



# REGIONAL INCLUSION A HOW TO GUIDE

FURTHERING LGBTQ INCLUSION IN  
REGIONAL AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES



A PRIDE IN DIVERSITY INITIATIVE  
**REGIONAL  
REACH**

**pridein  
diversity**

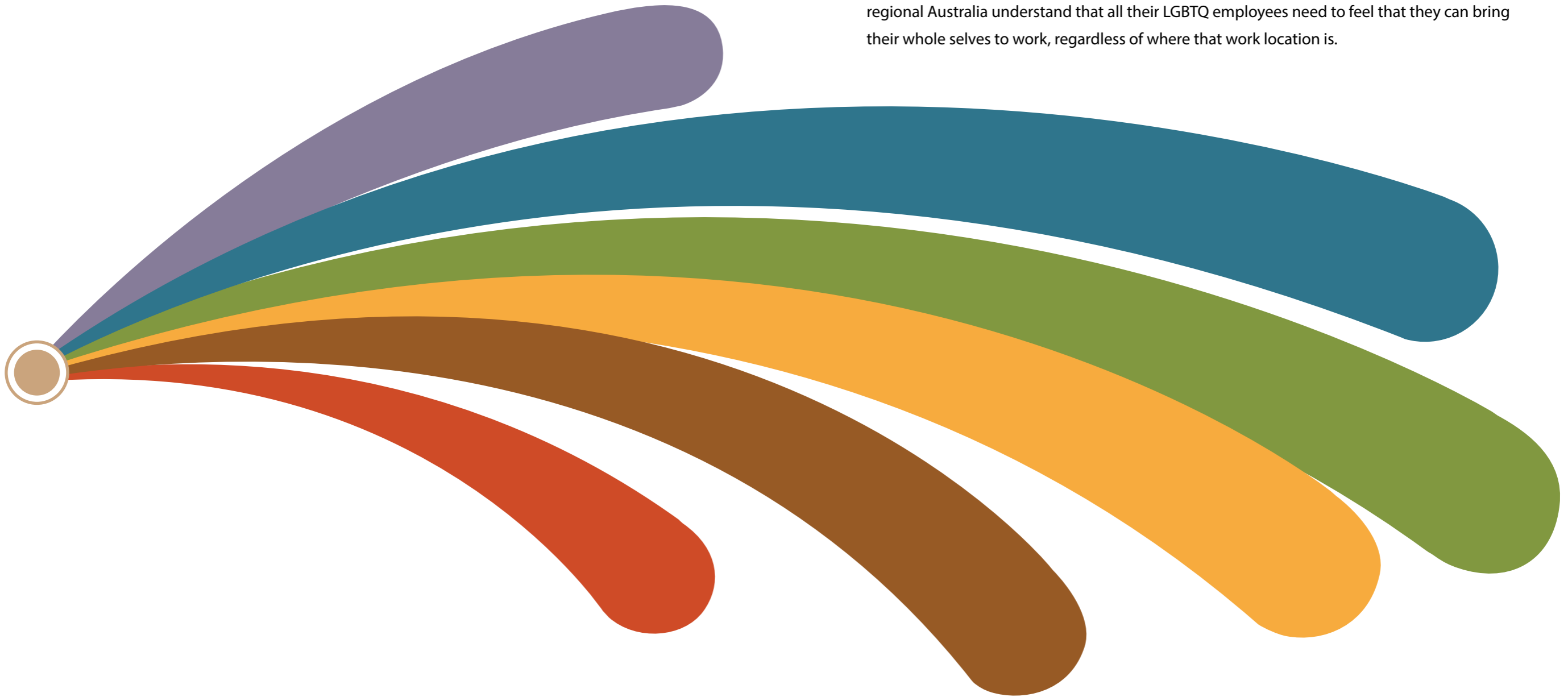
# REGIONAL REACH

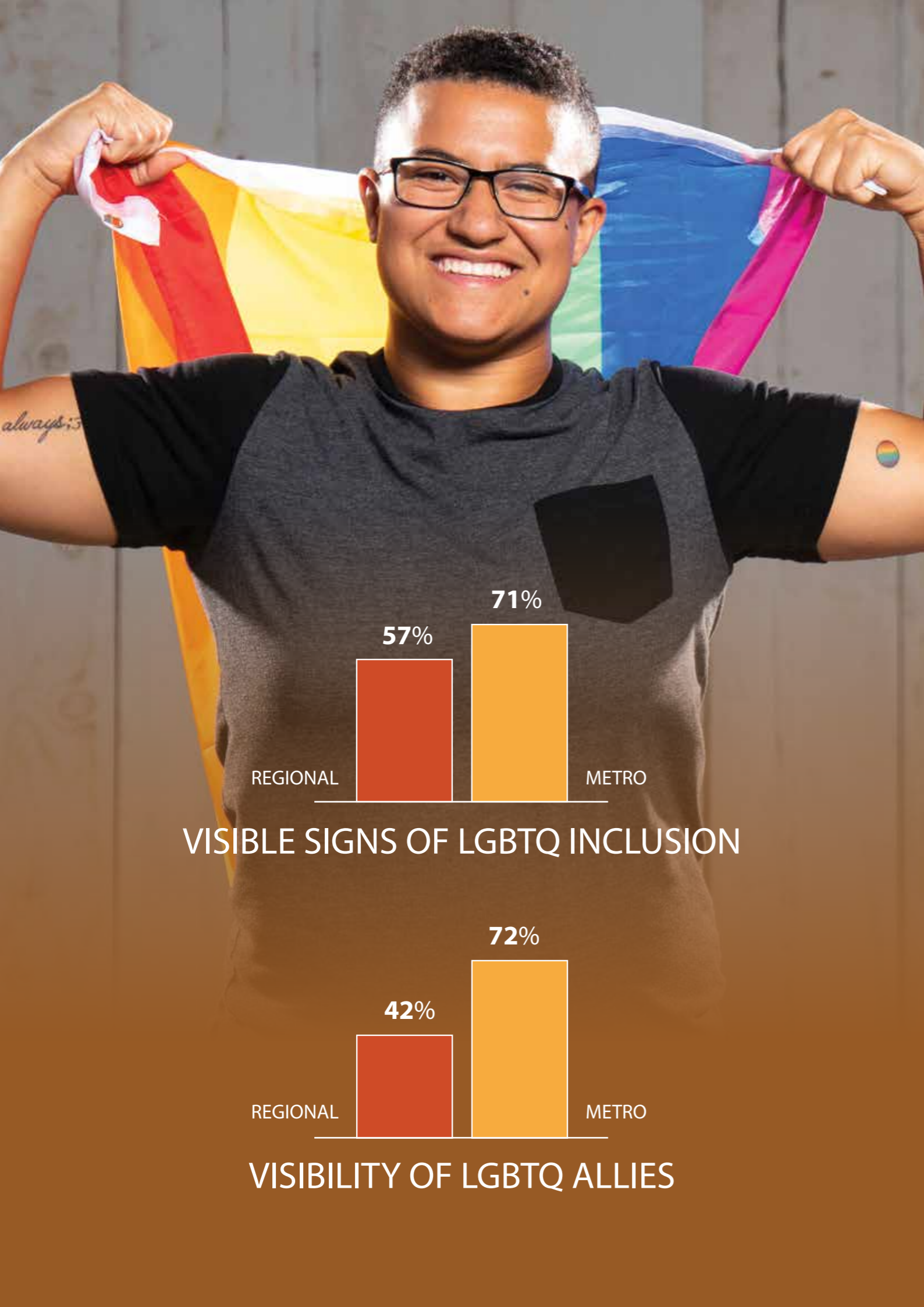
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## LGBTQ INCLUSION ACROSS AUSTRALIA

Over the last decade, employers in Australia have made enormous progress in LGBTQ workplace inclusion, particularly in capital city locations. This progress is across both private and public sectors, irrespective of organisation size.

One of the challenges that remains, is how to progress LGBTQ inclusion in workplaces that are not based in metropolitan CBD locations. Leaders with workforces scattered across regional Australia understand that all their LGBTQ employees need to feel that they can bring their whole selves to work, regardless of where that work location is.





# WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

## THE 2019 AWEI EMPLOYEE SURVEY

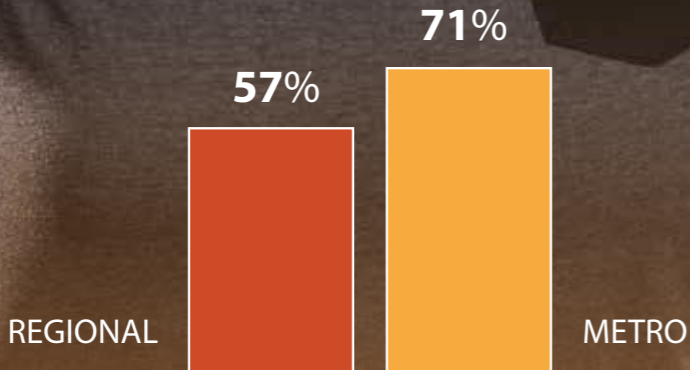
Data from the 2019 AWEI Employee Survey<sup>1</sup> showed that the majority of activity and communication in regard to LGBTQ inclusion excluded regional offices, or was significantly reduced. This was despite the fact that 63% of regional employees felt that LGBTQ inclusion initiatives were very important.

