

Being myself at UNE

Report of the Queer Allyship Steering Committee

2019 - 2023

une
University of
New England



**UNE Ally
Network**



Acknowledgement of Country

UNE campuses, students and staff around Australia are located on the unceded lands and waters of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This report was researched on Anaiwan country, who share caring responsibilities for the land with the Gumbayngirr, Dhunghutti, and Kamilaroi peoples.

The research team acknowledge that we are the beneficiaries of the ongoing caring for this country by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as their continued dispossession. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.





**You can either be
out and proud and
risk being hurt,**

or you can keep your head down, get on with your life and keep your business to yourself. I do not feel like I can be who I am at UNE. I wear the mask I always have and I just do my job. My sexuality has been discussed openly by staff in front of students just out of earshot of myself...

**In my mind, UNE
is not inclusive."**

Acknowledgments

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Christina Kenny, Pallotta-Chiarolli, Maria and Nolan, Huw, (2024) *Being myself at UNE: The report of the Queer Allyship Steering Committee 2019 – 2023*, University of New England, Australia.

We advise that readers from diverse backgrounds, particularly those of diverse sexuality and/or gender identity should exercise self-care when reading this report. It contains important information relevant to the reception of this research by some members of the UNE community, but also includes sentiments and statements that may be distressing.



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Terminology, Acronyms and Key concepts

The authors acknowledge that language evolves, and that it is never possible to capture and reflect the great diversity of experience in any society, and that the diversity of culture and identities outside the dominance of Western, English language cannot be captured here. We have tried to ensure the language we use is intentional and accessible, but also depathologising and rights-based. This report is our contribution to supporting marginalised members of the wider UNE community, and we continue to learn from UNE's diverse communities, and strive to build a more inclusive institution.

AFAB	Assigned/presumed female at birth
AMAB	Assigned/presumed male at birth
Blak	A term coined by Destiny Deacon, an Erub/Mer (Torres Strait) and K'ua K'ua (Cape York) artist. In 1994 the curator Hetti Perkins described the collaborative First Nations exhibition Blakness; Blak City Culture: "Destiny Deacon developed the term 'Blak' as part of a symbolic but potent strategy of reclaiming colonialist language to create means of self-definition and expression." ¹
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour. It is an acronym which has been used in recent years to "address the erasure of Black and Indigenous Peoples and centre their unique struggles while promoting solidarity." Like all attempts to collate the experiences of disparate and discrete groups of people, we acknowledge that BIPOC can "amalgamate distinct experiences of racism and colonialism and misses those that do not fit within one category, like individuals of mixed ancestry." ²
Cis	Short for cisgender, describes a person whose gender identity corresponds to their sex assigned at birth. The Latin prefixes cis and trans have a long history in the sciences, indicating 'on the same side as', and 'on the opposite side as'. Cis as a prefix is useful because it makes visible a more common gender identity without using words like 'normal' which position trans or gender diverse people as 'abnormal'. By being able to differentiate between trans and cis people, we can talk about the experiences we have that differ, and the many more experiences we have that are similar. ³
COO	Chief Operating Officer
DAC	The Diversity Advisory Committee of the University of New England. This committee has been reconstituted and is now the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee.
EY	The consulting firm (also known as Ernst and Young)
Int.	Used in this report to indicate an excerpt from a deidentified interview
Intersectionality	Intersectionality is a way of examining how different forms of oppression overlap and interact to create complex experiences of discrimination. This can be by understanding how one person's gender, race, ability, sexuality, age, class or immigration status makes their experience different to someone else's. Intersectionality goes further than acknowledging that these different forms of oppression exist, and examines how, together, they create particular patterns of discrimination in a person's life. ⁴

¹Munro, Kate. "Why 'Blak' Not Black?: Artist Destiny Deacon and the Origins of This Word." NITV, November 28, 2022. <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/why-blak-not-black-artist-destiny-deacon-and-the-origins-of-this-word/7gv3mykzv>.

²McGuire, Michaela M. "Why We Should Stop Using Acronyms like BIPOC." The Conversation, September 21, 2023. <http://theconversation.com/why-we-should-stop-using-acronyms-like-bipoc-211472>.

³ACON, 'What does Cis mean?', 2021, <https://www.transhub.org.au/101/cis>

⁴Amnesty International. "Explainer: Why Intersectionality Is Important for Women's Rights." Amnesty International Australia, December 1, 2021. <https://www.amnesty.org.au/explainer-why-intersectionality-is-important-for-womens-rights/>

Allyship is a constant practice. We will never get it right all the time, but we are all learning (and making mistakes!) together.

LGBTQIA+	<p>LGBTQIA+ (or variations of it) is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual. It is used to refer collectively to these communities, and all people with a diverse sexuality or diverse gender. The ‘LGB’ refers to sexuality/sexual identity; the ‘T’ refers to gender identity including trans and gender diversity; the ‘I’ to intersex, or differences in sex characteristics; the ‘Q’ can refer to gender or sexuality; and the ‘A’ for asexuality (which is an umbrella term to describe people who may have little interest in having sex, even though they desire emotionally intimate relationships. Within the ace community, there are many ways for people to identify). The ‘+’ represents the complexity and diversity of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression cannot be comprehensively contained in any acronym or definition.⁵</p> <p>Similar terms to refer to the overall population include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • person of diverse sexuality and/or gender • people of diverse sexualities and genders • DSG (diverse sexuality and gender) • DGSS (diverse genders, sexes, and sexualities)
Neurodiverse and Neurodivergent	<p>Note regarding terminology: the authors acknowledge that the term neurodivergent has emerged as a more appropriate as a descriptor for individuals whose neurotype is atypical or marginalised, for example, Autistic people. The term ‘neurodiverse’ has been retained in this report as it was the terminology used in the demographic component of the survey. The authors note these demographic questions were sourced from ACON in 2021, when the use of the term neurodiverse in place of neurodivergent was a more common practice.</p>
S	Used in this report to indicate an anonymous survey response
T	Participant feedback given during or following Allyship training sessions
Trans and Gender diverse	<p>Trans and Gender diverse describes people whose gender differs from what was presumed for them at birth (sometimes referred to as “assigned at birth”). Trans people may position ‘being trans’ as a history or experience, rather than an identity, and consider their gender identity as simply being female, male or a non-binary identity. Some trans people connect strongly with their trans experience, whereas others do not. Processes of gender affirmation may or may not be part of a trans or gender diverse person’s life.⁶</p>
UNE	The University of New England (Australia)

⁵ Due to their focus on sexual health and wellbeing, ACON uses the LGBTQ acronym in their work to reflect that the experiences of asexual and intersex people are distinct from those of LGBTQ people. In this Queer Allyship report, we use LGBTQIA+ and are deliberate in our inclusion of asexual and intersex people, and people of diverse sexualities and gender identities.

⁶ ACON, ‘Language’, Transhub 2021, <https://www.transhub.org.au/language#presumed-at-birth>

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of landmark research conducted at UNE into the experiences of our LGBTQIA+ staff and students. It also outlines the steps that were taken to establish the Queer Allyship program of research and advocacy at UNE.

As individuals we are members of multiple communities and hold many identities simultaneously. We may be parents, children, partners, teachers, students, sportspeople, dancers and artists – but we may also be neurodiverse, have a disability, from a low socio-economic background, single parents, migrants, people of colour, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people of faith (among so many other identities!). Allyship is a commitment to a lifelong process of learning, listening and self-reflection which helps us understand and support people who do not share the same privileges as we might. Being an ally is required of all of us, and recognises that we all experience some privilege, but also experience set-backs and disadvantage. But it is important to remember that people holding multiple marginalised identities experience much greater disadvantage than people who hold fewer marginalised identities.

It is also important to remember that Allyship is needed from people outside marginalised communities, as well as *from within and across* marginalised communities. For example, while people who are heterosexual seek to be allies to LGBTQIA+ folk, allyship is also needed within the complexity and diversity of the LGBTQIA+ rainbow – for instance, people of colour within queer communities can often experience discrimination and exclusion. Allyship can also mean different groups coming together to work toward common goals, where for example, “lesbians, gay men and transgender people joined with Black Panthers and civil rights activists in New York City to protest against police brutality.”⁷

Allyship is a constant practice. We will never get it right all the time, but we are all learning (and making mistakes!) together.

“As allies, we advocate within our community, challenging ignorance and mobilising more allies. As allies, we understand we are there in a support role. We turn up when needed and know when to step back — never taking the spotlight, respecting boundaries, and supporting the community to be empowered in their need to act.”⁸

Unlike many universities across Australia, in 2019 UNE had no services in place to support LGBTQIA+ students and staff. While there had previously been a network for students this had become defunct in 2014, as had the Ally Network around the same time. To remedy this significant gap, in early 2019 the office of the Vice Chancellor put out a call for membership of a Queer Allyship Steering Committee, which was established later that year. The goal of the Committee

⁷ Cumming-Potvin, Wendy Marie. “What Is Allyship? A Brief History, Present and Future,” May 16, 2024. <https://theconversation.com/what-is-allyship-a-brief-history-present-and-future-220668>.

⁸ “Allyship Resources - Amnesty International Australia.” Accessed July 31, 2024. <https://www.amnesty.org.au/allyship-resources/#section1>.

was to create a policy framework for the University to finally understand and support the needs of LGBTQIA+ students and staff. Since the establishment of the Steering Committee, work has been underway to redress the lack of support for LGBTQIA+ staff and students, including the dissemination of a survey to all staff and students, as well as re-establishing the UNE Ally Network.

The survey and research component was delayed by a combination of factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic, and a disruptive program of restructuring and redundancies that took place in 2020 – 2021. These systemic factors, as well as significant illness experienced by members of this research team, have delayed the publication of the research findings in this report.

Although the report has been delayed, in the interim, we have been able to use preliminary findings from the survey and interviews to contribute to policy reform and cultural change across UNE's campuses and online spaces since the completion of the survey in late 2021. These contributions include the establishment of the Ally Network and the Queer Space (in Dixon Library), the change to the email policy to include optional pronouns, and funding for visibility and events which promote LGBTQIA+ inclusion.

We continue to be humbled by the significant efforts of UNE staff and students in participating in Allyship training, the survey and in-depth interviews; as well as the progress in policy reform since the inception of the Steering Committee and are proud to share the culmination of this work.

Our findings and recommendations are foundational in building a more safe and inclusive campus for staff, students and visitors, including supporting safer and vibrant online communities and spaces.



The background features a series of overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in shades of green and purple. The shapes are curved and layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The colors transition from a deep purple on the left to a vibrant green on the right, with various shades of teal and cyan in between.

Understanding and Supporting UNE's LGBTQIA+ Communities

The Queer Allyship Steering Committee undertook three key projects:

1. Comprehensive research

We conducted comprehensive research into the experiences of LGBTQIA+ staff and students, as well as the attitudes within the broader UNE community towards the LGBTQIA+ people. This research was the first survey to collect demographic data regarding UNE's LGBTQIA+ communities, and the first invite to the UNE community as a whole to share with UNE their intersectional experiences around gender and sexuality.

The Research consisted of:

- a. **Survey of the UNE community** (staff, students and alumni) which received 1,300 responses (Appendix 1)
- b. **Focus group discussions** (50 participants)
- c. **In-depth research interviews** (13 participants)

2. The establishment of the UNE Ally Network, which included:

- a. The provision of **Allyship training for 106 staff and 51 students** (initially funded by UNE Life, and later through a UNE Diversity Advisory Committee grant) that was tailored to UNE based on preliminary research findings. This training included a range of areas from initial awareness and Allyship 101 training, to 'train the trainer' events which took place in 2022 to build capacity for UNE to continue offering this training each year in-house. The training was provided by Ananda Training and Consultancy, Budi Sudarto and Dr Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, and was offered each year 2019 – 2022.
- b. The **establishment of the Ally Network in 2022**, consisting of staff and students who had completed the allyship training program. The Ally Network has secured modest event and program support funding through the Diversity Advisory Committee for 2024, but funding is not yet guaranteed in future years.

3. Establishing membership for UNE of ACON's Pride in Diversity (PiD) workplace program

PiD is the national not-for-profit employer support program for LGBTQ workplace inclusion specialising in HR, organisational change and workplace diversity. Pride in Diversity publishes the Australian Workplace

Equality Index (AWEI), Australia's national benchmarking instrument for LGBTQ workplace inclusion from which Top Employers for LGBTQ⁹ people is determined. UNE is participating in the AWEI survey in 2023-24.

⁹ Due to their focus on sexual health and wellbeing, ACON uses the LGBTQ acronym in their work to reflect that the experiences of asexual and intersex people are distinct from those of LGBTQ people. In this Queer Allyship report, we use LGBTQIA+ and are deliberate in our inclusion of asexual and intersex people, and people of diverse sexualities and gender identities.

Key Findings

The results of this research demonstrate that many LGBTQIA+ staff and students do not feel safe to be themselves at UNE. Intolerant attitudes and behaviours continue to shape the learning and working environment at UNE and there are **significant unmet needs for support, acceptance and tailored services for these communities.**

Importantly, there is also a great deal of support for positive change at UNE to improve our policies, reporting protocols, and to consciously promote allyship with, and within these diverse communities.

1. Many students and staff do not feel safe to be themselves

Students and staff reported experiencing direct and indirect discrimination at UNE, including bullying and harassment. Between 30 – 40% of LGBTQIA+ respondents to the survey felt that disclosing their identity would have a negative impact on their studies or career at UNE, and 30% of these respondents stated that they were not out at UNE. More than 50% felt that they would not be accepted by colleagues, classmates and peers as a result of their LGBTQIA+ identity.

Furthermore, students and staff were unsure how to address issues of intolerance, discrimination, harassment and bullying as they arose. Just less than half (48%) of respondents believed that there was a confidential avenue to report harassment based on their LGBTQIA+ identity. More than half (53%) of respondents stated that they did not know where to seek support and report discrimination.

2. Lack of Visibility Communicates Lack of Acceptance

Until recently, UNE has not actively communicated acceptance towards LGBTQIA+ students and staff. This research shows that in a context where other universities, corporations and institutions have taken significant steps to communicate acceptance of LGBTQIA+ people, UNE's *lack of visible acceptance* is understood as an *absence* of acceptance. This is reinforced by negative experiences in learning spaces or workplaces, and unclear and unsatisfying avenues for reporting and support.

Less than 40% of respondents felt that LGBTQIA+ inclusion was clearly communicated during recruitment and enrolment. Only 21% of respondents who selected a sexuality option other than heterosexual felt that there were visible allies at UNE. Less than 30% of all respondents felt that LGBTQIA+ identities and experiences were included in their curricula. This shows that UNE has important work to do in communicating acceptance of LGBTQIA+ people.

Significantly, our survey results demonstrate that when asked, students and staff are willing to anonymously disclose their LGBTQIA+ identity as well as other important demographic information including ethnicity, religious background and beliefs. This indicates that previous UNE surveys that are overly cautious in either requesting this information, or not published it are doing a disservice to the community as this nuanced information is important in driving cultural and policy change.

Building on these findings, UNE is re-commencing annual Engagement Surveys, beginning with the 2024 benchmarking survey which covers respect, support, wellbeing, leadership, training and opportunities. These surveys will also include optional demographic questions which are informed by best practice. This will be complemented by smaller 'pulse' surveys, including one on equity and diversity.



3. Transgender and Gender Diverse Students Most Vulnerable

The research found that transgender and gender diverse students experienced the most exposure to discrimination, and are most vulnerable to mistreatment and marginalisation.

In the survey, free-text survey responses were used by some participants to make transphobic comments. Some UNE community members completed the survey in order to express their views that “there are two genders, all others are mental illnesses”, or similar. The lead researchers

also received emails protesting the utility of the survey on transphobic and homophobic grounds.

Transgender and gender diverse students reported harmful experiences, including being deliberately misgendered and being the target of unwanted jokes and negative commentary. Some students also expressed difficulty with finding appropriate gender-neutral bathroom facilities, which can be an important safety issue for some transgender and gender diverse people.

4. Opportunities for a more inclusive UNE

While UNE has been slow to join Pride in Diversity, and the research shows that there has not been enough support for LGBTQIA+ people at UNE

Significant work, based on preliminary findings from this research and feedback from participants in the Ananda training program, has already been undertaken to establish an inclusive and intersectional Ally Network in 2022, and a Queer Space in the Dixson Library in 2023.

“we have a unique and important opportunity to build this support and embed inclusivity within UNE’s culture.”

Allyship involves creating learning and professional environments where all staff and students not only feel safe to be themselves – but also feel like these spaces were created with them in mind.

Creating learning and professional environments that build inclusion means:

1. Building online and in-person spaces that are safe and welcoming

Creating visibility communicates acceptance and a welcoming environment for LGBTQIA+ students and staff. The recent establishment of a Queer space on campus is an example of communicating acceptance and safety through visibility. Creating safe and welcoming spaces also includes creating UNE policies and procedures that consider the needs of LGBTQIA+ people, particularly transgender students and staff.

In 2024, UNE revised the organisation's Equity and Diversity Rule and created affiliated procedures and guidelines. The University also revised the Terms of Reference of the Diversity Advisory Committee and commenced a thorough review of UNE's recruitment policies and practices.

2. Appropriate resourcing of UNE staff to develop LGBTQIA+ inclusion activities

Inclusion is important work and requires drawing on the expertise and lived experience of appropriately trained individuals. The work that has been conducted so far to establish the Ally Network has largely been dependent on the goodwill and support that exists among UNE staff and students who volunteer their time and expertise, and a limited budget. In 2023, the Ally

Network secured a small amount of funding through the Diversity Advisory Committee to promote activities, merchandise and to support UNE's participation in regional events including Tamworth Pride and the Winter Blooming Festival.¹⁰ This funding was also available in 2024 but future, recurrent funding is not yet secured.

¹⁰ Winter Blooming is a regional festival held in Armidale that showcases the region's diverse communities, including Queer community, First Nations community and multicultural communities. See, for example <https://www.neram.com.au/event/winter-blooming-festival-24/>



3. Designing course and unit content that is inclusive and recognises the diversity of the human experience, including LGBTQIA+ identities

Human experience has always included the diversity that we now recognise under the banner of intersectional LGBTQIA+ experiences. Educators have a crucial role to play in recognising LGBTQIA+

experiences as part of the spectrum of human diversity. This will be an incremental and nuanced project working with staff across the institution, to build discipline specific content which supports inclusion.

4. Challenging ourselves as shapers of UNE culture to be accomplices and allies in struggles for equality at UNE, and the wider community

Universities have an historic and ongoing mission as drivers of progressive change and social inclusion. Our institutions bring together people of all walks of life and experiencing this diversity is an important part of the value of university education. UNE has a unique and important opportunity to drive social inclusion through our cultural leadership in our region.

There are significant costs associated with failing to meet the needs of LGBTQIA+ staff and students. Discrimination, bullying and harassment are important student retention issues in the context of the classroom, and are workplace health and safety issues in our professional environments. Students from our region and beyond may choose to enrol at more inclusive institutions with better support for LGBTQIA+ people. With the existing rates of non-disclosure of identity and fears regarding LGBTQIA+ identity negatively affecting careers at UNE, it is also likely UNE is experiencing staff recruitment and retention issues.

There is a great deal of good will and support for this work, across all levels of the University –

61% of survey respondents expressed that they would participate in LGBTQIA+ allyship activities. It is encouraging that the visibility of LGBTQIA+ allies, including through the UNE Ally Network and Queer Space, has increased substantially in 2024 from 21% to 54% (2023-24 AWEI Survey Results). The progress that has been made since the establishment of the Queer Allyship Steering committee in 2019, and the significant contributions of so many staff and students to these efforts, shows that it is possible to make significant inroads over a short period of time.

While there is more to be done, the goodwill and commitment of the UNE community provides hope that a more inclusive university is within reach.

