

SEEK

P.R.I.D.E Report

Promoting Real Inclusion,
Diversity and Empowerment
in the workplace

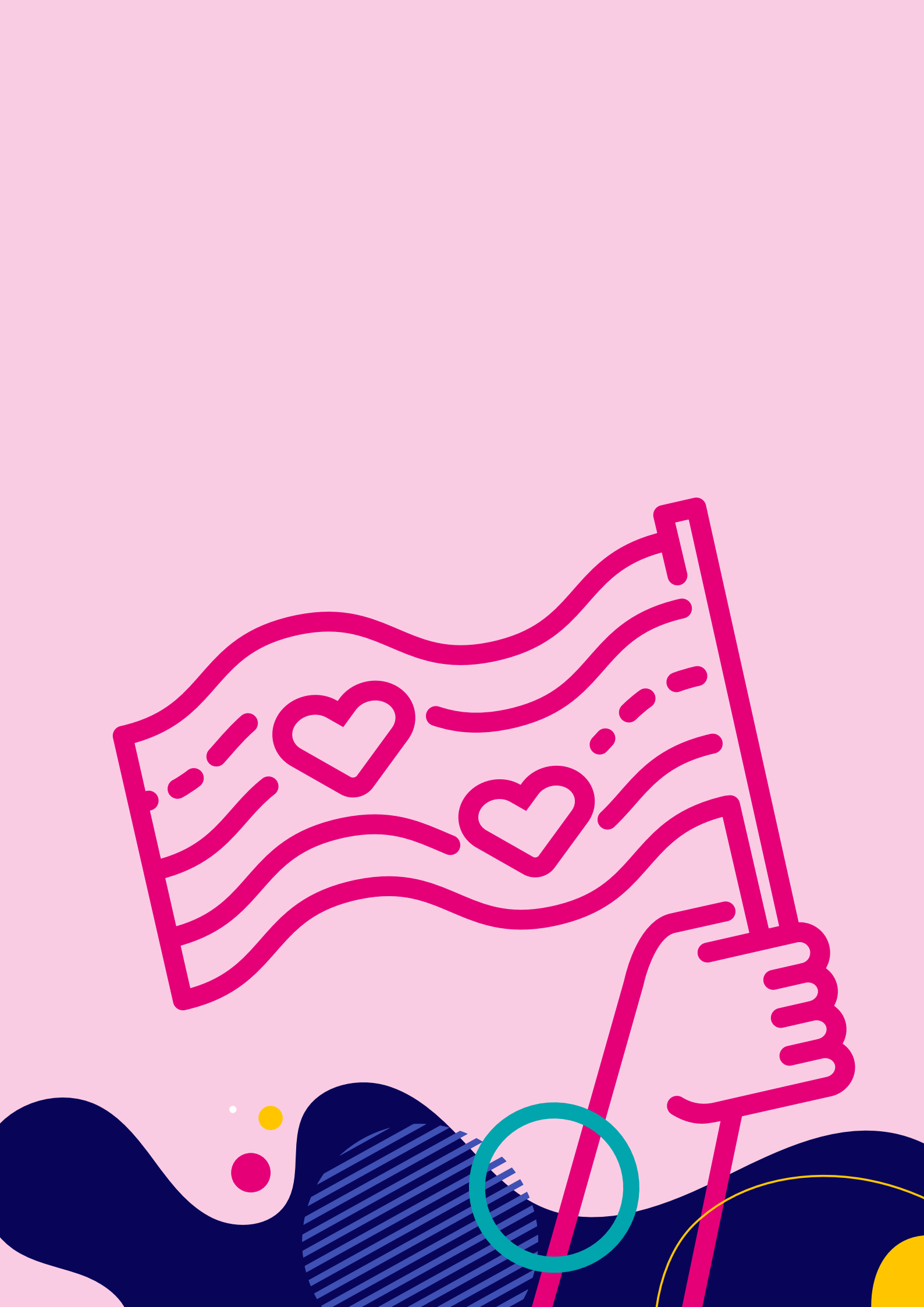
August 2021



THIS WAY FORWARD



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Acknowledgement of Country



SEEK proudly acknowledges Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.