Visible signs of LGBTQ inclusion are significantly lower in regional Australia. Only 57% of respondents from regional areas said that there were visible sign of LGBTQ inclusion, compared to 71% of metropolitan respondents. LGBTQ allies are not as visible in regional areas when compared to city locations. Only 42% of regional respondents were aware of active allies compared to 72% in cities.

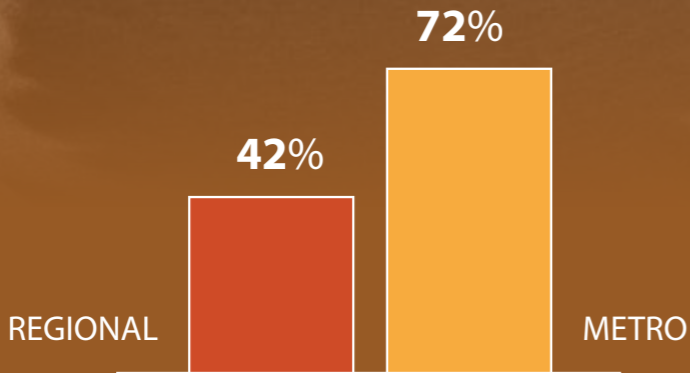
Regarding unwanted comments/jokes and bullying & harassment, employees in regional areas were more likely to experience negative commentary/jokes than their peers in the city. Furthermore, customers were 16% more likely to be the source of these jokes and innuendos in regional Australia. Instances of serious bullying are similar in number across the regional/city divide, however when those instances are reported to a manager or to HR, in regional Australia they are more than twice as likely to be ignored than in a metropolitan setting.

While there is little difference between regional and metropolitan Australia in being completely out at work, regional LGBTQ identifying employees are half as likely to believe that it has had a very positive effect on their career, than their city peers.

