Perspectives on LGBTI+ inclusion in the workplace

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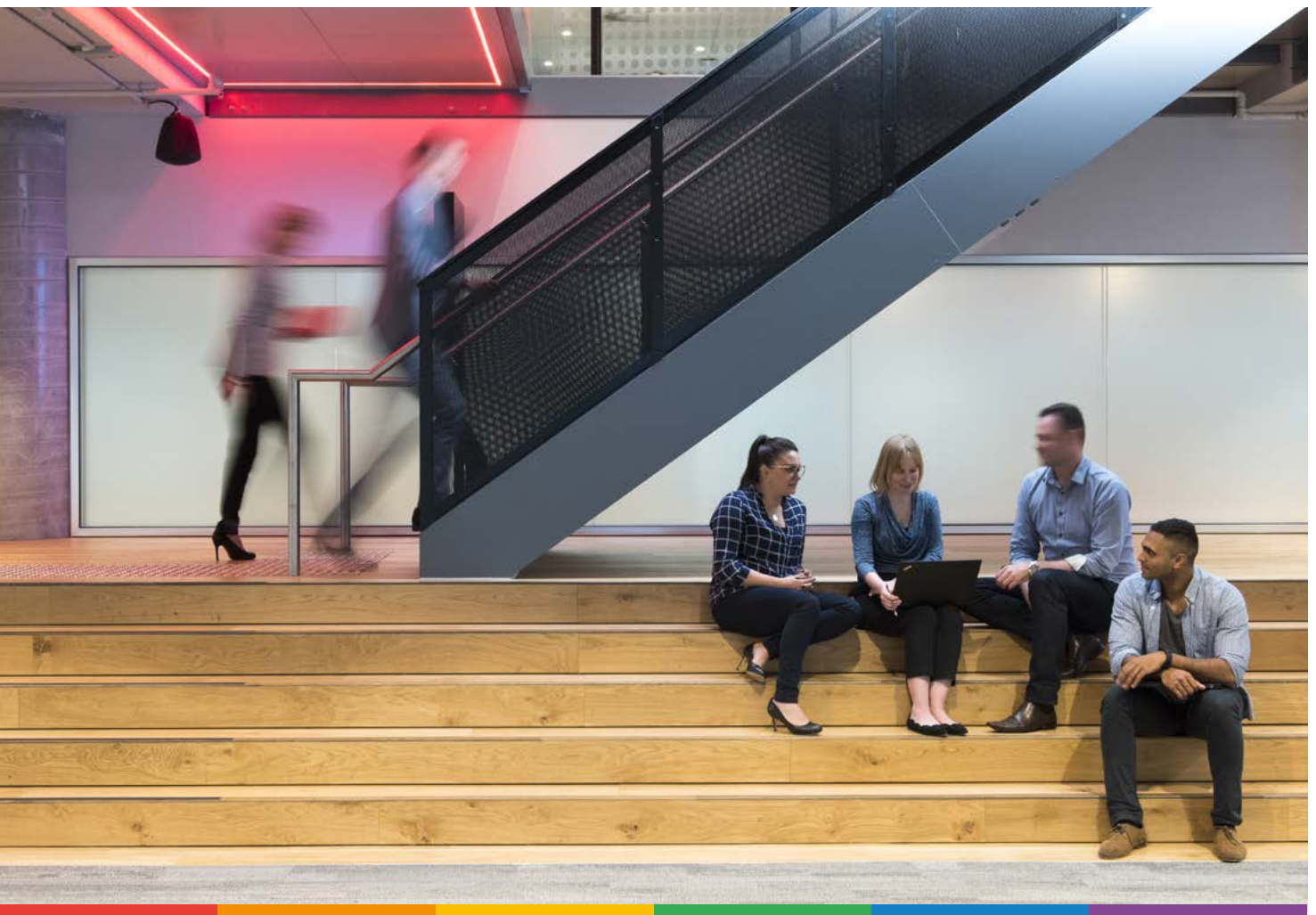
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Some of the GLEE@PwC volunteers collecting survey results (including Howie the shoodle) at Midsumma Carnival, January 2017

Foreword

PwC's GLEE team is passionate about creating a more inclusive workplace not just at PwC, but in organisations throughout Australia.

PwC's corporate sponsorship of the iconic Melbourne Midsumma festival provides a unique opportunity to gauge the temperature of the LGBTI community and better understand some of the current opportunities and challenges.

Building on the success of our inaugural report in 2016, PwC's team of volunteers surveyed over 550 attendees of Midsumma Carnival about their experiences in the workplace. Our report explores a range of current issues and, new this year, we have developed an interactive dashboard to enable further interrogation of our survey findings.