We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to Australian life and how this enriches us.



Glossary of terms

The following terms are relevant to this report. We acknowledge that language is always evolving. There is great diversity within LGBTIQ+ communities and a wide range of language and terms are used. The below list is a starting point for understanding.

LGBTIQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer or Questioning, Asexual.

Non-binary: A term used by someone who does not identify exclusively as a woman or a man.

Cisgender: A person whose sense of personal identity and gender matches their birth sex.

Ally: A Heterosexual and Cisgender person who supports equal civil rights, supports LGBTIQ+ social movements and challenges homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Discrimination: Discrimination happens when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics.¹

Homophobia: A prejudice against those who identify as same-sex attracted.

Biphobia: A prejudice against those who identify as Bisexual.

Transphobia: A prejudice against those who identify as Transgender or gender nonconforming.

Intersectionality: Intersectionality describes how different parts of a person's identity or circumstances – such as age, race, culture, disability, gender, location or religion – intersect and combine to shape people's life experiences, including of discrimination.²

Out / Out of the closet: Terms used to express an LGBTIQ+ person's self-disclosure of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Microaggressions: The everyday indignities, put-downs and insults that members of marginalised groups experience in their day-to-day interactions with individuals who are often unaware that they are engaging in an offensive or demeaning way.³

Generations:

For the purposes of this report, generations are classified as those born in the years specified below:

Gen Z: 1997 to 2003

Millennial: 1982 to 1996

Gen X: 1967 to 1981

Baby Boomer: 1956 to 1966.

1. Australian Human Rights Commission <https://humanrights.gov.au/quick-guide/12030>

2. Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex', 1989

3. Derald Wing Sue, 'Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation', 2010



A message from SEEK Managing Director, Kendra Banks:

Australian workplaces have never been more diverse and inclusive, but have we made as many steps forward as we think? As with most things, the answer is not straightforward or simple.

To help uncover and understand the state of the nation, we have conducted research into the lived experiences of Australian LGBTIQ+ communities in the workplace versus the perception of those experiences from their non-LGBTIQ+ counterparts.

SEEK's purpose is to help people live more productive and fulfilling working lives, and help organisations succeed. I genuinely believe to be able to represent job seekers and employers, we need to have a workforce that reflects the diversity of Australia.

At SEEK, we recognise and respect characteristics unique to individuals such as gender, language, ethnicity, age, religion, disability and sexual orientation. We strive to create an environment where people feel they can bring their whole selves to work.

Whilst we consider ourselves an inclusive place to work, we know that a concerted effort and focus must be maintained. There is more that we can be doing.

As such, we take a proud stance in supporting LGBTIQ+ communities in the workplace,

expressed through our internal policies, our seven-year partnership with Midsumma Festival and four-year partnership with Pride in Diversity.

The Promoting Real Inclusion, Diversity and Empowerment (P.R.I.D.E) in the workplace Report has brought to the surface the need to reinvigorate conversations around supporting LGBTIQ+ communities to bring their whole selves to work. The unearthed data brings to the forefront the discrepancies between the lived experiences of Australian LGBTIQ+ employees in the workplace and their non-LGBTIQ+ counterparts.

It's important to recognise the personal and emotional impacts a lack of an inclusive workplace can have on LGBTIQ+ communities. While discrimination in the workplace may not always be loud and open, the responsibility falls upon all Australians to be cognisant of the microaggressions that play a substantial role in diminishing safe and inclusive work environments for LGBTIQ+ communities.

The P.R.I.D.E report is set to empower Australian businesses and employees to work on ensuring they are creating safe workplaces for all. In all its forms, achieving diversity and inclusion is essential for an innovative and high-performing business, and the following report shines a light on the importance of fostering the right environments in the workplace.

Methodology

Independent research was conducted on behalf of SEEK by research and analytics agency, Nature. Respondents were recruited from a research-only panel and interviews were conducted via a 15-minute online survey with a nationally representative sample of Australians aged 18-64, who are working full-time or part-time or have worked in the past two years. Sole traders were excluded from the sample. Fieldwork was conducted between 9-18 March 2021 and a nationally representative sample of n=1,000 was achieved.