When it comes to the support of gender diverse employees, the situation is poor across all Australian workplaces. Only 50% of gender diverse employees in metropolitan areas believe that their organisation is fully supportive. In regional Australia this number falls to only 35%. Awareness of gender affirmation policies is also low across all employers; in regional Australia awareness sits at 33% compared to 42% in cities. Would trans and gender diverse employees recommend their place of work as a comfortable place for trans and gender diverse people? In regional Australia, only 37% would, compared to 55% in city locations.



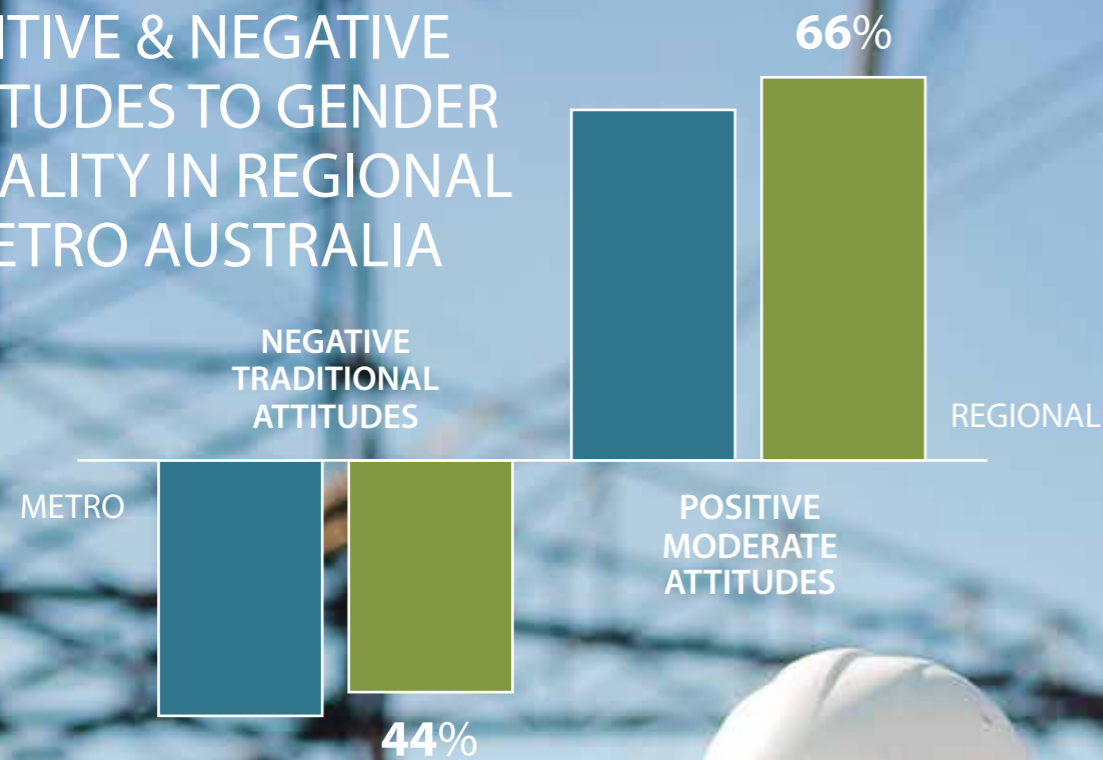
VISIBLE SIGNS OF LGBTQ INCLUSION



VISIBILITY OF LGBTQ ALLIES

1. AWEI (2019) [www.pid-awei.com.au](http://www.pid-awei.com.au) (27,349 responses, 4291 regional)

## POSITIVE & NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TO GENDER EQUALITY IN REGIONAL & METRO AUSTRALIA



# THE BUSINESS CASE FOR LGBTQ INCLUSION

## ATTRACTING & RETAINING TALENT

Voting data from the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey<sup>2</sup> showed that all but three regional electorates were in favour of marriage equality. Those three electorates were in Queensland (Kennedy, Maranoa and Groom) and their percentage of 'Yes' votes was far higher than seven of the twelve western Sydney electorates which recorded less than 50% 'Yes' votes.

This data confounded thinking that regional Australia was very conservative when it came to moral and social issues. A report by the 50/50 by 2030 Foundation on social attitudes to gender equality in Australia, revealed that regional Australia leads the way on positive attitudes to gender equality.<sup>3</sup>

However, unlike metropolitan areas, smaller rural communities do not allow for the same level of anonymity, so being out at work invariably means being out and open to everyone. Having an LGBTQ inclusive workplace, with visible allies, can make being out and open a far safer experience.

LGBTQ people are attracted to the big cities for the sense of community they can offer and, in some cases, the professional anonymity they can have. In large cities, it is possible to be out and open at work in a supportive and inclusive environment and not be so at home and in family and social situations. In smaller regional towns, the ability to be out and open at work and not out nor open socially or with family decreases, due to size. The LGBTQ drift to the cities may be a necessary right of passage for many, but the ability to attract more mature LGBTQ professionals back to the regional centres and towns where they may have been brought up, could be one way of employing key talent.

The business case for LGBTQ inclusion, as with all aspects of diversity and inclusion, revolves around the attraction and retention of talent. More and more Australian organisations – irrespective of whether public or private sector, large or small, regional or city-based – differentiate themselves by the quality and effectiveness of their people. Securing and retaining skilled and committed employees is particularly difficult away from the big cities.

