

# SAGE Cygnet Award Application

RMIT: SAGE Cygnet 3 v3

Supporting LGBTIQ+ Inclusion

Resubmitted March 2025



## Acknowledgement of Country

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University.

RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.

### Artwork 'Sentient' by Hollie Johnson

Hollie is a Gunaikurnai and Monero Ngarigo woman from Gippsland who graduated from RMIT with a BA in Photography in 2016.

## RMIT: SAGE Cygnet 3

<b>Name of Institution</b>	RMIT University
<b>Date of Application</b>	28 February 2025 (resubmitted 27 March 2025)
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	<b>Current Cygnet</b>	<b>Barrier</b>
[Mandatory] Institution-wide barrier		Attraction: Recruitment of academic women in STEMM
Institution-wide barrier		Participation and career fulfilment: Supporting parents and carers
[Mandatory] Sub-group barrier	✓	Supporting LGBTIQA+ inclusion
Sub-group barrier		Enabling accessibility – supporting people with disability and neurodiversity
Institution-wide		Respectful cultures and behaviours

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This application presents work undertaken by RMIT through Athena Swan and allied programs to foster inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people, and reduce inequalities, from 2019–2024. The application's focus is on the LGBTIQ+ workforce and RMIT Australia. However, some student-related and RMIT Vietnam data and activity is included.

## Key barrier

### Key barrier 3: Supporting LGBTIQ+ Inclusion

Sub-barrier 3.1:	Community experiences of invisibility and exclusion
Sub-barrier 3.2:	Limited allyship and networking opportunities
Sub-barrier 3.3:	Low representation of the community across the University workforce
Sub-barrier 3.4:	Policy, system and capability barriers

## Evidence of barrier

Evidence relating to the barriers faced by LGBTIQ+ staff was sourced from:

- workforce and recruitment data
- Diverse Genders, Sexes, and Sexualities (DGSS) Survey 2015
- the RMIT Staff Survey 2019 and
- the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) Survey and Award transcript 2018.

The sample sizes and breakdowns of respondents by gender for the above surveys are included in Table 1, below. Data about diverse gender was not collected in the Staff Survey in 2019 (only female/male gender was recorded). Additionally, due to data loss, only the total number of respondents to the Diverse Genders, Sexes, and Sexualities Survey 2015 is available.

Female/woman	Male/man	Trans/gender-diverse	Other	Not specified	Total
<b>Diverse Genders, Sexes, and Sexualities Surveys 2015</b>					
_*	_*	_*	_*	_*	1,100
<b>RMIT Staff Survey 2019</b>					
2,524	1,864	NA	NA	7	4,398
<b>Australian Workplace Equality Index Survey 2018</b>					
7	11	█	0	0	19

\*Data is unavailable, due to data loss.

Table 1: Sample sizes and gender breakdown of respondents to all surveys covered in Evidence of Barrier

### Sub barrier 3.1: Community experiences of invisibility and exclusion

In 2015, RMIT first attempted to understand LGBTIQ+ inclusion experiences through the Diverse Genders, Sexes, and Sexualities Survey. The survey was responded to by 1,100 staff—both LGBTIQ+ and non-LGBTIQ+. As shown in Table 2, agreement with the statement 'RMIT does a good job of promoting visibility and inclusion of LGBTIQ staff/students' was only at 18%, at this time. Additionally, nearly 70% of

respondents said that they had ‘experienced bullying, discrimination, harassment, or other negative treatment at RMIT related to sexuality or gender identity in the last three years’.

Survey item	Percentage agreement
RMIT does a good job of promoting visibility and inclusion of LGBTIQ staff/students	18%
RMIT students are welcoming of LGBTIQ people	49%
RMIT staff are welcoming of LGBTIQ people	69%
I have experienced bullying, discrimination, harassment, or other negative treatment at RMIT related to sexuality or gender identity in the last three years	67%
I have observed bullying, harassment, or other negative treatment at RMIT related to sexuality or gender identity in the last three years	64%
I would report any negative treatment related to my gender identity, intersex status, or sexuality	67%
RMIT’s commitment to LGBTIQ inclusion influences my sense of belonging and engagement	53%
I can be open about my sexual orientation, gender identity or sex at RMIT	57%

Table 2: Responses to DGSS Surveys 2015

Further to this, in the AWEI Survey 2018, only around of 53% LGBTIQA+ respondents said they were completely “out” at work, with a further 11% being “out” to a moderate extent.

### Sub-barrier 3.2: Limited allyship and networking opportunities

In 2018, RMIT advanced from Bronze to Gold status in the Australian Workplace Equality Index Awards. Through this process, ‘network and allies’, ‘training and education’ and ‘community engagement’ were slated as areas where work was seen as ‘preliminary’ (see Table 3).



Section of AWEI Awards transcript	Score		
	Points	Percentage	Status
Section 1	51/69	74	NA
Section 2: Strategy & Accountability	19/22	86	Maturing
Section 3: Training & Education	11/19	58	Preliminary
Section 4: Network & Allies	24/41	59	Preliminary
Section 5: Visibility & Awareness	19/22	86	Maturing
Section 6: Community Engagement & External Advocacy	14/21	67	Preliminary
Section 7: Survey & Other	4/6	67	Maturing
<b>Total Annual AWEI Score</b>	<b>142/200</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>NA</b>

Table 3: AWEI Awards transcript 2018

Free-text responses to the AWEI Survey from the same year also highlighted the need for improved promotion of opportunities for allyship and networking:

*“When I talk to people about the Ally Network in my organisation they usually say: ‘the what?’”*

### Sub-barrier 3.3: Low representation across the University workforce

In 2018, less than 30 staff (0.58%) declared a gender other than female/male in RMIT’s workforce data management system (see Table 4), highlighting the need to improve representation, data quality and/or how safe staff feel to disclose this information.

Female	Male	Non-disclosed	Other	My gender identity is not displayed	Total
2,593 (54%)	2,151 (45%)	0		23 (0.48%)	4,772

Table 4: Self-identified gender of staff in 2018

Further to this, in the period 2015 to 2017, RMIT only hired four staff who identified as ‘gender-diverse/my gender is not displayed’ or ‘other’ (see Table 5)—this is a low percentage, relative to those that applied (see Figure 1).



Gender identity	Staff cohort			
	Professional	Academic	Vocational Education	Total
Female (F)	1,566	453	136	2,155
Male (M)	910	574	127	1611
Other (O)	█	█	0	█
Undisclosed (U)	34	92	0	126
Gender-diverse/my gender is not displayed (X)	█	█	0	█
Blank	9	16	0	25
Total	2,521	1,137	263	3,921

Table 5: Appointments to positions by gender identity 2015–2017

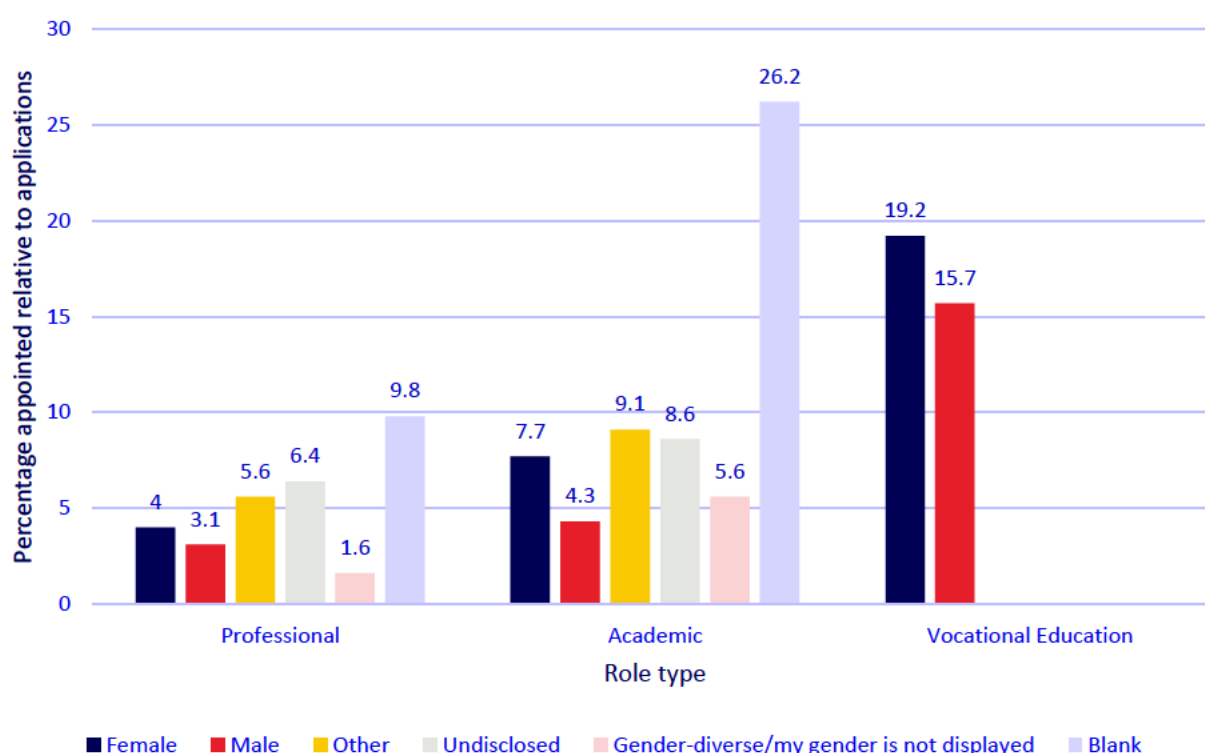


Figure 1: Percentage of people appointed, relative to applicants, by gender identity 2015–2017