Our hope is that the insights from this report help generate constructive conversations about how organisations can make changes that directly support LGBTI inclusion in the workplace. I'd personally like to thank my GLEE team and allies here in Melbourne for their energy, their curiosity and their passion to be leaders in driving positive change in our society.
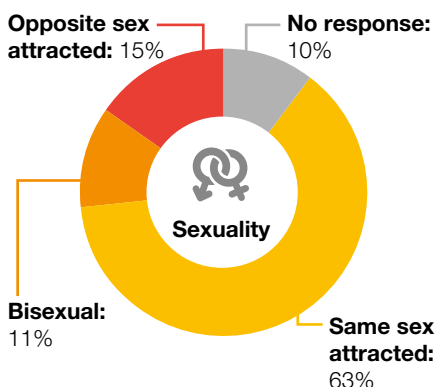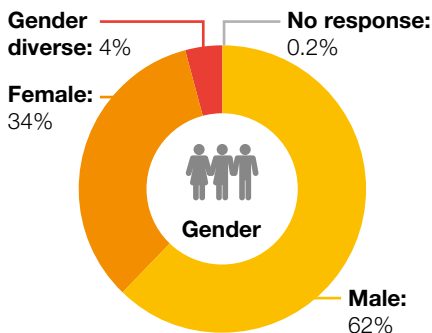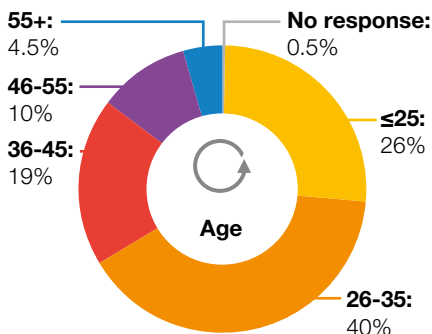
Yours sincerely,

Tanya Matthewson
GLEE@PwC Victorian Lead & Female LGBTI+ Sponsor

— Introduction

At PwC we seek to build trust in society and solve important problems. One area PwC is committed to is creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace and society.

Since being established in 2010, our employee-led LGBTI+* network GLEE (Gay, Lesbian and Everyone Else) has been instrumental in driving change within PwC – including policy changes to parental leave for same sex parents; helping clients like CBA, Macquarie Bank and American Express set up similar networks; and delivering 'Sticks and stones' diversity training to PwC teams and clients across Australia.

On a broader level, we are supportive of driving positive change in our community and are a keen supporter of the LGBTI+ community. PwC has been leading the way in its evidence-based support of a Parliament vote on same-sex marriage in place of a plebiscite as well as providing strategic advice to the Victorian Government that resulted in funding for the establishment of the soon-to-be-built Victorian Pride Centre.

In recognition of these contributions to change within PwC and in the broader community, PwC was named Pride in Diversity's Employer of the Year for LGBT Employees in 2012 and 2015, the first organisation to receive this award twice, and subsequently awarded Platinum Tier status in 2016 and 2017.

Acknowledging our position as an organisation showing leadership in fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace, we feel compelled to share our success with other organisations to advance the workplace environment for LGBTI+ people. Being a proud sponsor of the Melbourne Midsumma Festival, the annual Midsumma Carnival day provides a unique opportunity to engage with the community and understand the climate of workplace inclusion among Australia's LGBTI+ community.

Continuing the conversation started at the Midsumma Carnival in 2016, the PwC GLEE team took to the crowds in Alexandra Gardens in 2017. The team surveyed over 550 individuals, asking questions around how supported they feel at work to be their authentic self.

Three key themes emerged from the 2017 survey:

- The variability of LGBTI+ experiences across industries
- The positive impact of having an LGBTI+ network
- The importance of employees being their authentic selves and having supportive leadership.

We explore these three themes in this report.

Demographics of respondents

55+: 4.5%
46-55: 10%
36-45: 19%
No response: 0.5%
≤25: 26%
26-35: 40%

Age

Gender diverse: 4%
Female: 34%
No response: 0.2%
Male: 62%

Gender

Opposite sex attracted: 15%
No response: 10%
Bisexual: 11%
Same sex attracted: 63%

Sexuality

* Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex +

The variability of LGBTI+ experiences across industries

The experience of homophobia differs by industry

Overall, respondents to the survey said homophobia is generally not present in the workplace: almost half indicated that it was not seen, another third saying it is rare. However, 55 per cent have observed homophobia in the past 12 months. When considering the data on an industry by industry level, there are noticeable differences.

The *Professional*, *Scientific and Technical* services industry, which had a high rate of being 'out at work' (93 per cent)[1] and a higher percentage having an LGBTI+ network or committee (60 per cent), surprisingly still had a moderate amount of observed homophobia (60 per cent observed homophobia).

In the case of those in the *Construction* industry, homophobia was more present than on average; 75 per cent responded to say it was present compared to 56 per cent in other sectors.

The sector with the lowest rate of observed homophobia was the *Arts and Recreation Services*, where 36 per cent had observed homophobia. Employees in this industry were less likely to have an LGBTI+ network in their workplace (27 per cent) but a higher rate of being out at work (89 per cent).

