

# The Being Valued Toolkit

Creating Safer and More Inclusive Workplaces for LGBTIQA+ Victorians



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## Acknowledgement

This toolkit has been developed across many Aboriginal Nations. We acknowledge that wherever we are on this continent, we are on stolen Aboriginal land.

Sovereignty has never been ceded. We pay deep respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders — past and present — and extend our respect to all Indigenous Elders for their ongoing leadership, cultural knowledge, and strength.

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## Trigger Warning

This Toolkit discusses LGBTIQ+ gendered violence in the workplace, which may be distressing. If you find any sections activating, please take breaks as needed. A list of LGBTIQ+ support services is provided at the end of this Toolkit.

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## Language Use

Throughout this resource, "LGBTIQ+" is used as an umbrella term to refer to the entire LGBTIQ+ community. However, the acronym may vary in specific sections when referencing research studies, reflecting the parts of the community included in that particular research. This ensures accuracy and alignment with the original context of the studies cited.

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# About the Toolkit

As leaders, we want to create workplaces that are safe and affirming for every employee – but it's not always clear how to do this well for LGBTIQ+ staff, clients, and customers. Therefore, the *Being Valued Toolkit* was developed to help bridge that gap.

## The toolkit is designed to:

- \* **Increase Awareness** – Define LGBTIQ+ workplace gendered violence and its impact.
- \* **Support Policy Development** – Provide clear guidance on building inclusive workplace policies.
- \* **Encourage Safe Reporting** – Outline practical steps for creating confidential and effective reporting pathways.
- \* **Equip Leaders and Employees** – Share tools and resources to address workplace violence and foster inclusion.
- \* **Showcase Reputable Pathways and Resources** – Connect you with trusted organisations and materials to continue your LGBTIQ+ education and strengthen support for your LGBTIQ+ employees.

## Who Is This Toolkit For?

This resource is intended for:

- \* **Leaders and Managers** – To shape inclusive workplace culture and lead organisational change.
- \* **Employers and HR Professionals** – To strengthen policies and improve support for LGBTIQ+ employees.
- \* **LGBTIQ+ Employees** – To better understand their rights and access tools to support their safety at work.

The recommended actions are adaptable and scalable – organisations are encouraged to implement them in ways that are proportionate and appropriate to their size and capacity.

By fostering a culture of inclusion and respect, organisations can reduce workplace gendered violence and create environments where all employees are supported to thrive.

## How Was This Toolkit Developed?

This toolkit was created through a **co-design process** with **LGBTIQ+ community members** who have lived experience of gendered violence in the workplace. Participants came from a wide range of industries and professions, and their insights were guided by both personal experience and recent research findings.

The toolkit also draws on data from the *Being Valued 2024 Survey of LGBTIQ+ Experiences in the Workplace*, which explored how LGBTIQ+ workers had experienced gendered violence over the past 12 months and what strategies they believe all workplaces should adopt to prevent harm and improve safety.

The toolkit also underwent a **user-testing process** to ensure it is practical, relevant, and usable across different sectors and organisational sizes.

## Case Studies

The case studies in this toolkit are drawn from **real experiences** of LGBTIQ+ Victorians in workplace settings. While names and identifying details have been changed to protect privacy, the stories reflect the very real discrimination, barriers, and harm faced by many LGBTIQ+ employees.

These accounts illustrate the **urgent need for systemic change**, proactive leadership, and stronger workplace policies. They serve as a call to action to build safer, more inclusive environments for LGBTIQ+ workers across Victoria.

## Author Bios

### delsi Moleta (they/them)

delsi Moleta (they/them) is an award-winning queer femme activist, the Operations and Relationships Lead at Transgender Victoria, and the founder of Unicorns, a grassroots LGBTIQ+ organisation.

A qualified adult and secondary education teacher, delsi brings over a decade of experience across the LGBTIQ+ sector as an educator, producer, and community builder. Their work focuses on creating safer, celebratory, and more inclusive spaces for LGBTIQ+ communities.

delsi's work has been spotlighted in Asking for It, the SBS documentary by Jess Hill, and they have delivered a TEDx Talk on the Power of Queer Joy. They also made national headlines when they stood up to LGBTIQ+ online defamation and successfully won a landmark court case – the first of its kind in Australia.

delsi was named one of Australia's Top 50 Leaders by Google in 2020 and has been recognised as a finalist for Victorian LGBTI Person of the Year three times between 2019 and 2025.