### Sub-barrier 3.4: Policy, system and capability barriers

Responses to the AWEI Survey 2018 emphasised a need for data management processes that were more inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ community—particularly, the need for more options to self-identify gender in systems. One respondent called for:

*“more gender neutral and inclusive options for applying [for jobs] (e.g. titles/salutations).”*

In RMIT's Staff Survey 2019, results for LGBTIQ+ and non-LGBTIQ+ staff were reasonably consistent. One notable area where LGBTIQ+ staff were less likely to respond favourably was in relation to enablement (i.e. systems and processes) (see Figure 2).

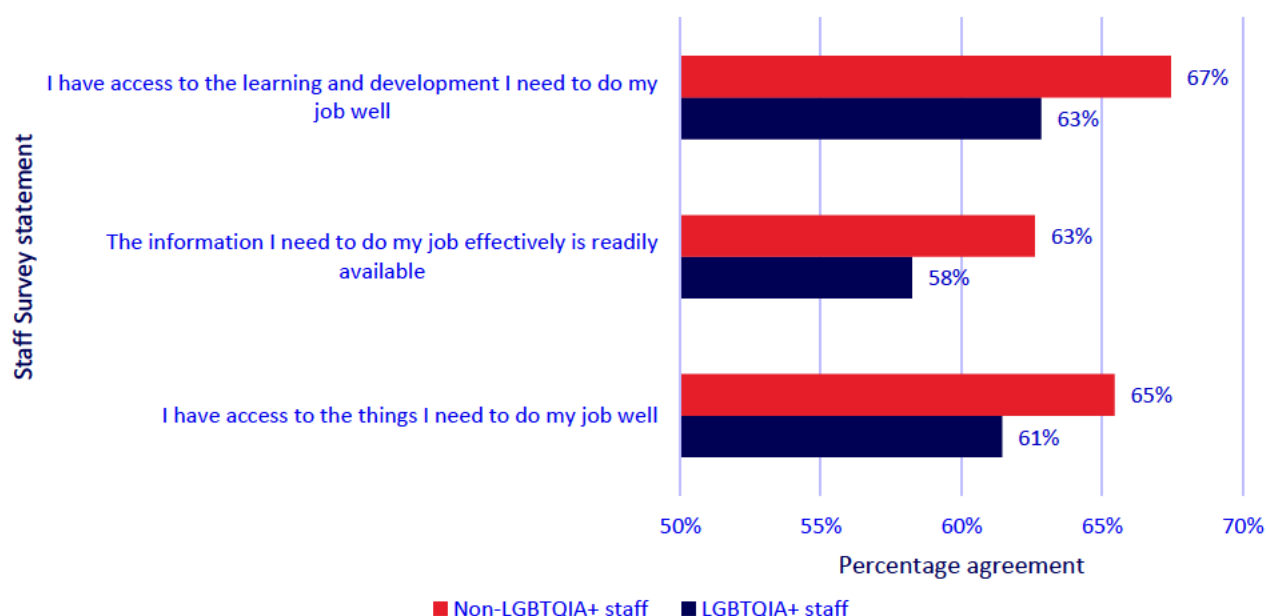


Figure 2: Staff Survey 2019, responses by sexuality/gender identity

Responses to the AWEI Survey 2018 also highlighted a desire for LGBTIQ+-focussed capability uplift, especially among leaders. One respondent suggested that:

*"LGBTI inclusion courses should be made mandatory in employee training, and particularly with upper-level team leaders/managers."*

## Progress (actions and outputs)

### Addressing sub-barrier 3.1: Community experiences of invisibility and exclusion

#### *Events and campaigns*

Since achieving the Athena Swan Bronze Award, RMIT has held a range of events and campaigns to support LGBTIQ+ inclusion, including on days of significance. The aim was to ensure that LGBTIQ+ staff and students felt included and celebrated as an important part of the University community. These events and campaigns included the Midsumma March, Pride Week, campaigns for IDAHOBIT and Wear it Purple days, a fundraiser for Minus 18 and others. Figure 3 shows staff and students at RMIT's inaugural Pride March during Pride Week 2024, in Australia and Vietnam.



Figure 3: RMIT's inaugural Pride March 2024 in Melbourne and Vietnam

Since 2018, the total number of registrants for LGBTIQ+ events grew from 55 in 2017 to 346 in 2023, showing their increasing traction (see Figure 4). Due to data loss, there is no available data for 2019.

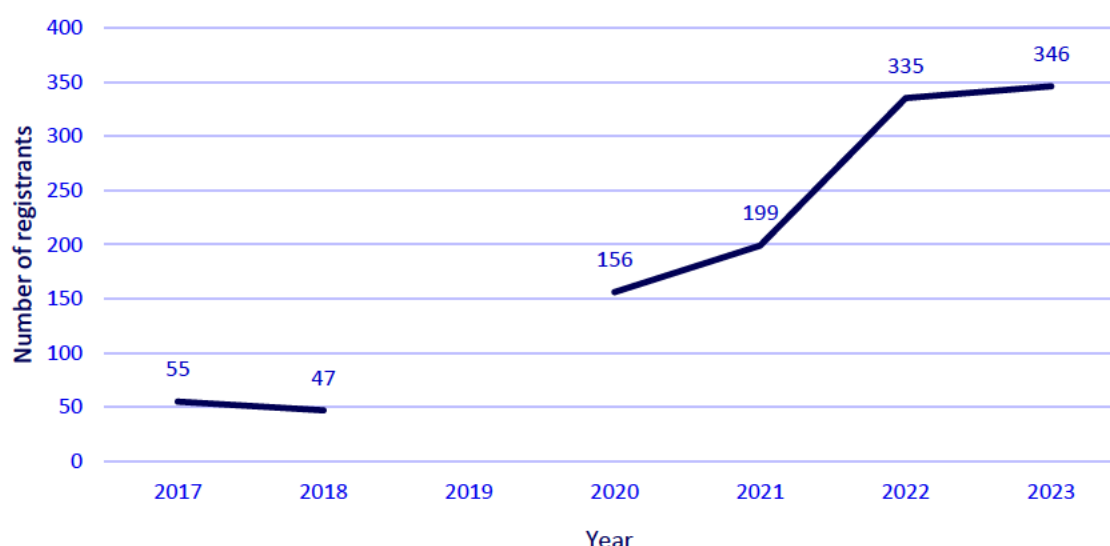


Figure 4: Registrants for LGBTIQ+ events 2017–2023 (excluding 2019, no data available)

### *Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) and Pride in Sport Index*

RMIT has participated in the AWEI since 2017. We received Bronze in 2017, Gold from 2018–2020 and Platinum from 2021–2024, demonstrating how we matured with respect to LGBTIQ+ inclusion throughout this time.

RMIT Sport has also participated in the Pride in Sport Index, an industry benchmark for inclusive practice, since 2020. Example actions under this program of work included:

- LGBTIQ+ student inclusion ambassadors
- professional development for staff and volunteers
- development of a formal process for reporting incidents of discrimination
- introduction of inclusive spaces and facilities (e.g. all-gender change rooms)
- participation in Pride Day at UniSport Nationals and
- ten “Pride Rounds” across different codes in 2022.

RMIT received a Bronze in the Pride in Sport Index in 2023 and 2024.

### *Infrastructure and services*

Other actions to promote inclusion over this period included uplifting LGBTIQ+ infrastructure and services, such as introducing:

- Queer Lounges
- RMIT Medical Clinic specialised LGBTIQ+ support and
- all-gender bathrooms.

## Addressing sub-barrier 3.2: Limited allyship and networking opportunities

### *LGBTIQA+ Research Network*

In 2020, RMIT Higher Degree by Research candidates and staff founded the LGBTIQA+ Research Network. The aim of the Network was to connect researchers who identify as LGBTIQA+ and/or do research in the fields of gender or sexuality. Run entirely by passionate volunteers, the Network is a safe space to discuss work with peers and offers symposia and seminars, as well as social events. The group, the first of its kind in Australia, now has national and international participation.