2. [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au) (2017)

3. 50/50 by 2030 Foundation, 'From Girls to Men: Social Attitudes to Gender Equality in Australia', 2018, p.33

## REGIONAL LGBTQ EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE BEEN ON THE RECEIVING END OF INAPPROPRIATE AND HARMFUL BEHAVIOURS AT WORK:



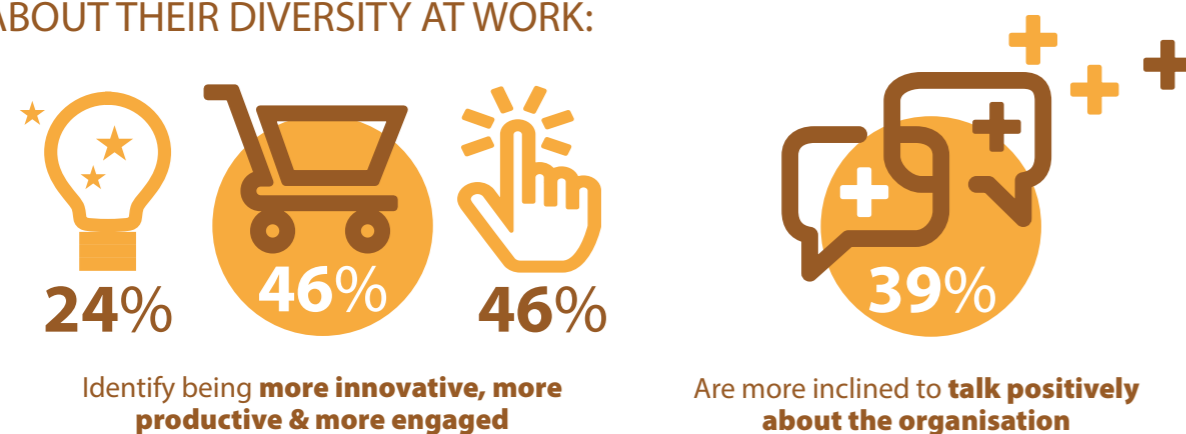
The data from the AWEI Survey<sup>4</sup>, illustrated by the infographic above, shows how critical it is for organisations to ensure that their workplaces are safe and inclusive for all people, including LGBTQ people. Visible and safe LGBTQ inclusive workplaces are key to attracting employees from the entire talent pool. It is a major driver for many people, regardless of how they personally identify.

The Survey provides strong evidence that being out and open at work drives performance. Regional LGBTQ employees who are out and open at work identify being more: innovative 24%, productive 46%, and engaged 46%, as well as feeling more inclined to: work 35%, engage in organisational activities 36%, and talk positively about the organisation 39%.

Alongside the business case for LGBTQ inclusion, is the moral one.

Promoting the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ employees is important regardless of location; however regional areas can be very isolating for LGBTQ people, as local support networks may be absent. This makes being able to be out and open at work far more important.

## REGIONAL LGBTQ EMPLOYEES WHO ARE OUT & OPEN ABOUT THEIR DIVERSITY AT WORK:



4. AWEI Employee Survey (2019), [www.pid-awei.com.au](http://www.pid-awei.com.au)

# REGIONAL INCLUSION A HOW TO GUIDE



**1** IMPORTANT MESSAGE  
**160** LOCATIONS  
**9,600** EMPLOYEES

## CASE STUDY – LENDLEASE

Lendlease's business is enormously diverse, and with over half their workforce working from construction sites, satellite offices or in varied assets, they were concerned that their usual communication and training channels may not always reach their remote teams. One of their approaches was a Site Engagement and Awareness Campaign.

The campaign focused on connecting the core message of inclusion with mental health and highlighted the high rates of depression and suicide in the LGBTIQ community to reinforce the importance of LGBTIQ inclusion.

Lendlease developed a Manager Toolkit for Wear it Purple day, that included key messages, promotional material, purple t-shirts, posters and suggested activities to generate a conversation and team involvement.

Leader briefing sessions followed to equip leaders with key messages and managing questions and help them discover what approach would work best in each diverse site.

Events were held in over 160 locations and the positive feedback was overwhelming.

# 1. LOCAL LEADERS AS SELF-SUFFICIENT LGBTQ ALLIES

## INSIGHT AND INFORMATION

For cultural change to be embedded in regional employment sites, the regional and local leaders need to understand the business case for LGBTQ inclusion and be able to put LGBTQ inclusion into practice in their sites. This will need to be driven by senior leadership and by their role modelling of behaviours.

LGBTQ inclusion requires leaders to have an understanding of LGBTQ terminology and the issues and challenges that LGBTQ people face in employment and in their community. Leaders also need to understand what LGBTQ allies are, what they do and say and then become one themselves.

Education is key for leaders to become effective allies. Distance makes face to face workshops more difficult, although education pieces could be part of periodical or regular leadership meetings. Leaders can also use Pride in Diversity's online and WebEx education modules. This can be reinforced with appropriate reading and online resources.

Local and regional leaders are able to use their own personal stories as to why they are LGBTQ allies setting the tone and influencing the workplace culture of inclusion. Leaders as allies can make a huge difference in driving local LGBTQ inclusion because of their visibility. They become local role models when LGBTQ role models are missing.

## CASE STUDY – WESTPAC

As a leading national employer, Westpac aspired to extend the reach and conversation of LGBTIQ awareness and support across their business regardless of geographical location.

Central to this aspiration was to build a strong LGBTIQ and ally network regionally.

Deliverables were:

1. Growth of the GLOBAL network members outside Sydney and Melbourne
2. Deliver LGBTIQ events and roadshows in every state
3. LGBTIQ Summit held with representation from all states and Westpac businesses

4. Establish a regional operational framework for GLOBAL with state representatives and committees
5. Measure success through employee surveys and focus groups

The strategy resulted in a 308% increase in GLOBAL membership outside of metro areas.

