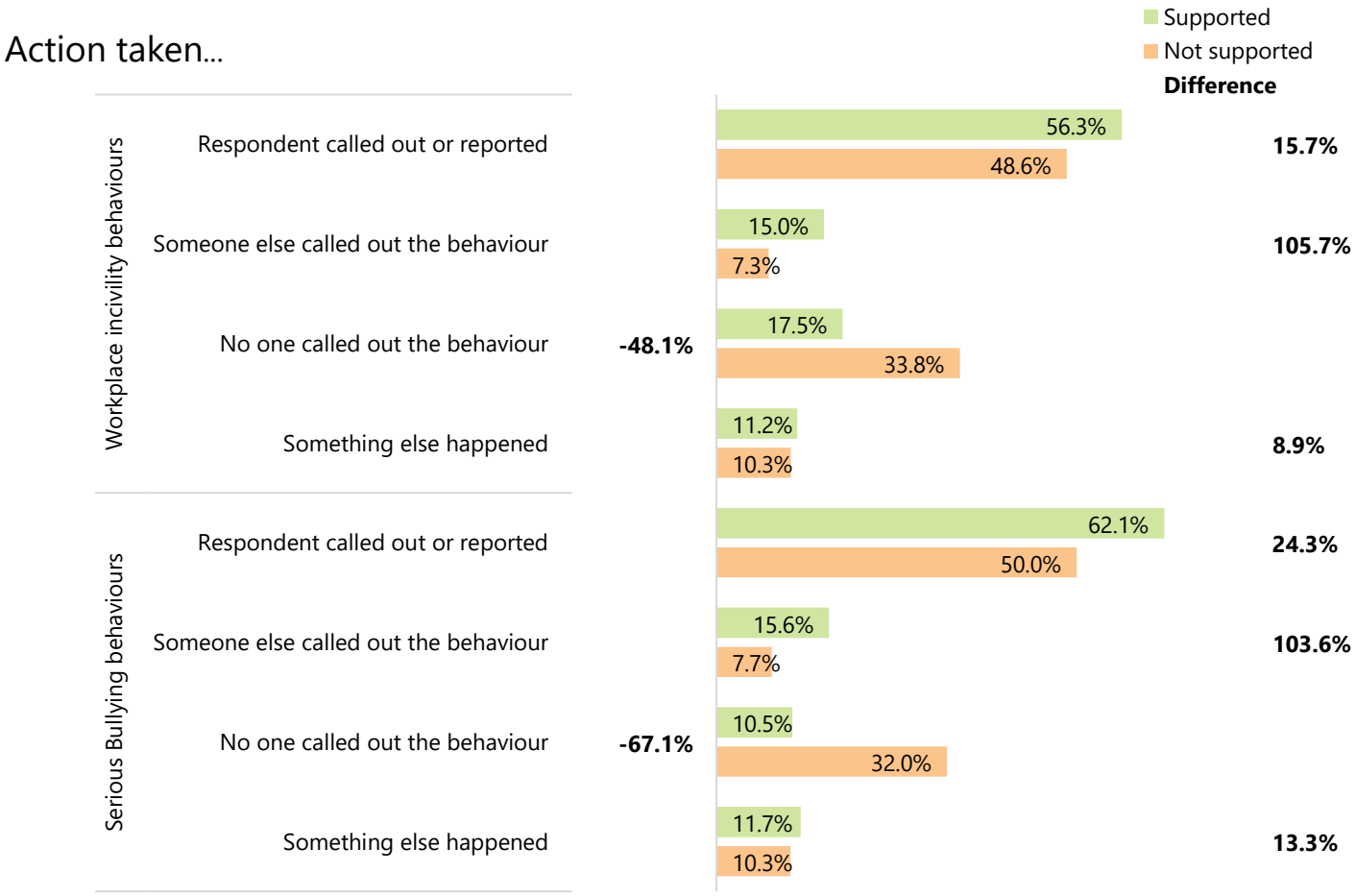


Instances of witnessing bullying and harassment are significantly lower, with around 50% fewer respondents having witnessed behaviours.