### *Ally Network*

The RMIT Ally Network was founded in 2016. It aims to bring together and train staff who wish to act as visible, active advocates and supporters for the LGBTIQA+ community. Members need to undertake an LGBTIQA+ 101 training module and an LGBTIQA+ Best Practice workshop. The network now has around 150 staff who communicate through an online “VivaEngage” channel.

## Addressing sub-barrier 3.3: Low representation across the University workforce

Since 2020, RMIT has taken actions to explicitly include trans- and gender-diverse job applicants.

In January 2020, RMIT became an ‘Endorsed Employer’ in LGBTIjobs.com.au and ensured our recruitment systems included a range of options for self-identifying pronouns and gender identity. RMIT was also the first non-community sector employer to use Special Measures to employ gender-diverse applicants, by opening recruitment to only women and gender-diverse people for certain roles.

In 2021, the RMIT Talent Acquisition team was trained by Pride in Diversity on LGBTIQA+ inclusion. In 2023, RMIT introduced inclusive hiring training modules to uplift the capability of other staff to undertake bias-free recruitment. There are two modules that are mandatory for participation in a selection panel. Figure 5 shows the uptick in completion of both training modules since 2022.

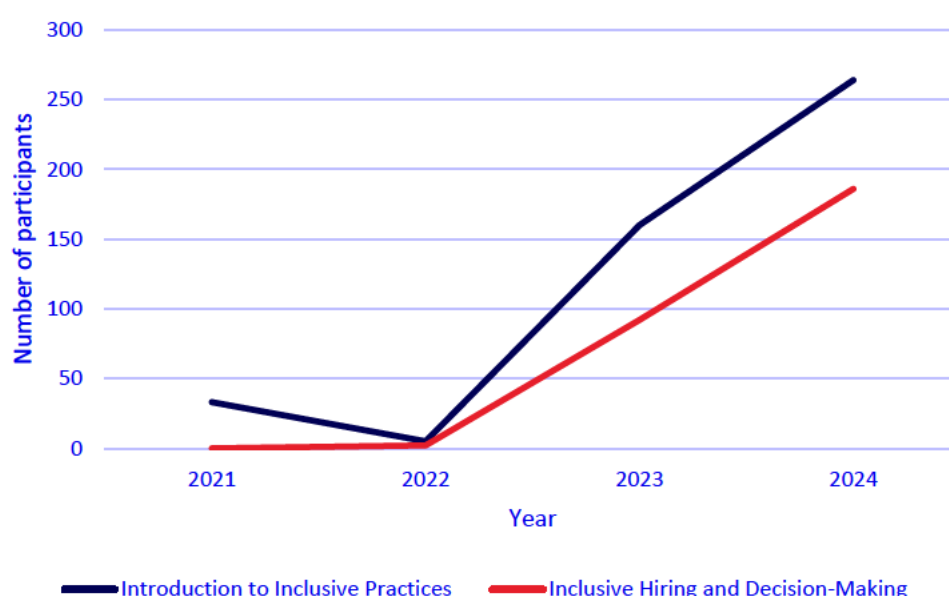


Figure 5: LGBTIQA+ inclusive hiring training module completion 2021–2024



## Addressing sub-barrier 3.4: Policy, system and capability barriers

### *Introducing gender identity and sexuality identifier options*

Since 2018, RMIT has been broadening identity options for staff across different systems. The aim was to affirm staff expressions of their own gender and to promote data quality. In 2021, RMIT introduced the option to declare trans/gender-diverse gender and sexual orientation into our workforce data management system (Workday). There has been an uptick in the use of these options, since this time, discussed in the next section.

### *Preferred name project*

From 2022, RMIT began to support students to use a preferred name, recognising that some students may choose to use a name and/or title that affirms their gender. The aim was to affirm students' identities, thereby supporting their mental health, participation, success and retention. Building on this, a process for alumni who have affirmed their gender to request a new testamur including their chosen name, free-of-charge, was established in 2023.

### *Parental leave and gender affirmation leave policy provisions*

Policy changes that have prioritised LGBTIQ+ inclusion have also been made since 2019. From 2023, RMIT introduced access up to 30 days Special Leave for employees, in addition to annual and personal leave entitlements, for appointments or recovery periods associated with the gender affirmation process. We also updated our Parental leave policy, making it available regardless of gender, sexuality, or marital status and following adoption, surrogacy, custody or guardianship, as well as birth.

### *Staff training and resources*

In 2017, the LGBTIQ+ 101 online training module was introduced to promote staff capability with respect to LGBTIQ+ issues. It includes content on key concepts and terminology, the importance of LGBTIQ+ inclusion, how to be respectful and inclusive when working with LGBTIQ+ community members, ways RMIT supports the LGBTIQ+ staff and student community and how to get more involved in community activities. As shown in Figure 6, online training module completions have increased, since 2019.

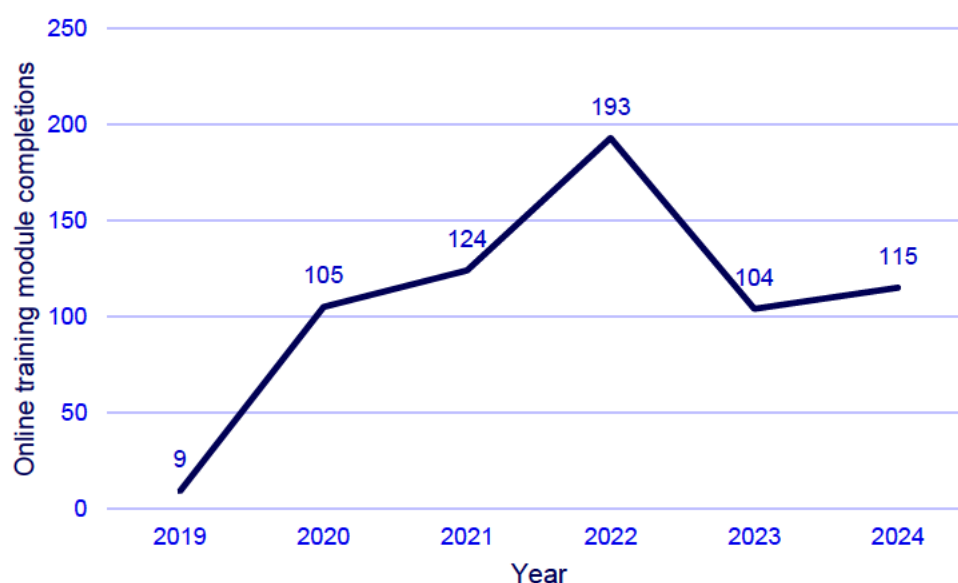


Figure 6: Online training module completions 2019–2024

The complimentary LGBTIQA+ Inclusive Best Practice in-person workshop was also introduced to help build allies' confidence before joining the Ally Network.

Lastly, RMIT also developed a range of resources supporting staff capability in relation to LGBTIQA+ issues, including:

- *RMIT Library's Safe and Inclusive Spaces Statement*
- *Guide to Inclusive Language*
- *Top 10 Tips to be an Effective Rainbow Ally: Trans and Gender Diverse Edition* and
- *Gender Affirmation at RMIT Guide*.



## Outcomes

Outcomes against each of the sub-barriers identified can be understood with reference to:

- workforce data, including recruitment and promotion data
- results from the RMIT Staff Pulse Survey 2023 (an abridged version of the full Staff Survey conducted in 2019) and
- Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) Award feedback and Survey responses (2024).

The sample sizes and gender breakdowns of staff who responded to the above surveys are provided in Table 6, below.

### RMIT Staff Survey 2023

Female	Male	Trans/gender diverse	Other	Non-disclosed	Total
2,296	1,511	10			3,826

### Australian Workplace Equality Index Survey 2024

Man or male	Woman or female	Non-binary	A different term	Prefer not to respond	Total
12	16	8	0	0	36

Table 6: Sample sizes and gender breakdown of respondents to all surveys covered in Outcomes

Due to small sample sizes of trans/gender-diverse or other staff, analysis of LGBTIQ+ experiences with respect to gender identity is limited.

## Sub barrier 3.1: Community experiences of invisibility and exclusion

### *Experiences of inclusion for the whole LGBTIQ+ staff group*

In the AWEI Survey 2024, LGBTIQ+ respondents rated their degree of being “out” around 78%—this compares to the 62% who were “completely out” in 2019, and 53% in 2018.

Of the staff who were out, almost all (82%) agreed or strongly agreed that they would feel comfortable discussing workplace issues related to sexuality with their manager—and 85% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt fully supported by their teams, in terms of their sexuality (see Table 7).