Recommendations

Policies, Procedures and Facilities

1. Establish a protocol which assesses any policy or other university instrument as they are reviewed or developed which sits under the Diversity Rule. This protocol should ensure the development and renewal of intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusion policies including in student enrolment, People and Culture, trusted and reliable grievance and reporting procedures, student services and support, and medical facilities.
2. Develop procedures to accommodate gender affirmation, as well as name changes in staff and student records.
3. UNE's demographic data collection processes need to be reviewed in regard to intersectional LGBTQIA+ staff and students, noting there is no mechanism to collect voluntary information on gender identity and/or sexuality.
4. Update the language in policies to reflect respectful and inclusive terminology for people of diverse sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression. The development of an inclusive language guide is currently underway:
une.edu.au/staff-current/people-and-culture/about-us/equity/inclusive-language-guides
5. Provide clear, streamlined and accessible complaints information and procedures, for straightforward and confidential reporting processes. The University has commenced a thorough revision of staff and student complaints mechanisms following the 2023 UNE Safety Culture and Wellbeing Review.
6. Security staff to be given training as first responders to likely incidents. Security staff should be familiar with referral pathways, and be given training as first responders to incidents. UNE should have a signed agreement with contractors regarding expected behaviours and accountability.
7. Continue to develop more effective strategies to enhance visibility across social media and other forms of messaging, events, building inclusive services and facilities that foster trust and accessibility.
8. An established and active Ally Network to initiative LGBTQIA+ inclusive and intersectional practices, run events, participate in policy reviews and advocate for LGBTQIA+ inclusive services and facilities, led by allies, and LGBTQIA+ staff and students.
9. The Ally Network to:
 - a. develop its own set of guidelines/code of conduct, and
 - b. have its own Teams, and
 - c. Facebook page [these three items have been achieved in 2023-24]
10. Inclusion of LGBTQIA+ awareness training in induction programs for staff, students and external contractors.
11. LGBTQIA+ Awareness and/or Allyship training to be mandatory for all staff and students, including Executive, upon joining UNE (as part of staff induction and student orientation, in particular, students holding leadership positions), with a refresher course to be completed every three years.

Terms of Reference have subsequently been developed here: Ally Network Terms of Reference - University of New England (UNE). The Ally Network should be a member of, and report to the Diversity Advisory Committee. The importance of this work needs to be recognised through time allocation for participating staff, particularly recognising the contribution of professional staff who are not allocated a 'service' component to their workload, as well as adequate resourcing of meetings, and committee projects.



Curriculum and Pedagogy

12. Induction programmes for both staff and students regarding intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusive course content as is discipline appropriate, behaviours on campus and online classes.
13. Curriculum inclusion working groups within each School and Faculty to audit course content and build programs to ensure course materials are inclusive where necessary.
14. Online classes to begin with statements for students to e-sign regarding awareness of respectful conduct.

Safety and wellbeing

15. Clear and well-disseminated information regarding LGBTQIA+ inclusion policies.
16. All UNE and UNELife student services, including the UNE Medical Centre, to create visible and accessible messaging to foster trust and respect, thereby reducing vicarious trauma.
17. LGBTQIA+ leadership and visibility in mental health and wellbeing strategies and engagement.
18. Update the sexual health information services and information provision at campus medical services to ensure they are intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusive.
19. Seek to promote intersectional LGBTQIA+ staff role models and mentors for students and student peer groups. LGBTQIA+ students need staff role models and mentors who share personal stories and build relationships.
20. Establishing accessible and victim centered complaints reporting and support processes for staff and students including deidentified reporting to Executive and the university community to ensure transparency and accountability.

Residential Colleges

21. Induction programmes for residential leaders in relation to intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusion and allyship.
22. Develop visibility strategies and community events to foster intersectional LGBTQIA+ college inclusion.
23. Establish an intersectional LGBTQIA+ committee for student residences to contribute to strategies which promote inclusion and safety.
24. Establishing accessible, transparent and victim centered complaints reporting and support processes for staff and students.
25. Update the sexual health information services and information provision at the colleges to ensure they are intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusive.

UNE in the wider community

26. UNE Ally Network to engage with feeder schools to undertake collaborations and preparations for intersectional university life.
 27. UNE to lead and collaborate in intersectional LGBTQIA+ community engagements, events, councils and schools in Armidale and other regional areas.
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Being myself at UNE

**Social Research Project
2019-2023**

In-depth Results

1. Introduction

We don't want people trained to handle us, we don't want to be studied and analysed, we don't want to be made to be different. We just want to live our lives – (Survey)

This report presents original qualitative research and training programs undertaken within the UNE community by the Queer Allyship Project, a subcommittee of the Queer Allyship Steering Committee. This includes a survey of 1,300 members of the UNE community including staff, students, alumni. The results of this survey show that at a time when other Australian universities are heavily investing in Queer allyship and support for students and staff who are LGBTQIA+ this has not been the case at UNE. Many students and staff who are LGBTQIA+ do not feel safe at UNE.

We advise that readers from diverse backgrounds, particularly those of diverse sexuality and/or gender identity should exercise self-care when reading this report. It contains important information relevant to the reception of this research by some members of the UNE community, but also includes sentiments and statements that may be distressing.

1.1 Project Scope and Objectives

The Queer Allyship Project (Research and Training) was initiated to rebuild community, structural and systemic support across UNE's online and on campus locations for LGBTQIA+ staff, students and affiliates, and to train staff and students across all our campuses and online environments to create policies, resources and spaces of safety and wellbeing which reflect and support the diversity of the UNE community. This Project and this Report are not about problematising or interrogating LGBTQIA+ identities and lives, but rather understanding that the institutional culture of UNE has a great deal of influence on the experiences of its community members. Where the institutional environment is not receptive to the diversity of UNE's communities, a culture of ignorance, underfunding and dismissal erases and stigmatises LGBTQIA+ staff and student identities and lives.

As the Recommendations in this Report recognise, this work is ongoing and focuses on supporting not only a person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity, but also the other multiple identities which we all carry with us – including, but not limited to, our cultural, ethnic and religious identities and histories, and our experiences of disability, mental illness and neurodivergence. Intersectionality is a concept developed by Professor Kimberle Crenshaw (1989) that is designed to better express the experiences and politics of Black feminist movement in the United States. This concept is based on Crenshaw's observation that black women are marginalised on the basis of their race *and* their gender, and that therefore the character of their experiences of

marginalisation are different from those of people who experience marginalisation only on the basis of *either* their gender or their race.

Intersectionality has been adopted as a broad framework for understanding that marginalisation is often the result of complex, overlapping and interconnected marginalities in a society that privileges White, Anglo, cisgender, heterosexual, middle class, non-disabled, and educated among many other privileged characteristics. As an analytical framework, intersectionality can be used to make visible, and better understand the experiences of marginalisation faced by people who carry intersecting marginalised identities and experiences. Intersectionality helps to critique the systemic and socio-cultural institutions, cultural power, and privilege that have been used to maintain the current hierarchies of power and status that exist both outside of and within marginalised groups (Collins 2019; Tang et al 2020). For the purposes of this Report, we use the term 'intersectional LGBTQIA+' to encapsulate this multiplicity of identity and multiple-minority marginalisation.

A significant majority of student responses identified as belonging to intersectional LGBTQIA+ communities. In particular, the analysis of the statistical and qualitative data gathered from the significant proportion of students identifying as non-binary, gender diverse and/or transgender is critical to current efforts to protect this cohort from the disproportionate rates of violence, harassment and abuse reported in the Queer Allyship Survey.

1.2 UNE Ally Network history and background

Following the collapse of the previous iteration of the UNE Ally Network some time in 2014, efforts were made to reinvigorate the group, with the in-principal support of then Vice Chancellor and CEO Anabelle Duncan, and then Chief Operating Officer (COO) Peter Creamer who also agreed to be the executive champion of the Queer Allyship Steering Committee. A call for members to form a Queer Allyship Steering Committee was sent out early in 2019. The call received over 100 applications from staff and students interested in joining the committee. After selecting a committee of 11 members based on representation across the university (under and post graduate students, professional and academic staff from each Faculty, on and off campus students and staff, as well as a range of people who variously identified under the LGBTQAI+ umbrella), the committee met for the first time in May 2019.

Led by elected co-chairs Ben Bible (UNE Life) and Dr Christina Kenny (Sociology, HASSE), the committee designed and costed a comprehensive, multi-year program of training, research and advocacy which included:

- i. annual Allyship 101 training for staff and students,
- ii. a university-wide survey to explore the experiences of on campus and online staff, students and alumni of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression and/or sex characteristics (SOGIE/SC) at UNE; and
- iii. supporting the development of a UNE Ally Network for staff which would eventually auspice a student led LGBTQIA+ group.

The most significant issue initially faced by the steering committee was a complete lack of funding or administrative support from UNE. The work of the committee was carried out solely on a voluntary basis by members. As a result of this lack of institutional support, many members of this first committee fell away over the next 6-12 months.

Mr Bible and Dr Kenny subsequently joined the UNE Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) (now the UNE Diversity Committee) in September 2019. This membership was crucial as the Queer Allyship Steering Committee had no access to funding other than through direct requests to the COO. This pathway was proving to be ineffective. A subcommittee of Rachael Kleindienst (Student Life Coordinator, Student Experience), Christina Kenny, Mirela Suci (then Manager, Wellness

Centre) and Ben Bible (General Manager, UNE Life) put together a funding proposal and presented it to the Diversity Advisory Committee [Proposal attached at Appendix 2 for \$91,000.] This proposal was unanimously voted through by the DAC in November 2020, with the funding proposal increased by Peter Creamer (COO) at that meeting to \$100,000. This proposal was the only successful proposal to be approved and funded by the DAC in the period of the COO's tenure as Chair for this committee, 2019 – 2022.

Since this funding award, the Ally steering committee has set up the Ally Network which was inaugurated in June 2022 and now hosts 75 members (55 staff and 20 students). Since its inception, the Network has:

- i. run three sets of training and capacity building programs at UNE in a hybrid mode, and over 100 staff and students trained across the university.
- ii. achieved the university level policy change to include pronouns in the email signature
- iii. set up a facebook group facebook.com/groups/une.ally.network/
- iv. a UNE Ally Network Email: allynetwork@une.edu.au and an
- v. UNE Ally Network webpage which lists members who have completed allyship training and who are also willing to be public facing and contactable representatives of the Network une.edu.au/ally-network
- vi. liaised with Governance on the updating and redrafting of the Parent Policy and the Diversity Rule
- vii. hosted a cupcake and coffee event for Pride Month (June 2023, and June 2024); and visibility events for Orientation Week for Trimester 2, 2023, and Orientation Week Trimester 1 2024
- viii. establishing a Queer Space in Dixson Library, coordinating a team across Library, Student Experience, EBE and UNE Life
- ix. supporting the promotion of the Winter Blooming Festival hosted by NERAM and co-produced by NERAM and Dr Christina Kenny (Sociology, HASSE). The festival promotes intersectional community representation hosting performers, artists and activists from First Nations, LGBTQIA+, and multicultural communities across the New England and from around Australia.

1.3 UNE’s Queer Allyship research in a wider context

This Report includes extensive analysis of the student, staff and alumni responses (a significant majority of student responses identified as belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community (61.6%)). The analysis blends qualitative and quantitative information that will support deeper engagement across the university and contribute to internal and public reports as well as to peer-reviewed publications, future training, policy and pedagogical design. In particular, the analysis of the statistical and qualitative data gathered from the significant proportion of students identifying as non-binary, gender diverse and/or transgender is critical to current efforts to protect this cohort from the disproportionate rates of violence, harassment and abuse reported in this Queer Allyship Survey.

Significantly, this report contributes to, and corroborates, larger national data sets and research exploring the experiences and needs of LGBTQIA+ communities living in Australia, as well as recommendations and implementation strategies regarding the health and wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ students and staff in higher education. This includes the *2021 National Student Safety Survey* from Universities Australia and *Private Lives 3* (Hill et al, 2020), Australia’s largest national survey of the health and wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ people to date.

1.3.1 The Australian Human Rights Commission Review into UNE Colleges

This Queer Allyship Report also compliments and provides further insights into the data collected at UNE in 2018 when the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) was engaged by UNE to undertake an independent, expert led review of the seven residential colleges. The *Independent review of residential colleges at the University of New England* led to a comprehensive understanding of:

1. the culture at the colleges, specifically in relation to attitudes towards women, sexual assault and sexual harassment
2. the factors contributing to the risk of sexual assault and sexual harassment, and
3. barriers to reporting sexual assault and sexual harassment.

Approximately one-third of residents who responded to the AHRC survey disclosed they had experienced sexual harassment. This rate was 2.5 times higher for female residents than male residents. Four percent of all residents who responded to the survey reported experiencing actual or attempted sexual assault or rape since first residing at their current college. The majority of reported sexual assault and sexual harassment took place within college grounds, and the majority of perpetrators were male residents, known to the victim.

The AHRC was told about hierarchical systems, incidents of social isolation, and coercion to participate in ‘hazing’ rituals. These factors affected decisions concerning the reporting of sexual assault and sexual harassment.

Twenty-eight (28) Recommendations were made including a clear governance structure to support the implementation of recommendations, and to drive cultural change within the UNE residential system.

Other recommendations were made to:

- a. improve the organisational structure and resourcing of the UNE Residential System’s student support services
- b. ensure college staff are equipped to prevent and respond to experiences of sexual assault and sexual harassment
- c. address the existence of harmful attitudes to sexual assault and sexual harassment
- d. improve gender equality within the UNE colleges
- e. improve and streamline the policy response to sexual assault and sexual harassment
- f. improve levels of accountability for Heads of Colleges
- g. address identified barriers to reporting
- h. support student leaders to effectively and appropriately respond to disclosures of sexual assault and sexual harassment, and drive a college culture that does not condone sexual assault and sexual harassment
- i. improve the safety and comfort of students
- j. ensure UNE has structures in place to support the monitoring and evaluation of progress.

Although this report was an important step in uncovering the abuses that the UNE college system has continued to condone, there was only one mention of the experiences of people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression. This sole mention was made only in relation to one college and by one student who said the college was “a welcoming environment for LGBTI students, with the College community demonstrating a strong willingness to celebrate gender diversity” (2018: 42). This erasure of all identities and experiences outside the cisgender, heterosexual norm is complicit in the very harassment and discrimination the Report was endeavouring to uncover and address. We submit this report to ensure that the voices of LGBTQIA+ staff and students are heard.

1.3.2 EY Safety Culture and Wellbeing Assessment Report

In the first half of 2023, Ernst and Young was engaged to conduct an assessment of the UNE workforce entitled *Safety Culture and Wellbeing Assessment Report*. A desktop assessment of relevant policies, processes and procedures, anonymous survey and submission responses, semi-structured interviews and focus groups found:

- a. many staff local to the Armidale campus valued their strong ties to the community,
- b. many participants in stable employment valued the flexibility and employment benefits,
- c. many participants valued “the supportive, dedicated, diverse and committed colleagues they interact with at UNE and the positive impact that University has on students and the broader community” (2023: 4).

The need for improvements were identified in:

- a. Leadership and leading capability
- b. Roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and ownership
- c. Governance
- d. Organisational justice
- e. Siloes and disjointed communication
- f. Systems and processes: integration with people
- g. Organisational discipline

Our findings corroborate the above identified areas requiring improvement, as will be discussed later in this Report.

Five recommendations for structural and systemic activation were put forward in the *Safety Culture and Wellbeing Assessment Report*:

1. Develop and connect UNE’s people to a galvanising and enduring purpose and strategy into which trust, respect and psychological safety are interwoven
2. Build safety and leadership capability across all levels of the organisation
3. Create a movement for change
4. Develop internal supports and conduct further internal reviews into the systems and ways of working at UNE to increase health and safety at work
5. Develop and maintain person-centred work design and practices.

While identifying crucial organisational factors requiring urgent attention, the EY Report deliberately did not provide demographic data about the 530 survey respondents, 11 interviewees and participants in 10 focus groups, apart from identifying that they are in the UNE workforce. This decision was taken to guarantee the anonymity of participants. While an important consideration, this choice means that we do not know the gender of participants, how many research participants were LGBTQIA+, nor their cultures, faiths, physical and invisible disabilities and/or neurodiversity. Data on the location of participants (on campus, working remotely) was also absent.

The decision not to collect demographic data in order not to make staff identifiable and protect anonymity raises the very issues of safety and trust the *Safety Culture and Wellbeing Assessment Report* was intended to ascertain and address. While we appreciate the safety of research participants is always paramount, this deliberate lack of reported data specificity significantly hampers efforts to design and implement solutions to support particular marginalized groups. In contrast, our findings explicitly address the above identified areas requiring improvement and provide necessary demographic data on intersectional LGBTQIA+ identities to determine which groups in the workforce require tailored strategies to improve their safety and wellbeing.

We also found that although the demographic questions (as all questions in our survey) were voluntary, participants were comfortable sharing detailed anonymised demographic data with us. This may demonstrate an over-caution in refusing to collect demography as a safety issue on the part of EY and

UNE management (emphasising the voluntary provision of personal data, and the opportunity to complete the survey while providing very little, or no personal information. In this Report, we explore issues of cultural safety, trust in management and complaints procedures, with recommendations strengthened by understanding the specificity of affected groups within the UNE community.

The above examples of existing research which refer to variously, the experiences of the Australian LGBTQIA+ community, the Australian university sector, and specific to UNE demonstrate the need for this UNE Queer Allyship Research and Report to consider degrees of corroboration and differentiation in relation to UNE intersectional LGBTQIA+ staff and students. We are committed to continuing to build a UNE community that is diverse, engaged and supported to teach, learn, and research. This Allyship Report is the beginning of

the work that UNE has undertaken to better understand how to resource intersectional LGBTQIA+ communities' projects and provides recommendations for ongoing improvements.

This project also contributes to large gaps in current Australian and international literature - which typically focuses on urban LGBTQIA+ communities - by offering the experiences of LGBTQIA+ students and staff in regional setting and with an intersectional focus. UNE has the opportunity to become a world leader in understanding and supporting LGBTQIA+ students and staff living and working in regional and rural settings, as well as the communities of online and distance education students. Building this program of inclusion from an intersectional foundation will position UNE as an institutional and cultural benchmark for other universities to follow.

1.4 Ally Network Training

As outlined in the Introduction, the Ally Network Training program was designed to equip UNE staff and students, including College Residence Leaders, with knowledge of LGBTQIA+ terminology, intersectionality, power and privilege, LGBTQIA+ inclusive practice, and allyship within and between communities. Topics in the training were also UNE-specific, including:

1. Unpacking the experiences of LGBTQIA+ staff and students at UNE,
2. Identifying needs and strategies for improvement at UNE in three main areas:
 - a. policies and procedures,
 - b. culture and environment, and
 - c. workforce development.

The training program was delivered over several sessions in hybrid mode each year 2019 – 2022 inclusive. The last iteration, run in 2022 required participants who wished to be a part of the upcoming UNE Ally Network to attend the first three sessions to ensure they had the knowledge to be a safe and effective ally.

The 2022 session breakdown was as follows:

Session 1: LGBTQIA+ Awareness and Intersectionality - March and April

Session 2: Power, Privilege, and Inclusive Practice - April

Session 3: Allyship - May

Session 4: Train the Trainer - October to provide an opportunity for UNE staff and students to be an in-house trainer who can deliver LGBTQIA+ Awareness Training at UNE.

Over 100 staff and students were trained across the university. Many staff and students who completed the training have subsequently joined the Ally Network. It is important to note here that while the Train the Trainer sessions trained 6 staff and student leaders, and were evaluated very highly by these participants, the participants did not have the capacity to develop and deliver training programs as part of their roles which were not training roles.

