

# Supporting the wellbeing of our LGBTIQ+community

June 2022



# Project Overview

The Shine Network (PwC's LGBTIQ+ employee network) and firmwide Diversity Inclusion & Wellbeing (DI&W) team have worked together to continue to test and enhance the organisational support we provide to the LGBTIQ+ community at PwC.

To do this, we partnered with SuperFriend - Industry Funds' Mental Health Initiative ("SuperFriend"), a not-for-profit group insured charity organisation, to complete research into the wellbeing of the LGBTIQ+ community at PwC - through an internal survey in late 2021. This research measured workplace mental health and wellbeing through the *Thriving Workplace Index* and also gathered important perspectives on psychological safety at work, LGBTIQ+ wellbeing at work, wellbeing outside of work and the broader impact of COVID-19.

Prior to the internal survey, desktop research was completed to look for and consider international wellbeing benchmarks and other related surveys of the LGBTIQ+ community (including with reference to the impacts of COVID-19, that could be used as comparators) - the findings of this desktop research were factored in the survey questions set and reviewed by SuperFriend.

135

survey responses

115

identified as LGBTIQ+

~30%

of identifying LGBTIQ+ community at PwC

## Survey respondents summary

- *This report summarises data provided by the 115 respondents that identify with the LGBTIQ+ community.*
- *Cisgender males (60%) were most highly represented, followed by cisgender females (36%) and non-binary / gender diverse (4%), with most respondents (57%) aged between 24 to 34 years.*
- *There was also balance in respondents across roles (e.g. associates, managers, directors, partners) at PwC.*
- *NSW returned the greatest number of responses, with overall representation across divisions (e.g. Assurance, Consulting) being relatively similar nationally.*



# The Thriving Workplace Index

The PwC LGBTIQ+ community were found to have a **thriving index score** (72.5 out of 100) that exceeds both the national and industry benchmarks (65.6 and 67.0, respectively).

## What are we getting right?

## What can we do better?



- Leaders are perceived to act as champions for their work teams and proactively promote good mental health policies and practices.

- Opportunity exists for leaders to better recognise/reward good work and provide constructive feedback.



- People are courteous and treat each other with respect, with many relationships considered to be built on togetherness and trust.

- A small proportion appear to feel less connected with/supported by their teams, especially beyond the day-to-day work context.



- There is access to mental health and wellbeing education, with opportunity to upskill the workforce in supporting each others' mental health and wellbeing needs.

- Although people perceived that their talents, skills and competencies were well used in the workplace, around 2 in 5 indicated they were less engaged at work.



- There is easy access to confidential counselling/support services, supported by a good mental health policy/strategy.

- Opportunity exists for better return to work policies and practices for those who have taken time off work due to mental health conditions; changes to policies and decisions also need to be communicated more transparently.



- Many respondents feel committed to their work team and feel good about working at PwC.

- Continue to uplift psychological safety particularly around discussing mental health and wellbeing issues, and enabling work related experiences to drive positive mental health and wellbeing (e.g. practicing good work/life/family integration).

# Snapshot of Survey Results

*Note: These values only represent a subset of the findings derived across these themes, but provide an overview of key outcomes*

## Psychological Safety at Work



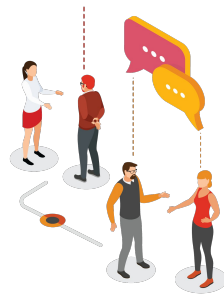
**70%**  
of respondents agree they are able to **bring up problems and tough issues**

**65%**  
of respondents **feel safe to take a risk** at work

## LGBTIQ+ Wellbeing at Work

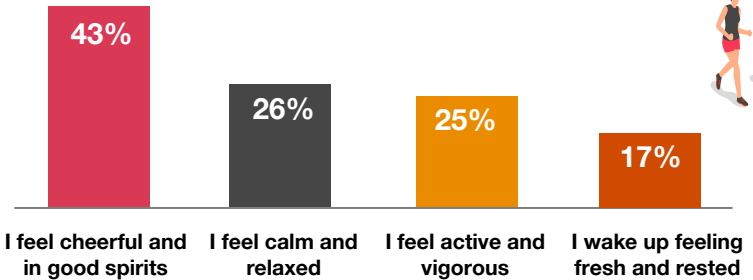
**77%** of respondents who identify as part of the LGBTIQ+ community **feel comfortable with openly identifying** as LGBTIQ+ at work

**79%** of respondents agree that LGBTIQ+ **inclusion in broader society** impacts on their level of **comfort to identify as LGBTIQ+ at work**



## Overall Wellbeing Outside of the Workplace

Percentage of respondents who agree with the below statements 'all of the time' or 'most of the time'.



## Wellbeing through COVID-19

**42%** of respondents feel distress over being able to perform my work well enough through COVID-19

**37%** of respondents feel distress over loneliness as a result of COVID-19

**40%** of respondents feel distress over the risk of myself or others I know contracting COVID-19



# Snapshot of Respondent Comments



**“Visible role models are so important.** I feel most comfortable when I can see others like me (especially in leadership) - or positive messaging (such as rainbow posters on the wall) **reassuring me that I will not be the token gay.**”

“It's hard **forming connections when you onboard and work online.** I never felt lonely until COVID.”