An additional n=200 LGBTIQ+ respondents were collected to increase reportable samples to show a lived experience versus perception and n=364 respondents were re-contacted to answer follow-up questions.

The intent of this report is to be inclusive of all respondents. However, we acknowledge that language is personal and we have tried to avoid homogenising the thoughts, feelings and experiences of entire communities, while presenting our findings from the research.

Nature, 2021

Introduction

“Are Australian workplaces doing enough to support LGBTIQ+ communities?”

This is still an important question to ask now in 2021.”

SEEK has commissioned research into the lived experience of LGBTIQ+ employees across Australia, and attitudes towards LGBTIQ+ communities within Australian workplaces.

Fundamentally, this research highlights that despite organisations making major improvements to diversity and inclusion over recent years, there is still much work to be done to support LGBTIQ+ employees, and to combat discrimination.

To ensure organisations truly support and include LGBTIQ+ employees, it is important to understand the discrimination and challenges that still exist, in order to forge a path forward and foster more inclusive workplaces.



This report will focus on:

- The particular workplace challenges faced by members of LGBTIQ+ communities
- The effects of workplace discrimination and the lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ employees
- How employers and colleagues can better support LGBTIQ+ communities in the workplace

45%

Almost half of Australians (45%) say they have noticed an improvement in inclusion and diversity in their workplace during their tenure.

2x

But LGBTIQ+ employees are still twice as likely to be victims of workplace discrimination as their non-LGBTIQ+ colleagues.

The experience and impacts of discrimination

The research paints an eye-opening picture of the experiences of members of LGBTIQ+ communities in Australian workplaces.

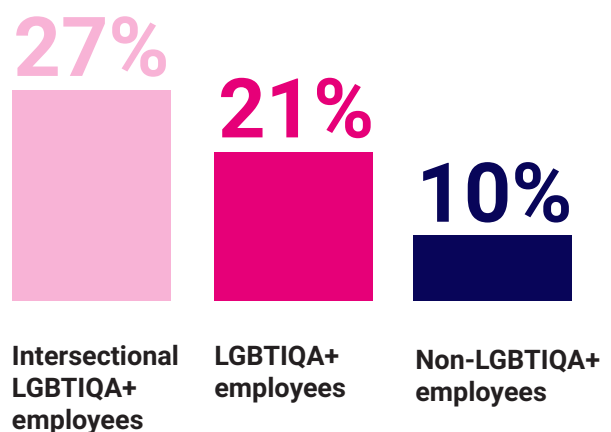
SEEK research has revealed that LGBTIQ+ employees are twice as likely to be victims of workplace discrimination when compared to their non-LGBTIQ+ colleagues.

- LGBTIQ+ communities are three times more likely to be discriminated against based on their mental health status in the workplace compared to their non-LGBTIQ+ counterparts, despite organisations prioritising mental health.⁴

When discrimination happens, a person – or group of people – are treated less favourably because of certain personal characteristics.

This risk of workplace discrimination is even greater among intersectional LGBTIQ+ employees (employees who identify in more than one minority group).

I have personally experienced discrimination in the workplace



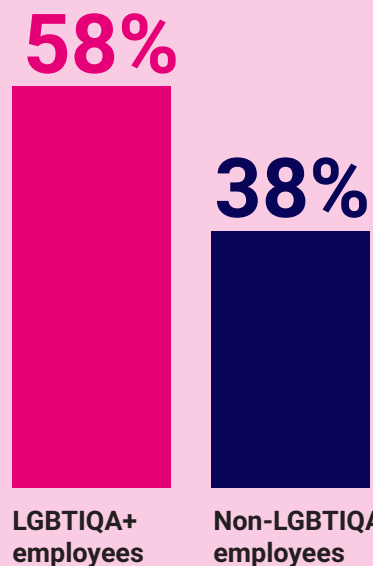
⁴ In February-March 2021, SEEK conducted a bespoke study entitled 'Fostering Belonging Within Organisations'. This study found that 69% of HR professionals are developing or implementing mental health and wellbeing strategies in 2021.