At the end of each session, participants were provided with anonymous online evaluation surveys. Quotations used in this Report from trainees will be identified with a (T). The results were outstandingly favourable with the following reasons provided:

1. The lived experience, expertise and relatability of the main facilitator, Budi Sudarto

opportunity to speak with and be led by someone who actively and deeply understands the struggles and obstacles of establishing an inclusive network in a new place meant that there was no blanket assurances or platitudes, it was acknowledged that establishing such a network takes work and commitment (T)

Budi clearly had first-hand experience in this and was very articulate and open about their experience which helped me think outside my white person view (T)

2. The demonstration of leadership and collaboration by an LGBTQIA+ lead facilitator with an ally facilitator

good to see the flow between the presenters (T)

Thanks so much for all your energy, trust and vulnerability through this process. Our trainers were deeply insightful, welcoming, but also not afraid to talk about difficult or challenging topics (T)

I thought both facilitators worked really well together and had great respect for one another which was engaging (T)

3. The dual or hybrid mode was appreciated by off-campus students particularly during times of Covid restrictions

in a dual mode worked really well, as it meant that an inability to appear physically wasn't a constraint or deterrent (T)

4. The content, resources and flexible interactive approaches

The focus on case studies and then workshopping practical solutions, I feel I have a much clearer idea of what I can do within my sphere (T)

I had heard of the term intersectionality but did not know what it meant. It demonstrated the complexity of culture and the LGBTQIA+ community (T)

The whole was very good, mixed modes in information, personal stories, the ability to discuss with your peers what we've just seen, and the personalities of the presenters (T)

I liked the workbook resource- there are some new definitions in here that I was not familiar with (T)

5. The safety of the spaces, empowered with knowledge and strategies, and feeling connected with co-participants

it helped me to meet other people across UNE with similar goals (T)

Facilitators encouraged self-reflection and provided a safe space for thoughtful discussion (T)

Prior to the training, I was often afraid of 'getting it wrong' despite being a supporter of diversity, and felt that I may not have been 'qualified' to advocate. Now I feel that advocating doesn't mean having to know it all, just be there, be supportive, challenge discriminatory behaviour, and support others who do (T)

Participants also pointed out the immediate effectiveness of the training on their work and that of their peers and colleagues, as exemplified by the following interviewee:

There was a student who identified with a they-them pronoun, and I was just trying to make sure that my colleagues knew that was the case so they didn't misgender this person, and the response was, "Oh, is there more than one of them?" like it was funny. I was like, "That's not acceptable." That same person, later on, went to your training. When we started talking about the importance of pronouns, I noticed immediately on their Zoom, they changed it to he/him. Then, I dropped into his office and I had a chat to him. I was like, "What's that little Post-it note?" He had put the LGBTQIA+ as an acronym on his computer so he could remember what they all meant (Int 9)

Only one person did not like the training at all, based on feeling that the training was intolerant of faith and other groups at UNE:

The training is a waste of time, money and energy. ... While making LGBTQIA+ feel more comfortable the solution is not to make other people feel unwell. The training made it clear that people of certain religious beliefs are not welcome at UNE. I suspect that promoting intolerance to overcome intolerance is not a recipe for success. UNE needs to find solutions but it is difficult for me to see myself involved in this process or recommend that others become involved in the current form (T)

It is vital to recognise the importance of faith-based value systems in any inclusivity program, and also to recognise that communities of faith also host people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. This complexity is one of the reasons we contracted Budi Sudarto as a non-binary, Asian and practicing Muslim trainer and facilitator.

The training was guided by the human rights principles that are indivisible and interdependent. This means that the rights of people to hold their faith must not impinge on the rights on LGBTQIA+ to be safe and free from discrimination. The allyship training was designed to encourage such conversation.

The training sessions also became places of action research, including:

- i. participants searching for UNE policy statements and support services online, timing how long it took to find the required information
- ii. sharing resources cross-campus and online through the Chat function and emails
- iii. establishing informal sub-groups to undertake further investigation and provide personal support.



2. Project Methodology

The research project was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. HE21-172, Valid to 30/06/2022). The two key components of this multiyear research and training program iteratively informed each other and evolved according to the needs identified in each setting. The research design was informed by feedback and experiences of the Allyship Training Program, and the survey responses informed later iterations of the training suite.

The research project consisted of the following components:

- a survey of the UNE community,
- focus groups and
- in-depth interviews.

2.1 UNE Survey

The Queer Allyship Survey was launched in October 2021 inviting staff, students and alumni at UNE to participate through an email invitation via Moodle, SRM, and Alumni mailing lists. The survey was adapted with permission from an ACON (*Pride in Diversity*) survey that has been widely distributed, tested and used across 35 other Universities over several years. The UNE Survey was modified to capture data on regionality and rurality, and to enhance data collection around ethnicity, Indigeneity, intersex characteristics, and intersectional experiences of staff and students. Members of the Advisory Team, listed in the Acknowledgments, reviewed the survey and offered comments and critique which were incorporated.

The Survey consisted of 236 survey questions in 60 blocks, with 1,997 responses from across current students, staff and alumni. The depth of the demographic data is unique in its collection of data including rurality and regionality, faith, linguistic and ethnic diversity as well as gender identity and sexual orientation.

Almost 2,000 participants commenced the survey - ten times beyond expectation. This was the first of its kind at UNE and the survey was designed to capture the UNE community's diversity and breadth of opinion so that the services, training and support UNE provides reflect the needs of our communities.

The sheer number of responses to the survey (1,300) and the proportion of student respondents who identified under the LGBTQIA+ rainbow is indicative of their investment in promoting inclusion at UNE, and a trust and generosity in sharing their experiences in order to improve our systems and services. The support from the wider UNE community in completing the survey is also very encouraging in indicating strong support

for making UNE a safer and more inclusive institution. We recognise the survey was quite extensive and appreciate the time and effort respondents have gone to in engaging with it. As one of the interviewees said,

I love that there was the survey to begin with. As an institution that deals with data, the staff want data (Int 9).

Survey participation was voluntary. No questions were compulsory, and as a result, the response rates differed between questions. Response rates are reported as n values with each question. For the purposes of this study, respondents of some questions were combined so non-LGBTQIA+ responses are included within the LGBTQIA+ responses. Where responses to open-ended questions are quoted, they are identified with (S).

This survey provides unique, baseline data reporting on the level of knowledge and understanding of the identities and experiences of the LGBTQIA+ communities across UNE. As the demographic breakdown of participants shows, the desire to participate in the survey demonstrated the desire to be heard and acknowledged, especially from members of the UNE community (staff and students) who identified under the LGBTQIA+ umbrella.

This survey is the first LGBTIQ+ related information I have seen from UNE (S)

2.1.1 Participant Demographics – Survey Responses

Respondents were predominantly from NSW, followed by Queensland and Victoria (68.2%, 11.6%, 9.1% respectively).

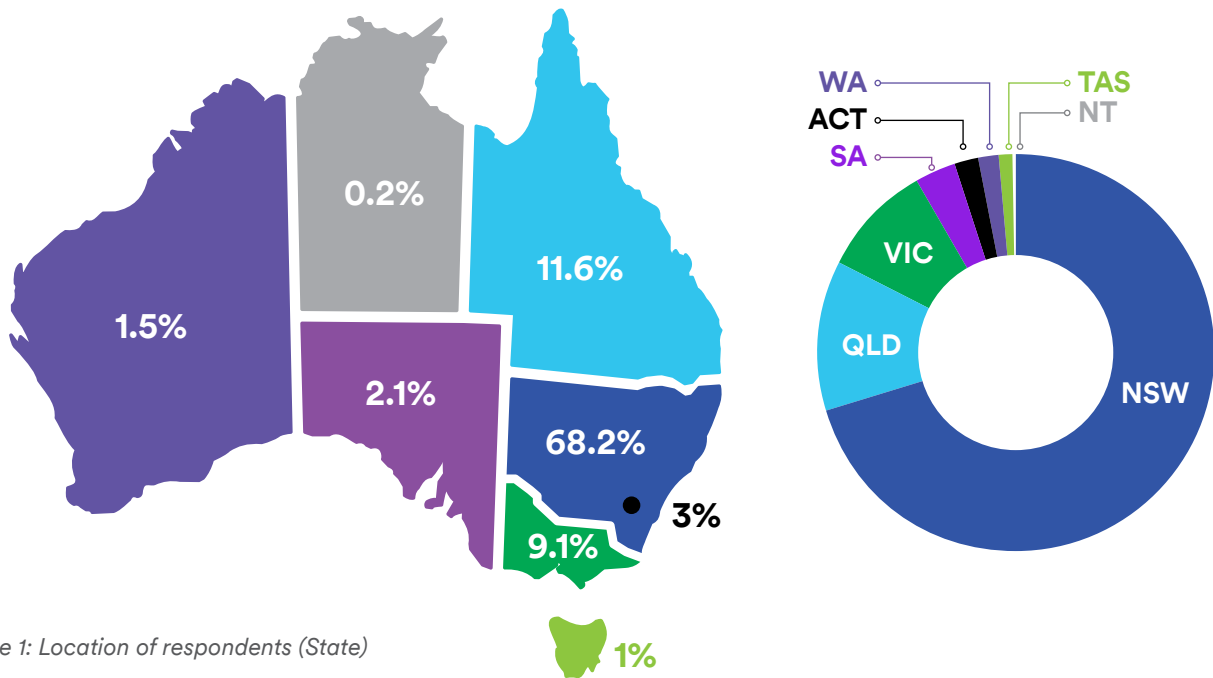


Figure 1: Location of respondents (State)

Almost half (41.7%) of the respondents were from regional areas followed by metro (35.4%) and rural/remote (22.8%)



Figure 2: Location of respondents (area)

Relationship to UNE: 51.1% of the respondents were students, 29.3% were alumni, 9.4% were professional staff, and 8.0% were academic staff. 2.2% of respondents had other relationships such as retired staff members (Figure 3). Based on the numbers provided in UNE’s 2021 Annual Narrative Report these figures represent 3.4% of the total student cohort, and approximately 0.42% of the connected alumni. Only figures for ongoing staff were available in the report, and 17.6% of ongoing professional staff and 17.4% of ongoing academic staff completed the survey.

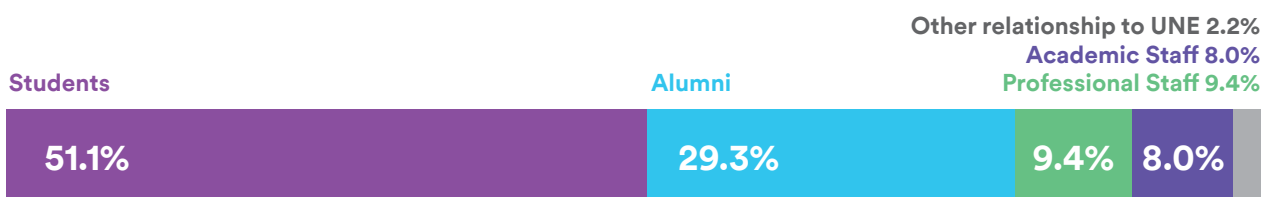


Figure 3: Employment/position at UNE

Sexual orientation: Of 1,147 respondents, 44.7% identified as belonging to LGBTQIA+ communities (Figure 4). 65.3% of the LGBTQIA+ respondents were students.

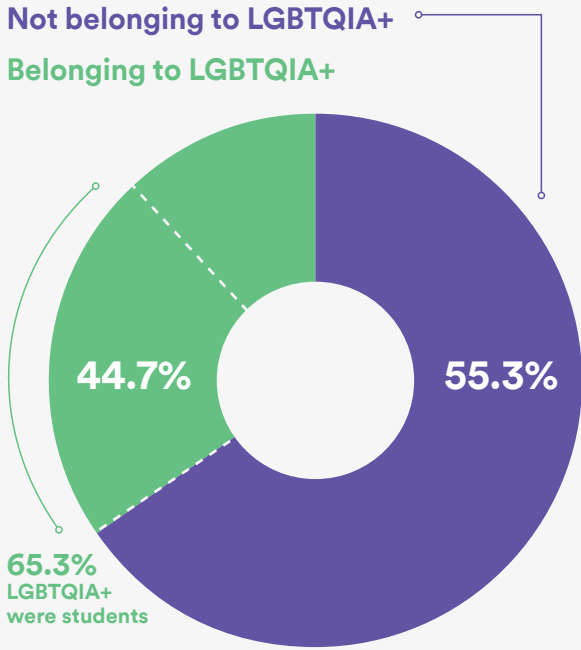


Figure 4: sexual orientation

Students belonging to LGBTQIA+

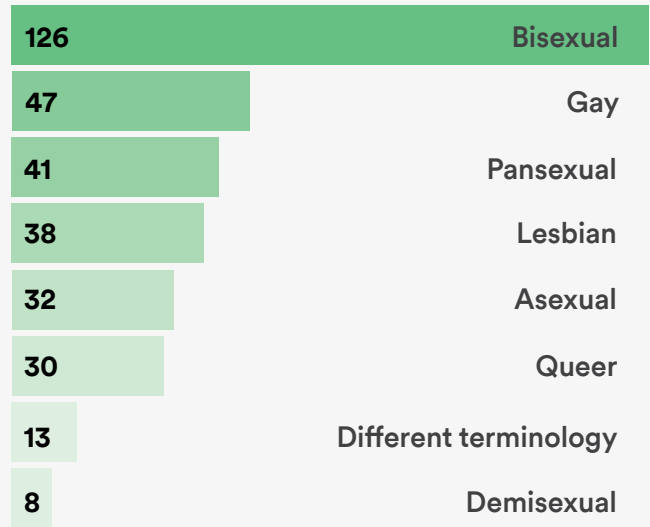


Figure 5: students belonging to LGBTQIA+ communities

Gender identity: Of the 1,169 people who responded to the question about their gender identity, 6.9% (79 people) provided a differently described gender other than cisgender man/woman (figure 6). 6.5% of students, 5.8% of professional staff and 3.1% of Alumni identify as gender diverse. 218 respondents reported having a gender that was different to the one on their birth certificate (19.0% of 1,147).

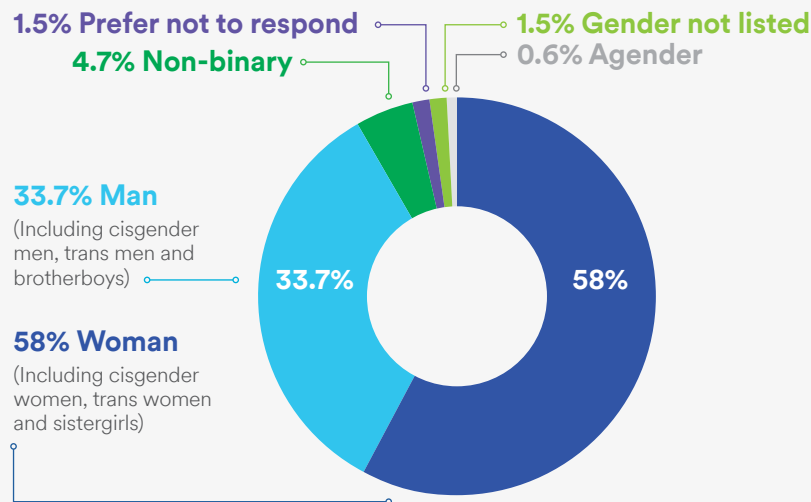


Figure 6: gender identity

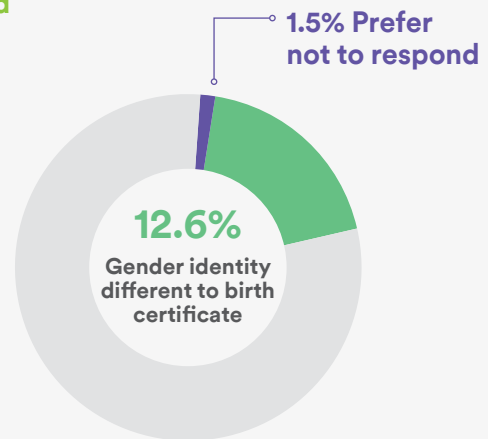


Figure 7: gender identity different to birth certificate

Intersex: Five participants (0.3%) were born with an intersex variation. Four of the five intersex respondents were students. It is important to note here that although the number of participants may appear small, many people with variations of sex characteristics do not know they are intersex, and/or do not identify as LGBTQIA+. Intersex Human Rights Australia (IHRA) reports that 1.7% of all live births are intersex with estimates ranging from 1 in 2,000 births (0.05%) to 8 in 200 (4%). Exact figures are unknown.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples: From 1,164 of respondents, who answered the question, 3.7% (43) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Cultural identity: From 1,145 respondents, 21.5% identified as non-Anglo-Australian.

BIPOC: 20 of the 43 First Nations persons identified as brown, black, Indigenous or a person of colour (BIPOC). A further 50 respondents identified as BIPOC (total 70 participants) (Figure). Importantly, five participants identified as Anglo-Australian, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and BIPOC, these people are not indicated on the figure.

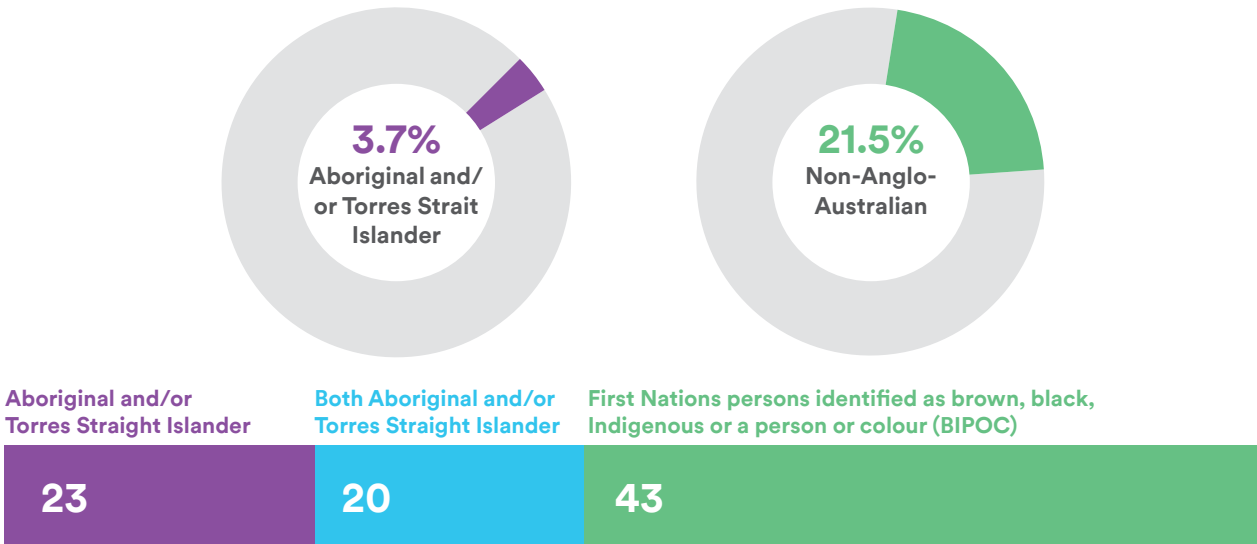


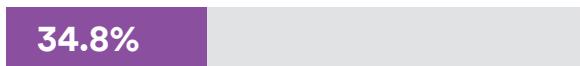
Figure 8: cultural identity and ethnicity

Faith: 61.8% (1088) of 1,095 respondents reported not currently having a faith. This is relatively consistent across staff, students and alumni (65.2%, 62.6% and 57.6% respectively) (Figure). This finding is substantially higher than the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data in 2021 wherein 38.9% said they had ‘no religion’ (2021).

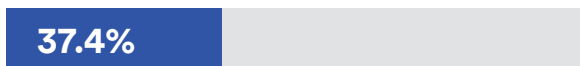
The most common religions in ABS data were Christianity (43.9%); Islam (3.2%); Hinduism (2.7%); and Buddhism (2.4%). The ABS noted there is a steady decline in the proportion of Australians who report an affiliation with Christianity, and a consistent rise in Other religions and No religion, particularly in the last 20 years. UNE’s religious demographics differed from the Australian norm, Christianity (65.9%); Islam (1.9%); Hinduism (0.5%); and Buddhism (4.9%); and Other religions 25.5%.