Statement	Agree	Strongly agree
I would feel comfortable and safe discussing workplace issues related to my diverse sexuality with my manager.	34%	48%
I feel fully supported by my team in terms of my diverse sexuality.	33%	52%

Table 7: AWEI Survey 2024 – experiences of LGBTIQ+ staff who were “out”

The questions and scale changed in the AWEI Survey from 2019 to 2023, so it is not possible to draw a direct comparison—however, as shown in Table 8, the 2023 results compare favourably to similar

questions in 2019, when only 72% of respondents who were “out” agreed that their managers genuinely supported LGBTIQ+ inclusion and 17% agreed or strongly agreed that they had to expend energy hiding their sexuality at work.

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
To what extent do you agree with the statement "I believe that my manager genuinely supports LGBTIQ inclusion?"	-	3%	24%	72%	-
To what extent do you agree with the statement "I expend energy hiding this aspect of myself to fit in within my work environment"?	47%	21%	15%	15%	2%

Table 8: AWEI Survey 2019 - experiences of LGBTIQ+ staff

According to the Staff Pulse Survey 2023, LGBTIQ+ staff experiences of inclusion in 2023 were similar to 2019 (see Figure 7).

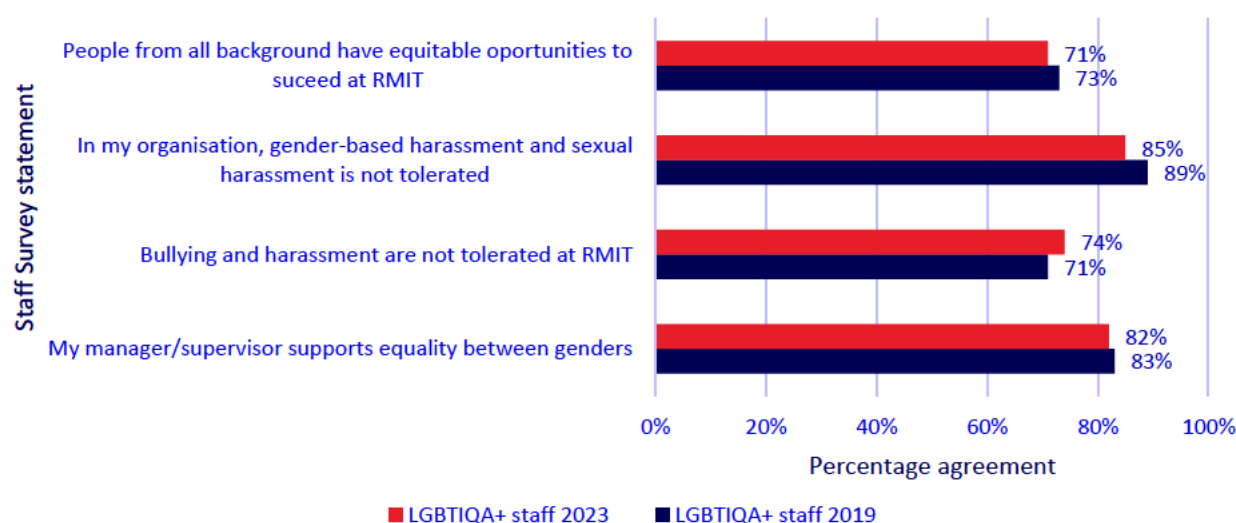


Figure 7: LGBTIQ+ staff responses to inclusion statements in the Staff Survey 2019 and 2023

Heterosexual and LGBTIQ+ staff responses were also similar to each other in 2023 (within five percentage points for most questions). As Table 9 shows, gay and lesbian staff responses broadly mirrored heterosexual staff responses—and were generally more favourable than queer, transgender and other LGBTIQ+ staff responses. These diverse sexuality/gender-identifiers were not used in the 2019, making comparison at this level impossible.

Staff Pulse Survey statement	Percentage agreement 2023						
	Sexuality/gender-identity						
	Gay or lesbian	Bi/Pan /Multi	Asexual	Queer	Transgender	Prefer not to say	Heterosexual
Number of responses	145	129	■	47	21	278	2,282
People from all backgrounds have equitable opportunities to succeed at RMIT	80%	65%	100%	64%	71%	58%	79%
In my organisation, gender-based harassment and sexual harassment is not tolerated	76%	71%	100%	64%	81%	62%	81%
Bullying and harassment are not tolerated at RMIT	87%	84%	100%	79%	86%	76%	91%

Table 9: Responses to Staff Pulse Survey 2023 by sexuality and gender-identity

### Experiences of inclusion for different LGBTIQ+ cohorts

AWEI Survey demographic data demonstrates the diversity of RMIT's LGBTIQ+ community. In 2024, around a third of LGBTIQ+ respondents identified as culturally, linguistically or ethnically diverse. Around half identified as neurodiverse or living with a disability and just over half were aged 35-years or older (see Table 10).

Demographic factor	Yes	No
Culturally, linguistically or ethnically diverse, a migrant, refugee or person of colour	7	29
Living with disability	18	18
Neurodiverse	11	25
Aged 35 or over	20	16

Table 10: LGBTIQ+ staff demographic factors 2024

When we look at how these demographic factors intersect with sexuality, it can be seen that experiences of inclusion *within* the LGBTIQ+ community differed. As shown in Table 11, in the 2023 Staff Pulse Survey, female-identifying LGBTIQ+ staff favourable responses to the statement 'People from all backgrounds have equitable opportunities to succeed at RMIT' declined by nine percentage points, compared to one percentage point for male-identifying LGBTIQ+ staff. Though we note that this binary analysis is problematic, unfortunately, we were unable to draw comparisons for trans and gender-diverse staff as diverse gender identifiers were not included in the 2019 Staff Survey (however, they were included in the 2023 survey).

Staff Pulse Survey statement	Percentage agreement (percentage point change 2019 to 2023)	
	Male-identifying LGBTIQA+ staff	Female-identifying LGBTIQA+ staff
People from all backgrounds have equitable opportunities to succeed at RMIT	71% (-1)	62% (-9)
In my organisation, gender-based harassment and sexual harassment is not tolerated	82% (-8)	81% (-5)
Bullying and harassment are not tolerated at RMIT	71% (+3)	66% (-2)

Table 11: Change in responses to Staff Survey, by sexuality and gender-identity (2019 to 2023)

Further, LGBTIQA+ staff without disability were more likely to respond favourably to the statement ‘People from all backgrounds have equitable opportunities to succeed’ in 2023, compared with 2019, while LGBTIQA+ staff with disability were less likely, as shown in Table 12. Responses of LGBTIQA+ staff with disability to this question were 20 percentage points less favourable than LGBTIQA+ staff without disability in 2023. LGBTIQA+ staff with disability were also more likely than their counterparts without disability to report that gender-based and other forms of harassment were tolerated in both 2019 and 2023.

Staff Pulse Survey statement	Percentage agreement (percentage point change 2019 to 2023)	
	LGBTIQA+ staff without disability	LGBTIQA+ staff with disability
People from all backgrounds have equitable opportunities to succeed at RMIT	77% (+4)	57% (-6)
In my organisation, gender-based harassment and sexual harassment is not tolerated	89% (+16)	74% (+24)
Bullying and harassment are not tolerated at RMIT	80% (-9)	72% (-11)

Table 12: Change in responses to Staff Survey, by sexuality and disability status (2019 to 2023)

Lastly, when we consider LGBTIQA+ staff by age, it is clear that older LGBTIQA+ staff had more negative experiences of inclusion, as shown in Table 13. Indeed, LGBTIQA+ staff aged 65+ had a 48 percentage point less favourable response to the statement ‘People from all backgrounds have equitable opportunities to succeed at RMIT’ in 2023, compared with 2019—other age cohorts gave only marginally less favourable, or more favourable, responses. These discrepancies can be explained, in part, due to the small sample size of LGBTIQA+ staff aged 65+ who responded to the survey (11 in 2019 and 7 in 2023)—that is, a small number of less favourable responses had a bigger impact on the overall results.

Staff Pulse Survey statement	Agreement—percentage point change (2019 to 2023)				
	Age				
	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
People from all backgrounds have equitable opportunities to succeed at RMIT	79% (+1)	64% (-10)	61% (-3)	57% (-1)	22% (-48)
In my organisation, gender-based harassment and sexual harassment is not tolerated	92% (-1)	74% (-16)	79% (-5)	No change	56% (-34)
Bullying and harassment are not tolerated at RMIT	86% (-5)	66% (-3)	58% (-2)	68% (+23)	44% (-16)

Table 13: Change in responses to Staff Pulse Survey by sexuality and age (2019 to 2023)

As one response to the AWEI Survey further noted:

*“I think LGBT inclusion at RMIT is seen as a young person thing. Are we inclusive of older LGBT employees? I don’t think so—there is very rarely anyone over 30-35 at events of involved in networks.”*

Overall, some LGBTIQ+ staff feel more comfortable to be “out”, but many still report feeling that diverse groups of people have less opportunity to succeed. This is despite RMIT’s considerable efforts to improve LGBTIQ+ experiences of inclusion. This points to a need to ensure that future efforts are experienced as genuine and not tokenistic—and are inclusive of diverse LGBTIQ+ experiences.