Further, the research found the level of discrimination among LGBTIQ+ employees is highest within trade and resource occupations, with 27 per cent of LGBTIQ+ employees experiencing workplace discrimination compared to only 10 per cent of non-LGBTIQ+ employees.

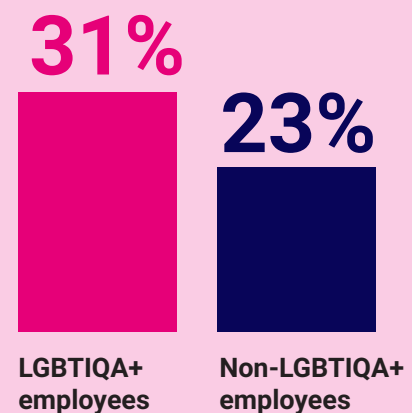
- SEEK research also highlighted microaggressions – the everyday, sometimes subtle interactions or behaviours that communicate negative attitudes towards, or bias against, a marginalised group. Using gendered language has been identified by LGBTIQ+ communities as the most common form of microaggression in the workplace (41%), followed by making assumptions about colleagues' sexual orientations (37%), and having only gendered signage (32%).

When looking at what LGBTIQ+ employees would like from their workplaces, more than half (58%) of LGBTIQ+ employees said their workplace could be more understanding of issues facing LGBTIQ+ communities. A third (31%) feel there is a lack of education when it comes to the issues the communities face.

My workplace could be more understanding of issues facing LGBTIQ+ communities



There is not enough education for employees on the issues facing LGBTIQ+ communities



Workplace attitudes and approaches to LGBTIQ+ diversity in Australia

The research also highlights a sense of inertia within Australian workplaces when it comes to supporting LGBTIQ+ communities and addressing discrimination.

57%

Almost 2 in 3 LGBTIQ+ employees who have experienced or witnessed discrimination say these issues are rarely or never resolved.

1 in 6

Australians feel it's not their business if their LGBTIQ+ colleagues are discriminated against in the workplace.

32%

A third of Australians believe their employer has a lot more to do to support its LGBTIQ+ employees.

Workplaces also appear to be lacking education, resources and guidance around LGBTIQ+ experiences:

- Less than half (46%) of Australians say their workplace has adequate information and guidance on how to fight discrimination against LGBTIQ+ employees
- 35 per cent of Australians wish they could do more to 'stand up' for their LGBTIQ+ colleagues
- 29 per cent say they would like to fight discrimination against LGBTIQ+ communities in their workplace, but don't know where to start

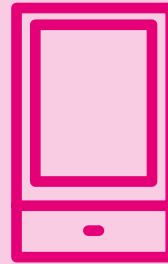
In particular, the research suggests there is confusion about the meaning of the term 'Ally' – which refers to someone who supports and advocates for LGBTIQ+ communities. This confusion has led to differing expectations between LGBTIQ+ communities and non-LGBTIQ+ Australians about how they should show up for the communities.



Impact of LGBTIQ+ discrimination on organisations

It is important to recognise not only the personal and emotional impacts but also the financial consequences arising from a failure to properly address discriminatory behaviour.

The research reveals that LGBTIQ+ employees are nearly two and a half times more likely to fake sickness or skip work due to feeling unsafe from discrimination compared to their non-LGBTIQ+ counterparts.



15% of LGBTIQ+ employees have called in sick to work due to feeling unsafe, compared to **7% of non-LGBTIQ+ employees**



11% of LGBTIQ+ employees have left a job due to workplace discrimination, compared to **8% of non-LGBTIQ+ employees**

Generational differences in attitudes to LGBTIQ+ support

Overall, the research shows significant generational differences in Australia in understanding the issues faced by LGBTIQ+ communities, and in levels of activism in supporting these communities.

Younger generations in the workplace adopt a far more active role to combat adverse behaviours and discrimination and understand the need to educate themselves further.

Actions taken by these younger generations may include educating themselves and others on issues facing LGBTIQ+ communities, challenging their own biases around gender and sexuality, and amplifying voices of LGBTIQ+ communities through social media.