“Due to COVID and working from home, **the connections and visibility of seeing other LGBTIQ+ people 'thrive' and having fun in the office is reduced...** it leaves me **feeling disconnected and lonely...**It impacts my feelings of **comfort to be outwardly and visibly gay from a safety in numbers perspective.**”

**“Inclusive language** by others within the team increases my psychological safety, **especially by those outside the LGBTIQ+ community.** This also includes seeing the broader team attending LGBTIQ+ inclusive events... A significant part of my improved mental wellbeing at work over the time that I have been at PwC can be attributed to the **heightened sense of inclusion** I experience **due to the work of Shine\***, and the **firm's open support and celebration of LGBTIQ+ diversity.**”

“Much of time spent during covid has been **focused on more basic 'survival',** feels as though **my identity as a person has been put to the side.**”

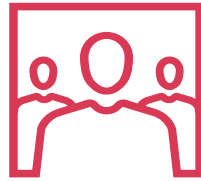
“If my **colleagues speak openly, casually and positively about LGBTIQ+ issues or people** I will be **more open about my sexuality.** I don't want to 'come out' and have it be an issue but also I don't want it to be a big deal / attention generating.”

“Knowing that my employer has **actively made a public stand to support LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the broader community** (e.g. marriage equality) I feel the support is genuine.”

“Having transitioned to being almost fully virtual with my team (due to many being interstate) it just feels that there is **less opportunity for people to be aware of Shine\*, and the firm's support of LGBTIQ+ inclusion.** I think the **immediate team environment now carries a greater degree of impact on feelings of active inclusion as a result.**”

“The view of and **support of the inclusion networks plays a big role in whether identifying as LGBTIQ+ is comfortable or not.** This includes **practice staff recognising publicly** the work that networks do, the role and impact they play in bringing awareness and education to the firm. And more importantly how this is **valued** particularly when it comes to competing demands, **by non-LGBTIQ+ identifying Partners and leaders.**”

# Key actions



## Connect with LGBTIQ+ leaders

### Broader Organisation Takeaways

Ensure leaders are easily accessible and equipped to support mental health and wellbeing concerns from within the LGBTIQ+ community

Consider more active, visible involvement concerning LGBTIQ+ inclusion and equality in society

### PwC Specific Actions

Draw the LGBTIQ+ and Ally Partner and Director community together - highlight opportunities to be more involved and visible

Work with leaders and the Diversity, Inclusion & Wellbeing team to further improve the recognition of contributions and volunteer activity made to LGBTIQ+ inclusion

Roll out organisation wide Mental Health Literacy training to equip with supporting mental health and wellbeing concerns

Provide greater visibility of Shine\* Council (e.g. LGBTIQ+ Council, LGBTIQ+ Support Network, LGBTIQ+ Employee Network)

# Key actions



## Uplift psychological safety

### *Broader Organisation Takeaways*

Continue to uplift the psychological safety across teams so people who identify with the LGBTIQ+ community are comfortable to raise their concerns and voice their opinions

Encourage and facilitate opportunities for ally leaders to show their support for the community, convey the importance of allyship and explain how others can become an effective ally

### *PwC Specific Actions*

Change to refer to the community from LGBTI to LGBTIQ+

Enhance the use of pronouns in email signatures, on internal profiles, and in meeting introductions

Continue to improve the visibility of the LGBTIQ+ community by engaging a broader audience (e.g. events, organisation wide messaging, more frequent communications, establishing a 'rainbow calendar')

Review organisation policies to ensure consideration of psychological safety in all settings, and ensuring escalation pathways are clear

# Key actions



## Support the LGBTIQ+ community through the pandemic

### *Broader Organisation Takeaways*

Support people who identify as LGBTIQ+ through the changing pandemic environment and enabling ongoing feedback to ensure that people's needs / concerns are being addressed

Consider the role of demographic factors (e.g. new starters, expatriate employees) who may require more support than others to build strong social connections in a virtual environment

### *PwC Specific Actions*

Roll out a digital, self-managed, evidence-based wellness tool which will enable our people to maintain and improve their mental fitness through tailored content

Host on-going organisation wide events to connect with the LGBTIQ+ community, create a sense of excitement and keep track of progress.



## Research Contacts:



Christopher Ladds  
[christopher.ladds@pwc.com](mailto:christopher.ladds@pwc.com)



Marty Jovic  
[marty.jovic@pwc.com](mailto:marty.jovic@pwc.com)



Cherie Mulyono  
[cherie.mulyono@pwc.com](mailto:cherie.mulyono@pwc.com)

© 2022 PricewaterhouseCoopers. All rights reserved. PwC refers to the Australia member firm, and may sometimes refer to the PwC network. Each member firm is a separate legal entity.

Please see [www.pwc.com/structure](http://www.pwc.com/structure) for further details.

This content is for general information purposes only, and should not be used as a substitute for consultation with professional advisors. Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

At PwC Australia our purpose is to build trust in society and solve important problems. We're a network of firms in 156 countries with more than 250,000 people who are committed to delivering quality in assurance, advisory and tax services. Find out more and tell us what matters to you by visiting us at [www.pwc.com.au](http://www.pwc.com.au).