Recommendations to employers
Holding training on the use of inclusive LGBTI+ language and encouraging forums where your people can share their stories in a safe space can help to educate everyone on the impact of casual homophobic language. Storytelling can be a compelling way to deliver this.
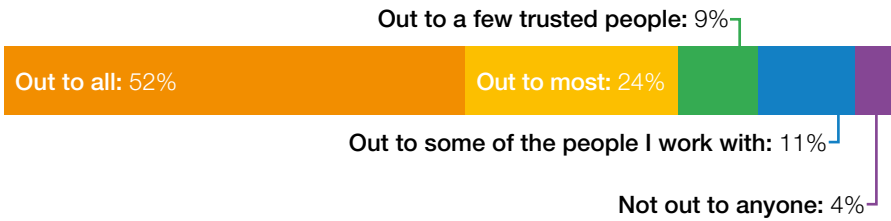
Experience of homophobia in the workplace in the past 12 months[2]

No/Never: 44%

Rarely: 33%

Occasionally: 17%

Frequently: 5%
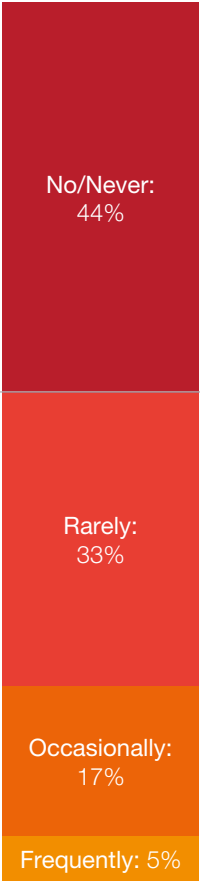
Homophobia may discourage people coming out as the propotion of people who are out differs by industry too
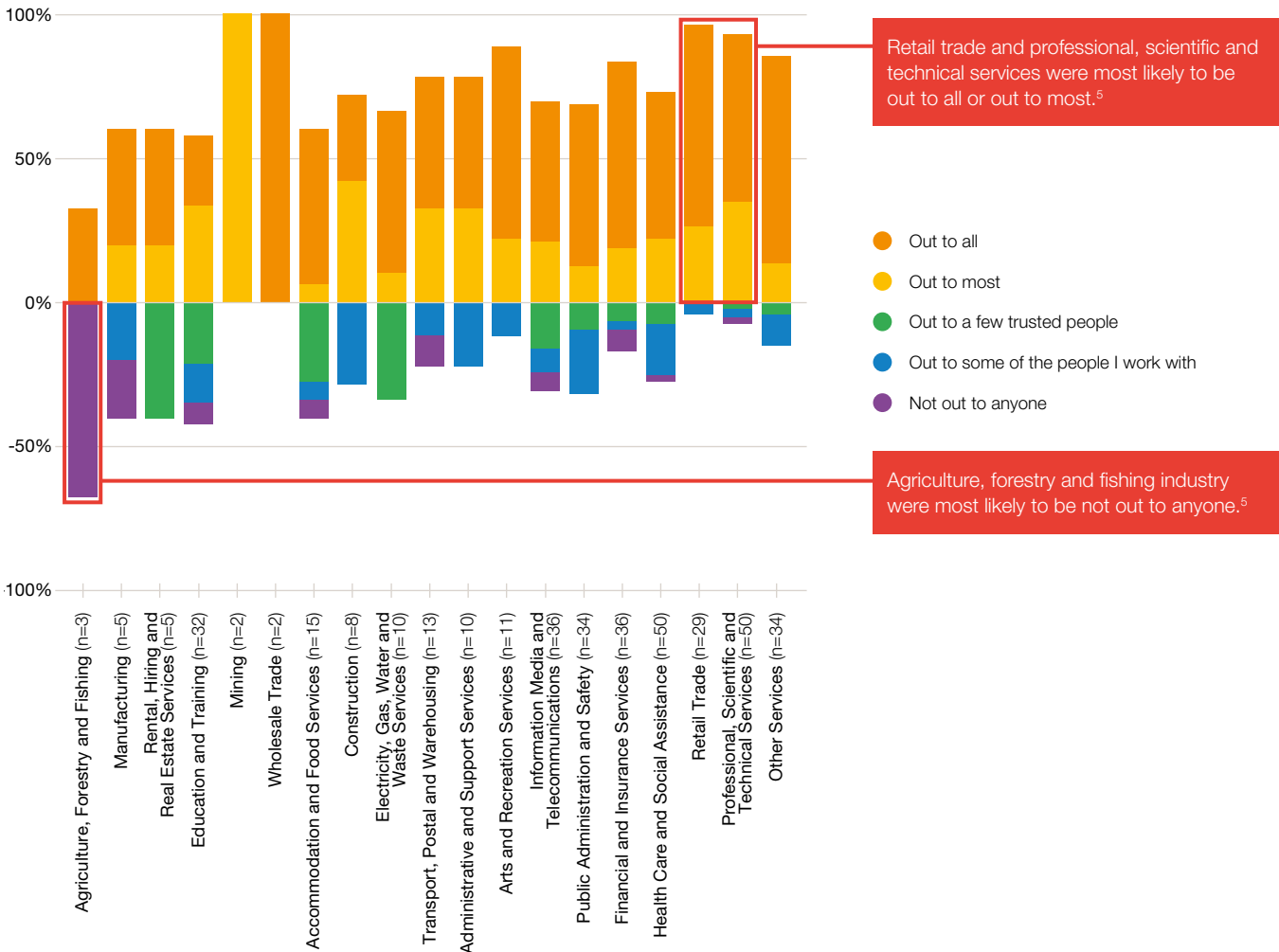
Similar to other Australian research, 52 per cent of those employed people responding to the Midsumma survey were 'out to all'.[3]