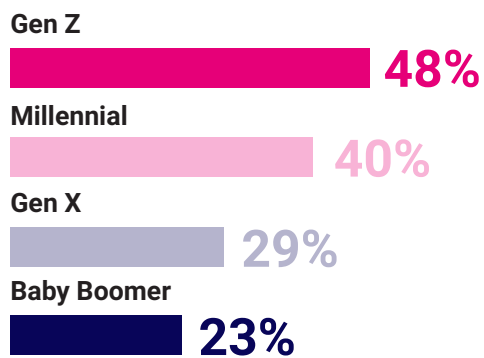
Gen Z employees are the most active in driving LGBTIQ+ rights in the workplace compared to colleagues from previous generations.

The research highlighted a strong desire among Gen Z employees surveyed to do more to 'stand up' for their LGBTIQ+ colleagues.

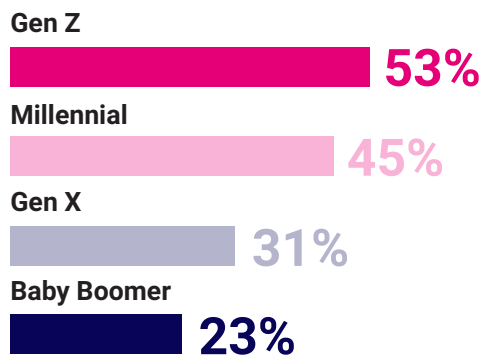
Gen Z employees are also more willing to fight against discrimination compared to other generations. This desire falters more dramatically among Baby Boomer employees.

The research also shows that younger generations, specifically Gen Z and Millennials, are far more aware of the challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ communities in Australian workplaces and are more willing to provide support than older generations.

I could do more to support my LGBTIQ+ colleagues



My workplace could be more understanding of the issues facing LGBTIQ+ communities

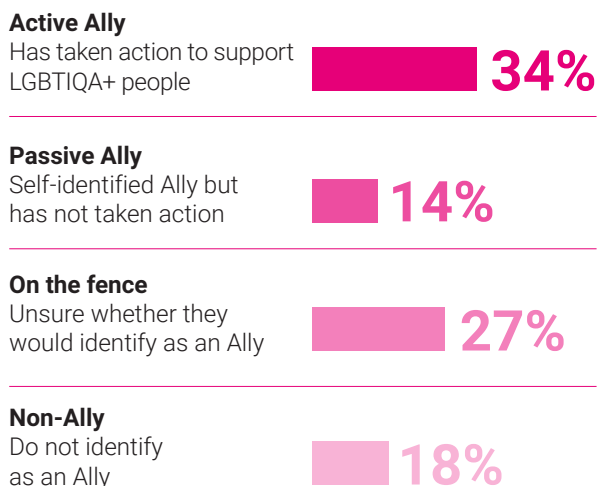


However, it's not entirely a positive story for Gen Z. Of the 1 in 4 non-LGBTIQ+ Australians who don't currently consider themselves an Ally, 45 per cent of Gen Zs would never consider becoming one. This is broadly in line with other generations, with 42 per cent of Millennials, 58 per cent of Gen X and 62 per cent of Boomers also stating that they would never consider becoming an Ally to LGBTIQ+ communities.

The importance of Allyship within the workplace

Allyship is a key component in addressing workplace discrimination among LGBTIQ+ communities. The research found that there are varying degrees of Allyship within Australian workplaces:

DEGREES OF ALLYSHIP



What's more, **1 in 4 Australians don't ever see themselves becoming an Ally to LGBTIQ+ communities, creating an even larger divide in the workplace.**

It's worth noting that providing information and awareness can be critical to promoting higher levels of Allyship among employees.

Thirty per cent of non-LGBTIQ+ Australians that identify as 'on the fence' believe they need **more information** on how to be an Ally and 20 per cent say they need **better awareness** on the issues that LGBTIQ+ communities face.

To contribute toward a greater presence of Allyship, as well as attitudinal change, it's important that employees have access to accurate information and education on the issues LGBTIQ+ communities face.