### Rhiann Thomas (she/they)

Rhiann (she/they) is a queer Taiwanese-Australian person with a passion for indigenous activism, community engagement and collaborative research. They have previously interned at Midsumma and worked on the Queer PHOTO 2024 project, as well as curated a community archival exhibition.

Rhiann holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) – Anthropology and Ancient World Studies from the University of Melbourne and is a current PhD Candidate researching urban poverty in the Roman Empire. They delivered a TEDx Youth talk on the experience of second-generation immigrant children in the Australian schooling system.

# This resource is created by Your Community Health and Transgender Victoria and supported by WorkSafe Victoria

This resource was created by **Your Community Health** and **Transgender Victoria**, with support from **WorkSafe Victoria**.

**Your Community Health** is a community health organisation providing inclusive, accessible, and culturally safe services across Melbourne's north. They offer a wide range of support including medical, allied health, and social services, with a strong focus on health equity and community wellbeing.

**Transgender Victoria (TGV)** is one of Victoria's leading trans and gender diverse-led organisations, advocating for the rights and safety of trans and gender diverse people. TGV provides education, resources, a gender affirming op-shop and social support to help build inclusive communities and workplaces.

**WorkSafe Victoria** is the state's workplace health and safety regulator. Through education, enforcement, and collaboration, WorkSafe helps create safe and healthy workplaces for all Victorians, including supporting initiatives that address workplace gendered violence and inclusion.

Recognising the urgent need to address the workplace gendered violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ people, Your Community Health, Transgender Victoria, and WorkSafe partnered to develop this important resource. Each organisation brought unique strengths to the project – from frontline health and wellbeing support, to lived experience advocacy, to occupational health and safety expertise. Together, they have developed a practical, evidence-based toolkit to help workplaces create safer, more inclusive environments where LGBTIQ+ employees are truly valued.

## What is Workplace Gendered Violence?

**Workplace gendered violence** refers to any behaviour that targets or impacts someone because of their **sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation**, and creates a risk to their health and safety at work.

While anyone can experience gendered violence, it **disproportionately affects women, transgender and gender diverse people, and LGBTIQ+ individuals**.

**In Australia, LGBTIQ+ people are twice as likely to experience gendered violence compared to their cisgender and heterosexual peers.**

Workplace gendered violence is a serious **occupational health and safety issue** – and one that all workplaces have a responsibility to prevent and address.

To understand how to best support LGBTIQ+ workers and lower the rates of gendered violence they experience, the first step is to better understand what it means to be LGBTIQ+."

# Understanding the LGBTIQ+ Community

## The Evolving Language of Sexuality, Sex, and Gender Identity

Language shapes our understanding, builds community, and affirms people's identities. LGBTIQ+ terminology is constantly evolving, and staying informed is essential for fostering respectful, inclusive workplaces.

It's important to recognise that LGBTIQ+ language can vary across cultures, communities, and personal experiences. A term that feels affirming to one person may not resonate with another. When in doubt, it's always best to ask respectfully rather than assume.

Not sure how to ask these questions? Try actively listening to how someone describes themselves, and mirror their language where appropriate. This is a powerful way to show respect and deepen understanding.

Below, we've outlined some commonly used terms within Australian LGBTIQ+ communities.

## LGBTIQ+ Populations

**LGBTIQ+** stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning), Intersex, and Asexual, with the plus sign (+) representing other diverse gender and sexual identities.

It is conservatively estimated that LGBTIQ+ individuals make up **4.5% to 11% of the Australian population**.<sup>1</sup> However, this likely underrepresents the true size of the community, as the national census does not fully account for LGBTIQ+ people. Advocates continue to push for accurate data collection, particularly for transgender, gender-diverse (TGD), and intersex communities.<sup>2</sup>

Many LGBTIQ+ people — particularly those from older generations — may not feel safe or comfortable disclosing their sexuality, gender identity, or intersex status. In contrast, younger generations are increasingly open about their identities.

Recent research shows that:

**17.7%**

of Australians aged 16–24 identify as having a diverse sexuality

**2.3%**

identify as gender diverse<sup>3</sup>

**1.7%**

of the population is intersex<sup>4</sup>

These figures highlight the growing visibility of LGBTIQ+ people, underscoring the importance of creating inclusive workplaces that prioritise safety, respect, and equity.