Out at work

Out to a few trusted people: 9%

Out to all: 52%   Out to most: 24%

Out to some of the people I work with: 11%

Not out to anyone: 4%

Importantly, this survey allows us to look at the results by industry to understand what issues might be affecting sectors.

Out at work by industry[4]

Retail trade and professional, scientific and technical services were most likely to be out to all or out to most.[5]

- Out to all
- Out to most
- Out to a few trusted people
- Out to some of the people I work with
- Not out to anyone

Agriculture, forestry and fishing industry were most likely to be not out to anyone.[5]

# *There is a greater presence of LGBTI+ people in certain industries*

Compared to the Victorian workforce, LGBTI+ people at Midsumma were more likely to be employed in service sectors like professional and financial services.[6]

For men, they were much less likely to be employed in the construction sector (15 per cent of broader workforce but 3 per cent of the men surveyed) or manufacturing sectors (12 per cent of broader workforce but 1 per cent of surveyed men).
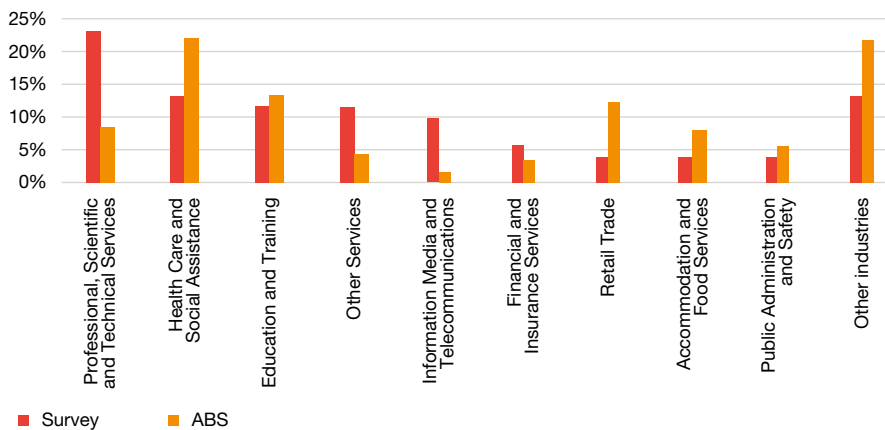
For women, they were less likely to be employed in the healthcare sector (22 per cent in the broader population, 13 per cent in the survey).

Gender diverse respondents were most commonly working in the *Healthcare* industry (note that this ABS dataset does not allow a comparison for employment by gender diverse in the broader workforce).

Male employment by industry in survey vs Victoria workforce[7]

■ Survey ■ ABS
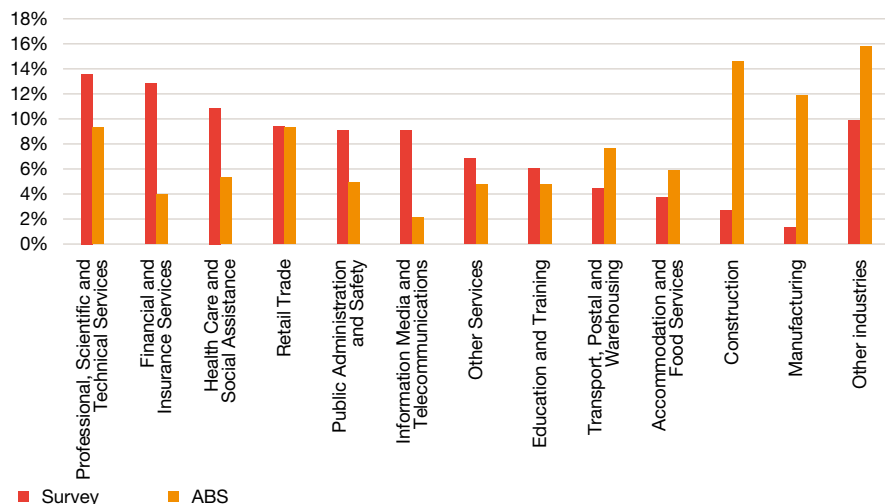
Female employment by industry in survey vs Victorian workforce[7]

■ Survey ■ ABS

Industries of employment for gender diverse respondents[7]

● Health Care and Social Assistance, 42%

● Other Services, 33%

● Public Administration and Safety, 17%

● Administrative and Support Services, 8%

The positive impact of having an LGBTI+ network

LGBTI+ networks can reduce homophobia and encourage employees to come out at work

An LGBTI+ committee or network is a broad term, encompassing employee-led groups and programs that are initiated by leadership but inclusive of LGBTI+ employees.