Currently have a faith

Staff



Students



Alumni

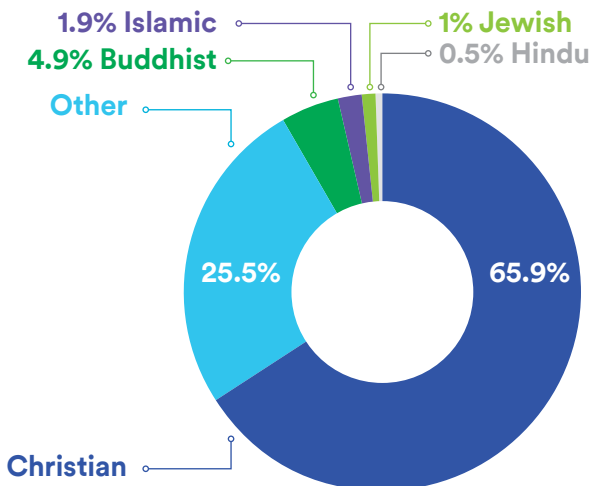
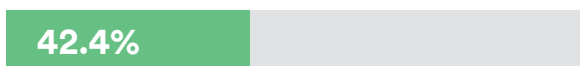


Figure: 9 Proportion of survey respondents who reported a faith affiliation

Disabilities: Of the 1,134 who responded to the question of living with disabilities, 42.1% (476) indicated they were living with one or more disabilities.

Neurodiversity: 20.7% (238) identified as neuro-diverse. 18.1% of participants identified as neuro-diverse and living with a disability (n 1,122).

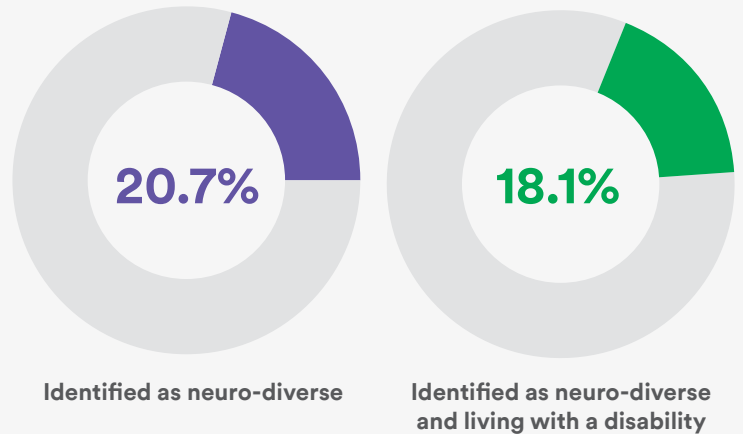
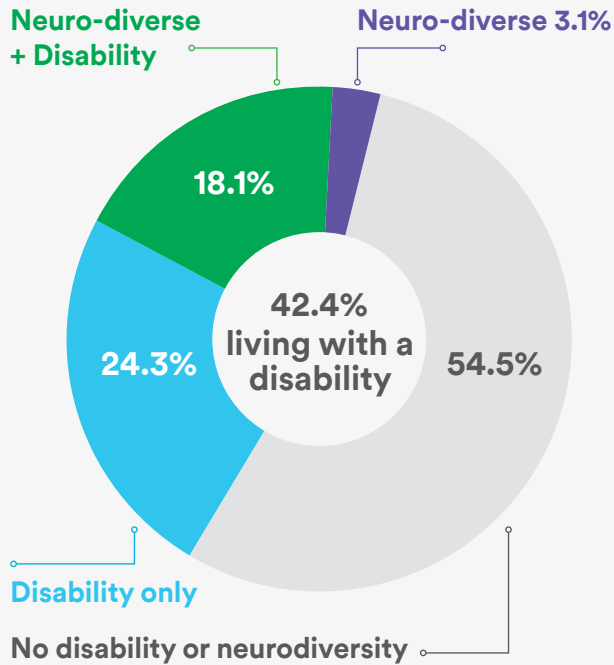


Figure 11

Figure 10

Disability & LGBTQIA+



Neuro-diverse & LGBTQIA+

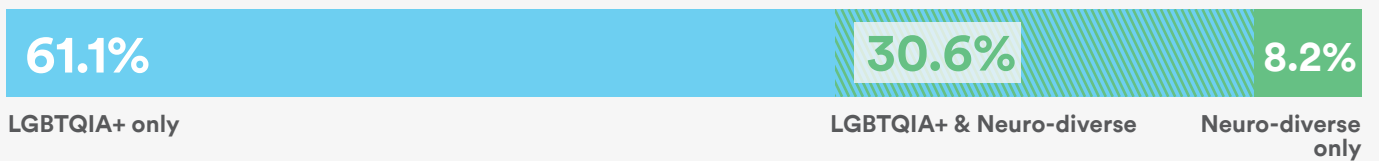


Figure 12: Proportion of respondents who identified as living with a disability, neuro-diversity or both (n 1,122)

Age: Of the 1,371 respondents to the question about their age, the majority 22.7% (311) were in the 25-34 age bracket, followed by 21.1% (289) between 35-44, and 17.9% (245) between 45-54. (Figure 11).

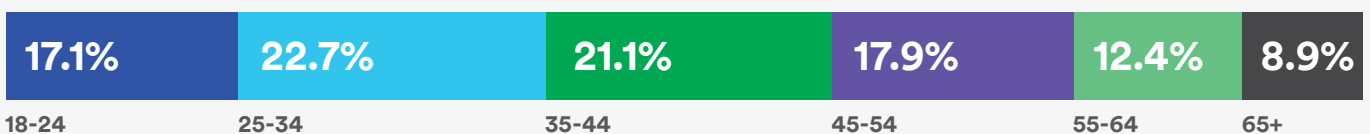


Figure 13: Age brackets of survey respondents

Intersecting Identities:

Of the maximum 1,165 respondents who answered the questions regarding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, neurodiversity, disability, BIPOC and LGBTQIA+, 67% had intersecting identities.

Note: Below frequencies can overlap, for instance, BIPOC/Neuro-diverse/LGBTQIA+ will also be counted in Neurodiverse/LGBTQIA+.

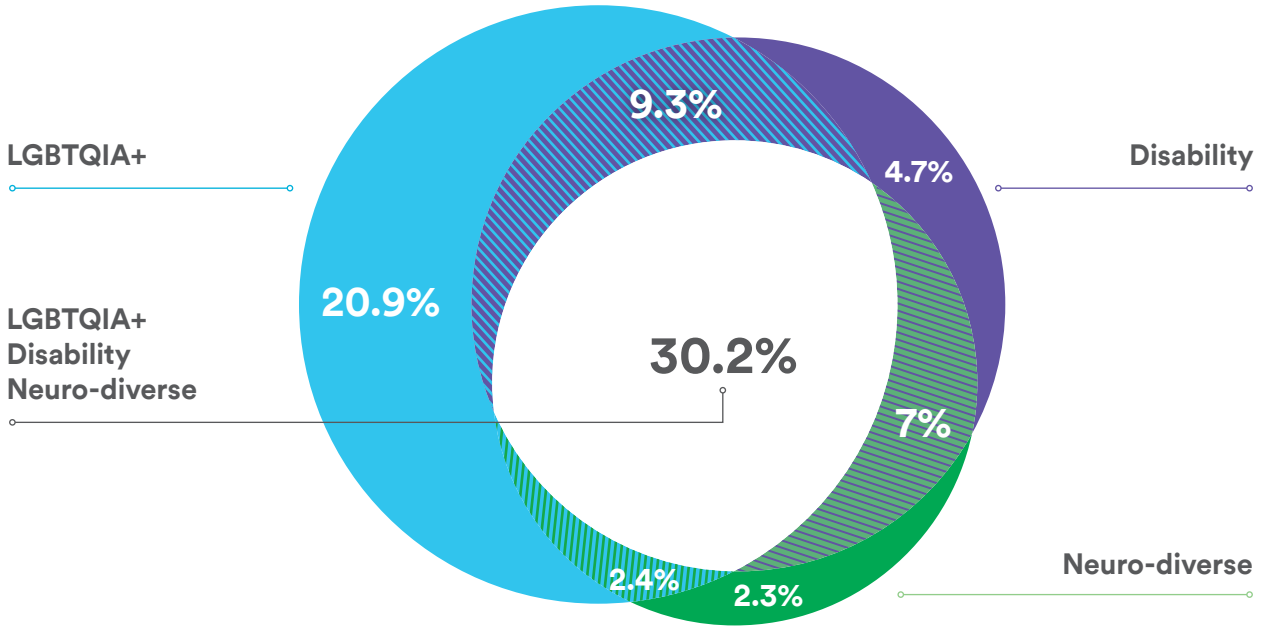


Figure 14: Intersection of LGBTQIA+ Disability and Neuro-diverse Groups (percentages rounded)

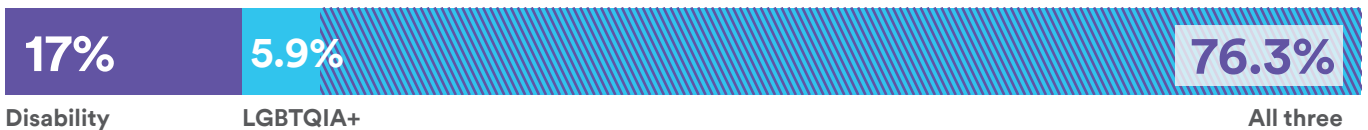
LGBTQIA+ Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people



Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people living with disabilities



Neuro-diverse Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people



Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people with two intersecting identities



Figure 15: Participants with intersecting identities and characteristics

It's important to acknowledge in this report, and in building and rebuilding services and systems at UNE that experiences of intersectional marginalisation have real, felt consequences for members of the UNE community:

Like many neurodivergent folk, I don't really experience gender or sex in the culturally dominant ways either. I don't feel I fit in any communities. I list myself as pansexual but really it's just that I don't get or value sex or gender as part of my decision making on choosing a partner. I also do not really fall into any gender category because these are such manufactured categories that I don't think I fit into. I've heard this described before as autigender. (S)

2.1.2 Interviews

Decolonising research, relationality, co-design and co-review practices (Moreton-Robinson 2013; Smith 2012) were fundamental to the research process. Decolonising research challenges Eurocentric/Anglocentric research methods and the expert/researched hierarchies that undermine the knowledge and experiences of marginalised population groups. It fosters relationality, or the connectedness and relationships of trust between research participants and researchers, in order to co-design and co-review, meaning community members are treated as equal collaborators in the research design and review processes. Significant examples of decolonising research, relationality and co-design in the UNE research and reporting were the leadership (at times anonymously to ensure safety) by LGBTQIA+ researchers, advisors and trainers, with allies listening and collaborating while remaining mindful of their non-lived experience and positionalities.

The above methods focus on building genuine rapport through cultural humility, mutual respect, collaboration and curiosity instead of interrogation which is impersonal, imposed and hierarchical. As qualitative practices, they focus on the safety and anonymity of participants, and allow the conversations to be participant-driven, so that any areas not raised within the research guidelines but of significance to the research participant can be raised and discussed. These research methods also ensure participants are provided

My neuro diversity makes it more difficult to communicate my gender and sexuality differences and find community at UNE (S)

with audios and transcripts of their interviews, as well as a draft of this Report, to edit, add to, veto, and keep for their own future purposes and projects.

Interviewees were recruited via:

1. a question at the end of the survey where they could express their interest and leave contact details;
2. contacting the researchers after having attended the Ally Network Training Sessions; or
3. approaching a member of the research team by phone, email, or in person saying they wished to be interviewed.

Interviews were conducted online, and on campus in Armidale and Tamworth. All interviewees reported feeling safe and positive about the interview experience, and appreciated knowing they would be able to have access to their transcripts and audios to edit. As some participants were concerned about their particular speech inflections, we assured them that if they were quoted, the focus would be on their content and any irrelevant speech inflections or idiosyncrasies would be removed.

Data from the interviews was thematically coded and analysed with the development of the themes being driven by the data and less by existing theory, research or hypotheses. (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

2.1.3 Participant Demographics and data limitations – Interviews

13 semi-structured interviews between 30-60 minutes were conducted. The following is a de-identified table of the interviewees. Despite seeking a diversity of interviewees, as the table illustrates, there is a lack of intersectional diversity in our interview participants. This may be related to the lack of trust in UNE processes regarding the anonymity and confidentiality of their data as 11 of the 13 participants had met the interviewer via

the Ally Training or been referred via the snowballing technique. This may be indicative of a range of findings and recommendations to be discussed in this Report regarding cultural safety among students and staff, including employment concerns, complaints procedures and other systemic barriers to trust and open communication.

Interviewee number	Student/ Staff	Age	Gender Identity	Sexuality	Religious beliefs	Self described family/cultural background	Other self described info
1	Student	24	Non-binary	Asexual	Lapsed Catholic	Scottish/Irish	Seventh Generation Australian
2	Staff		Woman (cis)	Heterosexual		Anglo-Conservative	Rural, first in family
3	Staff/ student	37	Woman (cis)	Heterosexual	Atheist	Conservative, white	Working-lower middle class, first in family
4	Staff	33	Woman (cis)	lesbian/ asexual/ pansexual	Atheist born and baptised Anglican	Anglo-Australian	
5	Other (Mentor at College)			Bisexual			Married with children
6	Staff	45-50	Woman (cis)	Heterosexual			Married with Children
7	Staff		Woman (cis)	Heterosexual			Married with Children
8	Staff	52	Cis (no gender indicated)	Heterosexual	Atheist	Originally from UK	Executive academic staff
9	Staff	37	Woman (cis)	Heterosexual	Atheist	Anglo white heritage	Academic
10	Staff	44	Man (cis)	Heterosexual	Atheist	Anglo white heritage	Academic
11	Staff	38	Man (cis)	Heterosexual			Engages Aboriginal community
12	Student	59	Woman (cis)	Heterosexual	Atheist	Anglo white heritage	Illness, disabilities, indigenous family members
13	Staff	50	Man (cis)	Gay	Buddhist/ Christian	Anglo white heritage	Rural upbringing

Table 1: Where responses by interviewees are quoted, they are identified with (Int).

2.2 Research limitations and participant experiences of the Survey

Scrap this bullshit and get on with education (S). (Anglo-Australian, Alumni, heterosexual man, 45-34).

2.2.1 Research limitations, negative participant experiences and criticism of the project

Several limitations were noted by both research participants and the research team. It is also important to note that some of feedback was sent to the co-researcher Maria or UNE staff administering the survey via email either as a place of safety and privacy, or as a place to send offensive and discriminatory statements. Likewise, the fear of systemic repercussions for completing the survey in affirming or discriminatory ways was also voiced:

I went to complete the Allyship Survey and from the questions asked I feel that it would be easy to identify me and other staff. I won't be able to complete the survey until this is resolved (Email to Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, staff, cisgender man, heterosexual, Anglo-Australian)

In principle I support UNE's efforts in this area and believe that any discrimination is wrong. Nonetheless I personally feel uncomfortable with such discussions in any public forum as I have always believed one's sexuality is a private matter (S). (Anglo-Australian, Alumni, without a faith, heterosexual man, 65+).

The length of the survey was considered prohibitive by some participants who did complete it but commented on its length:

this survey is so long and honestly i just wanted to say "my experiences as a queer person studying at une have been garbage" (Email to Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli)

Others did not complete the survey because of its length, noting the survey "required considerable grit to get through" (S). A flaw in the survey progression meant that people who did not identify under the LGBTQIA+ umbrella were directed to questions intended for this group, which was understandably irritating for some participants as it was a longer survey process than it would otherwise have been.

Some respondents questioned the relevance of the survey to cisgender heterosexual respondents, feeling excluded or attacked, prompting one respondent

to describe herself as a, "Normal woman of God" (S). Resistance to the very existence of the survey is particularly insightful given the actual erasure of LGBTQIA+ communities from previous and current research into culture at UNE:

It invites everyone to be involved but excludes heterosexual binary individuals from answering most questions (S). (Anglo-Australian, Staff, Christian, heterosexual woman, 25-34).

As a cis gendered, straight woman of a mature age I feel NONE of my concerns were addressed in this flag waving, tokenism survey. Try dealing with sexism and ageism encountered in higher learning institutions then get back to me about minority group concerns. FFS. (Email to UNE staff, alumni, cisgender woman, heterosexual)

I have normal "relations" inside of a normal marriage - thanks for asking (S). (Anglo-Australian, Student, Christian, heterosexual man, 45-54).

You disregard ACTUAL WOMEN! (S). (Anglo-Australian, Alumnus, woman, 45-54).

Make heterosexual people feel more welcome in LGBT spaces (S). (Anglo-Australian, gay man, 25-34).

Your multi-lettered acronyms and concepts of "safe" and "inclusion" seem targeted to exclude people such as me (S). (Australian man, 45-54).

The fact that we listed heterosexuality lower in the list of possible multiple-choice responses in the survey with LGBTQIA+ categories appearing above them was also pointed out as discomfiting, indicating how the survey structure and design of the questions were disruptive of hetero-cis-normative survey methods – and how easily these norms are disrupted.

Given that the overwhelming majority of people are hetero/straight, why is it the penultimate option on this list? (S). (Anglo-Australian, fixed-term academic man, 35-44).

Some alumni questioned the relevance of the survey to their current status as alumni. The inclusion of alumni created some confusion in that group as many were unfamiliar with, or not wanting to be involved in Allyship or allyship research. This is in stark contrast to the strong interest Alumni have shown in other areas of university experience and governance, for example the 2022 meeting of UNE Convocation, which was well attended by UNE alumni.

I can't see the relevance of any of these questions to my circumstances and it has absolutely no application to an 82 year old alumnus who lives away from the university and has no interaction with the university... sorry, it became too boring and unrelated to my life and experiences for me to complete. (Email to UNE staff, cisgender woman, heterosexual, alumni)

it's not relevant and takes time and resources away from things that matter. stupid survey (S). (Anglo-Australian, Christian, Alumni, heterosexual woman, 35-44).

As is typical for this type of research, there was a small portion of survey respondents (n 44 or 2.2% of the total number of survey respondents) and email correspondents who took offence to the questions being asked and/or did not engage with the survey in good faith. It is difficult to know which demographics represented these respondents because the integrity of their data is in question. Rather than responding to questions as asked these participants often opted to recorded bad faith or homo/bi/transphobic responses, often based on self-expressed religious values. For example, rather than selecting an available choice on a question on gender (e.g. 'Which of the following would best describe your gender identity?'), many of these respondents opted to insert discriminatory or offensive text entries. These text entries included:

I do not ascribe to gender ideology (S). (Irish, Atheist, student, bisexual, 35-44).

there are 2 genders, all others are mental illnesses (S). (did not provide demographic data).

This is a shameful survey engineered towards one answer. This is a poor reflection on an academic institution. (S) (Anglo-Australian, Catholic, Alumni, heterosexual man, 25-34)

useless surveys trying to legitimise the psychosis of gender dysphoria (S). (Anglo-Australian, Alumni, heterosexual man, 55-64)

I was just wondering why the vast majority of people must conform to this forced indoctrination (Email to

Maria, student, cisgender man, heterosexual, Anglo-Australian)

I actually forced myself to complete the survey honestly, although I was offended by some of the intrusive and pointed questioning... It was written as if all of us sprout forth our type of sexuality as a proud revelation. (Email to Maria, past staff and alumni, cisgender woman, heterosexual, Anglo-Australian).

Can you stop sending me absurd surveys about people suffering gender dysphoria and homosexuals and other disturbed people. Stop trying to legitimise their delusions and get these people the help and guidance they desperately need. (Email to Maria, past staff, cisgender man, heterosexual)

The numbers of Australians who claim a diverse sexuality and alternate gender is minimal, and unlike the changes required for disabled students, no specific attention in my view should be taken to accommodate the emotional requirements of those who are 'alternative'. They needed counselling and the university should offer this assistance, but not allocate large sums of their finance to these students who mostly have chosen to be alternative. (Email to Maria, past staff and alumni, cisgender woman, heterosexual, Anglo-Australian).

Worry about your students now instead of this crap (S). (Anglo-Australian, Catholic, Student, heterosexual man, 35-44).

LGBTIA+ ideology is a cancer on our university, the university culture, learning standards, research and management (S). (Anglo-Australian, Christian, Alumni, bisexual man, 25-34).

i [sic] am heterosexual. I follow God, not voices in my head, social cues or some academic hack theory on gender (S). (Anglo-Australian, Alumni, heterosexual man, 55-64)

An area that needs substantial improvement is the force feeding of these abstract ideas to the whole community. Those who do not conform to this gendered agenda, should still be respected and valued members of the community. The silent majority suffers once more (S). (Anglo-Australian, Alumni, heterosexual man, 35-44)

Too many sodomists at UNE (S) (conflicting demographic data provide)

I'm a biological male. No identity needed (S). (Anglo-Australian, Alumni, heterosexual man, 35-44).