1 "ABS releases first ever estimates of LGBTIQ+ Australians," Australian Bureau of Statistics, published 2024, December 12, <https://www.abs.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/abs-releases-first-ever-estimates-lgbti-australians#:~:text=Linda%20Fardell%2C%20ABS%20head%20of,to%2024%20years%20are%20LGBTIQ%2B>. Aged Care Sector Committee Diversity Sub-Group, *Actions to support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Gender Diverse and Intersex Elders; A guide for aged care providers* (Australian Government, Department of Health, 2009), 4.

2 Andrew Lyons, Mary Lou Rasmussen, Joel Anderson, & Edith Gray, "Counting gender and sexual identity in the Australian Census," *Australian Population Studies* 5, no.1 (2021): 41–42.

3 Daryl J. Higgins, David Lawrence, Divna M. Haslam, Ben Matthews, Eva alacova, Holly E. Erskine, David Finkelhor, Rosana Pacella, Franziska Meinck, Hannah J. Thomas, & James G. Scott, "Prevalence of diverse genders and sexualities in Australia and associations with five forms of child maltreatment and multi-type maltreatment," *Child maltreatment* 30, no.1. 10775595231226331.

4 Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the body: Gender politics and the construction of sexuality*, 1st edition. (Basic Books, 2000), 53.

## Key Concepts: Sex, Sexuality, and Gender

When discussing LGBTIQ+ people, it's important to understand that **sex**, **sexuality**, and **gender identity** are three distinct aspects of a person's identity — and they should not be conflated.

A person can embody any combination of these identities. For example, someone might be:

- \* Gay and cisgender
- \* Trans and heterosexual
- \* Intersex and non-binary

Understanding these distinctions helps prevent confusion in everyday conversations, workplace interactions, and policy development.

Everyone has a sex, sexuality, and gender identity — and none of these can be assumed based on appearance.

### Sex

The sex recorded on a person's birth certificate is typically based on visible biological characteristics such as genitals, chromosomes, and hormone levels. At birth, people are usually assigned male or female based on these traits.

However, around **1.7% of the population is intersex** — meaning they are born with sex characteristics that don't fit typical medical definitions of male or female.

Being intersex is **not** a third sex or biological category. Instead, it reflects the **natural diversity** that exists within what is medically classified as male or female.<sup>5</sup>

Term	Definition
<b>Intersex</b>	<p>An umbrella term for natural variations in a person's reproductive or sex characteristics. These variations may appear in a person's chromosomes, hormones, genitals, or internal reproductive organs (such as ovaries or testes).</p> <p>Some intersex traits are visible at birth, while others may not be identified until puberty or later in life — or may never be identified at all.</p>
<b>Endosex</b>	<p>A term for people whose sex characteristics align with societal expectations of male or female and who are not intersex.</p>

There are over **30 medical terms** used to describe specific combinations of intersex traits, and **at least 30 - 40 known intersex variations**. Every intersex person is different — these variations are as natural as differences in height, hair colour, or eye colour.

Some individuals embrace the term *intersex*, while others may not, and instead prefer to use the specific medical term for their variation. Language and identity are personal, and it's important to respect each person's choice in how they describe themselves.

### Sexuality

Sexuality describes **who someone is romantically, emotionally, and/or sexually attracted to — or not attracted to**. It exists on a spectrum and can change over time.

#### Some key terms include:

- \* **Alloromantic:** A person who experiences romantic attraction to others.
- \* **Allosexual:** A person who experiences sexual attraction to others.
- \* **Aromantic (Aro):** A person who experiences little or no romantic attraction to others.
- \* **Asexual (Ace):** A person who experiences little or no sexual attraction to others.
- \* **Bisexual / Bi+:** Attraction to two or more genders. The "+" acknowledges the diversity of experiences within this identity.
- \* **Gay:** Typically refers to a man (trans or cis) who is attracted to other men, but can also describe anyone who is same-gender attracted.
- \* **Heterosexual / Straight:** Attraction to a different (usually binary) gender than one's own. Typically, men who are attracted to women and women who are attracted to men.
- \* **Lesbian:** A woman (trans or cis) or non-binary person who is romantically and/or sexually attracted to women.
- \* **Pansexual:** Attraction to people regardless of gender.