The purpose of a committee or network is to promote an inclusive, diverse and respectful work environment for all LGBTI+ employees. This is achieved by providing a support network and increasing awareness within the organisation of the challenges faced by LGBTI+ colleagues. Based on our survey data, 43 per cent of all respondents' (ie of all sexualities) employer organisations had an LGBTI+ network.

The data shows that there is a higher level of comfort in a workplace that has an LGBTI+ network. Having a network does reduce the likelihood that an employee will experience homophobic behaviour at work, as well as reduce the perception that being 'out' at work will have a negative impact on future promotion. However, where a network existed, 48 per cent of respondents had still experienced homophobic behaviours at work in the past year. Where there was no network, 58 per cent had experienced homophobic behaviours at work.

Further, the existence of a network reduced the perception that being 'out' at work will negatively impact future career progression by 5 percentage points (from 14 per cent to 9 per cent).

The survey data shows a significant association between the presence of a network and being out to most of your colleagues. This trend can be seen in the corresponding chart where those who were not out at work were also more likely to report not having an LGBTI+ network at their workplace.

Does your organisation have an LGBTI+ network/committee?
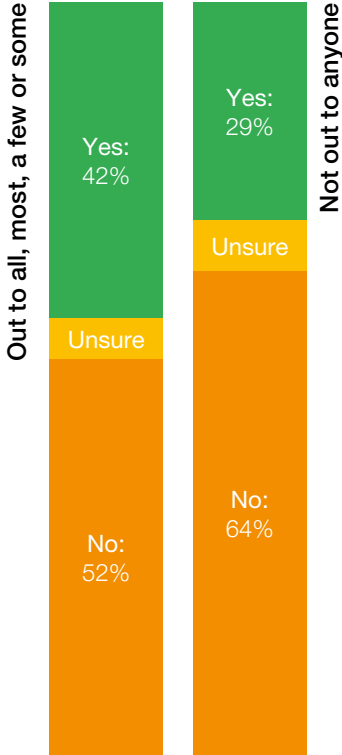
75%

of those respondents who were 'out' in their workplace and who had a network at their organisation, were actively involved in their network. Within this group, women were under represented, making up only 23 per cent compared to 25 per cent of same-sex attracted or bisexual survey responses.

Recommendations to employers
Implementing (or enabling your employees to implement) a support network is a great start. However, this is just the beginning. Your organisation will need to support a culture of openness and inclusion, by encouraging your leaders to be supportive, training your people to identify unconscious bias and being proactive in addressing homophobic behaviour displayed in your organisation.

The combination of industry, organisation size and whether or not your organisation has a network is a reliable predictor of how comfortable your people are to be 'out' at work'
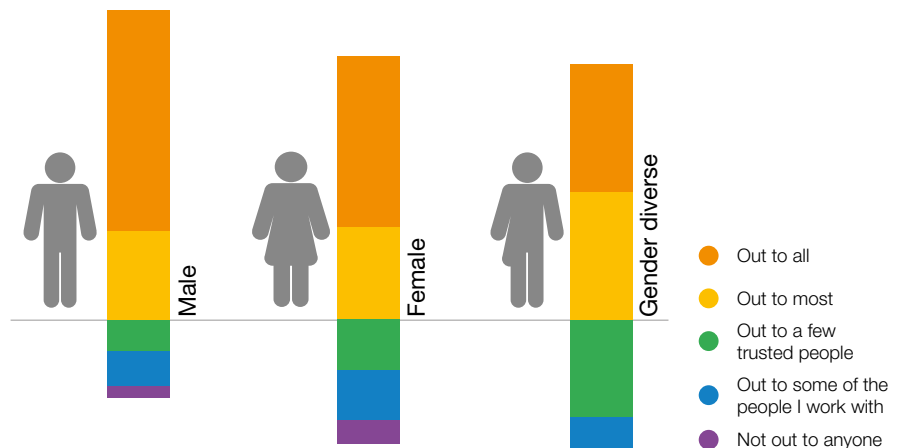
In other words, these three factors can have a big impact on whether your employees are comfortable to be 'out' at work. In most industries we found that with the presence of a network in large firms there was, with a high level of confidence, a correlation with employees being out.[8]
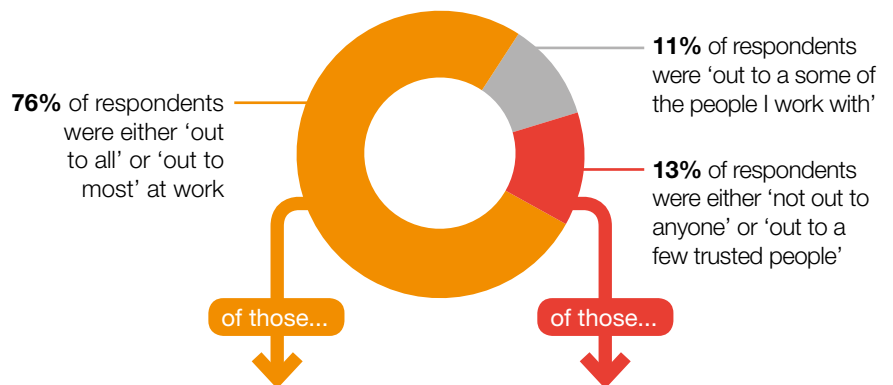
Survey says...