“ I was delighted with the outcome of our hard work. The growth in regional GLOBAL members means that our message of LGBTIQ inclusion is getting out to all our regional locations, so that LGBTIQ employees can be themselves where ever they are located. ”

*Iain Shepherd, Westpac's D&I Consultant*



LGBTIQ&ALLY GROUP  
MEMBERSHIP IS NOW  
**UP 308%**  
IN REGIONAL AREAS!

## 2. STATE/REGIONAL LGBTQ NETWORK LEADS

### FURTHERING CONNECTION

Regional LGBTQ employees often complain that they feel less engaged than metropolitan employees. This is borne out by the latest AWEI employee survey data.

When a national organisation, with a regional presence in different states, establishes an LGBTQ employee network, it is important to include state and regional leads at the different employment sites. Having one or preferably more than one engaged contact point means that communication from the LGBTQ network in metropolitan corporate head office is more effectively transmitted to the radiational centres.

Having state based and regional leads can assist in creating local events and practices while being aligned to head office ones. Local leads are able to convey back to head office the initiatives that work in regional centres.

### CASE STUDY – BHP

Jasper is BHP's employee inclusion group for their lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and others (LGBT+) community and its allies. The groups' name is inspired by the mineral rock jasper, known for its unique multi-coloured patterns.

Since its formation in 2017, Jasper has grown to over 1,100 members. Over the past two years, BHP Jasper chapter leads, together with Pride in Diversity have visited every coal and iron ore mine in WA, QLD and NSW plus it's copper mine in SA to roll out LGBT+ inclusion awareness and

education sessions. The sessions have included a video of senior leaders speaking about why LGBT+ inclusion is important at BHP followed by an interactive LGBT+ awareness workshop led by Pride in Diversity and Jasper members.

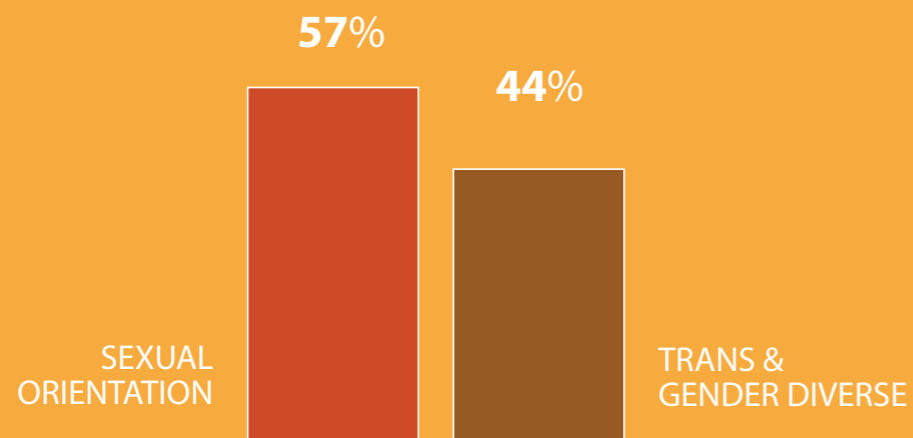
BHP recognises the important role leaders play in creating inclusive workplaces. Leaders attending the sessions are provided with rainbow shoe laces and rainbow lanyards to convey inclusion, encourage respectful behaviour and help connect LGBT+ employees with Jasper.



### INCLUSIVE DAYS ARE SIGNIFICANT

LGBTQ allies can make a significant difference to inclusion within the workplace and celebrating LGBTQ days of significance is one way to bring allies together to demonstrate support of LGBTQ colleagues, friends and family.

## ALLIES HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE TO MY SENSE OF INCLUSION



# 3. LGBTQ DAYS OF SIGNIFICANCE

## CREATING AWARENESS AND VISIBILITY

Acknowledging LGBTQ days of significance can focus attention and create awareness of LGBTQ inclusion. Most mature metropolitan LGBTQ inclusive employers are able to celebrate or acknowledge days of significance more easily due to employee population size.

Preparing guides for different days to send to all local employment sites on how to celebrate or acknowledge days of significance, is a great way to get regional involvement. For these events to be successful, they need to be led, in the first few instances, by the local leader.

Pride in Diversity promotes the different days of significance on social media. These messages can be shared internally and externally on members' social media platforms. ACON's Welcome Here project also provides messages to share. For information kits and imagery that you can use on LGBTQ days of significance, visit: [www.welcomehere.org.au/diversitydays](http://www.welcomehere.org.au/diversitydays)

MAR 31	Transgender Day of Visibility
APR 26	Lesbian Visibility Day
MAY 17	International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia (IDAHOBIT)
JUNE	Pride Month (1st Mardi Gras was 24 June 1978)
JULY 24	International Non-Binary Pride Day
AUG (Last Fri)	Wear It Purple Day
SEP 23	Bi Visibility Day
OCT 8	International Lesbian Day
NOV 20	Transgender Day of Remembrance
DEC 1	World AIDS Day

States also hold their own Pride days, fair days and cultural festivals including a growing number of LGBTQ celebrations in regional areas.



## PRIDE IN DIVERSITY REGIONAL REACH ROUNDTABLE CASE STUDIES

### WOOLWORTHS

We were delighted to be able to participate in Pride in Diversity's regional reach programs in Kalgoorlie and Bathurst. Team members from across our different local stores attended the days' events and came away with many great ideas and tools to implement. Woolworths has sites across regional Australia and it is very important to us that all our sites are LGBTIQ aware and inclusive, both for our customers and employees.

*Rachel Mead, Head of Diversity & Inclusion  
Woolworths Group*

### WA POLICE

It was great to have been invited and offered the opportunity to speak on the community panel. I was a little nervous about what to expect but really enjoyed the experience. It was nice to discuss things around LGBTIQ that don't usually get mentioned in our workplace. I hope that the local members take it to the next level and organise a street parade or something similar. It would be great for the local community.