**Heteronormativity:** The assumption that heterosexuality is the default. This view can contribute to workplace discrimination.<sup>6</sup> It is important that people avoid assumptions about someone's sexuality based on their relationships or appearance.

<sup>5</sup> Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body*, 53.

<sup>6</sup> Child Family Community Australia, *LGBTIQ+ Glossary of Common Terms* (2021), 4. <https://aifs.gov.au/resources/resource-sheets/lgbtqi-glossary-common-terms>

## Gender, Trans Identity and Pronouns

**Gender** is distinct from sex and refers to a person’s internal sense of self. A person’s gender might align with the sex they were assigned at birth – or it may be different. Gender is shaped by **culture, society,** and **personal identity.**

A person who is **transgender** or **gender diverse** has a gender that does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. They may describe themselves using terms like *trans, non-binary, or gender diverse* – or they may simply know themselves to be a *woman, man, or no gender* at all.

Term	Definition
<b>Cisgender</b>	A person whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth.
<b>Transgender</b>	A person whose gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth.
<b>Non-binary</b>	A person whose gender does not fit within the binary of man or woman.
<b>Agender</b>	A person who does not identify with any gender.

## Inclusive Language and Pronouns

- \* **Pronouns** (e.g. *she/her, he/him, they/them, ze/zir*) are the language we use when talking about a person and are an essential way to affirm a person’s gender identity. Using someone’s correct pronouns demonstrates **respect, inclusion,** and **recognition** of their identity.
- \* **Deadnaming** means referring to a transgender or non-binary person by a name they no longer use. This can be **distressing, invalidating,** and may **out** a person without their consent, putting them at risk of harm.
- \* **Misgendering** is using incorrect pronouns or gendered language for someone. It can cause **emotional harm,** reinforce exclusion, and contribute to a **hostile or unsafe environment.**
- \* **Cisnormativity** is the assumption that everyone is cisgender (identifies with the sex they were assigned at birth), and that this is the default or ‘normal’ experience. This perspective can **erase, invalidate,** and **marginalise** transgender and gender diverse people.

## LGBTIQA+ Communities of Colour

Many LGBTIQA+ people experience intersecting forms of discrimination. For LGBTIQA+ people of colour, these challenges can be compounded by both anti-LGBTIQA+ bias and racism. In workplace settings, this may lead to additional barriers to **inclusion, safety,** and **career progression.**

Recognising these intersections is essential for building truly inclusive workplaces and communities that address the **unique lived experiences** of LGBTIQA+ people of colour.

The following terms are commonly used to describe communities of colour in affirming ways. These terms are often preferred over words like *marginalised or minority,* which can feel dehumanising or overly broad.

Term	Definition
<b>QTIPoC</b>	Queer, Trans, and Intersex People of Colour. Acknowledges the intersection of gender, sexuality, intersex status, and racial or cultural identity.
<b>BIPOC</b>	Black and Indigenous People of Colour.
<b>PoC</b>	A broad, collective term used to describe individuals and communities who are not white and are likely to have shared or differing experiences of being racialised.

## First Nations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

First Nations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have long held diverse understandings of gender and sexuality that **predate colonisation**. Across different Nations, there are many words, roles, and cultural practices that reflect **rich and complex expressions of identity**. In some communities, terms like *sistagirl* and *brothaboy* are used to describe trans and gender diverse identities. However, these words do not represent all experiences or Nations. Language around LGBTIQIA+ identities may also vary – or may not be publicly shared – depending on **cultural protocols** and **community context**.

In your inclusion work, consider how you can:

- \* Create space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQIA+ people to **self-identify** in ways that feel culturally safe and affirming
- \* Honour the **strength, diversity, and sovereignty** of First Nations LGBTIQIA+ identities
- \* **Listen deeply, amplify Indigenous voices, and resist generalisation or extraction**

## Intersectionality

**Intersectionality** is a framework that explores how overlapping aspects of a person's identity shape their experiences of **discrimination, privilege, and access to opportunities**. Recognising intersectionality is key to creating workplace policies and support systems that are truly inclusive and responsive to the diverse realities of LGBTIQIA+ people.