44%

of women were out to all at work compared to 57 per cent of men.

Levels of personal disclosure by gender

- Out to all
- Out to most
- Out to a few trusted people
- Out to some of the people I work with
- Not out to anyone

How OUT are you as an LGBTI+ person at work?

76% of respondents were either 'out to all' or 'out to most' at work

11% of respondents were 'out to a some of the people I work with'

13% of respondents were either 'not out to anyone' or 'out to a few trusted people'

of those...   of those...

What is your gender? (female, gender diverse, male)

How would you define your sexuality?

Same-sex attracted: 89%

Same-sex attracted: 63%

Bisexual: 11%

Bisexual: 37%
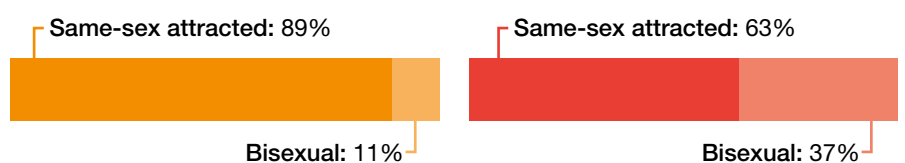
Leaders who support and advocate inclusion have a significant impact on confidence of LGBTI+ people in the workplace

When employees confidently express themselves and their personal identity in LGBTI+ inclusive organisations, they gain attention and advocacy of their superiors.

This also lends to greater traction between leaders and employees, reducing bias in pay and promotion decisions while strengthening relationships within communities and across networks.

Achieving sponsorship of diversity and inclusion (D&I) from the leaders and senior members of an organisation fosters an inclusive culture that cultivates support for those who feel less comfortable to be 'out' at work.

Survey says...

72%

of the respondents in our survey who felt genuinely supported were comfortably 'out at work'.
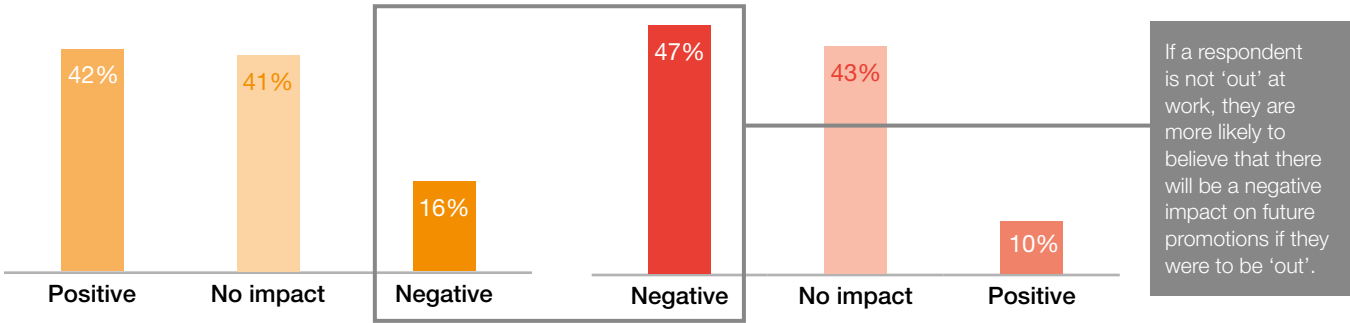
Our survey data showed that, if a respondent is not 'out' at work, they are more likely to believe that there will be a negative impact on future promotions if they were to be 'out'.

When leaders are genuinely supportive of D&I, there is a higher percentage of employees being 'out' at work – our analysis found managers that are perceived to genuinely believe in the importance of D&I in the workplace is correlated with a higher proportion of employees being out.[9]