### Sub-barrier 3.2: Limited allyship and networking opportunities

Though RMIT received a Platinum Award as a part of the AWEI Awards from 2021–2024, feedback from the Awards process included that our LGBTIQ+ networks need improved leadership succession processes, as well as improved reporting. Feedback also included that there was a lack of allies at executive leader level.

According to the AWEI Survey, there was a dip in staff knowledge of allies from 2019 to 2022, as shown in Table 14—this is possibly owing to COVID and the increased move to remote working from 2020 onwards. Notwithstanding this, staff knowledge of active allies improved from 2018 to 2024, overall.

Survey statement	Percentage agreement			
	2018	2019	2022	2024
I know of active allies within my immediate work area <sup>1</sup>	60%	84%	67%	75%

Table 14: Staff knowledge of allies 2018–2024

Further to this, RMIT’s LGBTIQ+ Research Network, founded in 2020, has experienced a great deal of success. The Network has grown nationally and internationally with regular attendance at events, including monthly research seminars and networking opportunities. It grew from 110 members in 2022 to 170

<sup>1</sup>The question was slightly different in 2018–2019, reading: “Are you personally aware of visible, active LGBTIQ allies/ champions within your organisation?”



members in 2024. It has established working partnerships with researchers at University of Sydney, Western Sydney University, La Trobe University, Monash University and University of Queensland. The Network's first conference, Queer Contexts, was held at RMIT November 2024 and will continue, biennially.

Future effort in this space will have a focus on further supporting leaders' allyship.

### Sub-barrier 3.3: Low representation across the University workforce

As shown in Table 15, compared to the six-year period 2015–2020, there were far more appointments of gender-diverse professional staff in 2022–2024 (51, compared to 6). There were also moderately more gender-diverse vocational education staff appointed.

Gender identity	2015–2020			2022–2024		
	Professional	Academic	Vocational Education	Professional	Academic	Vocational Education
Female	4,072	1,112	388	1,588	242	30
Male	2,174	1,260	329	995	268	44
Other (O)	■	■	0	17	■	0
Undisclosed (U)	117	157	■			
Gender identity not included/gender-diverse (X)	■	8	0	51	■	■
Blank	57	28	■	3,063	651	243

Table 15: Appointments to positions by gender identity, 2015–2024

As shown in Figure 8, below, the percentage of gender-diverse people who were successful in their application, relative to those that applied, improved for professional and vocational education staff from 2015 to 2024—the trend with academic staff was more variable, with a peak in 2018–2020. This shows a general trend in the desired direction with respect to appointments of gender-diverse staff and/or a greater willingness of applicants to disclose their diverse gender identities.

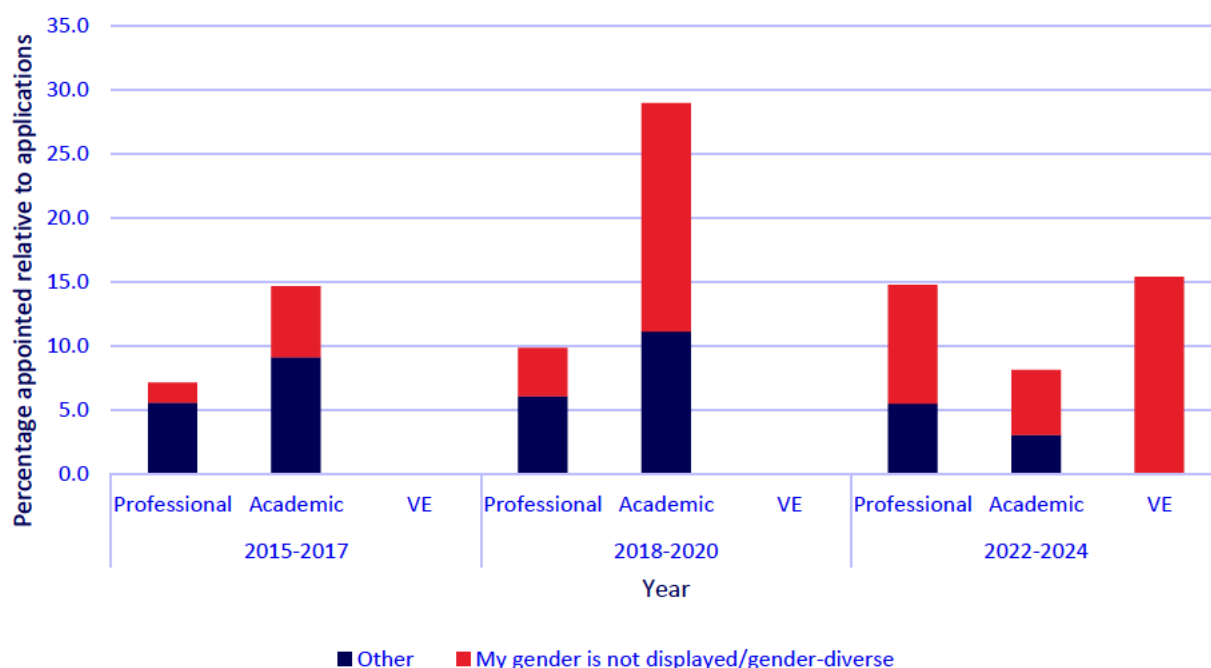


Figure 8: Percentage of people appointed, relative to applicants, by gender, 2015–2024

Further, 12 gender-diverse identifying academics applied for promotion in the period 2018–2024 (1.15% of total staff who applied for promotion). Applicants' success rate decreased from 100% in 2023 to 50% in 2024 (see Table 16)—possibly reflecting the increase in the number of gender-diverse applicants and/or the 'readiness' of applicants. Over the seven years from 2018 to 2024, however, gender-diverse academics who applied for promotion had a success rate of 75%—higher than the male-identifying applicant success rate.

Year	Applications #	Promotion recommended # (% of total applications for cohort)	Applications #	Promotion recommended # (% of total applications for cohort)	Applications #	Promotion recommended # (% of total applications for cohort)
	Female		Male		Trans/Gender-diverse	
2018	73	48 (66%)	106	55 (52%)	■	■ (50%)
2019	43	35 (81%)	80	50 (63%)	0	N/A
2020	49	35 (73%)	58	39 (67%)	■	■ (100%)
2021	59	43 (73%)	88	63 (72%)	■	■ (100%)
2022	58	49 (84%)	77	58 (75%)	■	■ (100%)
2023	75	60 (80%)	84	52 (62%)	■	■ (100%)
2024	84	67 (80%)	93	62 (67%)	■	■ (50%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>337 (76%)</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>379 (65%)</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9 (75%)</b>

Table 16: Academic promotions by gender identity, applications Vs success rate, 2018–2024



With respect to senior leaders, 1.38% of Academic level E staff currently report being gender-diverse (see Table 17)—there is no data for any other senior leadership levels and no historic data available from which to draw comparisons.

Executive level	Female # (% of total cohort)	Male # (% of total cohort)	Non-disclosed # (% of total cohort)	Other # (% of total cohort)	Trans/Gender-diverse # (% of total cohort)
Academic D	114 (44%)	145 (56%)			
Academic E	123 (33.98%)	233 (64.36%)		■ (0.28%)	■ (1.38%)
Executive 1	50 (57%)	37 (43%)			
Executive 2	13 (48%)	14 (52%)			
HEW 10A	81 (55%)	66 (45%)			
HEW 10B	-	-			
HEW 10C	58 (51.79%)	53 (47.32%)	■ (0.89%)		
Senior Executive	■ (14%)	■ (86%)			
Senior, Specialist or Executive Employee	26 (44%)	33 (56%)			
TOTAL	466	587	■	■	■

Table 17: Senior leaders self-declared gender identity 2024

Overall, while there are some trends in the right direction with respect to recruitment and promotion, the limited data availability makes tracking progress difficult. Continued effort will be focussed on improving data quality.