Of the 39 respondents who were critical of the survey and the project of inclusion more broadly, 41.0% identified as cis men (n = 16), 30.8% as cis women (n = 12) and 28.2% gender not listed above' (n = 11). Gender not listed respondents included bad faith responses to this question.

I'm a straight white male without disability so I'm excluded from everything (S).

as long as it... does not isolate caucasians and heterosexuals and particularly white heterosexual males who I think are becoming a persecuted group! (S)

It is likely many of the responses from the negative cohort were provided in poor-faith. Just over half

(51.3%) of these negative respondents also reported being from regional areas and 56.4% have been part of the UNE community for less than five years. The negative respondents were also disproportionately represented by 15 alumni, 13 undergraduate students and 8 post graduate students (38.5%, 33.3% and 20.5% respectively).

Many of these respondents took the time to complete the survey and to write text comments. Their written comments, together with the emails, are important to document and discuss in order to understand the full range of perspectives that are both publicly and privately held.

2.2.2 Positive reception and experiences of the Survey

In contrast, the majority of survey participants either filled out the survey in good faith, while some also noted that the survey was welcomed and understandably long as it was one of the first initiatives UNE had undertaken and thereby required comprehensive data collection.

I think this survey is a really good start (S). (Anglo-Australian, post-grad student, aceflux man, 25-34)

We need more workshops for students and surveys (Feedback from Allyship training)

This survey is the first I've heard about it [Allyship] really (S). (French/Australian, Christian, Alumni, heterosexual man, 35-44)

[I'm straight but] I'm glad that the questions are being asked of those with lived experience. (S) (Mixed background, post-graduate, heterosexual woman, 45-54).

Some respondents were hoping the survey could be broadened further, such as including more questions specifically for online students.

This survey is difficult for online students who seldom visit the campus to answer. I have used the N/A box to mean "I don't know" or "I have had no experience with this because I am not at the university" (S). (Anglo-Australian, post-grad student, gay man, 65+)

As a remote student I don't have the opportunity to interact or discuss topics other than course content with students so I cannot presume to know how they think or feel or what they would say on this matter (S). (Anglo-Australian, under-grad student, heterosexual woman, 45-54).

In the following chapters the results of the research project are presented, with each chapter highlighting a particular theme.

Allyship is a constant practice. We will never get it right all the time, but we are all learning (and making mistakes!) together.

3. Policies, Procedures and Facilities

This chapter addresses perceptions of UNE policies, procedures and facilities. Overall, LGBTQIA+ staff and students reported that they did not experience UNE policies, procedures and facilities as having been created with them in mind. Participants reported experiences with facilities that lacked visible indicators that they as LGBTQIA+ people were welcome. They also expressed that a number of policies and procedures they had interacted with made assumptions that either implicitly or explicitly excluded LGBTQIA+ people, for example forms relating to change of name made assumptions relating to marriage but did not contemplate gender affirmation.

3.1 UNE policies and procedures reinforced exclusion of LGBTQIA+ students and staff

Interviewees and ally training participants pointed out outdated or unclear policies and procedures across UNE, as well as a general lack of visibility of indicators of inclusion. In many cases this was interpreted as suggesting that UNE was not an inclusive environment for LGBTQIA+ people and this was reflected in outdated policies or policies that made hetero- and cisnormative assumptions. Less than a fifth (19.9%) of LGBTQIA+ survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “There are visible signs of UNE’s support for employees.” Since the survey, and the establishment of the Ally Network, the 2023-24 Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) Survey Results reported more than half of all respondents (53.8%) knew of active allies in their immediate area and 81.1% understood why active allies are important, which indicates the importance of the Ally Network and visibility of LGBTQIA+ spaces and allies on campus and online.

We need a project manager and a legal team to go through the policies and make sure that they’re up-to-date. And a sexuality question in enrolling students. It should be there because we have zero statistics. If you put it in the form with an option saying, “Don’t want to answer,” that’s all you have to do. (Int 4)

UNE’s policy framework is a disaster. There are nice words out there in the strategic plan and around things like diversity and inclusivity. How much of that is supported by a policy that’s coherent and could be actioned in some useful way? There’s a big disconnect there. I think there’s governance problems as well that are then reflected in policy problems. ... Look at how this policy talks to all the other relevant policies because you can’t just fix one in isolation. One of the areas where UNE’s policies are less than adequate is around misconduct because I think we can have all these great aspirations for being an inclusive and diverse body of people, but if I don’t have the levers to pull when somebody’s in flagrant breach of the code of conduct, at the moment there’s not much I can do. I can flag it with HR and occasionally they might feel inspired to have an investigation (Int 13).

3.2 Lack of Clarity about where to seek support at UNE

Overall, just over a tenth (12.4%) of all survey respondents knew where to seek official support services at UNE. None of the respondents who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Straight Islanders, and/or BIPOC could name any UNE support services (Figure). Over half (65.9%) of LGBTQIA+ respondents could not name any support services UNE provides ($n=386$, total 588 LGBTQIA+ survey respondents). Just five of 39 staff members and nine of 116 students could name support services (12.8% and 8.4% respectively).

Whether respondents knew of support services changed depending on their identity/ies. Significantly, regardless of identity, the percentage of all respondents who knew of support services was always below 50% (Figure).

Survey respondents unaware of support services at UNE

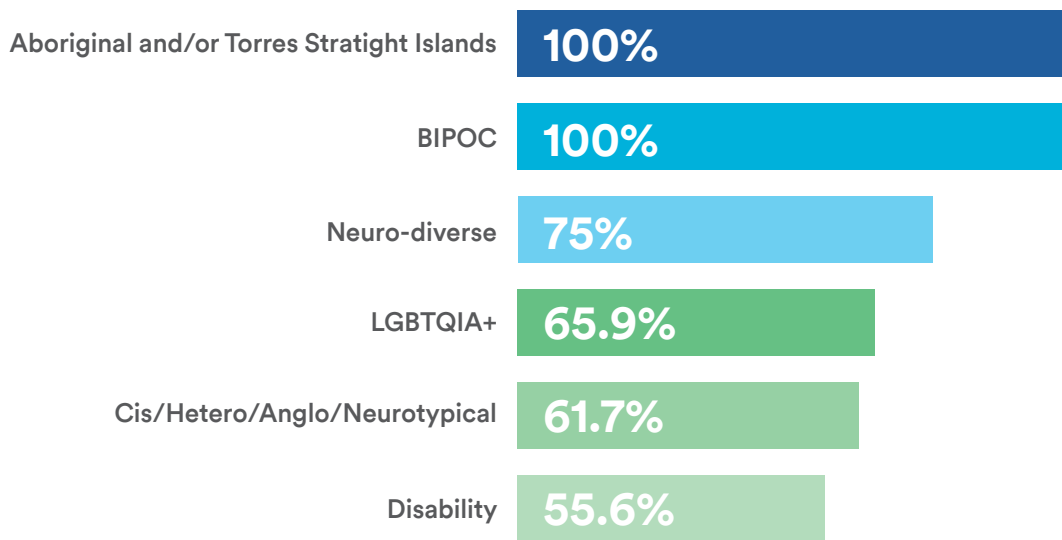


Figure 16: Proportion of different respondent demographics who are unaware of support services at UNE

The above findings and the following corroborate those of the EY (2023) report, with the added depth of insight into intersectional LGBTQIA+ staff and students.

In the absence of clear inclusive systemic policies and procedures, LGBTQIA+ inclusion or exclusion was very much reliant on individual awareness and responsibility:

There doesn't feel like an institution wide drive to promote this education and acceptance. (S)

I asked my head of school to distribute information about allyship courses and she refused. (S)

I feel UNE does nothing to be inclusive. All the work comes from staff and students on top of their usual workload resulting in burnout (S)

Just over 80 percent (82.1%) of those who responded thought it was important that employers be active in this area of diversity & inclusion, this includes 98.5% of staff respondents:

I think UNE is still tackling the visibility issue. There is still so little presence of an ally network due to the enormous structural barriers that UNE imposes on all communities. Visibility would be first followed by finding a way to nuance the nature of allyship in relation to intersectionality (S)

3.3 Lack of Visibility and Support Particularly Noticeable for Gender Diverse Students

In particular, when asked about the visibility of organisational inclusion for gender diverse employees and students, 29.4% of survey respondents noted their expectations were not met (*n* = 64 of 281 respondents), while only 5.0% said their expectations were exceeded. A third (33.2%) of respondents noted the communication of policies to support those affirming their gender did not meet expectations (*n* = 64 of 193 respondents). Similarly, the acknowledgement of gender diversity beyond the binary of male/female did not meet the expectations of 29.7% of the respondents (*n* = 62 of 209 respondents). These findings were supported by most interviewees:

the forms don't say, 'if you're changing gender, if you're wanting to change your name if you're transitioning'. It says your marriage certificate or your birth certificate. That's the only things we accept here. And it didn't have a contact to speak to someone about it (Int 6).

Students who are gender transitioning or for whatever reason want to change their name are finding it really difficult to navigate that. It says it's not recommended that you change your username or email. That's really a worry. You would think UNE should aspire to doing this easily or properly. The brighter note is that students are doing it. ...It's all fixable, but I always worry there's a certain kind of student who will write to the Head of School or get in touch with me, but I really worry that that it takes a lot of courage and there's probably lots of students who wouldn't be comfortable to do that (Int 13).

Around a quarter (26.5%) of all survey respondents said the communication of the grievance process to report discrimination based on trans, gender diverse, and gender non-binary identity did not meet expectations.

Ensure that people are informed of where to go to get support and report discriminatory experiences at the uni (S)

Almost a half (45.7%) said they did not know the reporting procedures, or the facilities and services for reporting, or where to seek support and report discrimination based on their LGBTQAI+ identity/ies and intersectionalities (racism, ableism, ageism, sexism and more). A fifth (22.5%) did not feel safe and supported reporting more serious bullying/sexual harassment targeting their sexuality, gender identity and/or sex variations to senior management, HR or grievance officers.

Constantly experiencing discrimination in terms of gender/sexual identity & when I report or call people out on discriminatory behaviour, I've been personally attacked and gaslit by people in senior/exec positions (S)

Ensure anyone with direct reports is trained to be approachable and supportive of LGBTQIA+ team members, and reassure the team members of this (I have no idea what kind of training managers have at UNE - lots seem to have none) (S).

Ally Network Training participants unanimously agreed that the UNE reporting system is not well-advertised. They questioned whether UNE was undertaking minimal advertising as increasing advertising could lead to an increased number of complaints. This questioning indicates a lack of trust in UNE's commitment and integrity. A useful recommendation for People and Culture from the Ally Training participants was for security staff and external contractors to be given training as first responders to likely incidents. Security responders should understand referral pathways. Likewise, UNE should have a signed agreement with contractors regarding expected behaviours and accountability.

While knowledge of policies and services available to support staff and students was low, particular subgroups evinced especially poor levels of knowledge of the services and supports UNE can provide. No respondents with intersecting identities including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islands, and/or BIPOC could identify support services at UNE.

Over 85% (85.6%) of all survey respondents were aware of the intersections between race/ethnicity, faith, disability, Indigeneity and other identity categories with LGBTQIA+ identities. Less than half of LGBTQIA+ respondents (35.7%) reported that they did not have role models or leaders in their work or study environment at UNE.

A strong majority of respondents (80.8% (n= 923)) of survey respondents believed work in intersectional LGBTQIA+ diversity & inclusion would have a positive influence on UNE’s culture, and 82.1% would personally support work UNE undertakes for the inclusion of employees and students with intersex variations. More than 85% (86.5%) would personally support work UNE undertakes for the inclusion of employees and students of diverse sexuality and/or gender. Almost 70% (68.6%) believed UNE should put more effort into LGBTQIA+ diversity and inclusion, and 64.0% would involve themselves in activities put on by the employee/student network for people of diverse sexuality, genders, sex characteristics and allies.

Proportion of staff and student respondents unaware of support services at UNE

Neuro-diverse unaware



Staff



Student

LGBTQIA+ unaware



Staff



Student

Living with a disability unaware



Staff



Student

BIPOC unaware



Staff



Student

Figure 17: Proportion of subgroups who don’t know any support services. Intersectional groups consist of two or more of the either Disability, Neurodiverse, or LGBTQIA+

3.4 Benefits of an Inclusive Workplace

The importance of a more diverse and inclusive workforce, particularly in leadership, was discussed in the interviews:

there's a staff member who's a very out lesbian. And at meetings, she'll bring it up. She was the one who presented about these workshops and training at a meeting a few months ago. And when the survey came out, she was like, "Do the survey." (Int 10)

*we've had a massive uptick in Aboriginal students enrolling. That is due to having someone who they know... They've heard that he's here and they'll come to talk to him. I think it's the same with any minority. People want to see themselves represented. **People want to feel that they have a safe place and a safe person for them to talk to who will understand their issues.** It's not about getting another inclusion officer in here who is the same looking and feeling as the rest of us. ...We need more LGBTQ staff. We need more people from different ethnic origins here. If we could get more colour, more difference, it would be a more friendly place ... The amount of cross-cultural stimulation that we've had between people who are gay and who are Aboriginal has been wonderful. I think having representation is important. **I think how we go about that representation is the difference between losing and gaining** (Int 3).*

Interviewees provided a range of strategies to develop resources, facilities, and systemic communications in order to develop an inclusive UNE culture:

ongoing messaging sent out from the top. *The Vice Chancellor, the executive committee, so that it filters down ... our communications across the university, newsletters, that we have interviews at least every month, some key themes once a month. eg how do you deal with someone who's disrespectful,*

*personal pronouns. Creative messaging: design little characters to make animations, face to face videos. Creative workshops. **Fun things around the university**, having a day where we paint rocks and have words that capture what it means to have a diverse community and a safe community. Then those rocks are placed all around the university. Then on the back of them is a QR code that when you scan it, links to information, links to a website. (Int 2)*

*The webpage needs to have an entire overhaul. LGBT signs need to be on the webpage. The Aboriginal flag needs to be on the webpage. **You log onto Moodle, you log onto UNE website, you log onto alumni page, you just need to know that you are included** ... you don't have to have a parade in the middle of the freaking university. That's not what anyone's asking. **By putting a Pride sign up, it's just those subtle, tiny things that you can do just to make the community understand that this is a safe space.** It's not about getting everyone uncomfortable and making it a thing. There are 60-plus year old students and they're not going to understand, but that doesn't mean they get to go around being abusive or horrible. They still have to understand we are a prideful university. End of story. It's not a difficult concept ... if you've got issues, don't bring it onto the university. (Int 4)*

*I've been seeing the social media since we've had the Wellness Centre, there's been posts that have sort of been Pride, and rainbows. And days to celebrate. I haven't seen it in the main UNE communications. **And there's been training now across different sections of the University not just our area. It makes me feel very positive** (Int 6)*



3.5 Remote students and staff also need to feel included

Remote and online respondents particularly expressed the need for more inclusion policies and practices, or felt they were unable to comment because of their actual exclusion:

As a remote worker I don't see anything inclusive (S)

We need visible queer spaces and services for online students and services for online students (S)

I am 2000 km away at the end of a computer link. I do not feel part of the UNE community in the slightest. (S)

Being an external student, I've literally heard nothing about UNE's inclusivity, programs, etc. I haven't looked either so I don't know how hard it would be to find this sort of thing, but it would probably be good for students to at least know who to go to if they experience discrimination or bullying over any identity (S)

3.6 Visible allies and the Allyship Network welcomed and supported by staff and students

The Allyship Network was considered a very welcome addition to UNE life, and an important shift at UNE that also required a greater understanding and advocacy of intersectional LGBTQIA+. Only 40.8% of survey respondents felt confident that active allies would understand their intersectionality. Almost a third (40.7%) of all respondents of all respondents said they did not know where to seek support from within their own

communities (multicultural communities, First Nations, disability and many more) in order to be an LGBTQIA+ Ally. This finding asserts the need to undertake specific strategies of Allyship with specific communities.

An allyship program is a good start. Much more needs to be done on racism, ageism and sexism as well. (S)

When asked about self-identifying as allies in the survey, 927 respondents described themselves as:

Response	Count	%
Passive Ally (I support LGBTQAI+ inclusion and I am yet to learn how to take an active role)	331	35.7
I am an LGBTQAI+ person and support LGBTQAI+ inclusion but not actively	196	21.1
Active Ally (I am active in my support and willing to expand my knowledge)	169	18.2
I am an LGBTQAI+ person with intersecting identities and I feel confident to be an ally in my multiple communities	84	9.1
I am an LGBTQAI+ person with intersecting identities and I am yet to learn how to be an active ally in my multiple communities	66	7.1
Not an Ally (I do not support LGBTQAI+ inclusion)	54	5.8
I am an LGBTQAI+ person and I play an active role at UNE to promote inclusion	20	2.2
I am an LGBTQAI+ person and do not support LGBTQAI+ inclusion	7	0.8

Table 2: Identifying as Allies

The above results indicate the willingness of LGBTQIA+ “passive allies” to learn to take a more active ally role. Also of interest is the lack of understanding and confidence of LGBTQIA+ respondents who did not see themselves as allies toward other LGBTQIA+ people, thereby lacking awareness in how their privileges may be of use to other intersectional LGBTQIA+ communities.

Almost a half of LGBTQIA+ respondents (44.8%) did not know of active Allies within their immediate work area or area of study. Only a quarter (24.4%) knew of workplace/student material or training available that would show them how to be an active Ally. Only 14.0% knew of active executive/senior leadership Allies.

When asked why they would not be an active Ally, 29 respondents said being an active Ally would be “in conflict with” their personal beliefs or values, and five respondents said it would be “frowned upon by someone/people with influence over their career”.

Resonating greatly with the findings of the *Safety, Culture and Wellbeing Assessment Report*, many survey respondents commented on their lack of trust in existing reporting procedures. The UNE reporting system was not well-advertised, and as discussed earlier in relation to Ally Network training participants, this led to some survey respondents questioning whether UNE was undertaking minimal advertising because increasing promotion could lead to an increased number of complaints. This indicates a lack of trust in UNE’s commitment and integrity.

I have experienced bullying at UNE and I was warned not to speak out because then people would not hire you because you are someone who calls out other people. I was horrified this was the culture and it has given me little confidence to use this channel if something else should ever arise (S)

don’t give victims of harassment bullshit unspecific corporate apologies that mean nothing (e.g., “I’m sorry you feel this way”), and make an actual effort to help people, going beyond the classic textbook response of “report it to SGU” (S)

These findings point strongly to the reality of vicarious trauma (Dominguez 2017) and apprehended discrimination (Avery 2018). ‘Vicarious trauma’ in its past, present and predictive forms occurs when members of a minority group hear about or “witness attacks on other group members” (Dominguez 2017: 212).

For example, intersectional LGBTQIA+ individuals may experience the anticipation of discrimination and the resulting vigilance when they witness or hear about what has happened to their peers at UNE services or following UNE procedures. Similarly, Avery (2018) defines ‘apprehended discrimination’ as frequent exposure to discrimination which leads to an avoidance of certain situations and spaces in which a person could expect to be discriminated against as “every incident adds the weight of evidence to their rational judgment of discrimination, its frequency and its impact upon them” (2018: 42-43).

The findings also match the findings in a previous report, *Navigating Intersectionality* (Pallotta-Chiarolli, Sudarto & Tang 2021) where when asked how intersectional LGBTQIA+ responded to racism, sexism, and homo/bi/trans/intersex discrimination in educational settings and spaces, the great majority of students (n=33) chose not to formally report their experiences, choosing instead to do nothing (39%), share the situation with family and friends (15%); or leave the situation (12%). Only 12% elected to notify management or teachers.

Self-exclusion or avoidance of services and facilities where the discrimination is expected to occur, or not following a policy procedure, may mean LGBTQIA+ staff and students are not accessing the very support networks and services they need due to perceived or potential discrimination, negative stories and experiences from peers, and the absence of a guarantee of cultural safety.

