

Out to Succeed in Australia Survey 2018

## Creating an environment in which LGBT+ talent can thrive

November 2018



LGBT+ inclusion is a valuable brand differentiator, performance enhancer, and talent draw. Are Australian businesses capitalising on the benefits by creating an environment where LGBT+ talent can bring their true selves to work and fulfil their career potential?

In 2018, PwC and Out Leadership surveyed more than 300 openly LGBT+ employees from around the world, who've been identified by their employers as high performers or people with leadership potential<sup>1</sup>.

This overview outlines the views of the 44 survey participants from Australia. For comparison, we also include perspectives from the 111 American, 89 Asian, and 50 European participants.

### Key findings

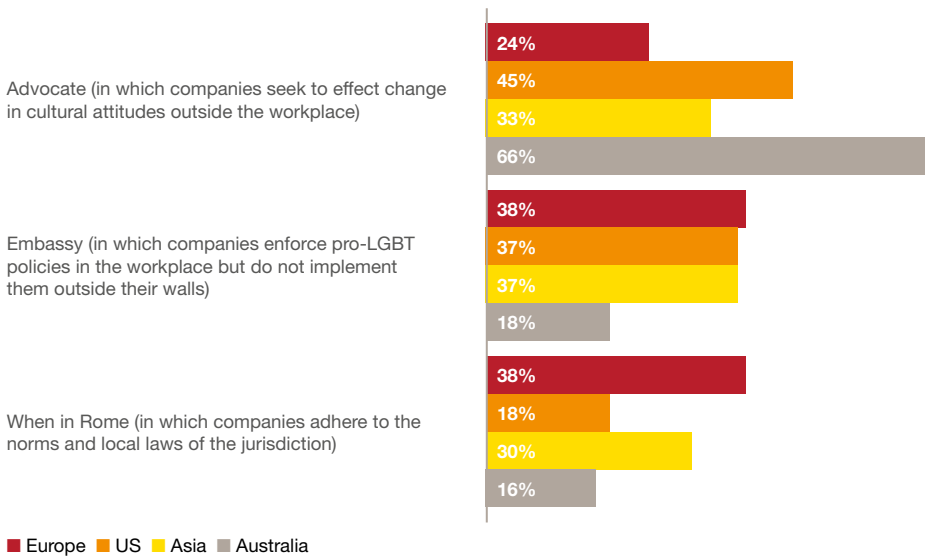
Progress on inclusion in Australia is being made – 98% of the high potential LGBT+ employees in our survey would recommend their place of work to an LGBT+ friend, compared to 94% in the U.S. and Europe, and 88% in Asia.

Australian participants also report that their organisations are among the most active champions of LGBT+ rights of any region in the survey. Nearly two-thirds describe their employers as advocates for LGBT+ equality, much higher than responses from the U.S. (45%), Asia (33%), and Europe (24%) (see exhibit 1).

<sup>1</sup> The survey was carried out in two rounds. The first round formed the basis for the [global report](#). A second survey was carried out to gain more insights about regions. Figures in this report are for the combined survey (global and regional), so they may differ slightly from the global report.

### Exhibit 1: Standing up for LGBT+ rights

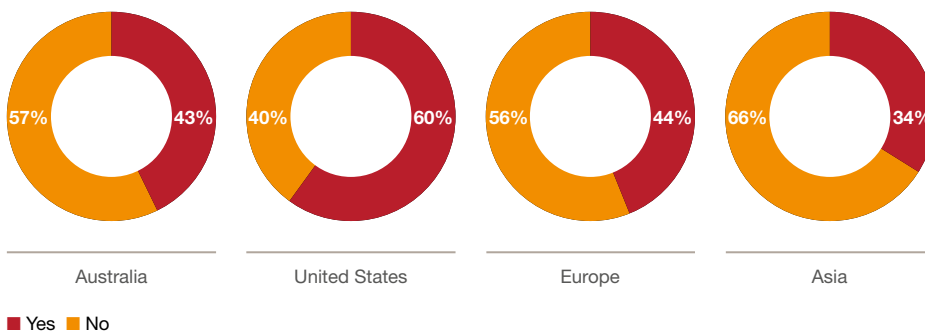
From your perspective, which of the three corporate models of engagement most appropriately describes your company's engagement in LGBT+ equality? (Select one only)



Source: PwC/OutNext Out to Succeed Survey

### Exhibit 2: Out when interviewed

Were you out during your interview and application process?