### Sub-barrier 3.4: Policy, system and capability barriers

Since the introduction of the option to declare trans/gender-diverse gender, sexual orientation and pronouns into our workforce data management system in 2021, there has been a small uptick in the use of these options (see Figure 9, Figure 10 and Table 18), which has improved our ability to monitor and report on LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

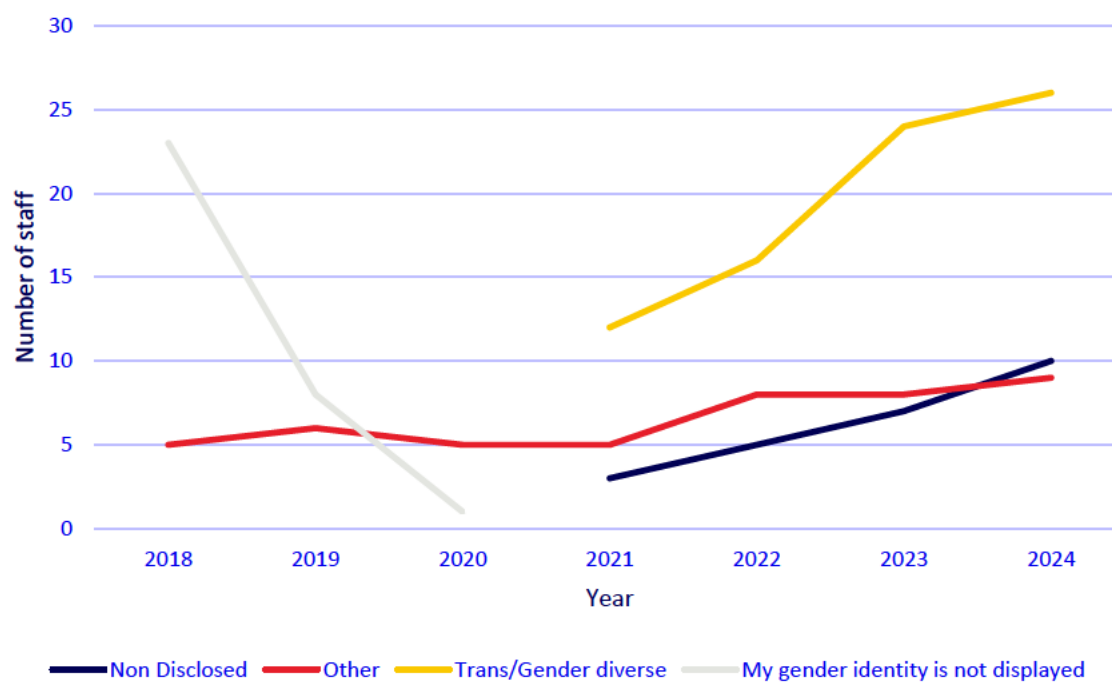


Figure 9: Staff declarations of trans/gender diverse identity 2018–2024

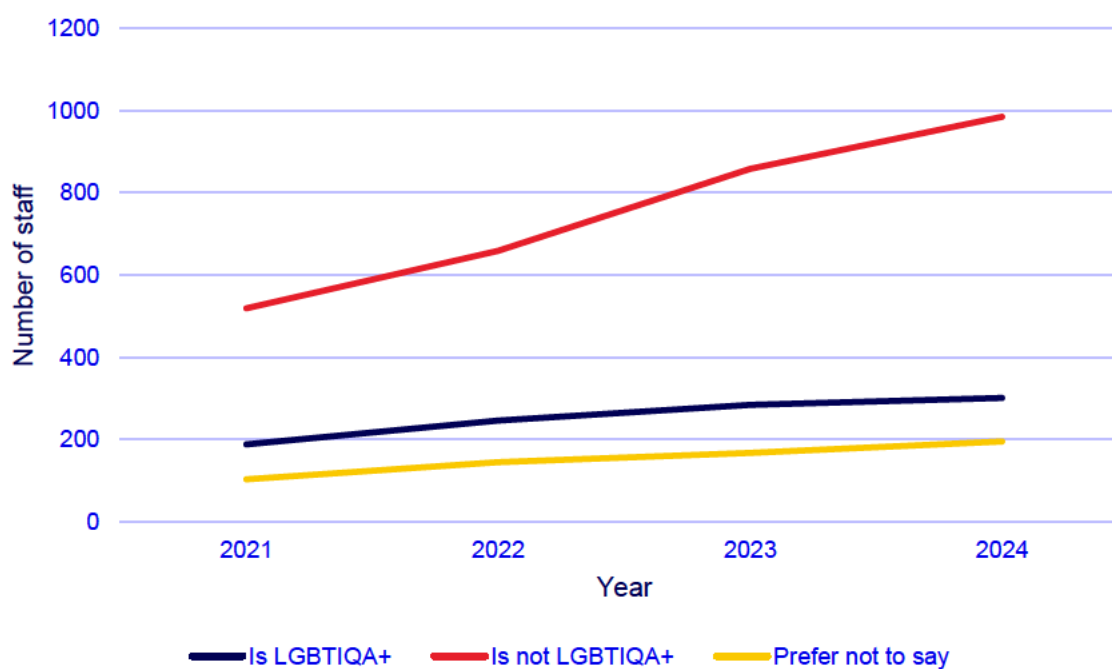


Figure 10: Staff declarations of sexuality 2021–2024<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Staff who left this data field blank in our workforce data management system have not been included in this figure, for simplicity.

Year	He/Him	Other	She/Her	They/Them	Blank	Total
2021	432	11	685	15	5,080	6,223
2022	707	15	1,102	22	4,417	6,263
2023	910	15	1,363	34	4,138	6,460
2024	1,066	17	1,540	33	3,550	6,206

Table 18: Staff declarations of pronouns 2021–2024

Following the 'Preferred name project', a significant number of students (over 161,000) made a change to their preferred names. Further, over 1.5 million students completed their enrolments with a preferred name. It should be noted, however, that these figures were not limited to LGBTIQ+ students. Regardless, this initiative has helped to provide visibility and consistency in student systems as RMIT continuously improves its mechanisms of support for its LGBTIQ+ community.

Finally, according to the Staff Pulse Survey in 2023, LGBTIQ+ staff experiences of systems and processes worsened, compared with 2019 (see Figure 11). However, there were also declines among non-LGBTIQ+ staff (from 43% to 37% agreement with the statement "Most of our systems and processes support us getting our work done effectively"). It is understood that these declines in sentiment among both cohorts are largely due to challenges associated with the introduction of a new, 'self-service' workforce data management system.

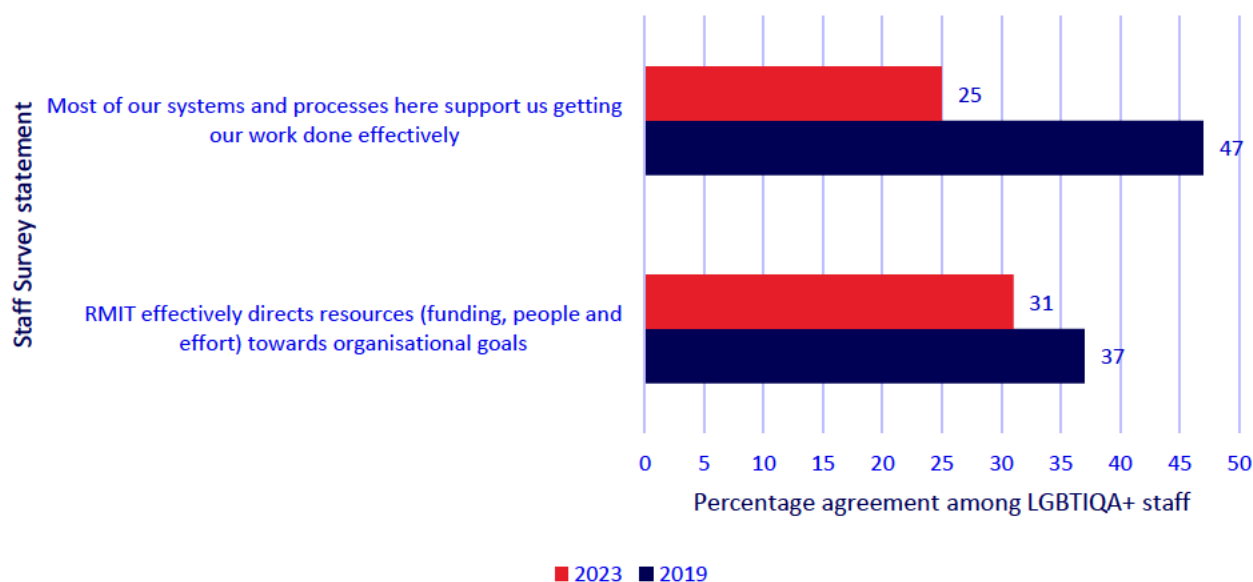


Figure 11: Staff Pulse Survey 2023 – LGBTIQ+ staff responses to enablement statements

Future effort will focus on further embedding system improvements in relation to LGBTIQ+ data management.

## Impact

A total of 43 staff provided feedback to help gauge the impact of our program of work. This included 17 staff who participated in three 'listening groups' and nine staff who participated in one-on-one interviews.

These staff were:

- academics and professionals from RMIT Australia and Vietnam (from Higher Degree by Research students to Senior Executives)
- 89% LGBTIQ+
- 35% female-identifying, 24% gender-diverse and 41% male-identifying and
- 29% from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

The question sequence used for interviews can be found in Figure 12.