These intersecting identities can compound workplace barriers and must be considered together, not in isolation. Some aspects of identity that may impact a person's workplace experience include:

- \* **Neurodiversity** – Differences in cognitive functioning, such as autism, ADHD, or dyslexia, which can shape how individuals interact with workplace structures, communication styles, and expectations.
- \* **Disability** – Physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental health conditions that may require workplace accommodations and influence access to opportunities, support, and inclusion.

- \* **Mental Health** – LGBTIQIA+ people experience higher rates of anxiety, depression, and trauma than their cis gender and heterosexual counterparts. This can be due to systemic discrimination, family rejection and experiences of violence – all of which can impact a LGBTIQIA+ persons well-being, workplace engagement, and access to support.<sup>7</sup>
- \* **Homelessness & Housing Instability** – LGBTIQIA+ individuals, particularly youth, are at higher risk of homelessness due to family rejection, financial instability, rental agency rejection or lack of safe housing options, which can affect employment stability.<sup>8</sup>
- \* **Race & Ethnicity** – Experiencing racism, cultural biases, or lack of representation in the workplace can affect career progression, workplace culture, and access to leadership roles.
- \* **Gender Identity & Expression** – Trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse employees may face misgendering, lack of inclusive facilities, and barriers to recognition in the workplace.
- \* **Sexuality** – LGBTIQIA+ individuals may encounter discrimination, exclusion, or assumptions about their personal lives that impact their sense of belonging at work.
- \* **Socioeconomic Background** – Financial barriers, educational opportunities, and access to professional networks can impact career progression and job stability.
- \* **Religion & Faith** – LGBTIQIA+ employees from religious backgrounds may navigate additional complexities related to workplace policies, personal beliefs, and cultural expectations.
- \* **Age** – Younger workers may face challenges in being taken seriously, while older workers may experience ageism, particularly in LGBTIQIA+ spaces where youth might feel more celebrated.
- \* **Migration & Citizenship Status** – Visa restrictions, language barriers, and systemic biases can impact job security, workplace rights, and access to support networks.
- \* **Family & Caregiving Responsibilities** – LGBTIQIA+ employees with children, elder care responsibilities, or chosen family commitments may face workplace inflexibility and lack of recognition for diverse family structures.

Understanding these intersecting experiences is crucial to building **inclusive, equitable, and safe workplaces** for all LGBTIQIA+ employees.

7 Adam Hill, et al. *Writing Themselves In 4: The health and wellbeing of LGBTQA+ young people in Australia. National report, monograph series number 124*, (Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, 78-81). <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/arcshs/work/writing-themselves-in-4>

8 Ingrid Bretherton et al., "The Health and Well-Being of Transgender Australians: A National Community Survey," *LGBT Health 8*, no. 1 (2021), 44 - 46. DOI: 10.1089/lgbt.2020.0178

## Allyship and Inclusive Practices

Being an **active ally** means taking intentional steps to support and advocate for LGBTIQ+ people. True allyship goes beyond passive acceptance — it involves **action, accountability**, and an ongoing commitment to fostering **safe, inclusive**, and **affirming** spaces.

### A few ways to Practise Meaningful Allyship

- \* Use **inclusive language** and avoid assumptions about a person's gender, sexuality, or relationships.
- \* **Advocate for LGBTIQ+ protections** in workplace policies, culture, and leadership decisions.
- \* **Respect each person's identity** by using their correct pronouns and affirming their lived experiences.
- \* **Listen to LGBTIQ+ voices** and prioritise community-led solutions.

Allyship is an ongoing journey of **learning and unlearning**. It's about ensuring that all people feel **safe, respected**, and **valued**, while having **equitable access** to opportunities and resources.

## LGBTIQ+ vs. Queer: Which Term to Use?

The word **queer** has been reclaimed by many as a powerful, political, and affirming identity marker. For others, however, it remains a painful slur due to its historical use in discrimination and violence.

### Best Practice When Choosing Language:

- \* Use **LGBTIQ+** in formal settings, as it is widely recognised and considered neutral and respectful.
- \* If someone **self-identifies as queer**, it is appropriate to use the term when referring to them.
- \* Never assume someone is comfortable with the word *queer* — when in doubt, **ask respectfully**.
- \* If someone expresses discomfort with the term, **adjust your language moving forward**.

Using **affirming and inclusive language** helps foster **trust, belonging**, and **psychological safety** for LGBTIQ+ individuals.