3.7 Some students and staff are already having positive experiences at UNE

As noted above, respondents expressed that it was often up to individual managers or members of teaching staff to determine what kind of inclusion initiatives were undertaken. As such, some students and staff were already having positive experiences, including:

The way the UNE exec communicates typically indicates an openness to accepting the diverse needs of different people. (S)

UNE has high expectations of conduct and a general sense of inclusion which makes me feel safe and comfortable as a student. (S)

Demonstrating strong self-reflexivity, some survey respondents who believed UNE provided a supportive, inclusive environment reflected on their own intersectional positions of privilege:

as a privileged white, straight woman, I am aware that I am somewhat blind in this area and have not really thought about, encountered or sought out inclusion initiatives. However, I think I would be concerned if there was anything that I observed that was obviously discriminatory or unsupportive and I have not seen that. (S)

Respondents were also asked to suggest areas for improvement in inclusion initiatives. They called for a systemic position on “hate speech” and “freedom of speech”:

The difference between hate speech and freedom of speech is not well understood with some people holding abhorrent views but claiming free speech rights (S)

Increased diversity in student enrolment and staff recruitment procedures, and in all HR policies, were also recommended:

more interviews with LGBTQIA people when advertising for students and recruiting staff (S)

stronger HR policies to protect those who are discriminated against. Current policies are weak and useless (S)

Increased and ongoing visibility and accessibility of inclusive facilities and information was also needed:

During my 8 years at UNE I was only offered one opportunity to attend a meeting for LGBTQIA+ students and staff (S)

Communication around what happens with bullying in any form and that people need to speak out and that we will be heard and not discriminated against in any further way for simply doing the right thing and calling out bullying (S)

It would be great if more LGBTQIA+ information was shared throughout each trimester as I felt like I missed it all when I started in my first trimester (S)

A policy of including pronouns and pride flags in staff sign offs would communicate a hugely important message. Giving students the option to use these signoffs too (S)

the University’s web info and marketing does almost nothing to indicate that the LGBTQIA+ demographic is welcomed and will feel safe here. It is almost impossible to find links and services on our website that would be available to students from this demographic (S)

Can we please have an LGBTQIA+ club or society? I know other universities have one and I was disappointed when I discovered UNE did not (S)

Mandatory training for all new students and staff, similar to Academic Integrity training (S)

Have more Queer LGBTQIA+ reaffirming/celebratory events (there has been none in the time I have been here) (S)

The ability to provide anonymous complaints against people in power/anonymous support systems without fear of being hate-crimed for speaking up (S)

An Anonymous drop box for complaints of either teachers, students or people in leadership team. Because I don’t feel comfortable to do this in person (S)

Survey respondents who were critical of UNE’s LGTBQIA+ inclusion initiatives perceived these initiatives as creating “a new problem”, the decrease in the rights, respect and “dignity” of other groups considered to be in opposition such as faith groups. These initiatives were also described as “segregational bullshit” and “normophobic”, and supposedly aggravating academic fields set up to be in opposition, such as sociology and science. This was strongly and at times offensively voiced, particularly in relation to trans and gender diversity policies and procedures:

policies and content consistently disrespect those from a faith group, and also strip away certain dignities from women by encouraging appropriation and characterisations (S)

It is disturbing and very offensive. My moral and religious affiliations are being violated (S).

it [Trans and Gender Diverse inclusion] would only work well for those who actually accept the theory of gender as articulated in the sociology faculty, not one with a more sceptical view grounded in hard science (S)

women's rights - including the right to NOT allow males into changing rooms or bathrooms if it makes them feel unsafe. If LGBTQI want an intersex or non gendered space that is great. But if they demand free use of what is currently set apart for a specific gender, then it places people at risk. Especially those who for reasons of faith do not wish to share a bathroom space (S)

as a female and person of faith, I regularly feel and experience hostility and bias from Allies of the LGBTQI community. My gender is culturally appropriated, mocked, exploited and denigrated. My faith is maligned, opposed and attacked (S)

I believe people who are Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual shouldn't necessarily be grouped with the rest. The problem is it is professional suicide to even mention this. (S)

it tries to indoctrinate people to accept gender dysphoria as normal (S)

force feeding these abstract ideas to the whole community (S)

Stop discriminating against normal people (S)

Equal attention should and must be awarded those who are the normal men and women of society, the traditional union of a man and woman and the crucial role the strong, traditional family unit has played in the formation of human civilization. (S).

UNE would do better if it stopped trying to pander to gender and sexuality fascists (S)

Another perspective was that LGBTQIA+ inclusive training work was resource-wasting given the scarcity of resources and struggle to pay university costs at UNE, thereby positioning LGBTQIA+ inclusion outside resource-enhancing policies and procedures:

University costs continue to rise and I am consistently getting emails from the UNE executive team about restructures, and facing truly gigantic class sizes. These resources should be put into teaching, that is what I am paying for (S)

Also concerning was the resistance to LGBTQIA+ visibility by cis gay and lesbian staff who saw this as spotlighting their lives in "embarrassing" ways, that it was not about equality, and that it did not allow for hetero-assimilationism.

Speaking as a lesbian, I just want to be treated like every other person. Please stop pandering to the extremists of the communities and realise that the majority of us are embarrassed by these over the top initiatives, we don't want special treatment, just fair and equitable treatment! (S)

As a gay man I feel like you would be invading my private life. Sometimes less is more, and over-promotion can feel like tokenism and also that we're a special group and not a part of the wider community (S)

3.8 Recommendations: Policies, Procedures and Facilities

1. Establish a protocol which assesses any policy or other university instrument as they are reviewed or developed which sits under the Diversity Rule. This protocol should ensure the development and renewal of intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusion policies including in student enrolment, People and Culture, trusted and reliable grievance and reporting procedures, student services and support and medical facilities.
2. Continue to develop more effective strategies to enhance visibility across social media and other forms of messaging, events, building inclusive services and facilities that foster trust and accessibility.
3. An established and active Ally Network to initiative LGBTQIA+ inclusive and intersectional practices, run events, participate in policy reviews and advocate for LGBTQIA+ inclusive services and facilities, led by allies, and LGBTQIA+ staff and students.
4. Inclusion of LGBTQIA+ awareness training in induction programs for staff, students and external contractors.
5. Provide clear, streamlined and accessible complaints information and procedures, for straightforward and confidential reporting processes. The University has commenced a thorough revision of staff and student complaints mechanisms following the 2023 UNE Safety Culture and Wellbeing Review.
6. LGBTQIA+ Awareness and/or Allyship training to be mandatory for all staff and students, including Executive, upon joining UNE (as part of staff induction and student orientation, in particular, students holding leadership positions), with a refresher course to be completed every three years.
7. UNE's demographic data collection processes need to be reviewed in regard to staff and students holding intersectional identities, noting there is no way to record voluntary report gender identity and/or sexuality.
8. Update the language in policies to reflect respectful and inclusive terminology for people of diverse sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression. The development of an inclusive language guide is currently underway: une.edu.au/staff-current/people-and-culture/about-us/equity/inclusive-language-guides
9. Develop procedures to accommodate gender affirmation, as well as name changes in staff and student records.
10. Security staff to be given training as first responders to likely incidents. Security staff should be familiar with referral pathways, and be given training as first responders to incidents. UNE should have a signed agreement with contractors regarding expected behaviours and accountability.
11. The Ally Network to:
 - a. develop its own set of guidelines/code of conduct, and
 - b. have its own Teams, and
 - c. Facebook page [these three items have been achieved in 2023-24]

Terms of Reference have subsequently been developed here: [Ally Network Terms of Reference - University of New England \(UNE\)](#). The Ally Network should be a member of, and report to the Diversity Advisory Committee. The importance of this work needs to be recognised through time allocation for participating staff, particularly recognising the contribution of professional staff who are not allocated a 'service' component to their workload, as well as adequate resourcing of meetings, and committee projects.



4. Curriculum and Pedagogy

In this chapter, findings relating to curriculum and pedagogy are presented. These results have been limited because by this point in the survey (Q49), many participants, particular heterosexual participants, had already exited the survey (44 hetero-participants answered this question, 43 cis man/woman).

4.1 Students wanting inclusion and diversity in curriculum and pedagogy

There was a strong call for LGBTQIA+ inclusion in curriculum and pedagogy, by both implementing LGBTQIA+ content and/or updating existing content in courses that address diverse sexualities and genders. There were also some negative responses questioning the “relevance” of LGBTQIA+ inclusion in the curriculum, for instance:

I question the relevance of including some issues within the curriculum when it has no relevance to the course being studied. (S)

Of course, not every unit will include content which needs revision, but regardless of the material being taught, we can strive as an institution to support all students to feel seen and respected while learning. less than one fifth (17.9%) of LGBTQIA+ respondents did not feel that their identity/ies and intersectionality were included as part of the curriculum. Students made recommendations for further improvements that acknowledged the crucial role that teaching staff could play in facilitating inclusive environments, including in online lectures and tutorials:

Acknowledging different identities and pronouns, incorporating LGBT+ experiences and issues into the curriculum (S)

Lecturers should be more aware of the possibility that someone in their class is not heterosexual or cisgender (S)

As an online student, lecturers having their pronouns in zoom lectures and introductory forum posts would be extremely helpful, as well as making it known they are an ally and encouraging students to do the same (S)

In the open-ended survey responses, students offered feedback regarding the positive shifts they had seen in their classes:

I like that some staff have started adding their pronouns to emails, and I like that there's information on how to write inclusively in assessments, eg. using gender-less language like chairperson instead of chairman or police officer instead of policewoman (S)





4.2 Teaching staff taking initiative in absence of systemic policies or approach from UNE

When interviewees were asked about personal experiences or observations at UNE of LGBTQIA+ inclusion initiatives and opportunities (on campus and online), most believed individual lecturers were taking initiatives but there was no systemic curriculum and pedagogical policy. Examples of good pedagogy included:

there needs to be a specific set of steps for the lecturer to take so they're not floundering, because a lot of the time the lecturer or a student in class wants to say something but they're largely by themselves and they don't know what to do... like when you go into class you've got your first slide, hopefully it's an acknowledgement of country. And after that, there could be a slide like, "I understand that coming into this class, I'll be respectful..." etc (Int 1)

My colleague said, "On every topic that we cover, I've built into it this trimester a point of reflection for the students. We're asking them to reflect on how much of what you've just learned is framed and determined by the white European colonial

institution of the discipline, and if we turn that upside down, looking at it from an Indigenous perspective, an LGBTI perspective, what would that look like?" I thought, "Wow. How cool is that?" (Int 13)

we were just about to run a multiday field trip, and we have trans girls in our class. We weren't sure of the bathroom facilities, and we didn't want to make anyone feel uncomfortable. You made a suggestion that we just call them up and ask what's the situation. I was like, "Damn, that's a good idea," so I called them up, and they said that all of the bathrooms are gender neutral. There were no girls' and boys' bathrooms. ...It was absolutely a non-issue, but it was something that we made sure to think about and ensure that it wasn't a problem before we even got there. Those girls were some of the most enthusiastic. ... We used their pronouns very clearly in the buses and things like that, and their names, so that there was no mistaking throughout the trip. Everyone just went with it. (Int 9)

Recommendations: Curriculum and Pedagogy

1. Induction programmes for both staff and students regarding intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusive course content as is discipline appropriate, including behaviours on campus and online classes.
2. Curriculum inclusion working groups within each School and Faculty to audit course content and build programs to ensure course materials are inclusive where necessary.
3. Online classes to begin with statements for students to e-sign regarding awareness of respectful conduct.

5. Safety and Wellbeing

In relation to safety and wellbeing, our survey results corroborate the findings of the Ernst and Young (2023) report and demonstrate that there is a greater need for support for staff wellbeing at UNE. Our results provide necessary demographic data on intersectional LGBTQIA+ identities which suggest that there is a need for tailored strategies to improve their safety and wellbeing. This survey found that neither staff nor students at UNE who identify as LGBTQIA+ feel well supported.

The strongest needs within this group were identified by:

1. students living in the intersections of LGBTQIA+ and disability/neurodivergence;
2. trans and gender diverse staff and students; and
3. LGBTQIA+ students living off campus.

5.1 The role of minority stress and its impacts on staff wellbeing at UNE

The minority stress model (Meyer 2006; 2010) analyses the complex relationship between external (discrimination/prejudice) and internal (self-doubt/self-hate/guilt/shame) stressors that shape the experience of multiple-minority groups who are “more likely to be exposed to experiences of stigmatization, discrimination, and fear of rejection” and “the impact of hypervigilance, personal identification with minority status, and negative self-perceptions” (Cyrus 2017: 194-195). Almost 40 percent (39.5%) of gender diverse participants reported being the target of unwanted jokes, innuendos, negative commentary as a direct result of their trans, gender diverse, or non-binary gender identity and expression. This 39.5% is made up of, 80% students and 20% staff.

Fewer LGBTQIA+ respondents than non-LGBTQIA+ respondents disagreed with the statement “I would be comfortable having “all gender” or “gender neutral”

toilets in my work/study areas (assuming male/female toilets are still available)” (5.4% and 14.4% respectively). However, the frequency of disagreement substantially increases if conversion of all toilets was proposed (24.6% of LGBTQIA+ and 40.4% of non-LGBTQIA+ respondents). These findings corroborate those from the *Private Lives 3* research where trans and gender diverse participants reported higher rates of psychological distress, suicidal ideation and attempts, and poorer self-rated health than cis women and men. Specifically, 57% of LGBTQIA+ people currently felt accepted “a lot” or “always” at an educational institution; where the proportion of non-binary participants who felt accepted “a lot” or “always” was significantly fewer (AFAB 35.5%; AMAB 46.5%), similarly for trans women (38.2%) and trans men (41.8%) .

It often feels like I can only live in one diverse community at a time, i.e. I can be religious or queer but not both at UNE

5.2 Intersecting identities made it even harder for staff and students to experience belonging at UNE

The survey also asked a range of questions in regard to how having multiple LGBTQIA+ diversities/ intersectionalities affected work/study experience. Multiple-minority stress occurs at the intersections, borders and overlaps of multiple sites of marginality and discrimination. The open-ended responses also highlighted areas of concern or critical reflection about their own and others' intersectionalities at UNE, where respondents identified their 'immigrant status', 'living on the poverty line', ageism and sexism as affecting their experiences of belonging, among others:

ageism and sexism have had a larger impact than my sexuality or my cultural background, due in part to the fact that I am not out at work (S)

Because I am different to others, it can be hard to feel like I fit in and to connect - asexual (aceflux), autism spectrum, mental illness. (S)

Respondents also shared that their neurodivergence, as well as their ethnic, cultural and faith backgrounds were not compatible with the way UNE engaged with them:

There is no support for anyone that is a black person of any sort of varying queer identity. It is not published, accepted or really understood. It is like there are two aspects of my college life that are unable to mix because of stigma surrounding them (S)

I come from an extremely conservative religious background that does not condone same-sex sexuality. This means that I exist in an awkward middle ground between 1) queer people who dislike this religion 2) a religion that dislikes queer people 3) a religion which is mocked, despised and hated by mainstream culture 4) a religion that most of my friends and family happen to belong to, which is incredibly rich and provides an unparalleled depth and meaning to life. I have always felt like I have to conceal aspects of myself, in every environment. I can't say that this affects my work/study experience because I am very good at leading double lives and editing/concealing myself, it's just a bit exhausting in the long run. Overall the things that really degrade my work/study experience have more to do with my neurodiversity. I have depression on and off, asperger's, am extremely introverted and find

particular unfamiliar settings exhausting in a way that neurotypicals just do not experience. If I wanted to instantly make the world a nicer, happier place and could choose between "end homophobia" and "stop designing everything for neurotypicals" I'd probably go for the latter because it would have more tangible benefits. The term 'diverse identities' should include not just people of diverse sexual identities, but also diverse neurological identities. The two cohorts have much in common, particularly in their experiences of institutional and personal discrimination. (S)

It often feels like I can only live in one diverse community at a time, i.e. I can be religious or queer but not both at UNE (S)

International Students aren't disclosing [their LGBTQIA+ identities]. If there's not a visible sign that there's inclusive practises in the international area, definitely we will see a gap in the international students having enough support they need. They expressed to me, "I don't want my family to know that I'm struggling." They might tell the Wellness Centre because we've told them it's a confidential discussion. But they have expressed to me before, "I'm not sure I want to talk to the offices-" So the system needs to be in place for them to feel comfortable (Int 6)

Intersectionality, that's just not being considered. They want you to tick one box. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, you go there. Disability, you go there. LGBTQIA is not even in there. ... They just think, but you're gay. How can you have a disability? It's just pure ignorance... the main way my office hears about LGBTQIA students is through the mental health challenges. Disability. Neurodiverse. They come to us for that, and then disclose their gender identity and ask, "What do you have in place?" (Int 7)

Some antagonism was also expressed regarding intersectionality in policy, procedure and services:

intersectionality divides communities and ostracises people who are not part of the intersectional/gender diverse community as they are prevented from speaking their own thoughts and feelings as they will often be labelled every "ism" or "phobia" under the sun to shut them up (S)

Interviewees unanimously supported the need for more inclusion of intersectionality in all facets of LGBTQIA+ inclusion:

When I came to UNE, the first thing I noticed was that it was all white women working here [in my sector]... I know that we have been pushing to get that changed. We have a policy for hiring a percentage of Indigenous, but not LGBTQ. There's no LGBTQIA+ inclusion. ... Our Indigenous guy, the first thing he walked in, he was like, "Where's your Indigenous artwork?" I have actually talked to the students, and they do find it alienating. I had one girl who walked in and said, "I don't feel like I'm allowed to come in here, because I'm not smart enough. This looks like a place for smart people." Everything takes forever at UNE. (Int 3).

For intersectional LGBTQIA+ communities, minority status is considered to be based predominantly on sexuality, sex, and gender diversity, race, culture, faith and/or religious affiliations (Cyrus 2017). Using an intersectional lens, multiple-minority status can be expanded to include other intersecting marginalities such as age, migration status, disability, English language proficiency, employment status, and class. In the following pie diagrams, there is an overall and recurring marginality of the same groups. If these intersect, the experiences could be compounded. For example, Figure 17 indicates intersex, trans and diverse gender identity, First Peoples, BIPOC and people of faith feel the least valued (under 10%).

Three times fewer LGBTQIA+ respondents feel valued at UNE.
5.4% LGBTQIA+ and 14.4% cis het.



Almost a fifth (18.7%) of LGBTQIA+ respondents in our survey reported being the target of serious bullying/harassment targeting their trans, gender diverse, or gender non-binary identity and expression (17.1% of students and 15.8% of staff). This was a more significant percentage than the National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) reported for UNE at 12%. A quarter (25.0%) of people of LGBTQIA+ participants reported being misgendered, and over a third (32.1%) said most people they work/study with are not aware of their gender diversity.

Almost half LGBTQIA+ respondents (47.1%) reported witnessing harassment and bullying (mild to serious) of others. Whereas just 29.3% of non-LGBTQIA+ participant reported witnessing bullying or harassment. As stated earlier, this is harmful in relation to apprehended discrimination and vicarious trauma, but also raises the issue of whether the witnesses felt they had the skills to be active allies or active bystanders in those situations.