The action taken when behaviours were witnessed is also positively impacted, where those in supportive organisations are;

- 48.1% less likely to advise that no one called out workplace incivility behaviours
- 67.1% less likely to advise that no one called out serious bullying behaviours
- *Over twice as* likely to advise someone else called out either behaviour

Organisation supporting allyship increases action taken when witnessing bullying & harrasment



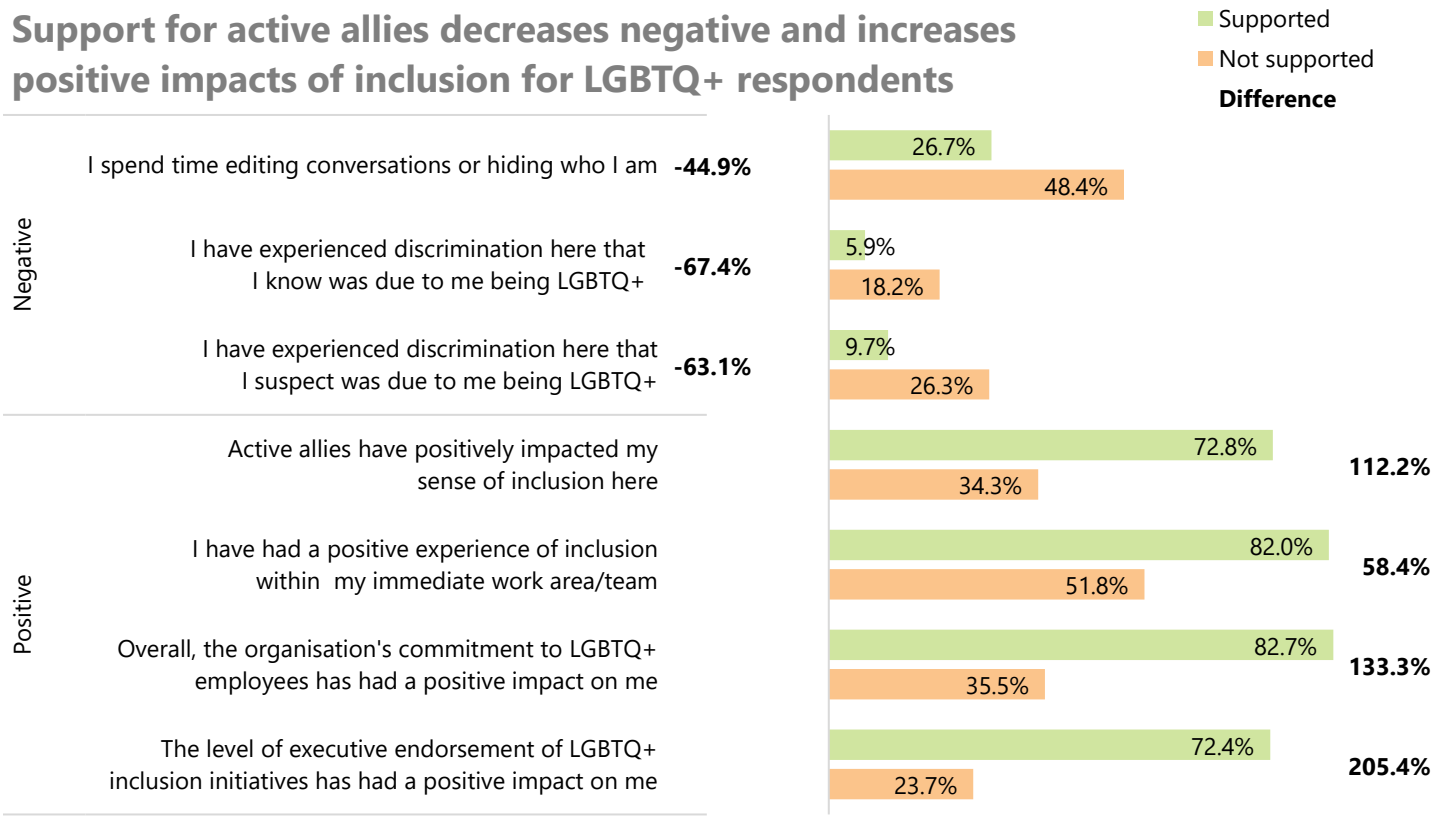
Impacts for LGBTQ+ respondents

LGBTQ+ respondents in supportive organisations are less likely by;

- 44.9% to spend time editing in the workplace,
- 67.4% to have experienced discrimination that they *know* was due to their being LGBTQ+
- 63.1% to have experienced discrimination that they *suspect* was due to their being LGBTQ+

More substantially, they are more likely to agree with statements around positive impacts of inclusion, including by;

- 205.4% that executive endorsement of LGBTQ+ inclusion initiatives had a positive impact
- 133.3% that the organisation's commitment to LGBTQ+ employees has had a positive impact
- 112.2% that active allies have impacted their sense of inclusion
- 58.4% that they have had positive experiences of inclusion within their immediate work area/team



Impacts on respondents of diverse sexuality

Respondents of diverse sexuality are 22.6% more likely to be out to all or most in their organisation when their organisation is supportive of active allies (supported: 65.5% vs not supported: 53.4%).

