Hiding wins at work

Tall poppy syndrome in Australian workplaces

212 Australian workers told us about sharing their wins.



Amber Gladstone · November 2026 · Research Summary

/ WHY THIS MATTERS

Most wins now happen out of sight.

When we lived in small groups, cutting down tall poppies made sense: everyone had already seen the win.

Now work is hybrid, specialised and spread out. Even people in the same team may not see each other's wins.

Sharing a win creates chances to pass on what worked, and to strengthen connection.

- What we've overcome is the strongest source of self-belief (Bandura, 1997).
- Making progress in meaningful work, including small wins, is the biggest boost to motivation at work (Amabile and Kramer, 2011).

/ FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

1 **Most people are hiding a win.**

61% hid a win in the past year. Only 31% always share.

2 **The further the audience, the bigger the fear.**

68% are comfortable telling their manager. Only 25% are comfortable telling their wider network.

3 **We brace for a cut-down. We get a shrug.**

61% hid a win. Only 13% got a bad reaction. 27% got silence, and that does damage too.

4 **Half of us decide it's not worth mentioning.**

51% held back because the win didn't seem significant enough.

5 One bad reaction is all it takes.

64% shared less after an awkward or negative reaction, compared with 27% otherwise.

6 One cut-down teaches the whole room.

42% of people who'd seen a cut-down more than once shared less, compared with 7% who'd never seen someone cut-down.

"Watching someone else get cut down for sharing; "That's great, but..."
I've held back wins, knowing someone would feel threatened and react the same way."

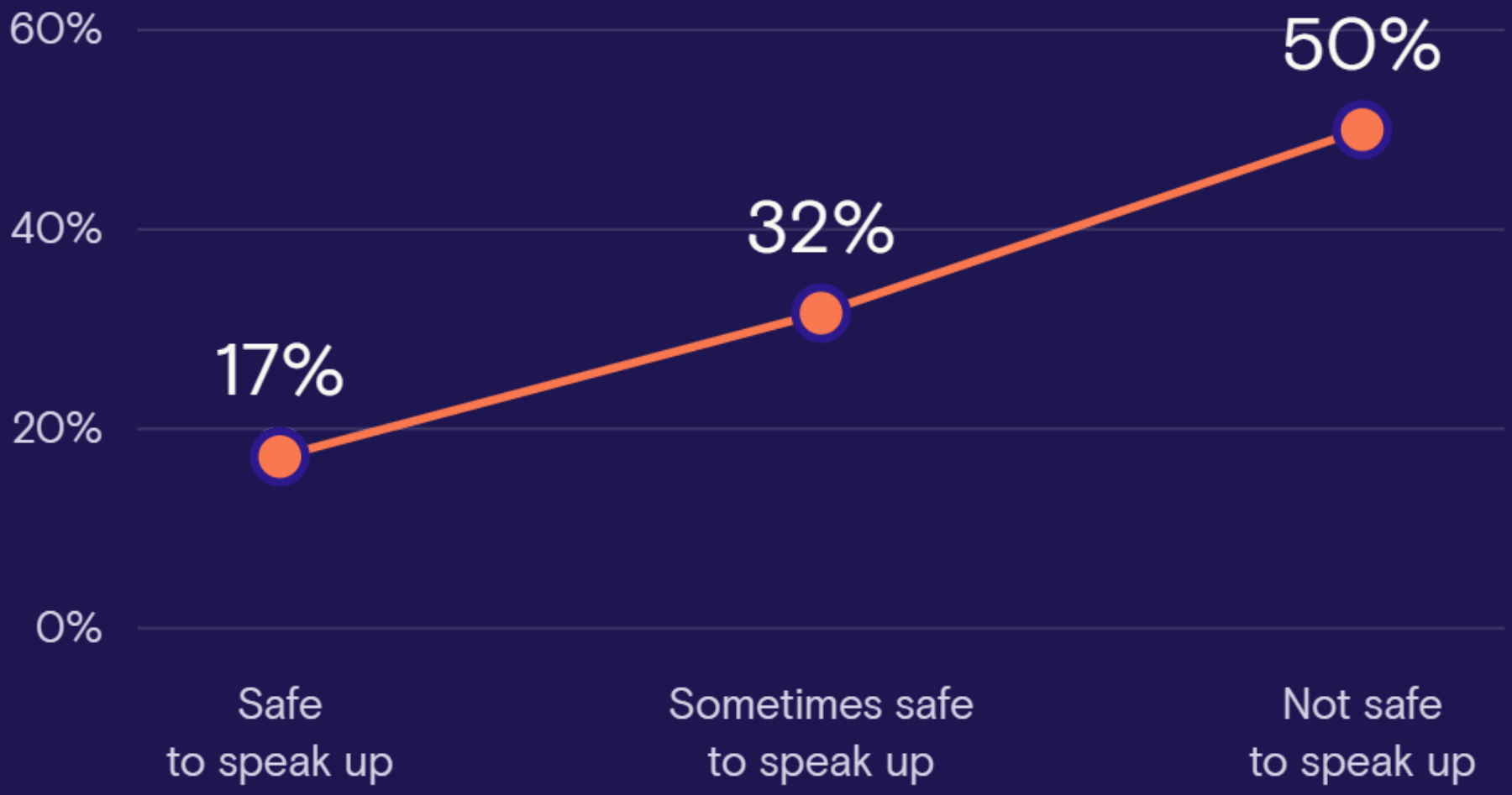
7 Catching wins well is a sign of psychological safety.

Where it's not safe to speak up, frequent hiding almost triples. See next page.

Safety and wins go together.

When it’s not safe to speak up, half the team hide their wins often.
When it is safe to speak up? Less than 1 in 5 (17%) hide their wins often.

How often people hide their wins against how safe it is to speak up



If you lead people

- Consider creating a regular team routine to share wins and celebrate progress together.
- Start a conversation about tall poppy syndrome.
- Take care with promotions, bonuses and awards.

If you have a win

- Count your wins, privately if you need to.
- When you do share, include the effort, the hurdles you overcame and those who helped.

Discover more

Read the full report for all the insights and next steps.

Want a strong start for 2027?
Join us Tuesday 1 December, 12pm AEDT, for an End of Year Wrap (free, online).
Register on Humanitix

212 Australian workers, online survey, 2026. 151 from a paid research panel (Prolific), 61 from Amber Gladstone's network. Self-reported, at one point in time.

/ WHO WE ARE

We help stop the drift from motivated to “meh”.

New leaders, new structures, new tools? We help teams and leaders maintain motivation through change, building skills and behaviours to handle whatever comes next.

Measure. Embed. Measure again.

1 Set a benchmark. Surveys, conversations or your existing data show where the team is now.

2 Embed the change. Workshops, coaching and practice on the job, so new habits hold.

3 Measure the impact. See what moved, and what didn’t.

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