Witnessing Bullying

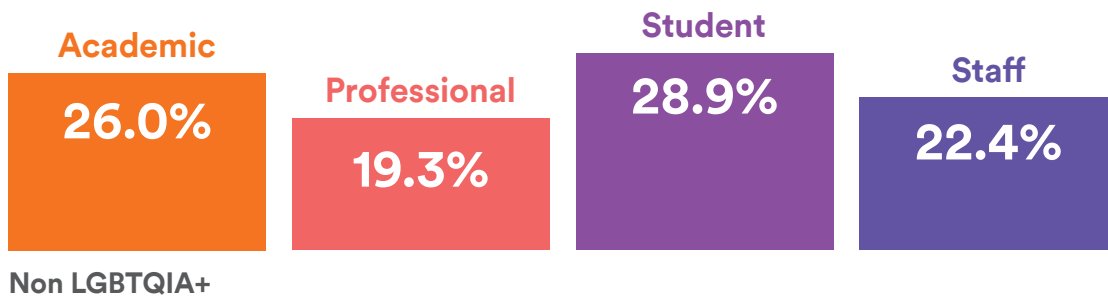
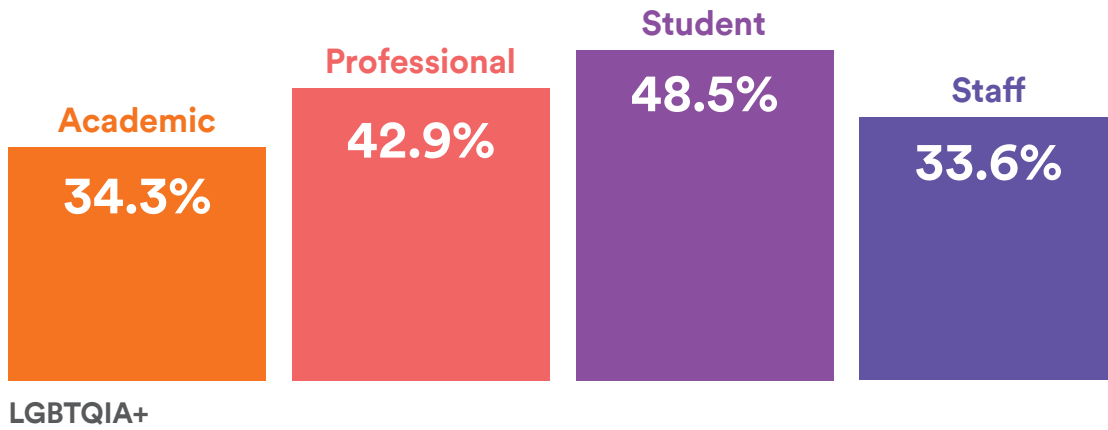


Figure 18: I have witnessed more serious bullying targeting people with variations of sex characteristics at work/in my area of study

When interviewees and Ally Training participants were asked about their personal experiences or observations at UNE of LGBTQIA+ discrimination (on campus and online), they reported experiencing:

1. overt discrimination
2. harassment
3. invisibility
4. micro-aggressions
5. international students living in unsafe spaces
6. vicarious trauma

More than 90 percent (92.6%) of LGBTQIA+ survey respondents could not name any support services UNE provides to them.

These experiences are compounded for intersectional respondents. No respondents who identified as both living with a disability and LGBTQIA+ could name any UNE support services. The following interview excerpt is an example of compounded risk and lack of safety due to the failure and lack of collaboration of multiple sectors to keep students safe:

*My daughter's bisexual girlfriend with mental health issues in one of the colleges attempted suicide and agreed to go with the ambulance from my daughter's place about 9:30pm. And then at 1:30am, she walked back to the college. But she's just gone in because she's a danger to herself, she's still possibly in that mindset and you're allowing her to walk home at 1:30 in the morning through some dodgy parts of town. I did say [to UNE], "Look, I'll go to the hospital and complain." And they said, "No, don't do that." They didn't want me to. Where are the UNE policies and duty of care to their students in residence and the fact it has a lot of power in the local areas, and a medical school attached to that hospital? This young person needs help. And if you're associated with this hospital and you're bringing a lot of money into town as a university, then what's your responsibility when these things happen? \$5 that either the public health service or the university could have spent on a taxi. **I think you sell this place [UNE] on it being inclusive and family-orientated. So then you've got to act like a family** (Int 5).*

If I wanted to support diverse identities, the ones I'd pay attention to would be the world's most excluded classes of people: those who have major disabilities and illnesses (S).

I am an employee with chronic mental illness and neurodiversity (these drive the traits I am most praised for), but I have not informed UNE for fear of stigma/a loss of opportunities (S).

Minimal to no mention of support for neurodiverse employees in UNE Policy, due to which I am hesitant to disclose my difficulties in the workplace to supervisors and UNE HR for fear of negative fallouts (S).

Most Australians identify me as "white" so generally race is not a "problem" for me. Most people don't know I am pansexual, so generally sexuality is not a problem for me. I generally wear comfortable clothes on my body (no point in getting glammed up for a zoom) so that's not really been exposed to anyone. Being "neurodiverse" makes much of my life a challenge, far more than any of my sexual/gender/racial/ cultural characteristics (S).

mental health and physical disabilities can sometimes impact how I handle the workload, my time management and physical ability to complete written tasks (arthritis in my hands makes it difficult to type very long, eye-sight problems) (S)

The above results were reflected in how LGBTQIA+ respondents felt about their workplace and studies as evidenced in the graphs below. LGBTQIA+ people were less likely to feel mentally well at work compared to non-LGBTQIA+ respondents (21.3% and 16.2% respectively: Figure 13), although we note that the percentages are low for both groups, reflecting the findings of the EY work. Substantially more LGBTQIA+ respondents than non-LGBTQIA+ participants reported that they could not be themselves at work (16.0% and 8.2% respectively, Figure). A similar trend was seen across multiple questions including LGBTQIA+ people feeling less productive (12.9% compared to 6.4% of non-LGBTQIA+ participants) and less engaged (18.2% of LGBTQIA+ compared to 11.3% of non-LGBTQIA+, Figure 19)



Figure 19: Proportion of respondents who agreed with the statement “I feel mentally well at work/in my area of study”

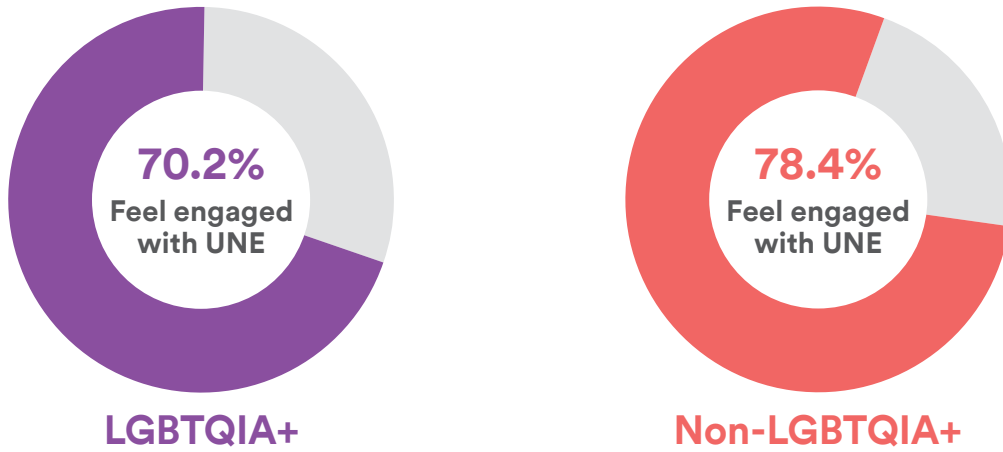


Figure 20: Proportion of respondents who agreed with the statement “I feel engaged with UNE and my work/in my area of study”

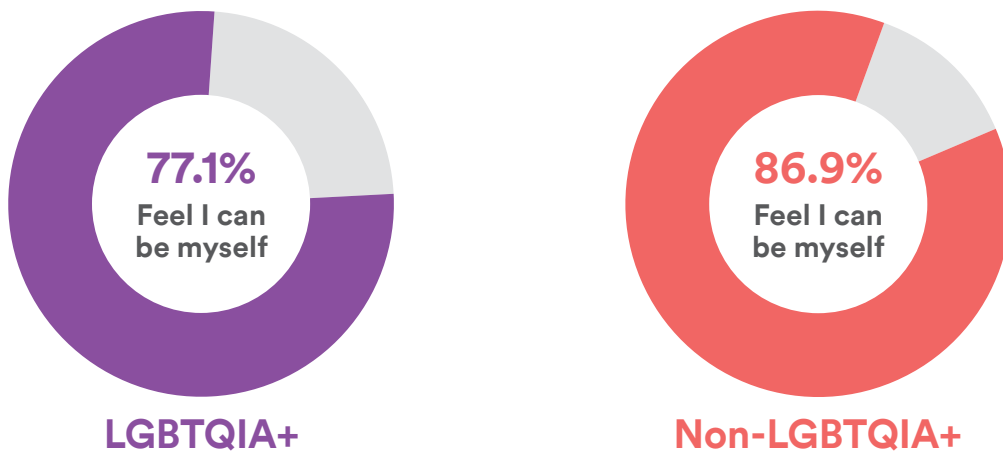


Figure 21: Proportion of respondents who agreed with the statement “I feel I can be myself at work/in my area of study”



5.3 Staff and students do not feel safe to disclose their identities

While 63.9% of LGBTQIA+ respondents feel a sense of belonging at UNE, this is fewer than non-LGBTQIA+ respondents (73.6%). Both staff and students felt similarly with 59.0% and 65.1% respectively. Almost 60 percent (58.1%) of LGBTQIA+ respondents believe they would not be accepted by some of their colleagues/classmates (57.5% of staff and 58.2% of students).

Almost a third (32.8%) of all LGBTQIA+ survey respondents were not yet comfortable disclosing their identity for fear of rejection, alienation, teasing and bullying. Almost one third of students were not comfortable disclosing their identity (29.1%) while 45.0% of staff felt uncomfortable. Substantially more professional staff felt uncomfortable than academic staff; 57.9% and 33.3% respectively. More than a quarter (26.8%) of LGBTQIA+ respondents believed that being open about their intersectional identities would be detrimental to the workplace/study experience. Considerably more staff than students believed it would be negative (42.2% and 21.5% respectively). Likewise more than a third of LGBTQIA+ respondents believed being open about their LGBTQIA+ identities and intersectionality would negatively impact their career and/or study progression. Again, considerably more staff were concerned than students; 57.1% and 35.8% respectively. **Academic staff were most concerned with 64.7% (45.5% professional staff).**

I am an online student and disclose as little as possible to avoid discrimination by other students in forums (S)

I do not disclose anything about my sexuality unless I am directly asked and it is within the safest environment (S)

I don't feel confident that it wouldn't involve leaving

a note on my record not recommending me for promotion. (S)

The culture of professionalism often excludes such conversations if you are not normative (S)

Almost two thirds of LGBTQIA+ respondents (58.0%) believe they would not be accepted by some of their colleagues/classmates, comprising 66.7% of professional staff, 58.2% of students and 50.0% of academic staff.

Over 10% (12.3%) of LGBTQIA+ participants avoided LGBTQIA+ inclusion strategies for fear of assumptions being made about their identities (11.1% of students and 12.5% of staff).

15.1% of LGBTQIA+ respondents reported they avoided inclusion initiatives (including reading posters, pamphlets, attending events and training) for fear of people *knowing* that they are a member of LGBTQIA+ communities (15.0% of staff and 14.2% of students).

40.7% of LGBTQIA+ respondents felt they were more productive at work/study after disclosing their identities and/or sex variations to their colleagues/classmates/teachers. (42.1% of student and 38.2% of staff).

Academic staff overwhelmingly agreed (and more frequently than other participants) with 58.8% of LGBTQIA+ academics reporting they were more productive.

Significantly, given these reports of minority stress, and identity concealment, it may be the case that these figures represent an undercount of LGBTQIA+ people who are fearful or reticent to disclose their identities. We can see from the table below that there is a range of disclosure options people have utilised (Table 3).

Answer	%	Count
I have not informed anyone of my identities	22.2	57
I have informed most people but not all	19.8	51
I have informed a few, trusted colleagues/classmates	16.3	42
I have informed nearly everyone of my identities	14.8	38
I have only informed my close friends who work/study at UNE, and no one else	14.8	38
I have informed members of the LGBTQIA+ community and some members of my communities (multicultural, First Nations, disability, and more)	9.3	24
I have informed support people who are not at UNE	1.9	5

Table 3: Responses to the question "Indicate to what degree you have informed/disclosed your identity in your work or in your area of study"

These findings concur with Asquith and Ferfolja's (2020) work which found that fear of discrimination, harassment and violence *in itself* affects LGBTQ+ staff and students significantly, leading to an avoidance of participation in some activities because of possible prejudice or discrimination, and believing they are safer if they hide their sexuality or gender identity. Thus, the

agency exercised in not disclosing, though coerced through social and institutional pressures, is a protective response. This protective response also exacerbates various forms of mental ill-health, and feeling in danger/unsafe, but this underreporting also may lead to an under-estimation of the need for services and resourcing.

5.4 Disclosure is often a negative experience at UNE

Open-ended survey responses and interviewees, particularly staff, provided detailed examples of these experiences regarding disclosure:

My sexuality has been discussed openly by staff in front of students and just out of earshot of myself. The ultra-religious members of staff have stopped speaking to me when they have found out about me (S).

I've become more private about who I am because it's just easier that way. I feel like I've, for better or worse, become quite skilled at shielding myself, especially in a professional space, from any sort of difficulty there. But then I'm conscious that, well, that's a kind of discriminatory environment in itself, that that's the way it's easier for me to do my work, is to be less public about who I am (Int 13)

When interviewees were asked about their personal experiences or observations at UNE of LGBTQIA+ discrimination (on campus and online), they also discussed overt discrimination, feeling invisible, being harassed, and vicarious trauma. They called for more

university-wide systemic awareness and action around student safety and wellbeing:

I think the space in which they can notify these things, they're not comfortable. ... And I go, "Well, go to the police. You don't have to go to the university if you've been assaulted. You can go bypass them". Because I hear people going, "Oh, the university don't do anything." (Int 5)

The university has got its policies around code of conduct and antidiscrimination policies, but we're very reliant on self-reporting on the part of people who have been subject to harassing behaviours. And nine times out of 10, you're in the situation where you've either got secondhand reporting, or when somebody mentions something, you say, "Right okay, and what would you like to happen? Would you like this to be taken any further?" And of course, then you have the situation that people will often be very reticent about that. And however much you say, "Don't worry, you'll be supported in the process", obviously it's understandable that people could be reticent about not taking that forward (Int 8)

Recommendations - Safety and wellbeing

1. Clear and well-disseminated information regarding LGBTQIA+ inclusion policies.
2. All UNE and UNELife student services, including the UNE Medical Centre, to create visible and accessible messaging to foster trust and respect, thereby reducing vicarious trauma.
3. LGBTQIA+ leadership and visibility in mental health and wellbeing strategies and engagement.
4. Update the sexual health information services and information provision at campus medical services to ensure they are intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusive.
5. Seek to promote intersectional LGBTQIA+ staff role models and mentors for students and student peer groups. LGBTQIA+ students need staff role models and mentors who share personal stories and build relationships.
6. Establishing accessible and victim centered complaints reporting and support processes for staff and students including deidentified reporting to Executive and the university community to ensure transparency and accountability.

6. Residential Colleges

As discussed earlier, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) was engaged by UNE in 2018 to undertake an independent, expert led review of the seven residential colleges at UNE. Approximately one-third of residents who responded to the AHRC survey disclosed they had experienced sexual harassment. This rate was two and half times higher for female residents than male residents.

However, in the whole AHRC Report there was only one mention of LGBTQIA+ experiences, and only mentioned as a feature of one college by one student who said, “a welcoming environment for LGBTI students, with the College community demonstrating a strong willingness to celebrate gender diversity” (2018: 42). This lack of LGBTQIA+ inclusion was referred to by one of our interviewees:

In 2018, UNE was the worst university in Australia for sexual harassment and so UNE very strongly were like, “Well, we have to combat this.” But they did it in a very exclusive way, it was very heterosexual, it was very narrow minded (Int 1)

6.1 Limited support for LGBTQIA+ students in residential colleges

Although the survey did not include a specific question about residential colleges, students offered their insights into their college experiences, drawing our attention to these concerns in survey text responses to questions on safety and wellbeing. Adding important data to the *Independent review of residential colleges at the University of New England Final report*, our results demonstrate a strong call for intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusion and leadership in UNE college culture. Colleges were considered very unsafe for LGBTQIA+ students or exclusionary.

The above survey open-ended responses were supported by interviewees:

There are sexual predators especially in the colleges. I think it's all tied in with the same cultural problem, the drinking problem, the hyper sexualization, the getting away from home for the first time. Everyone coming from the small towns ... But we've come a long way. When I first started in college, there were no out students ... When we had some students coming out there was certainly a pushback... We had those people who would say, “I don't care what your sexuality is. Please just don't shove it in my face.” ... I found myself hanging around the sides with some girls who got given some not very nice labels for having sexual liberation (Int 3)

there is almost no representation in the colleges for people that are coloured, have different sexualities or are gender diverse. Although my head of college is very understanding I don't think it is a safe environment for me to come out and I am pretty sure I will be hate-crimed at some point if I did so (S)

Reduce the amount of inappropriate jokes about disability, gender diversity and sexuality diversity in the colleges (S)

More open conversation about hate talk and bullying on college leadership teams (S)

LGBTQIA+ leadership teams in colleges (S)

Apart from a drinking event at college having the theme of Mardi Gras, I haven't heard a single thing about my community. Get your shit together (S).

we had some students who identified as LGBTQIA saying that they had not felt included in the college environment. They're from country areas and wanted to get away from home. They said they probably would not have come if they'd realised they wouldn't be as included in the culture. They had gone through channels, but they didn't feel they were getting the right responses. They want to be involved in college social activities, to be in leadership roles in the college (Int 6).

I know UNE's had a pretty bad reputation for appalling behaviour at the colleges. What I don't like is the idea that the reputation's made it kind of normalised. A bit like, "Oh, yeah. That's just college." (Int 9)

In the Ally Network training session specifically for student leaders of the Residential Colleges, the students addressed ways of extending their role to incorporate LGBTQIA+ safety and inclusion:

Check in one-on-one with [LGBTQIA+ residents], then offering some support services or groups to go to if requested.

Lead by example and ensure the entire leadership team is supporting the residents.

As a leadership team, use pronouns actively within the community, setting the standard that pronouns are accepted and respected.

Call out rude and disrespectful comments and encourage residents to not pry into people's private lives.

Challenge LGBTQIA+ students' assumption their experience of bullying and harassment won't be taken seriously, and urge them to report to head of college if they feel comfortable but ultimately let the decision remain theirs.

Recommendations - Residential Colleges

1. Induction programmes for residential leaders in relation to intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusion and allyship.
2. Develop visibility strategies and community events to foster intersectional LGBTQIA+ college inclusion.
3. Establish an intersectional LGBTQIA+ committee for student residences to contribute to strategies which promote inclusion and safety.
4. Establishing accessible, transparent and victim centered complaints reporting and support processes for staff and students.
5. Update the sexual health information services and information provision at the colleges to ensure they are intersectional and LGBTQIA+ inclusive.



7. UNE in its community and the role of external engagement

The questions in the survey regarding UNE's role in the local, regional and online communities made it clear that this was an important issue. UNE's community engagement was also particularly as discussed in the interviews.

7.1 UNE's regional environment shapes attitudes towards LGBTQIA+ people

When asked how living in a regional/rural/remote location was a significant factor for staff and students in relation to LGBTQIA+ inclusion policies and strategies, 55.4% of Rural/Regional/Remote respondents said they were raised in an environment where same-sex relationships or gender diverse people were not easily accepted. And 35.2% also did not believe UNE's diversity initiatives for the inclusion of people of diverse sexualities, genders, and/or people with variations of sex characteristics have been adequately communicated in their home location.

I will never hold my husband's hand in a shopping centre because I [as a gay man] fear what could happen in a small minded country town. I wouldn't take him to a work event because I already know the whispering and gossip that would begin. (S)

UNE is a product of its rural location. There is a reason why gay men in rural areas are not as visible, survival. You can either be out and proud and risk being hurt or you can keep your head down, get on with your life and keep your business to yourself. I do not feel that I can be who I am at UNE, I wear the mask I always have and I just do my job (S)

7.2 Inclusion is possible in rural communities

However, one interviewee refuted the idea that UNE reflected rural conservatism in relation to diverse genders and sexualities. Instead, it was the internal machinations of UNE that were not keeping up with external regional and national shifts in inclusion.

as someone who grew up in a country town, somewhere much smaller than Armidale, being gay was never a problem for me. I can remember going back home to my hometown with my first boyfriend, introducing him to everybody. I never had any hint of a problem. So I don't think it's the country town or the rural thing particularly. I think there's maybe other cultural aspects to Armidale that are more specific and to UNE as a university that's dysfunctional and conservative (Int 13).