*Senior Constable Julian Tricker  
Crime Prevention & Diversity Officer, Kalgoorlie  
WA Police*

### CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

It was great to be present at the Pride in Diversity regional reach event in Bathurst. I'm pleased the event was such a success. It's a privilege for the University to host organisations such as yours that so closely align with our values and what we want to achieve. I look forward to the further work that we can do with Pride in Diversity.

*Jenny Roberts, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Students)  
Charles Sturt University*

### LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

Thank you for inviting us to the Pride in Diversity regional reach program in Kalgoorlie.

The information that we were able to gather in the short time that was available regarding LGBTIQ inclusion was absolutely informative given the diverse community here in Kalgoorlie.

We look forward to more sessions like this in the future and of course creating a new relationship between our organisations especially from a regional point of view. Thank you for your support.

*Talbot Heta  
Finance & Administration Officer, Goldfields  
Life Without Barriers*

### HASTINGS DEERING

On behalf of the LGBT team at Hastings Deering, thank you for hosting such a fantastic Rainbow Rockhampton Regional Reach program in 2019!

HD was delighted to be able to participate and provide an opportunity for our Rockhampton leaders to learn and be visible in their support of the program and their LGBT colleagues.

Kelly, Elizabeth, Cindy and I really learnt a lot about what good looks like and have come away with some valuable ideas for the future.

We really appreciate your support and encouragement.

*Suzannah D'Juliet  
Executive Manager, Safety + Sustainability  
Hasting Deering*

## 4. LOCAL NETWORKING & EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

### CONNECTING WITH PRIDE IN DIVERSITY MEMBERS AND BEYOND

In 2018 and 2019, Pride in Diversity held the first of many Regional Reach events in Townsville, Geelong, Rockhampton, Bathurst and Kalgoorlie. The purpose was to provide to our regional members:

- LGBTQ awareness and ally education
- Member roundtables to understand and focus on local issues and the local impact of wider issues
- Networking opportunities for members, so that they got to know local LGBTQ allies
- Engagement with local LGBTQ groups and health & wellbeing providers for referrals, corporate support and volunteering opportunities

As regional member maturity in LGBTQ inclusion develops and member networking increases, these events can become self-sustaining, with little or no Pride in Diversity involvement. To enable participants to keep connected, Pride in Diversity creates an email list and a LinkedIn group upon conclusion of the day of events. The state Pride in Diversity relationship manager curates all Pride in Diversity information and news to the group.

Key to the success of these regional events, is the engagement of the local chamber of commerce, the local sports codes and the local councillors, state and federal MPs. The chamber of commerce can help create local momentum and additional funding if necessary. The local elected representatives together with senior police can give the events more prominence. Involving the local sports codes, because sport is such a powerful presence in Australian regional life, influences the local community to become more LGBTQ inclusive.

Engaging with local LGBTQ groups in a community forum helps to disseminate the inclusivity of local businesses. This was well reflected in Kalgoorlie with the participation of Kal Queers and TransfolkWA.

## CASE STUDY – ALCOA

Alcoa actively participates in every community in which they operate around the world. It's part of what Alcoa refers to as being a good neighbour.

Alcoa wants the communities in which our employees work and live, to thrive and they view their tenure in these places as an opportunity to help develop economic activity, environmental practices and social programs that will stay in place after our role ends.

Close community ties are fundamental to ensuring Alcoa's social license to operate.

One way that Alcoa tries to create strong social bonds with their communities in Western Australia is to sponsor and support local LGBTIQ groups and festivals. These include Out South West and Pride in Peel. Based in Bunbury, Out South West is a group that provides a safe space service to LGBTIQ youth in the south west of WA, where Alcoa have a large smelting and mining presence. Pride in Peel produce a LGBTIQ Tropical Party every year in early December for the local communities.

Alcoa's LGBTIQ network is called EAGLE (Employees at Alcoa for Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Equality). Its leader, Mark Hodgson, was named Network Leader of the Year at the Australian LGBTI Inclusion Awards 2018.

"We are a stronger, more competitive company because we make inclusion through diversity a priority," Mr Hodgson said. "Our wish is for every employee to bring their 'whole selves' to work and to feel included and valued for who they are and for the diversity of ideas and experiences they bring."



# 5. LOCAL LGBTQ SUPPORT & HEALTH SERVICES

## ENGAGING WITH LGBTQ GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS WHO WORK WITH LGBTQ COMMUNITIES

Engaging with local LGBTQ groups and including them on the organisation's LGBTQ inclusion page, can encourage support and community involvement for local LGBTQ employees outside of work and opens volunteering opportunities for the local LGBTQ network members. Being connected to your local LGBTQ groups raises awareness of community activities, fairs and Pride marches.

The same is true for engagement with local health and wellbeing groups, such as State AIDS Councils, Headspace and other local providers. Mental health issues are more common for LGBTQ people than for the general population, due to stigma, isolation and minority stress. These organisations provide important support for LGBTQ people and employees can be referred to them in time of need.

Local LGBTQ groups mostly run on the good will of leaders and members. Business support in hosting websites, support with IT issues and the like can make a world of difference. Funding or sponsoring local LGBTQ trivia, drag nights and other networking events be an effective support.



Headspace centres and services operate across Australia, in metro, regional and rural areas, supporting young Australians and their families to be mentally healthy and engaged in their communities.

At Pride in Diversity's Regional Reach programs in Townsville and Kalgoorlie, speakers from the local Headspace centres came and spoke about support, groups and activities for local LGBTQ young people.