### Question sequence

- What attracted you to RMIT and how important was RMIT's commitment to LGBTIQ+ inclusion in your decision?
- What do you value as community building, e.g. considering people of different age groups, abilities, cultures, etc.?
- What do we do well and what can we improve?
- How can University leadership become stronger visible role models for the community?
- What is getting in the way of LGBTIQ+ peoples' success at RMIT?
- Are there any systems, infrastructure, processes, that are a barrier for LGBTIQ+ people in getting work done, or even feeling included at RMIT, that you have not touched on yet?
- What is one action/area that should have a focus for the next 12-months, that would have real impact on community?

Figure 12: Question sequence used in 1:1 interviews

Additionally, we undertook analysis of 851 free-text responses to the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) Surveys from 2018 to 2024, using a Large Language Model. Some of the themes from the free-text responses can be found in Table 19, at the end of this chapter.

### Sub barrier 3.1: Community experiences of invisibility and exclusion

Analysis of AWEI Survey results showed that staff consistently praised RMIT for its visible commitment to, and proactive support for, the LGBTIQ+ community. Analysis also showed that RMIT's efforts in celebrating significant events and creating safe spaces were also well-received. As one listening group/interview participant noted:

*"This is the first organisation I've worked where I can be me. There is no need for me to hide myself... If I turned up tomorrow in full makeup and wig, no one would bat an eyelid. It would be like, where did you get that makeup from?... There would be excitement."*

AWEI Survey analysis also uncovered, however, respondents' desire for more consistent use of pronouns, better support for gender-diverse employees and addressing the performative nature of some initiatives. In addition, this analysis showed that staff have mixed feelings about all-gender bathrooms, with some staff feeling that they were not communicated or implemented effectively.

### Sub-barrier 3.2: Limited allyship and networking opportunities

While staff appreciated connection and networking opportunities, some staff in interviews and listening groups highlighted that they'd like more informal opportunities—and that these opportunities could better reflect the diversity of LGBTIQ+ experience:

*"I guess for me it's about that connection with like-minded people... It's more informal. We're not there for a particular purpose. It's just really socialising, exchanging ideas, information. As opposed to a March."*

*"And maybe we need to find other opportunities for informal engagement that might include different communities within the queer community."*

Others highlighted that increased communication about how to get involved as an ally would be appreciated. One response to the AWEI Survey called for:

*"More direct communication to staff about how to become an active ally would be great. I think many staff would like to get on board but not really sure how."*

Finally, another consistent theme of both the AWEI Survey responses and listening groups/interviews was the need for greater leadership support and allyship. As one interviewee noted:

*"Leadership with visible support, whether it's a badge, a lanyard, you know, speaking at an event that they perhaps normally wouldn't be thought of as speaking at. You know, those kind of things are really, really critical to show that level of support and engagement that you know, again, it's not just words, it's action being there, seeing doing."*

### Sub-barrier 3.3: Low representation across the University workforce

Staff were supportive of RMIT's efforts to improve inclusiveness in recruitment. One staff member noted, in response to the AWEI Survey:

*"Recruitment is very good. This was the first time I applied to a role while being out, and I felt supported and affirmed by the process."*

One trans listening group/interview participant noted, however, that they felt isolated because of a lack of peers:

*"I was attracted to RMIT due to its perceived support for trans individuals, contrasting with previous .... the presence of trans staff and research on trans-inclusive practices at RMIT indicated a supportive environment. But, despite initial perceptions, I felt isolated as the only visible trans person in my department."*

### Sub-barrier 3.4: Policy, system and capability barriers

There was positive sentiment in listening groups/interviews regarding policies and processes supporting gender-diverse people. One staff member noted:

*"I went through my name change journey here as well. And everyone was just, it was so easy. It was so quick. It made it really simple for me to feel seen and understood in that name change."*

Others were less trusting of the system:

*"I think RMIT is doing really good work in terms of... having the policy where students can have their preferred name rather than just their legal name... It just comes from a from a position of a certain perspective. That heteronormative assumption that is in the system, it's still there."*

With respect to staff capability, across the AWEI Surveys, staff called for more frequent and accessible ally training and better communication about available training/resources—and this is the final area where future action will be focused.



Table 19: A thematic selection of free-test responses from AWEI Survey 2024

Theme	What RMIT does well	What RMIT could improve upon
Visibility and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I feel our organisation does both DGS and Disability inclusion programmes very well. They are visible and well planned.</li> <li>The visible support is great - lanyards, badges, etc, and this is backed up by policies that support staff and students within the LGBTQIA+ community.</li> <li>It's normalised and there are networks to support but there is no fight to be part of the conversation. It's assumed and everyone takes it as a given.</li> <li>Visibility and network are strong. The DGSS (Diverse Genders, Sexes and Sexualities) research network has been a great place to connect with other academic staff in the same space.</li> <li>Just always celebrating every event on the Pride calendar. You can march, watch films, find information, go to Pride events, Pride flags everywhere. I organised a LGBTQ film festival last year for the students, that was fun and inclusive.</li> <li>Lots of community minded events and celebrations which contribute to a feeling of inclusiveness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I'm not sure as I've only been here for 3 months. If there is an ally network at my organisation, I am not aware of it. It needs to be promoted. If there is none, there needs to be one!</li> <li>Proactive engagement outside of "pride season" or theme days/weeks is needed.</li> <li>I have never been someone who is loud and proud about my sexuality, I'm not a flag waver and I do not enjoy Mardi Gras - I find it a bit tedious also can be overwhelming and I just want to not have to talk about it so much. I just put my energy into gardening and projects. That's what I want to talk about. I often feel guilty about not caring enough for DSG inclusion. I feel like the allyship, and other inclusion programs are quite good for extraverts.</li> <li>More focus on out staff in the organisation for those comfortable to share.</li> </ul>
Belonging/inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion and sense of belonging - everyone or mostly everyone really tries to include as many people as possible.</li> <li>We employ many staff who identify as LGBTQ which means they blend in; this isn't in an invisible way but rather in a positive way that means it is neither here nor there that they are LGBTQ and they can refer in 'matter of fact' way to their partners etc without any eyebrows being raised.</li> <li>A gender affirmation guide, and paid leave for gender affirmation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I think LGBT inclusion at RMIT is seen as a young person thing. Are we inclusive of older LGBT employees? I don't think so - there is very rarely anyone over 30 -35 at events or involved in networks.</li> </ul>
Senior leadership commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My gay CEO was at a staff pride games event and I was thrilled as I've never been in a workplace where that has happened before. I've never been at a workplace where the bosses were LGBTIQ+ and so this was quite a large moment for me.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall it is good, but the executive are broadly silent on the issue. It seems that there is a reluctance to publicly support us in case of conflict with overtly conservative and confrontational members of staff.</li> <li>More executive sponsorship and/or allyship. We have one great executive community member who is out and active, but that is only one. There is a large leadership group at RMIT, surely there is a way to engage others and take the</li> </ul>



		<i>pressure off of one executive member. It might also provide a fresh review and give some re-invigoration</i>
Allies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many allies have the ally network details in their email signatures, and a growing number of people also include their pronouns. The University also is very good at promoting LGBTQ+ events in the same way as other events (they go into the newsletters / there are the same kinds of comms) This kind of visibility in a matter-of-fact way makes it 'normal' to recognise/accept/acknowledge this part of our wider community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information and call to action for allies</li> <li>More direct communication to staff about how to become an active ally would be great. I think many staff would like to get on board but not really sure how.</li> </ul>
Systems and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My organisation has worked to include pronouns in systems and introduce this as normal practice in email sign offs as well.</li> <li>Recruitment is very good. This was the first time I applied to a role while being out, and I felt supported and affirmed by the process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Normalize pronouns on all signatures. Don't make those non cis individuals be the only ones using pronouns and therefor making the 'difference' so obvious.</li> </ul>
All-gender facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Availability of all-gender bathrooms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please ensure that anytime a gender-neutral bathroom is installed, that a gender segregated bathroom is also available.</li> <li>Gender neutral toilets and an understanding that gender neutral disabled toilets is not the same thing!</li> </ul>
Intersectionality		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am only now understanding that my Autism is a more dominant part of my identity than my sexuality. I wish there was a quiet model of DSG allyship. Not loud and proud but quiet and proud. I could be into that.</li> <li>I face challenges due to my ADHD. This something I am not open about at work. No issues about being part of the LGBTQ+ community</li> <li>I also think - and this will sound weird - but we are good at 'mainstream' LGBT inclusion, but we are not as good at including less prominent sexualities and identities such as people who are agender, or people who are pansexual.</li> <li>I feel that bisexual people are not highly understood or respected by either the straight community or the</li> </ul>