Our findings corroborated and extended the findings of the *Safety Culture and Wellbeing Assessment Report* in relation to regional leadership and local workforce. An important theme was the need for UNE to use its power to develop LGBTQIA+ inclusion strategies in Armidale and the local regions, to partner and collaborate with external services, and hold social and educational events. Over a third (33.2%) of the survey respondents said their local home/community area had not held inclusion related activities or events to reinforce diversity & inclusion, while 39.0% said their local area had not communicated support for people of diverse sexuality

and/or gender and/or people with variations of sex characteristics. And 57.1% believed UNE can take on a leadership role in their home location to advocate for LGBTQIA+ inclusion in their diverse and intersectional communities.

I don't know a specific police officer, a specific legal representative that I could rely on. UNE hasn't set up a referral system of people out there to support you. There's none of that information (Int 1)

Armidale has a medical school at the hospital. UNE staff work with the staff at the hospital. We do lots with agriculture as well. Something can happen in those spaces (Int 2)

There needs to be more outreach. Almost every function they have is up at the university. One of the things that we're looking at is a centre in the middle of town so students don't have to feel like they have to come in here. We need to go to the youth. We need to run events there. Because there's people who don't feel safe coming into our white spaces (Int 3)

The community runs events and UNE takes part. There is a Pride community here. We shouldn't be trying to create a new community in UNE and trying to invite people in. We need to invite ourselves to the Pride community that already exists (Int 4).

However, one of the interviewees working with local First Nations people discussed how the situation was reversed for sistagirls and brotherboys: there was a great deal of acceptance in home locations with stigma and exclusion being experienced at UNE, thereby affecting their wanting to enrol.

LBGTQ Indigenous young people, there's a lot in town but none that are enrolled in university, not that I know of. Indigenous people have always accepted gay people in our community. ...Never saw any discrimination. The only time is when they leave our communities, and they're on to white communities. That's when it becomes an issue, when they feel uncomfortable, because they're not uncomfortable where we're from (Int 11).

7.3 Impact of Inclusion on Enrolments – Positive and Negative Perspectives

The issue of whether LGBTQIA+ inclusion strategies would influence enrolments positively or negatively was also an important theme discussed by interviewees. Many expressed the view that enrolments would be higher, and employees wishing to work at UNE would be increased and more intersectional if UNE undertook visible Allyship in policy, curriculum, resourcing and cultural safety.

Definitely our responsibility is to setting students up for their life. For being global citizens. It's about the culture they want to create locally and globally. We're setting our students up to succeed educationally, but we also have to set them to up to succeed culturally (Int 2).

I have personally learnt of a young man in Armidale who did come out. His own family have been very, very accepting. But he hasn't found it easy in the local community to find people he can relate to at the University. He had to leave, go to Sydney. Missed home, came back, but didn't fit in. And moved back to Sydney. And I think that's the hard thing, the choices people may have in the rural areas. That they have to leave their family to find some sort of sense of peace. ***I feel very conscious that there's beautiful people that we're missing.*** He would have been able to offer a lot to the university community (Int 6)

What also emerged was an “enrolment dilemma” discussed predominantly by staff: whether ‘advertising’ LGBTQIA+ inclusion at UNE affected enrolment in positive or detrimental ways. Students also engaged in this question, predominantly saying that not enrolling at UNE was linked to students concerned at the lack of LGBTQIA+ inclusion/support. More than half (51.1%) of respondents ($n=1,055$) said UNE’s track record in LGBTQIA+ inclusion would influence their decision to work/study at UNE. This finding concurs with the results of a previous research report where the number of multicultural, multifaith LGBTQIA+ students, particularly international students, proactively selected the universities they would attend based on how welcoming they were to LGBTIQ+ people and cultural/faith diversity (Pallotta-Chiarolli et al, 2020).

The university is actually in a very powerful position, and can take a lead in a way which is not fearful of retribution... Okay, so some people were offended or alienated, because they felt that they would be more comfortable in an environment where things were hidden, discrimination was unchallenged. ... I'd certainly much rather we were a university that was saying, "Actually, we want to have the kind of profile, be the kind of community, and have the kind of culture that actually says, "This is a safe place for you to be whoever you are." And if that means for a time some students say, "Hey, I'd rather go somewhere else" well, good luck to them. And really, are we losing? I don't actually feel that's a price that's too high to pay (Int 8).

I think we'd be getting increased enrolment and we're making quite a huge effort in this regard... I think, "What's the way to help people [staff] stay?" because academia's a hard gig. Creating a community where people feel safe is really the priority (Int 9)

The reality is they [students] come in and say, "If you don't do these things, I'm going to go to Sydney." And those are the words that the administrators here hate to hear... You find people who express "I myself am not against diversity, but I fear that the students that I interact with will be." Present those people with evidence from the students, from the survey responses, that say, "Look, the fact that UNE celebrates pride month is an important thing that brought me here, because I was worried that a regional university would be just as conservative as my parents" (Int 10)

the numbers of students we are attracting is falling very rapidly over the last few years ... So, my strong belief is if we were actively a more inclusive workplace and cultural environment and intellectual environment, we might turn that around. What we have to do is work towards a cultural tipping point ... We're getting close to that tipping point because there are people doing such wonderful work in their little sphere of influence, a certain point where I think the less positive people are going to suddenly just start realising that they're left behind (Int 13)

However, some interviewees believed “if you push too hard in this direction”, enrolments would decrease from local communities- which was not always considered a negative issue- or there was a need to find “the middle ground”:

We don't want the people who identify as queer to feel unsafe, but we don't want people who identify as straight to feel alienated either. And we have to

have that middle ground between people who have legitimate conservative values need to feel legitimised and maybe they have always been the loudest voice, and that makes us feel a bit marginalised. We need to walk a road that is a safe space for everybody... We can't say this is a straight university, but we can't say this is a gay university. We need to say this is a safe university. I don't think it needs to be this, “We need to be more gay or more straight.” We just need to feel more safe (Int 3)

If you push too hard in this direction, we're going to lose students because they'll feel that the university is not part of their own culture. ...you're going to find students who are going to say, “No, I don't want to go to a place where those people are.” And there's a part of me that just says, “Well, screw them. I don't need them disrupting my class with asinine comments.” (Int 10)

7.4 The role that UNE can play in leading our region

There was also a sense that UNE was not only a regional university, and the existing online and international student diversity could be leveraged to increase LGBTQIA+ inclusion. Indeed, there was a concern that the stereotype of rural conservatism was being used by previous perceived conservative leadership at UNE to not resource LGBTQIA+ inclusion strategies.

I do understand that the history of UNE is a lot of financial support from very wealthy landowners, a history of rural landowners sending their children for a higher education and they're the ones who are making donations. And so that's why for a very long time it's been very rigid and unchanging. So, UNE might lose some of that financial support, and the backing and the status. But also UNE relies hugely upon its international students, so it's about inclusivity. We are not excluding a certain group of people to shine a light on others, we're widening the horizons (Int 1)

Armidale, it's a university town. They talk about “town and gown” and about the divisions between. Millions of dollars in grants for sheep, cattle, chickens. So, we are a regional university. We serve a regional population. **We're also global** ... We have

a lot of geographic diversity, people who come from the city and have never really been outside of the city before, people who come from other parts of the world, and people who come from down the road. But there is that expectation among the staff, that if students are from the regional areas, they're going to come in with these sorts of conservative views (Int 10).

*92% of our students in my school are online. They're not in Armidale. Huge percentage of them are not even in our region. The majority are in urban centres. They're in Sydney, Melbourne. So, **this is a really interesting question about the identity of UNE as a regional university, because what is our region?** ... Our staff and students are scattered across all of Australia. This is the bigger picture of, “What is the region we serve?”... I think one thing the university can do is be the megaphone for the voices of regional people. If nothing else, we can be the amplifier for the people who live in regional New South Wales through what we are doing [in LGBTQIA+ inclusion (Int 13)*

UNE as having a place of regional and town power, centrality and leadership, which could be more effectively leveraged for LGBTQIA+ inclusion, was also a strong theme in the interviews.

UNE is incredibly important to Armidale, so many businesses closed and people had to relocate because of the pandemic and they lost their student populous. Armidale, it's conservative, quite a Christian community, but I haven't had anyone yell at me for my identity. ...I think UNE specifically could advertise for jobs going, "Hey, we are looking for diverse people." And that would show the town, it would wake them up as to, "The university's taking these people and they're hard workers and they're doing a good job." ... Around town there are stickers, "This is an LGBTQ+ safe space." (Int 1)

The issue of employing local staff rather than staff from elsewhere who are not committed to the region corroborates and extends the findings of the Safety, Culture and Wellbeing Assessment Report.

We need local people with local solutions for this. They can't find enough recruitment in Armidale. Where are they looking? What are they looking for? What are they doing wrong? Why do they want to ship people in from other places? Why are they not training people? There is a big Indigenous population, and I know it's a troubled Indigenous population for historical reasons. Why are they not recruiting from that? Why are they not recruiting from the local LGBTQIA population? So, I think to build a local community, you have to be part of the local community. You have to get local community representatives. You have to have people who are important in the local community. Do they have local community engagement groups? ... you need to talk to the community and get it done. (Int 3)

Improved collaborations and commitment to LGBTQIA+ inclusion between UNE and local external services was unanimously recommended. Building on existing industry linkages with national peak body organisations including the Australian LGBTQIA+ Multicultural Council (AGMC), ACON (the AIDS Council of NSW, the peak body for health and wellbeing for people of diverse sexuality, gender identity and/or expression) and the New England Regional Arts Museum (NERAM), as well as developing new relationships, are next steps for this work.

I think NERAM is a really good example of a leader in the community. Because they put on events like Winter Blooming. Their word choicing (sic) is inclusive (Int 2).

Winter Blooming is a festival supported by AGMC and ACON and more recently, UNE, and held at the New England Regional Arts Museum (NERAM). The festival celebrates LGBTQIA+, First Nations and multicultural learning, arts, culture, communities, and allies. The inaugural festival was held in 2019, and its second and third festivals in 2022, 2023 were well attended, and represented a unique cultural, social and artistic space in the New England and North West regions of NSW. The 2024 festival launched this report. The third festival in August 2023 garnered regional and national attention and participation from artists, academics, writers and performers and attracted regional interest through interviews on NBN and ABC2. The 2023 festival won the Australian Museums and Galleries Association Social Impact (group 1) award¹². The 2022 festival was highly commended in the Engagement Programs category of the IMAGinE Awards 2023 run by Museums and Galleries of NSW¹³. Thus, it is increasingly positioning UNE and Armidale as a regional hub of intersectional queer and multicultural learning, arts and community, and thus for university students who wish to attend UNE for its intersectional policies, culture and local regional environment.

Interviewees proposed that UNE be responsible in reaching out to feeder schools about intersectionality in preparation for university life.

UNE needs to take responsibility for the feeder schools, it needs to step into the feeder schools and talk to the students about what will be acceptable and not acceptable at a university and what the schools should be doing now. There are boys who come to UNE from the local private school where a range of discriminatory behaviours haven't been addressed. UNE can influence the schools to prepare students for uni by national and international laws and values, given the school rhetoric of preparing students for the world (Int 5)

¹²<https://amaga.org.au/Web/Web/Awards/2024-AMaGA-Awards-Winners.aspx?hkey=f7557216-4121-422b-acc2-aca264debb96>

¹³<https://mgns.w.org.au/sector/programs/imagine/winners/winners-2023/>

<https://www.netimes.com.au/2023/08/12/triumphant-return-of-festival-that-celebrates-and-supports-diversity/>

UNE life is about experience, and it's the sports, it's the cafés, it's the cinema. Actually, it's quite unique in a country town that the university funds those things. I would really love a cultural centre right in the middle of town, set up for everyone (Int 6)

In the following are examples of how UNE is already central to rural wellbeing, and thus has already established partnerships and connections:

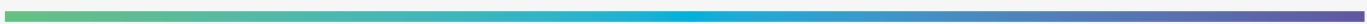
the university has worked with the city council around the old library site and created what's called Nova, and the university's initiative, which has been ongoing for about 10 years now, the Smart Region Incubator ...making use of a space that was a bit sad and neglected. It's in the centre of town, it's very much been developed through collaboration and co-creation with people in the community. And it's quite deliberately set up to be like an open-door facility... There were problems around the local soccer competition. The university stepped in, and now the UNE Sport formally organises the soccer competition...

[and] the importance of soccer as a sport for our local refugee community for example, the Ezidi community, giving opportunities for the refugee community (Int 8).

I really thought that in a town like this the uni would be one of the centrepieces of the town; that people would be really excited to know what was going on at the university. I'm astonished at the diversity, and the high-calibre research that goes on, and the cool people that come down and speak. You have this huge resource and I really wish that people in the town knew more about it. ... There's ... buildings, gathering places, spaces in town that the university controls. ... I think the business school does a bunch of stuff with them, because they're involved with companies in town. Just having that additional bit of UNE as LGBTQIA+ positive, inclusive, and enthusiastic, just there on the signs, whatever it is we're doing, where we're saying, "Come to UNE, study better tractors." (Int 10)

Recommendations – UNE in the wider community

1. UNE Ally Network to engage with feeder schools to undertake collaborations and preparations for intersectional university life.
2. UNE to lead and collaborate in intersectional LGBTQIA+ community engagements, events, councils and schools in Armidale and other regional areas.



8. Conclusion

The authors and the Ally Network remain committed to continuing to build a UNE community that is diverse, engaged and supported to teach, learn and research. We want inclusion and diversity to be part of the fabric of UNE.

This Report has demonstrated the work UNE has undertaken to better understand how to undertake systemic and structural improvements and resourcing respectful intersectional LGBTQIA+ communities' projects and provides recommendations for ongoing improvements. In addition to the work that is needed, this report also acknowledges the significant work that is already underway, especially across visibility, allyship and procedural and other institutional reform.

This work must be understood as foundational to UNE's future success and sustainability. It's also work that will pay tremendous dividends for staff, students, our university community, and the communities with which we engage.

I'm very embedded in UNE. I'm very fond of UNE. It's come to become my home place. And my found family (Int 3)

Appendix 1

Accessibility Action Plan Sponsorship: Ally Network, ACON, Pride & Diversity

University of New England LGBTIQ+ Ally Network Training and Inclusive Practice

Project snapshot

Initial Cost Estimate: \$84,000

Research, Evaluation and Publication \$27,500

Training and workshops – \$15,500

LGBTIQ+ Ally Network Workshop – \$14,500

LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Train the Trainer - \$22,000

Marketing/Badges/Events - \$5,000

Potential funding source: DSP, SAFF

Start Date: March 2021

End Date: March 2022

Ongoing financial implications:

Maintain ongoing membership - Ally Network, ACON, Pride & Diversity, Ongoing Consultancy fee's

Priority

Attractiveness: HIGH/medium/low because it has been supported as an initiative through the AAP, but ownership and sponsorship have been unclear and has lacked funding.

Achievability: easy/MEDIUM/difficult - Project has been endorsed the by Diversity Advisory Committee and published – lacks funding for delivery

Investment class & reason

MANDATORY/self-funding/ very attractive /attractive /attractive non-financial Sex Discrimination Amendment Act 2013 and compliance to the Australian Human Rights Commission

Top 3-5 key stakeholders

Reference AAP: 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 11

Opportunity or problem this idea will address & rationale

Training and awareness of amendments to the Sex Discrimination Amendment Act 2013 came into force, prohibiting employers from discriminating against someone because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status. People can make complaints to the Australian Human Rights Commission if they believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of these protected classes.

Being positive towards LGBTIQ+ students and employees is the ultimate litmus test for an inclusive culture

Key objectives

- Understanding the law (On 1 August 2013, amendments to the Sex Discrimination Amendment Act 2013 came into force, prohibiting employers from discriminating against someone because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status)
- Ensure UNE policies are equitable
- Enhance UNE diversity strategy (AAP, RAP, MAP)
- Respond to homophobia/transphobia promptly and effectively
- Respect confidentiality and understand the sensitivities around disclosure
- Understand the terminology and understand some of the unique challenges faced by LGBTI employees
- Provide awareness training for your teams and all levels of management
- Create a truly inclusive community

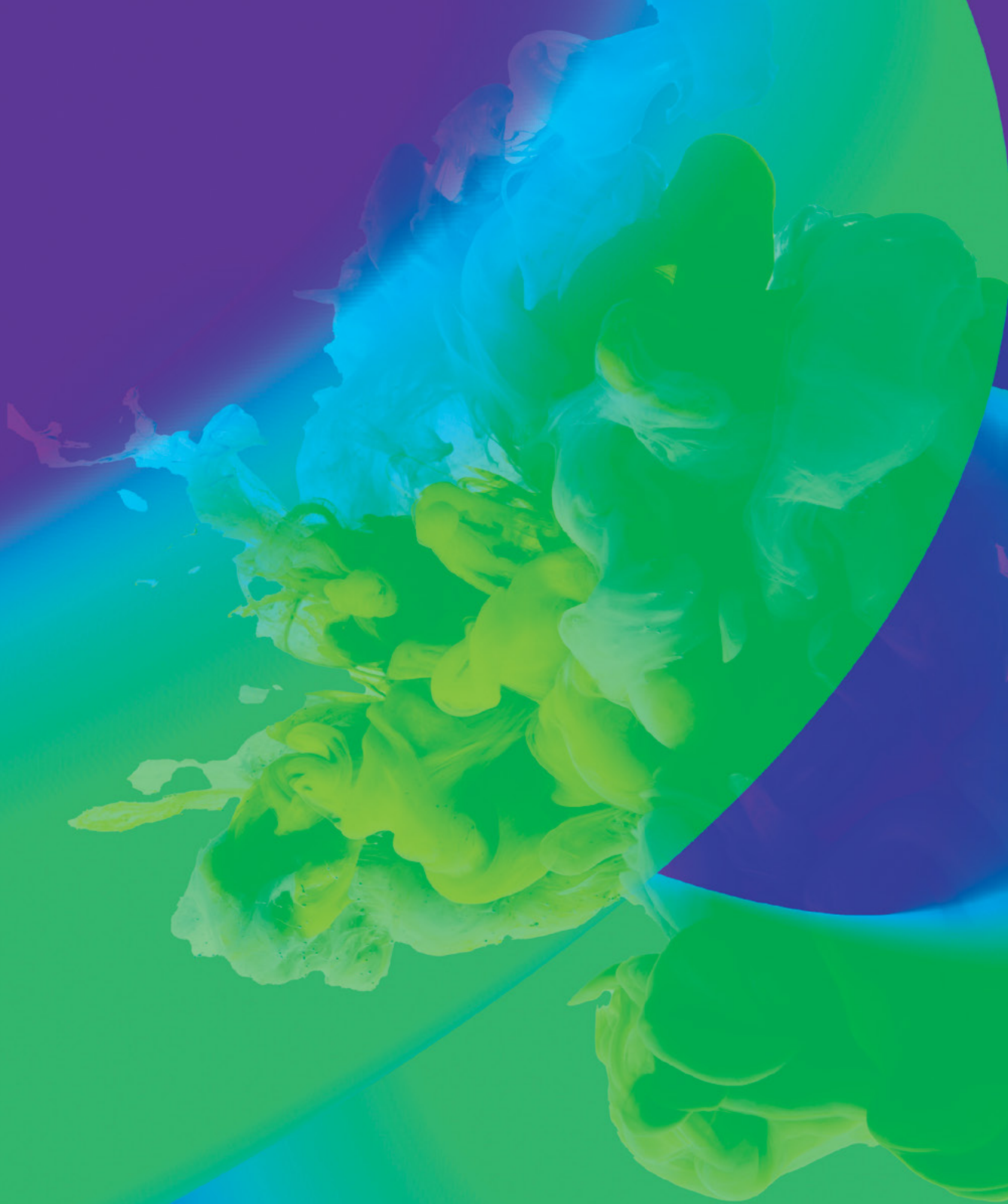
Key assumptions

- Membership
- Training
- Best practice

Key performance indicators to measure progress towards objectives

- Membership to Pride and Diversity (Imperative)
- Membership to Ally Network and Training (ACON) – See quote attached

Our findings and recommendations are foundational in building a more safe and inclusive campus for staff, students and visitors, including supporting safer and vibrant online communities and spaces.



**UNE Ally
Network**