## CASE STUDY – ESSENTIAL ENERGY

Essential Energy looks after the poles and wires that deliver electricity to 95 per cent of New South Wales and parts of southern Queensland.

In 2019 Essential Energy decided to raise awareness that they were an LGBTIQ inclusive employer by sponsoring regional NSW LGBTIQ events, such as the Tropical Fruits NYE party in the Northern Rivers. The annual party is part of the largest LGBTIQ festival in regional Australia with more than 5000 attendees.

As the Essential Pride network sponsor and Executive Manager Engineering, David Salisbury said, “You have the right to be proud of who you are. Sexuality or gender identity does not change this. We care about respect, equality and inclusion for all.”



# 6. HARNESSING LOCAL LGBTQ EVENTS

## COMMUNITY VISIBILITY

Having a presence at the local LGBTQ festivals can increase LGBTIQ engagement and show the organisation’s support for its LGBTIQ employees. This can include marching in the local festival Pride march with the organisation’s corporate logo, having a stall to showcase the organisation’s products and LGBTIQ inclusion initiatives, providing corporate sponsorship and advertising in the festival brochure. These are events not just for LGBTIQ employees but opportunities for allies to get involved.

For non-retail organisations, who are unable to showcase products or services, simply showing support and promoting inclusive recruitment, can help remove stigma, as the two Essential Energy examples show.



## 7. USING PRIDE IN DIVERSITY'S ONLINE TRAINING AND WEBSITE

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### LGBTQ RESOURCES

Organisations in regional Australia are less likely to access Pride in Diversity's face to face education sessions, due to location and size. Budgets may not allow for the development of individual organisation's online training modules, as these can be prohibitively expensive.

However, all member organisations can access the regular WebEx sessions that Pride in Diversity facilitates, as well as the Pride in Diversity members' section of the website. The Red Cross Blood Bank's 'Walking in Rainbow Shoes' E-learning module is available for viewing by members online and can be uploaded to internal learning management systems. Other opportunities include using video conferencing from regional locations to an education session held in a metropolitan head office location.

The Pride in Diversity website has many of our publications available for download and our vimeo channel has multiple videos available for viewing on different aspects of LGBTQ inclusion and awareness. Every member has password access to this section which can be shared with local leads and employees. These resources provide a wealth of LGBTQ information to any member's employees, no matter where they are located.

The LGBTQ Inclusive Employers' site is freely available to everyone. This is a great place to highlight the work you do in LGBTQ inclusion, promote jobs and stand out for inclusivity in regional areas.



[inclusiveemployers.com.au](http://inclusiveemployers.com.au)



## CASE STUDY – AURIZON

Aurizon is Australia's largest rail freight operator, transporting more than 250 million tonnes of Australian commodities through an extensive rail and road network.

Whilst headquartered in Brisbane, 80% of Aurizon's workforce is located in regional and remote communities across Queensland, NSW and Western Australia.

LGBTIQ+ inclusion is a key pillar of Aurizon's diversity and inclusion strategy. It is important for Aurizon that inclusion is felt and lived both in the cities and the country. One way that Aurizon does this is by raising LGBTIQ awareness through visible signs.

As an large operational workforce, a majority of staff are out on the tools and track in high visibility clothing every day. Aurizon's employee-led LGBTIQ

ALLin Network, operates with a goal of providing support and education, raising awareness and generally improving Aurizon's status as an employer for people of various sexualities, sexes and genders. Over the past four years, the ALLin Network has handed out over 2,000 rainbow shoe laces for the staffs work boots. The shoe laces are a conversation starter and a visible sign for LGBTIQ+ inclusion sign.

A core focus for the ALLin Network is to ensure that visibility and inclusion is felt throughout the business. To this end, they are passionate about engaging employees and leadership to activate local leads across all their sites and depots. They now regularly see and feel the passion and energy from their local leads who are engaging both the local community and workforce on stories of inclusion.

# 8. WELCOME HERE PROJECT & BROADER VISIBILITY

## AM I WELCOME?

Visibility of LGBTQ inclusion is central to creating a culture that welcomes LGBTQ people. This visibility can be as simple as wearing Ally pins or lanyards, displaying Ally posters or part of an organisation's LGBTQ inclusion strategy in public places.

ACON's Welcome Here Project<sup>5</sup> supports businesses and organisations throughout Australia to create and promote environments that are visibly welcoming and inclusive of LGBTQ communities. Members of the project (those who are registered Welcoming Places) receive a sticker to display in their window to let everyone know that LGBTQ diversity is welcomed and celebrated within their business/organisation. Registered Welcoming Places also display a charter that brings to life their commitment to the project, and what being a member is all about.

The project is an excellent way for smaller regional businesses and organisations to demonstrate their LGBTQ inclusion and to provide a safe space for LGBTQ people.



5. [www.welcomehere.org.au](http://www.welcomehere.org.au)



## CASE STUDY – AGL

Over three years ago, a vibrant display of inclusion illuminated the 110-metre-high cooling tower at AGL Loy Yang in support of the first ever Gippsland Pride Cup. The Traralgon Tennis Association held their first ever Pride in Tennis event last year, also supported by AGL Loy Yang. Over time, the message of inclusion, diversity, and acceptance of all has only grown in Gippsland. In June 2019, the region proudly celebrated the third Gippsland Pride Cup event.

Since then AGL has hosted community forums and other pride events, amongst other initiatives that have grown across the Gippsland region. More people are becoming educated, more are sharing stories and the message of inclusion is growing.

AGL is also proud to partner with the Pinnacle Foundation to sponsor a three-year scholarship program, open to students from the Latrobe

Valley region. The Pinnacle Foundation is a charity organisation that empowers young LGBTIQ+ Australians to achieve their full potential through educational scholarships and mentoring.