Without leadership support, individuals who are 'out at work' are likely to not be recognised for their talents, lack in career development opportunities and therefore may see their career progression stifled.[10]
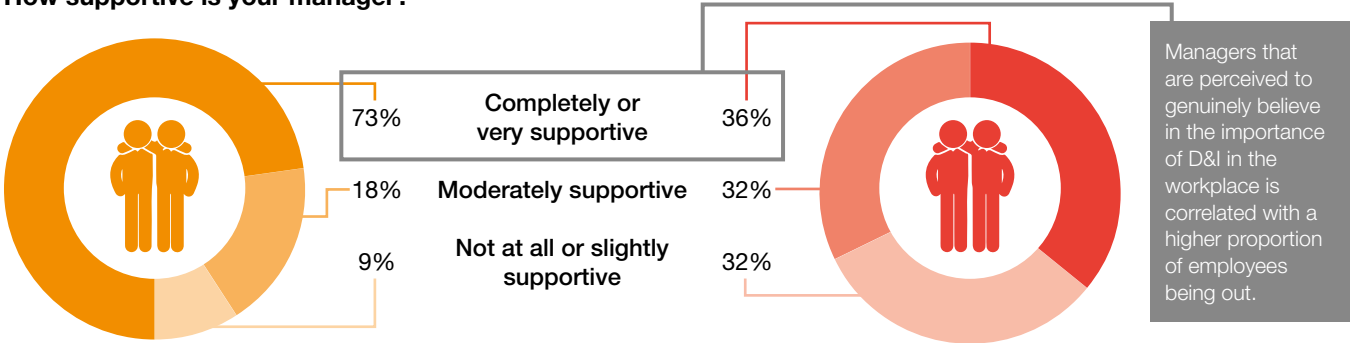
In contrast, those with leadership support, are much more likely to report that they are being promoted quickly, are satisfied with their rate of promotion, and career progression.[10]

How do you think coming OUT at work will have an effect on your prospects for future promotions?

Positive	No impact	Negative		Negative	No impact	Positive
42%	41%	16%		47%	43%	10%

If a respondent is not 'out' at work, they are more likely to believe that there will be a negative impact on future promotions if they were to be 'out'.

How supportive is your manager?

	Completely or very supportive	
73%		36%
18%	Moderately supportive	32%
9%	Not at all or slightly supportive	32%

Managers that are perceived to genuinely believe in the importance of D&I in the workplace is correlated with a higher proportion of employees being out.

The importance of employees being their authentic selves and having supportive leadership

Prioritisation of D&I within a workplace is an important motivational driver for LGBTI+ employees to be themselves

The findings of the survey indicate a relationship between being comfortable with ones own sexualtiy and the importance of support within the workplace to be yourself.

For those who are not out at work, supportive policies in the area of diversity and inclusion did not rate as highly as pay and progression.

However, for those people that were 'out to all' or 'out to most', the active pursuit of LGBTI+ inclusion in a workplace (including recruitment strategies, policies, networks and community engagement) were more important and aligned to achieving authenticity and bringing their full selves to work.

Recommendations to employers

- Train your managers/leaders so that they are aware of unconscious bias and equal opportunity at work (e.g. no bias in hiring, pay allocation or promotion).
- Leaders are influential and can serve as 'voices' to connect individuals to LGBTI+ networks and inclusion.
- Help people to be themselves by providing access to seminars or training on authentic leadership.

Achievement of being authentic is a combination of personal acceptance and workplace conditions and support

Individual's journey of self acceptance

Having a manager that is genuinely supportive of diversity and inclusion in the workplace can help to foster a culture where all employees receive equal opportunities at work. *Those who were out to most were more likely to have a supportive manager.*

Those that are 'out to all' or 'out to most' at work were more likely to respond that being out at work has either no impact or a positive impact on their career progression.

Having an LGBTI+ network or committee can help an individual to feel comfortable to be 'out' at work.

Respondents who are 'not out to anyone' or 'only out to a trusted few' were most likely to indicate that 'pay and career progression' is more important to them than diversity and inclusion.

Conditions for people to feel safe and supproted to be themselves

What's next?
What can you do in your organsiation to support your LGBTI+ employees to be their authentic selves at work?

1. **Implement an LGBTI+ network or committee in your workplace**
   Provide support to the network to enable members to take action and achieve meaningful outcomes.

2. **Engage your leaders**
   This is a key catalyst in driving change through the LGBTI+ network. Your leaders need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and resources to advocate for LGBTI+ inclusion in the workplace.

3. **Communicate and educate**
   Hold training on unconscious bias and the use of inclusive language, encourage forums where your people can share their stories in a safe space, and provide access to seminars or training on authentic leadership. Don't underestimate the power of storytelling!

4. **Realise the benefits of being an inclusive organisation**
   Being a 'smart', diverse and inclusive workplace can help to enable your organisation to attract the best and brightest talent.

5. **Check out Pride in Diversity**
   Pride in Diversity is a national not-for-profit employer support program for LGBTI+ workplace inclusion. It's a great source of training programs and advice.

Our approach to analysis

Below is a summary of the approach to the survey data collection, how we have analysed the data and the limitations of the data and analysis.

Survey overview

The survey had a total of 554 responses. The survey was administered both as an online survey on the Midsumma Festival website and on tablet computers by roaming volunteers at Midsumma Carnival Day, with 49 and 505 responses respectively.

The goal of the survey was to collect data to help in driving positive change in the LGBTI+ community.

Approach

Following the survey we undertook a process of:

- **Data cleaning** – where we removed any responses which had no answer for whether they were out at work, the importance of diversity to their manager and whether their organisation has an LGBTI+ network. As responses to all questions were voluntary, where responses did not specify which industry they worked in or whether they were out or not, we had to exclude the responses from the sample when analysing data for those particular questions.