		<p>LGBTQ community. I often feel like I don't belong in either group or that I need to hide this part of my identity. I would love if there was more information and training that focussed on the complex experiences of bisexual people so increase understanding and empathy.</p>
Training		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For casual workers, it would be great to know how to access policies and trainings, as well as how we can be involved as active allies on the days we are working at the organisation (whether remotely or onsite).</li> <li>• Training for those dealing with students and employees who are diverse in gender or sexuality.</li> <li>• Broader inclusion work in areas that have traditionally been represented by cis-hetero men.</li> <li>• I would love more training to be available. Not online modules. Conversations.</li> <li>• Have training for pronoun use, being misgendered consistently feels awful.</li> </ul>

## Further action

RMIT's efforts to foster LGBTIQ+ inclusion from 2019–2024 have addressed the key barriers faced by this cohort, including the need for enhanced visibility and inclusion, allyship and networking, representation and systems/capability. The actions RMIT took to break down these barriers included: 1) building an inclusive culture through events and campaigns, 2) developing staff networks, 3) improving inclusive recruitment practices and 4) improving our policies and systems and offering training. These actions resulted in numerous events and campaigns (such as Midsumma and Pride Week), the establishment of the LGBTIQ+ Research and Ally Networks, recruitment measures (such as 'Special Measures' recruitment) and policy/system changes (such as gender-affirmation leave and the addition of more gender identifier options in systems).

Outcomes included increased declarations of trans/gender-diverse identity and sexual orientation in our data management systems, and increased recruitment of LGBTIQ+ individuals—and culminated in RMIT achieving the Australian Workplace Equality Index Platinum Award from 2021 onwards. In terms of the impact of our efforts on staff experiences, evidence from surveys, listening groups and interviews revealed that staff members appreciated RMIT's visible commitment and proactive approach to diversity and inclusion. Staff feedback, however, also highlighted gaps in communication, leaders' allyship and support for gender diverse/trans staff. Staff emphasised that while RMIT has made significant progress, ongoing efforts are needed to ensure inclusion is authentic, visible and lived in everyday experiences. By continuing to focus on these areas, RMIT can further strengthen its reputation as a truly inclusive employer.

Ref	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcomes/ Targets/Success Indicators
<b>1. Progressing genuine inclusion efforts, including informal ones</b>						
<b>1a</b>	LGBTIQA+ focussed events are a valued, and source of pride to community, but not necessarily participated in by all.	Alongside recognition and support of formal days, <b>establish quieter, more informal, more frequent, locally-led opportunities</b> for celebration and connection for staff.	Q1 2026 –	CIL and local D&I groups	CPO	More members of the community feel included as measured by event feedback and attendance.
<b>1b</b>	Need to continue support of formal days/themes and establish more informal, quieter engagement for community and allies. Formal events largely attended by more extrovert, and flexible professional staff. Academics and quieter LGBTIQA+ prefer something less 'showy'.	<b>Broaden celebrations of the LGBTIQA+ community to include varied examples of pride</b> (e.g., older community members, carers).	Q1 2025 –	CIL and local D&I groups	CPO	
<b>1c</b>	Advocacy and responsive co-design with the community is valued.	Continue <b>Working Party</b> governance inclusive of staff and student members. Consider additional sub-groups to explore the needs and concerns of all gender identities/intersections (age, etc.) and/or focus on discrete staff or student-focused topics to report back to the Working Group(s).	Q2 2025 –	Local Advocates, Athena Swan team, IDEA leads	ADVC GE and Working Group Chairs	Working party is responsive to community needs and topics or project-foci are reviewed and actioned through formal governance.
<b>2. Improving systems and data quality</b>						
<b>2a</b>	Despite offering X and U, or other gender-identifiers in key processes/systems, the number of known members of the LGBTIQA+ community (incl. leadership) is known to be significantly higher than in our systems.	<b>Review public and staff facing recruitment platforms</b> for appropriateness, use and visibility, ensuring that LGBTIQA+ contact(s) prior to engagement and during recruitment process are clearly visible.	Q1 2025	Talent, CIL & University Comms	CPO, Exec Dir Comms	Platform review complete. Utilisation of LGBTIQA+ contact(s) measured.

2b	Preferred name initiative well received. Further preferred name settings in systems appreciated. Staff not as supported as students.	<b>Continue tracking and removal of dead-naming</b> in systems and investigate funding to support staff for legal name change, as desired, and as part of gender affirmation process.	Q3–Q4 2025	CIL	CPO	Reduced instances of misnaming in systems and processes.
2c	Data Dashboards that are in place, but at present only include rudimentary data on the academic workforce data. Student data is more comprehensive.  Dashboards also need to be offered across all Schools and Colleges, not just STEMM, and provide visibility on recruitment, exits, and promotion and research outcomes for better decision-making.	<b>Expand reach of real-time, School Athena Swan Equity &amp; Inclusion Dashboards</b> across the enterprise, including College-level data.	2025 – 2027	Athena Swan, Data & Analytics	ADVC GE, Chief Data & Analytics Officer, CPO, Exec Dir Students	Dashboards developed and maintained with real-time data.
2d	In relation to our Workday system, staff are starting to take up opportunities to include pronouns, richer inputs around cultural identity, etc., but this is highly variable.	Continue to <b>mature intersectional data capability</b> for staff and students, in particular gender and cultural diversity across all systems (Workday, Staff Survey) to allow consistent reporting across time.	2025 –	CIL, People Advisory & Assurance, OD & Employee Experience, SESG		Consistency in intersectional capability and data formats and analyses.
<b>3. Supporting leaders' allyship</b>						
3a	Staff asked for: 'More executive sponsorship and/or allyship'. They said, 'it would be good to hear executive leaders speaking more about LGBTQ+ support' and noted that 'the leadership seem more passive than previously in endorsing diversity.'	<b>Support, encourage and enable leadership to be more visible</b> in their allyship of the LGBTIQ+ community: attending events, utilising pronouns, wearing lanyards, sharing personal stories. Maturity approach, depending where 'leader is at'.	Q1 2025 –	CIL; University Comms	Executive sponsors including eg. DVC R&I & Chief Experience Officer, with CPO	Broader range of leaders active, visible and comfortable in their support. Improved feedback from all staff formally and informally.
3b		<b>Review personal and professional training</b> and foster connections among leaders to support one another to model inclusive behaviours together, and to challenge traditional assumptions about roles and responsibilities.	Q1 2025 –	CIL		
3c		<b>Continue to showcase staff</b> already practicing inclusive leadership.	Q1 2025 –	CIL		

4. Delivering more frequent/accessible training and communication						
4a	Staff called for more training, saying:  'Ensure LGBTIQ+ training and programs are attended by all staff.'	Ensure current <b>Inclusion, Diversity, Equity &amp; Access (IDEA) training is fit for purpose</b> and stays current with emerging trends through consultation, review, and co-development with Network. Consider microaggressions, addressing unconscious biases and the impact of asking invasive questions.	Q3 2025 –	CIL, SESG	CPO, Exec Dir Students Assoc Dir HR VN	Expanded reach of training to all staff, together with specialist units embedded into leadership and manager development programs.  Improved feedback from the community including newly trained facilitators, and allies. (AWEI, Staff Survey etc.).
4b	Not online modules. Conversations.'	<b>Promote existing resources</b> (website, training sessions, Ally network) for awareness and ease of access.	Q1 2025 –	CIL, University Comms; SESG		
4c	'Training for those dealing with students and employees who are diverse in gender or sexuality.'	<b>Adapt Ally 101 training</b> delivery through a train-the-trainer model. Train more facilitators for increased reach, especially local delivery.	Q1 2026 –	CIL		
4d	'Have training for pronoun use, being misgendered consistently feels awful.'	Consider <b>more training options for allies</b> , managers, HR business partners, leaders, including casual workers and all staff in specific areas including RMIT Vietnam (specific needs).	Q3 2025– Q4 2026	CIL, RMIT VN HR		
4e	'Training for managers in responding to and addressing microaggressions in the moment.'	<b>Produce LGBTIQ+ relevant (also other minority identities) resource</b> guides in a digital and accessible format. Ensure easy access, in one place, and allowing translation when needed as per the RMIT Digital Accessibility Framework.	Q1–Q4 2025	CIL; SESG		
4f	'For casual workers, it would be great to know how to access policies and trainings, as well as how we can be involved as active allies.'	<b>Continue to incorporate personal stories</b> in training to share lived experience and personal impact.	Q1 2025	CIL; SESG		
4g		<b>Equip managers and leaders through training</b> to incorporate inclusive behaviours and action into the everyday, leading by example.	Q1–Q4 2025	CIL and Research Training & Development, HR Partners; SESG		
4h		<b>Consider greater awareness campaigns</b> and education on the use and intent of sharing personal pronouns.	Q3 2025 –	CIL; University Comms		