Inclusive language is an evolving commitment — the best way to show respect is to **listen, learn**, and **adapt**. Even small, intentional changes in language and behaviour can have a lasting impact in building truly inclusive workplaces.

Access our [LGBTIQ+ Language and Definitions Guide](#) with your team or display it in your workspace to support everyday inclusion.



# How do LGBTIQ+ employees experience gendered violence in the workplace?

LGBTIQ+ employees often face **unique forms of gendered violence in the workplace** – from overt harassment to subtle and systemic exclusion. These harmful behaviours can create unsafe and hostile environments, significantly affecting individuals' **mental health, job security, and career progression.**

Workplace gendered violence can take many forms, including:

- \* **Verbal abuse**
- \* **Outing without consent**
- \* **Stereotyping and assumptions**
- \* **Threats or physical intimidation**
- \* **Sexual harassment or assault**
- \* **Bullying and exclusion**
- \* **Institutional discrimination**

Recognising and addressing these behaviours is critical to building workplace cultures where all employees are **valued, respected, and safe.**

## Examples of Gendered Violence in the Workplace

- \* **Verbal Abuse:** Intentional misgendering, slurs, or derogatory comments about someone's gender identity, sex characteristics, or sexuality.
- \* **Outing:** Disclosing someone's LGBTIQ+ identity without their consent, potentially exposing them to harm or discrimination.
- \* **Gender-Based Assumptions:** Making stereotypical assumptions based on someone's appearance, mannerisms, or behaviour.
- \* **Refusal of Service or Exclusion:** Customers, clients, or co-workers refusing to serve, assist, or acknowledge an LGBTIQ+ employee.
- \* **Bullying:** Persistent deadnaming, gossip, or spreading rumours about an LGBTIQ+ colleague.
- \* **Physical Intimidation:** Threatening gestures, blocking exits, or acts of aggression.
- \* **Sexual Harassment:** Unwanted advances, inappropriate touching, intrusive questions, or sexual assault.
- \* **Institutional Discrimination:** Lack of access to gender-neutral bathrooms, unfair dress codes, or denial of gender-affirming leave.

## Workplace Scenarios

- \* A **non-binary employee** is persistently misgendered, despite repeated corrections.
- \* A **trans worker** is told they must "prove" their identity to access gender-affirming leave.
- \* A **bisexual employee** is subjected to invasive questions about their relationships.
- \* A **customer refuses service** from an employee wearing a bisexual pride badge.
- \* **Co-workers mock** an employee after they update their name and pronouns via email.
- \* A **trans employee** is followed into a bathroom and threatened for using the "wrong" one.
- \* A **worker tells a colleague** that raising a child in a same-gender family is "wrong" or will harm the child.
- \* A **patron complains** to security about an LGBTIQ+ employee using a restroom. Due to a lack of training, security escorts the employee out in front of others, causing public humiliation.

## Case Study: Rose's Story

**Rose**, a non-binary hospitality worker, was required to wear a **gendered uniform** that did not reflect their identity. When Rose asked for an alternative option, management refused, saying:

“ Company policy requires you to choose either the men's or women's uniform. ”

Rose also faced challenges accessing a safe bathroom. The workplace only had gendered facilities, and when they raised concerns, a manager responded:

“ Just use the one that matches what you look like. ”

Without support or accommodations, Rose experienced growing stress and anxiety, leading to **physical and mental health impacts**. They began avoiding staff meetings and social events, fearing further exclusion.

Eventually, the lack of **affirming policies**, safe facilities, and workplace support led Rose to **resign** in search of a more inclusive environment.

## Lateral Violence in LGBTIQA+ Communities

Lateral violence refers to harmful behaviours – such as bullying, exclusion, or sabotage – perpetrated by members of a marginalised group against each other, often as a response to systemic oppression. Instead of challenging broader structural inequities, individuals may direct harm toward fellow LGBTIQA+ colleagues, leading to division, distrust, and the erosion of community solidarity.