- **Data exploration** – where we undertook exploratory analysis of trends by studying scatterplot matrices of all variables and built some hypotheses based on these trends. We also considered these trends in light of other similar data sets.

- **Hypotheses testing** – we undertook statistical analysis to test whether our hypotheses had statistically significant evidence to support them.

- **Reporting** – we then reported our findings in a thematic way.

The main hypotheses being explored in the survey data were that the presence of an LGBT network, a higher importance of diversity to an employee's manager and an employer's industry group correlated with a higher proportion of employees coming out at work and lower levels of workplace homophobia observed.

Some response categories were combined to both simplify analysis and to minimise the overestimation of precision. The question of whether a respondent was out at work was made into a binary out/not out response. The original responses "out to all" and "out to most" were considered to be "out" and the remaining responses were considered to be "not out".

Hypothesis testing was carried out with one-tailed z-tests typically with a weaker 90 per cent confidence interval. However, a 99.5 per cent confidence interval was used with the importance of manager on the proportion of who come out at work.

Further validation was carried out. A random forest classifier, a type of predictive model, was trained on industry, organisation size and whether there is an LGBT network with being out at work as the target. The prediction score was in the 50-60 per cent range meaning that given an industry, an organisation size and whether an LGBT network exists, the classifier was a decent predictor of whether that response would be out at work.

Limitations of survey data and analysis

As ever, the results of this survey have raised more questions around how organisations can practically improve the experience of their people at work. In this report, we have made the assumption that being 'out' at work is a sign that the respondent is comfortable to be themselves at work. It is worth remembering that there are many reasons that an individual may be 'out' at work. The data we have gathered is not exhaustive, but it provides a great starting point to begin a conversation around how organisations can practically improve the experience at work for their LGBTI+ employees.

The data collected will be affected by bias in that those who choose to attend the Midsumma Carnival Festival and choose to respond to the survey may mean that not all sections of the Australian LGBT community are represented in the sample. This may mean that the findings contain some statistical bias.

The responses have not been adjusted for age, sex and region by comparison with data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Thus, the survey results will not necessarily reflect the sentiments and circumstances of the Victorian community in the correct proportions.

The survey questions

1. What is your age?

2. What is your gender?

3. What is your employment status?

4. What industry do you work in?

5. How many employees work at your organisation?

6. How would you define your sexuality?

7. How OUT are you as an LGBTI+ person at work? (Choose the one option that most closely matches your situation)

8. How do you think coming OUT at work will have an effect on your prospects for future promotions?

9. In the past 12 months, have you seen or heard anything at work that you think is homophobic? (jokes, harassment, discrimination etc)

10. How important to your manager is a diverse and inclusive workplace?

11. Does your organisation have an LGBTI+ network/committee?

12. Are you involved in the LGBTI+ network/committee at your organisation?

13. Compared to other elements of work (e.g. pay, career progression etc), how important is LGBTI+ inclusion to you?

Endnotes

1. For simplicity we have grouped the categories of 'Out to all' and 'Out to most' as being 'out at work' and 'Out to some of the people I work with', 'Out to few trusted people', and 'Not out to anyone' as being 'not out at work'.

2. PwC survey January 2017.

3. OutNow Global 2020, LGBTI+ Diversity: Show me the business case, 2015 – found 51 per cent of those surveyed in Australia were out to all in the workplace.

4. The mining and wholesale trade industries which show higher proportions of being out at work, had low response rates. The categories of 'Out to all' and 'Out to most' are scored positively and 'Out to some of the people I work with', 'Out to few trusted people', and 'Not out to anyone' are scored negatively.

5. PwC survey January 2017.

6. These findings should be considered in light of the limitations of the survey. These are noted at the back of this report.

7. PwC survey January 2017; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6291.0.55.003 – Labour Force, Australia, Employed persons by Industry group of main job (ANZSIC), Sex, State and Territory, November 1984 onwards, June 2017.

8. We found that in most industries (excluding retail and wholesale, food and accommodation, and the arts), there was a correlation between being [out to all or out to most] and the known presence of an LGBTI+ network at the 90% confidence level. We grouped those who were out to all or out to most at work together and considered them as being out at work. Respondents that were not employed or self employed were excluded.

9. We found there was a correlation between people being out at work and having a manager who places high importance on a diverse and inclusive workplace. This was statistically significant at the 99.5 per cent level of confidence. This finding was in response to the question: "How important to your manager is a diverse and inclusive workplace?" The options to respond to the question were: not at all; slightly; moderately; very; or completely. We grouped 'completely' and 'very' responses together and considered them as indicating the manager places 'high importance' on a diverse and inclusive workplace. We grouped those who were out to all or out to most at work together and considered them as being out at work. Respondents that were not employed or self employed were excluded.

10. Based on discussions with participants of PwC's LGBTI+ leadership development program and informal discussions with members of PwC's GLEE network.

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A huge thankyou to the Midsumma partners and all our volunteers who made this report possible, as well as our team of contributors:

- Joe Chan
- Elspeth Taylor
- Dona Taleska
- David Williams

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