Supporting the communities in which we operate in is critical to AGL's value of Better Together by creating a sense of Pride in the Workplace and building relationships.

We understand that regional sporting clubs, including football, netball and tennis clubs, are places where young people can feel a real sense of belonging. Pride Cup builds on that by opening the door even wider to people who may have felt anxious about getting involved or staying true to themselves.

AGL is proud to continue building on the hard work already invested in these important initiatives.

# 9. SPORT

## REDUCING STIGMA ON AND OFF THE FIELD

Sport plays a very important part in Australian society and is often a central focus of regional communities, yet it is an area of life that can be very difficult for LGBTQ people because of a lack of LGBTQ inclusion. As the Out on the Fields Study in 2015 notes:

- 80% of Australian participants believed that lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) athletes are either not accepted, accepted a little or moderately accepted in sport
- Less than 1% believed that LGB athletes are completely accepted
- Australian participants are most likely to witness or experience homophobia as part of engagement with their sport (80%)
- 81% witnessed or experienced homophobic slurs
- Australia was the country with the highest number of LGB youth (under 22) actively hiding their orientation from their team mates. More than half of this group do so because they're fearful of bullying and 1 in 3 because they want to avoid discrimination from officials and coaches
- 48% of participants believed that the spectator stands are the most likely place that homophobic behaviour would occur

In regional areas, businesses can play a key role in helping the local sporting clubs become more LGBTQ inclusive through engagement and sponsorship. Businesses looking to promote their brand as an LGBTQ inclusive business could look at sponsoring local or regional sports teams. Tying sponsorship dollars to creating an LGBTQ friendly culture is a positive way to promote LGBTQ inclusion in sport.

ACON also has a Pride in Sport program to promote LGBTQ inclusion in Australian sport<sup>6</sup>.

6. [www.prideinsport.com.au](http://www.prideinsport.com.au)



STAND  
IN YOUR  
OWN LIGHT...

### CASE STUDY – WELCOME TO COUNTRY CEREMONY

To open our Regional Reach program at Charles Sturt University in Bathurst, Elders from the local Aboriginal Land Council welcomed participants to Wiradjuri country with a powerful smoking ceremony.

The smoking ceremony is an ancient Aboriginal custom designed to denote the importance of a gathering, cleansing the space and participants to promote peace and new beginnings.

The ceremony was led by Uncle Brian Grant and Yanhadarrambal Flynn (pictured above) and involved inviting all to step forward and wave the smoke of smouldering native plants over the head and body.

Uncle Brian spoke the ritual words of welcome and with lyrical eloquence explained to us about the Wiradjuri word 'WUNDIRRA'. He described how wundirra means to stand in your own light and not in someone else's shadow.

This was a beautifully appropriate word for the event and it resonated throughout the day – for far too long LGBTQ people have hidden themselves away.

The ceremony and Uncle Brian's wisdom set a fitting tone for our Bathurst event and we thank both Uncle Brian and Yanhadarrambal deeply for their generosity in sharing it with us.

# 10. ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ENGAGEMENT

## FIRST NATION INCLUSION MATTERS

Brotherboys, Sistergirls and other LGBTQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience a disproportionate level of discrimination and marginalisation in regional Australia. The intersectionality of being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and being LGBTQ leads to wider isolation in regional communities. There are also difficulties in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in maintaining cultural ties and family support as well as recognition of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity.

Many regional organisations have Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion programs. For local LGBTQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, being able to see that regional employers are inclusive of both aspects of their identity can make a profound difference.

Incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols such as Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, and displaying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags conveys respect and, like the use of the rainbow flag, demonstrates inclusion.

**WELCOME TO COUNTRY** – A welcome, before all other proceedings, by an authorised representative of the Traditional Owners of the Country where an event is being held.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY** – An acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners of the Country where an event is being held. It can be performed by anyone.



THE ABORIGINAL FLAG



THE TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FLAG



A PRIDE IN DIVERSITY INITIATIVE  
**REGIONAL  
REACH**

The Pride in Diversity Regional Reach initiative takes LGBTQ inclusion to workplaces within regional and rural Australia.

We recognise that for many national employers, LGBTQ inclusion work focuses predominately on city and metropolitan areas. By harnessing the collective resources of members with a presence in the regions, we are able to bring organisations together to discuss and collaborate on the job of making our workplaces fully inclusive of LGBTQ people regardless of location.

# GAINING TRACTION AND DRIVING CHANGE CAN BE TOUGH WITHOUT THE RIGHT TOOLS

Pride in Diversity works with member organisations across Australia, whether they be in city metropolitan areas or within regional/rural Australia.

With relationship managers providing customised support, Pride in Diversity can equip your business with the resources, training and expert advice to get the job of LGBTQ inclusion done.

To find out how we can help you drive LGBTQ inclusion within your workplace, or to find out how you can get your regional offices involved, please contact us on **02 9206 2139** or email [pride@acon.org.au](mailto:pride@acon.org.au)

**pride**in  
**diversity**







## PRIDE INCLUSION PROGRAMS

We're here to help make the places where our community members live, work and play more inclusive of LGBTQ people. We do this by working with a range of organisations to help ensure that LGBTQ people feel included and supported.

### ACON'S PRIDE INCLUSION PROGRAMS

**T** 02 9206 2139  
**E** [pride@acon.org.au](mailto:pride@acon.org.au)  
**W** [prideinclusionprograms.com.au](http://prideinclusionprograms.com.au)

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We recognise the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their cultures, languages, experiences and practices, and the richness of their contributions to the places where we work, live and play.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and we pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging, and extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Sovereignty was never ceded.