### What Can Drive Lateral Violence in LGBTIQA+ Communities?

- \* **Competition for limited resources** – Grants, jobs, speaking opportunities, or recognition can feel scarce, prompting competition rather than collaboration.
- \* **Jealousy or resentment** – Success in one part of the community can sometimes trigger backlash in others.
- \* **Internalised oppression** – Systemic discrimination can lead individuals to police or undermine each other's identities or behaviour.
- \* **Scarcity mindset** – A belief that there isn't "enough" for everyone can create toxic work environments and prevent collective progress.
- \* **Tall poppy syndrome** – The desire to "cut down" those who are visible, outspoken, or successful.
- \* **Moral perfectionism** – The unrealistic expectation that marginalised people must represent the community flawlessly, with harsh consequences when they fall short.

### Examples of Lateral Violence in the Workplace:

- \* **Gatekeeping:** Policing who is "LGBTIQA+ enough" to belong in spaces, initiatives, or conversations.
- \* **Undermining:** Questioning or dismissing someone's gender identity, sexuality, leadership, or lived experience.
- \* **Exclusion:** Silencing or sidelining LGBTIQA+ voices – especially those of trans people, non-binary individuals, and people of colour.
- \* **Public Shaming:** Using social media or workplace channels to tear down, call out, or humiliate others in harmful or dehumanising ways.
- \* **Bullying & Harassment:** Spreading rumours, gossip, or targeting colleagues with repeated hostility or microaggressions.

### Case Study: Lee's Story (he/they)

Lee, a QTIPoC employee, co-facilitated their **workplace's Pride Group** – a space for LGBTIQA+ advocacy and inclusion. They dedicated significant time and energy, often beyond their official role, to support the group's success.

Over time, Lee began experiencing **lateral violence** from within the group.

**Some members questioned his right to lead, gossiping about his motives and suggesting he was using the role for personal gain. Others scrutinised his behaviour in meetings, undermining their ideas and contributions. Online, vague posts criticised the group's leadership for "not doing enough."**

The backlash escalated, and Lee – feeling increasingly isolated and disheartened – stepped down. With no one willing to take on the leadership role for fear of becoming the next target, the Pride Group dissolved.

What was once a **safe space, educational resource, and vital support system** for LGBTIQA+ employees was lost to **unchecked lateral violence**.

### Who is Most at Risk?

Research shows that LGBTIQA+ individuals face a higher risk of workplace gendered violence compared to their cisgender and heterosexual colleagues.

However, within the LGBTIQA+ community, some groups experience disproportionately higher rates of discrimination, harassment, and violence.

Alarming trends in workplace research reveal:

- \* **Transgender and gender-diverse** employees face higher rates of workplace violence compared to their cisgender and gay/lesbian colleagues.<sup>9</sup>
- \* **Bisexual, pansexual, and asexual** workers report higher levels of workplace bullying compared to their gay and lesbian colleagues.<sup>10</sup>

9 Bretherton et al., "The Health and Well-Being of Transgender Australians," 44.

10 Julia Taylor, Jennifer Power, Elizabeth Smith, and Mark Rathbone, "Findings from the 'Who I Am' Study," *Australian Journal of General Practice* 48, no. 3 (March 2019), 142.

- \* **Intersex workers** experience high rates of workplace sexual harassment, with 70% reporting harassment in Australia.<sup>11</sup>
- \* **LGBTIQ+ workers in regional areas** are more vulnerable to public homophobia, workplace discrimination, and social isolation, increasing their risk of mental health distress and career instability.<sup>12</sup>

### Case Study: Jess' Story (she/her)

As one of the few visible LGBTIQ+ and trans advocates in her regional town, **Jess** frequently faces hostility from far-right activists and community members who oppose LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

While organising a **Pride Month event**, Jess is targeted online by far-right groups labelling the celebration a "child grooming event." Overnight, she receives a flood of **online threats, queerphobic slurs, and hate-fuelled abuse**. She becomes increasingly concerned that these online threats could escalate into physical violence – particularly during the public event.

At a recent **youth social gathering** she facilitated, a group of men shouted queerphobic slurs at the young attendees. **When Jess raised safety concerns with her workplace leaders, she was told she was "overreacting."** Later, those same senior staff refused to be photographed with the Pride Flag at the celebration event Jess organised, saying, *"Because you know what that looks like."*

Daily **microaggressions, transphobia**, and a lack of visible support make Jess's workplace an increasingly hostile environment. The **cumulative impact of online abuse, workplace dismissal, and public hostility** begins to weigh heavily on her mental health. Despite being responsible for protecting and uplifting LGBTIQ+ youth in her community, Jess feels she's receiving little to no protection herself.