They are also;

- 68.8% less likely to have been the target of workplace incivility
- 271.1% more likely to be completely satisfied with the resolution if they did report
- 82.2% less likely to have been the target of serious bullying behaviours
- 14.2% more likely to have reported the behaviour
- 363.7% more likely to be completely satisfied with the resolution if they did report

Impacts for trans and gender diverse respondents

Respondents of diverse gender are in organisations that are supportive of active allies are 349.6% more likely to have visible trans and gender diverse role models within senior leadership or executive positions During the recruitment phase, they were;

- 324.7% more likely to agree that a contact person was identified to support diverse gender applicants
- 152.7% more likely to agree there was visibility of gender diverse inclusion &
- 64.2% more likely to agree that application forms were inclusive

Negative aspects of the recruitment experience were reduced among respondents where allies are supported, with them being;

- 33.7% less likely to agree they faced barriers with background or criminal checks due to a change of name,
- 34.1% less likely to have fears of their diverse gender being disclosed without consent
- 32.5% less likely to fear being discriminated against &
- 58.6% less likely to have felt disadvantaged during recruitment.

They are 25.4% more likely to be open to all or most in their organisation when their organisation is supportive of active allies (supported: 62.2% vs not supported: 49.6%).

They are also;

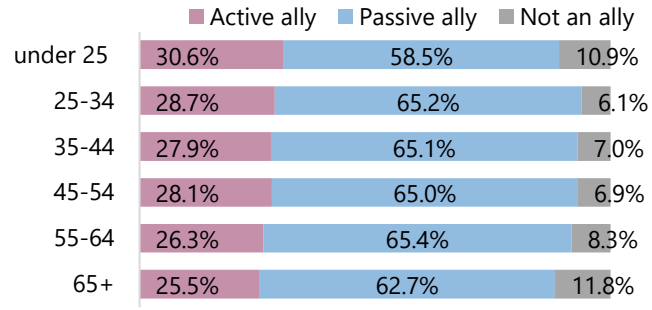
- 62.7% less likely to have been the target of workplace incivility
- 369.5% more likely to be completely satisfied with the resolution if they did report
- 81.9% less likely to have been the target of serious bullying behaviours
- 31.3% more likely to have reported the behaviour
- 187.5% more likely to be completely or partially satisfied with the resolution when they did report

Allyship across other demographics – by LGBTQ+ Status

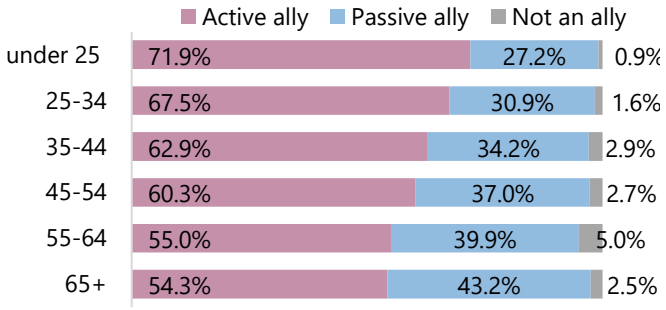
LGBTQ+ respondents are approximately twice as likely to be active allies across most demographics.