LGBTIQA+ inclusion tips for workplaces

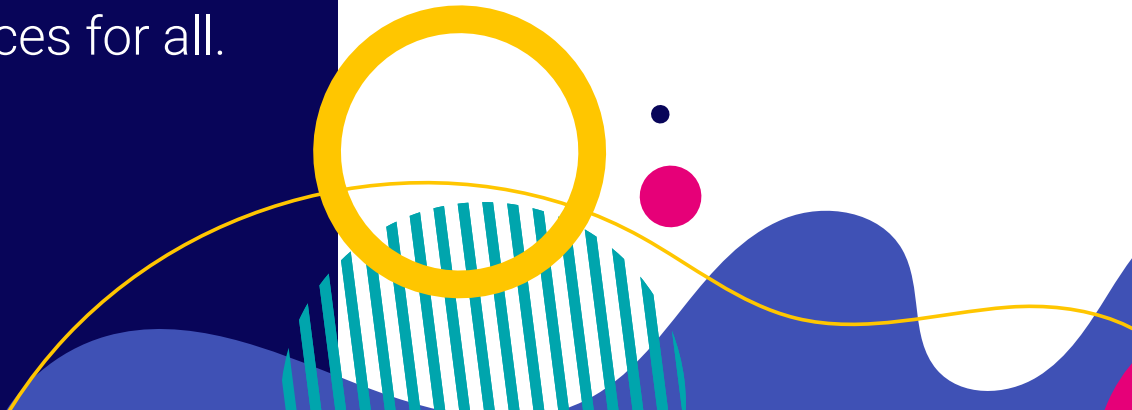
The research has highlighted the very real need to address diversity and inclusion issues for LGBTIQA+ communities within Australian workplaces.

Addressing such challenges might feel intimidating, but there are a range of actions that workplaces of all sizes can adopt to make meaningful change.

SEEK has partnered with Australian LGBTIQA+ charity The Equality Project to develop these tips for businesses, to help them foster inclusive and safe spaces for all.

Getting started

1. Set clear expectations with your employees around treating others fairly and with respect, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. This might come in the form of a written code of conduct and be reinforced by visual cues around the workplace. [A code of conduct template is available here.](#)
2. Display LGBTIQA+-friendly signage, such as 'You are welcome here' signs or a small rainbow flag at the front desk. This can help to show LGBTIQA+ customers and employees that the workplace or business is an inclusive and safe space.
3. Update your employee and customer forms and signage to include gender-neutral language. [Refer to this resource on inclusive language](#) to better understand why this language matters, and how you can start to use it.



On your way

1. Run an LGBTIQ+ awareness training session for employees. You can use free resources from organisations like The Equality Project to introduce your team to LGBTIQ+ communities, and provide foundational understanding of how each team member can create a welcoming environment for employees and customers alike. For more in-depth training, you can also engage The Equality Project for in-person or virtual workshops.

2. Celebrate IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia) and other key local and international LGBTIQ+ events in the workplace. Meaningful ways to celebrate could include hosting a rainbow morning tea and donating the proceeds to a local LGBTIQ+ charity, or having a guest speaker from the communities come in to give a talk. [You can find a list of LGBTIQ+ events here.](#)

3. Encourage employees to add their pronouns to their email signatures as a simple and respectful way to affirm other people's gender identities, and acknowledge transgender, gender diverse and non-binary people.

Active Allyship

1. Create a space where people who are part of LGBTIQ+ communities – employees and customers – can talk about what they need to support them. This could take place through informal conversations like casual coffee catch ups, or larger workshops to collaboratively explore issues and solutions. It's also important to be conscious of employees who are not out in the workplace; providing them a voice through anonymous surveys can be another useful approach. From these conversations or surveys, it's important to work together to develop steps to make change.

2. Establish strong anti-discriminatory policies in every aspect of the business and ensure that they are known across the workplace. Employees need to recognise that there is zero tolerance for any instances of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic related bullying or discrimination.

3. Treat all employees equally when it comes to parental or adoption leave. Ensure that your HR policies, family and all other staff benefits apply equally to LGBTIQ+ employees and their families. For example, parental leave provisions should be updated to include employees with same-sex partners, and 'maternity' leave should be changed to 'parental' leave to be more inclusive.