Source: PwC/OutNext Out to Succeed Survey

Resulting business benefits are coming through. Fully 84% of Australian participants believe that having an openly supportive focus on LGBT+ has provided their organisation with wider access to the best talent. Even more (91%) believe that this supportive focus has improved their organisation's place in the market.

Yet our survey also reveals areas where support for LGBT+ talent is still falling short in many Australian organisations:

#### **“Covering” remains prevalent in Australia**

Only 43% of Australian participants were out during the interview and application process, a significantly lower proportion than the U.S. (60%), but on a par with Europe (44%), and ahead of Asia (34%) (see exhibit 2).

Nearly 60% of Australian participants (59%) have avoided mentioning their life outside work, compared to 33% of participants in the U.S., 40% in Europe, and 43% in Asia. The same proportion of Australian participants have also kept quiet when they've heard comments reflecting negative attitudes about LGBT+ people, compared to 26% of participants in Europe and the U.S., and 35% in Asia. A significant 41% of Australian participants have changed their personal appearance, form of speaking or mannerisms when at work, compared to 24% in Europe, 18% in Asia, and 17% in the U.S.

If LGBT+ employees don't feel they can bring their whole selves to work, or that they won't be able to realise their full potential within their current organisation, they'll vote with their feet by looking for opportunities elsewhere. They'll also tell their friends and family that this isn't a business that's living up to its promises on inclusion, which could have a detrimental impact on the brand.

### **Australian businesses fail to capitalise on full benefits of LGBT+ inclusion**

Most of the Australian participants in our survey work for companies that are active promoters of LGBT+ inclusion. They should therefore be in the best position to benefit. Yet barely a third of Australian participants (36%) believe that their company leverages LGBT+ inclusion for business advantage. Other regions are also failing to capitalise, with only 41% of participants in the U.S., 37% in Asia, and 34% in Europe believing that their organisation benefits.

### **Findings highlight aspiration gap**

Career progression is the number-one priority for Australian LGBT+ talent in our survey. And more than 90% see LGBT+ specific training and development programmes as important to making them want to work for an organisation. Yet, only 39% report that their organisation takes steps to create a pathway to senior management for LGBT+ people, on a par with Asia (39%) and Europe (40%), but significantly lower than the U.S. (50%).

If there is a disconnect between the aspiration and experience of LGBT+ employees in businesses that are keen to promote inclusion, the gaps in less-committed companies are likely to be even greater.

## **Fostering true inclusion**

Drawing on the survey findings, we have identified five key priorities that organisations should adopt to promote real equality and realise the full business benefits of LGBT+ inclusion:

1. Set the right tone from the top and engage with CEOs
2. Create clear pathways for career progression
3. Stand up and advocate for LGBT+ equality
4. Build and empower LGBT+ ally networks
5. Create inclusive communications

Cutting across these five recommendations is the need to ensure that LGBT+ talent feels valued and supported, rather than just tolerated. This includes focused workplace support that enables LGBT+ talent to bring their whole selves to work and realise their full potential. The aim isn't to provide favourable treatment for LGBT+ employees; rather it is to offer guidance, inspiration, and visible role models, while clearing away the lingering biases – overt, covert and unconscious – that hold them back.

By offering the best possible working environment and career opportunities for LGBT+ talent, businesses can gain an important edge. And by promoting inclusion within the markets they operate, they can exert what we see as one of the most powerful influences to change society.



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To find out more, please see

[Out to Succeed: Realising the full potential of LGBT+ talent.](#)



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