Age

Non-Lgbtq+

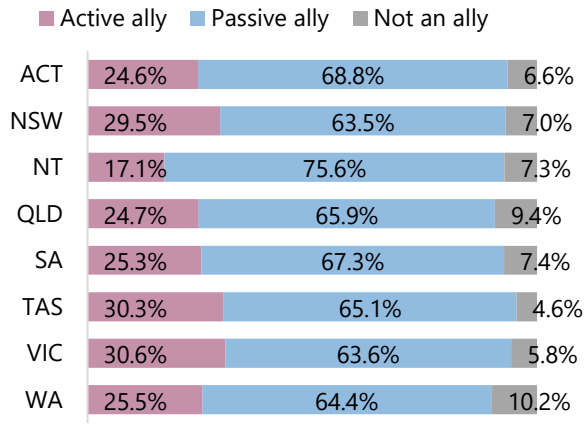


LGBTQ+

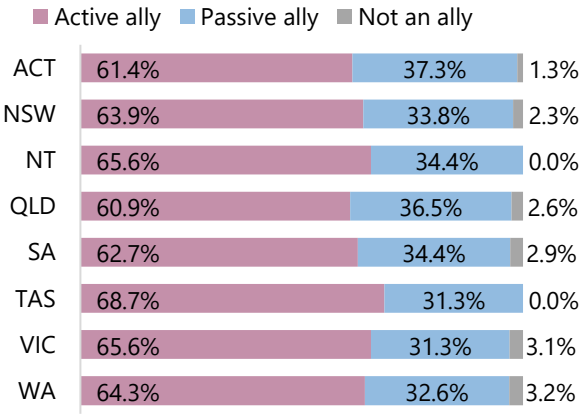


State

Non-Lgbtq+

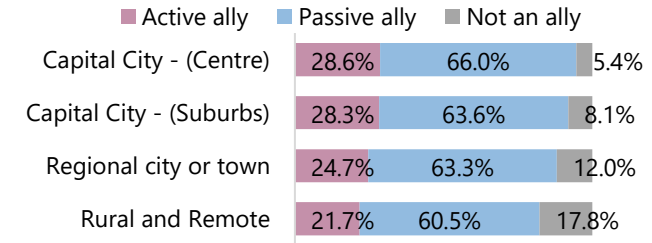


LGBTQ+

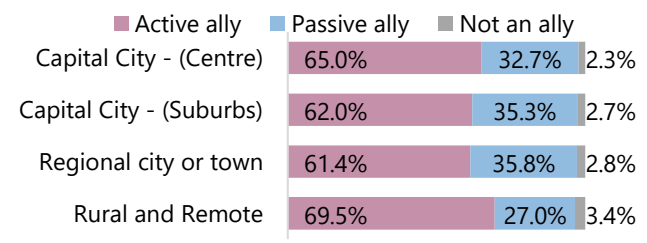


Location

Non-Lgbtq+

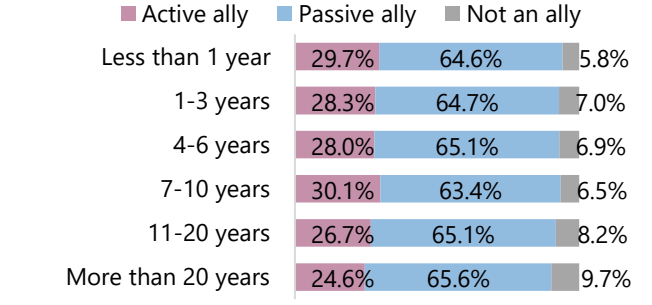


LGBTQ+

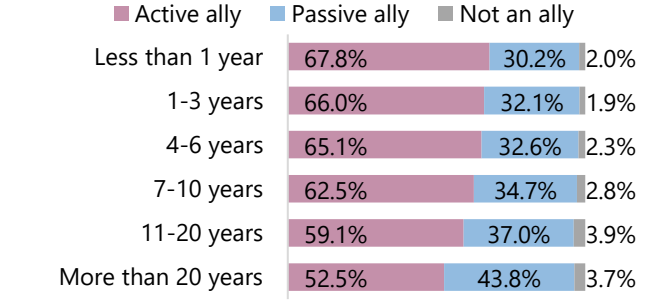


Tenure

Non-Lgbtq+



LGBTQ+



Actions

1. **Encourage employees to move from passive support to active allyship**: Create understanding and support visible active behaviours such as pronoun use, ally badges, participation in events, and public advocacy
2. **Develop and promote allyship training**: Ensure employees know how to be effective allies and can easily access practical resources, learning opportunities, and guidance.
3. **Increase executive and leadership visibility**: Encourage senior leaders and executives to champion LGBTQ+ inclusion and model active ally behaviours visibly.
4. **Strengthen LGBTQ+ employee networks:** Pair active ally programs with employee networks to increase communication, visibility, and engagement with inclusion initiatives.
5. **Recognise and celebrate allies:** Acknowledge allies' contributions through awards, storytelling, internal communications, and leadership recognition to reinforce positive behaviours.
6. **Focus on middle managers:** Equip people leaders with the skills and confidence to foster inclusive teams, as their behaviour has a significant influence on workplace culture.
7. **Measure allyship as a business outcome:** Track active ally visibility, employee perceptions of support, wellbeing, inclusion, and belonging to assess progress and identify areas requiring additional investment.
8. **Reframe allyship:** Provide opportunities for active allies to be seen as leaders by others and recognise allyship as a form of leadership.

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Pride in Diversity (2026). Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) Employee Survey. ACON's Pride Inclusion Programs