**THE
EQUALITY
PROJECT**

Australians have been making positive strides to support LGBTIQ+ communities, but there is still a significant amount of work to be done to achieve true diversity and inclusion in workplaces across the country.

For as long as discrimination against LGBTIQ+ employees continues to exist within the workplace, there will be a critical need for us to come together and enact change.



Further resources and support

Learn more about how you can improve inclusive practices within workplaces:

Pride in Diversity

The national not-for-profit employer support program for LGBTQ workplace inclusion specialising in HR, organisational change and workplace diversity. Pride in Diversity publishes the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI).

<http://www.pid-awei.com.au/author/pride-in-diversity/>

Minus 18

A national organisation for LGBTIQ+ young people, focused on leading change, building social inclusion, and advocating for an Australia where all young people are safe, empowered, and surrounded by people that support them.

<https://www.minus18.org.au/>

If this report has raised issues for you, know that support is available:

QLife

An Australia-wide LGBTI peer support and referral service for LGBTI individuals, their friends and families, and health professionals.

1800 184 527 | <https://qlife.org.au/>

Beyond Blue

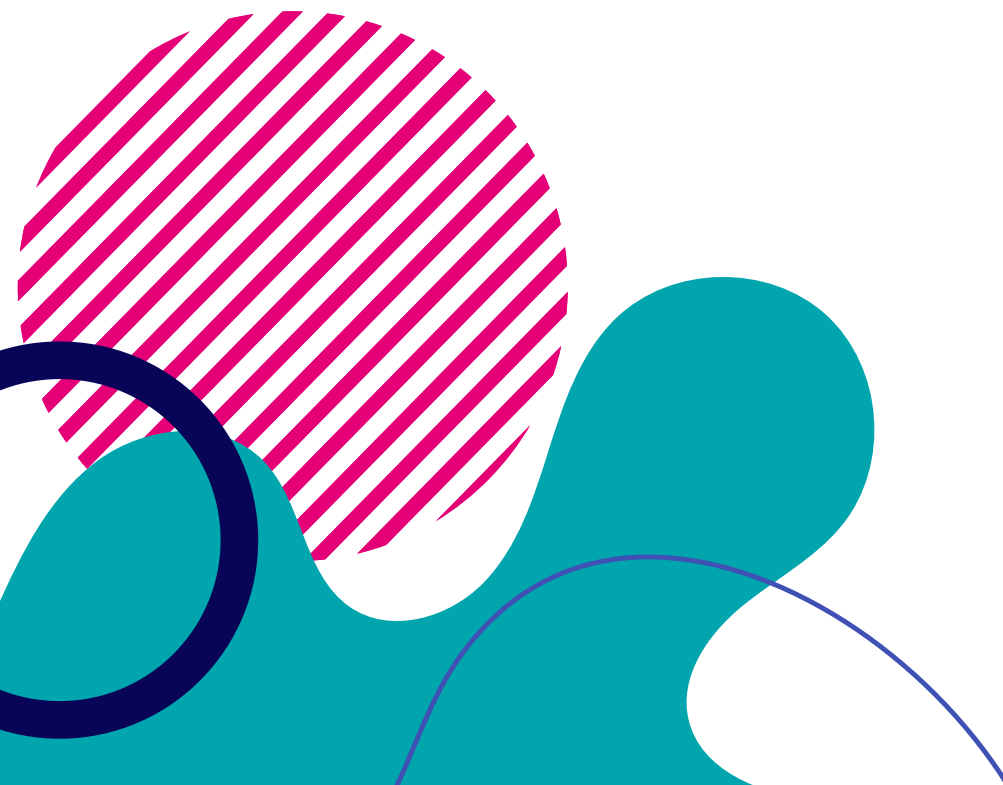
Support and information around depression and anxiety, with 24/7 advice and support available via telephone, as well as daily web chat and email support.

1300 22 4636 | <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

LifeLine

Free, 24-hour telephone crisis support service in Australia. Chat and text services are also available.

13 11 14 | <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>





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