When she gets home at the end of the day, Jess feels **exhausted, demoralised**, and increasingly unsure how much longer she can continue doing this important – but isolating – work.

### Common Workplace Factors Contributing to Gendered Violence

- \* Several workplace factors can contribute to conditions where **gendered violence against LGBTIQ+ employees** is more likely to occur. These include:
- \* **Lack of education and awareness** about LGBTIQ+ identities among managers, colleagues, clients, and customers.

- \* **Discrimination, stigma, and bias** embedded in workplace culture, reinforcing exclusion and harm.
- \* **Inadequate safety structures or support systems**, leaving LGBTIQ+ employees vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or violence.
- \* **Weak or unsafe reporting pathways**, where employees fear retaliation or are dismissed when they speak up, discouraging them from seeking help.

When these factors go unaddressed, they create unsafe environments that can significantly impact the wellbeing, confidence, and career development of LGBTIQ+ staff.

### Case Study: Hunter's Story (they/them)

**Hunter**, a transgender nurse, changed their name and pronouns and began taking testosterone while working at a hospital in Melbourne. Despite wearing a **pronoun badge** and a **name tag with their correct name**, they are routinely **misgendered and deadnamed** by both patients and colleagues.

Over time, Hunter begins to feel **isolated and excluded** at work. Co-workers avoid conversations, create distance in shared spaces like the lunchroom, and stop involving Hunter in social interactions.

**Patients subject Hunter to verbal abuse, transphobic slurs, and even inappropriate physical contact. When Hunter reports these incidents, management responds dismissively, suggesting that by socially transitioning, Hunter should "expect this kind of reaction" and "deal with the implications."**

This lack of institutional support and understanding takes a serious toll on Hunter's **mental health, professional confidence, and sense of safety**. With no clear protections, intervention strategies, or leadership accountability in place, Hunter is left to navigate a hostile and invalidating work environment alone.

<sup>11</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, *Time for Respect: Fifth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces*, (November 2022), 12. <https://humanrights.gov.au/time-for-respect-2022>

<sup>12</sup> Joanne Porter, Jess Reeves, and Valerie Prokopiv, *Rainbow Brick Road: A snapshot into LGBTIQ+ lives in Gippsland*, (Gippsland Pride Initiative Inc., April 2023), 9-10. <https://gippslandpride.com/rbrreport/>

# The Leader's Role in Lowering the Risk of Gendered Violence Against LGBTIQ+ People at Work

Leaders – whether in small businesses, large corporations, or community organisations – play a **crucial role** in shaping workplace culture, policies, and practices that directly impact the **safety, inclusion, and wellbeing** of LGBTIQ+ employees.

Addressing gendered violence in the workplace requires more than ticking legal boxes – it calls for **proactive leadership, visible commitment, and a willingness to challenge systemic inequities** that disproportionately affect LGBTIQ+ staff.

**Everyone deserves to feel safe and supported at work.** Creating an equitable workplace means that leaders take **deliberate and consistent action** to protect those most at risk of harm.

## Under the OHS Act (2004), Employer Obligations Include:

### Setting the Standard

- \* Clearly communicate that gendered violence, discrimination, and harassment – including those targeting LGBTIQ+ employees – will not be tolerated.
- \* Model inclusive behaviour and ensure your leadership team upholds the same values.
- \* Be visible and proactive in your support in creating a safer workplace for LGBTIQ+ communities.

### Embedding Accountability

- \* Establish and enforce policies that explicitly address gendered violence against LGBTIQ+ employees.
- \* Ensure that reporting processes are accessible, confidential, and lead to meaningful action.

### Allocating Resources

- \* Invest in LGBTIQ+ inclusion training, employee resource groups, and workplace initiatives that foster safety, visibility, and belonging.
- \* Regularly review policies and practices in consultation with LGBTIQ+ experts to ensure they remain effective.

### Empowering Managers

- \* Equip managers and team leaders with knowledge and tools to intervene in instances of discrimination or harm.
- \* Ensure they understand how to recognise gendered violence, respond appropriately, and support affected employees.

### Listening and Acting

- \* Engage with LGBTIQ+ employees through consultations, anonymous feedback channels, or advisory groups.
- \* Use their insights to inform workplace improvements and demonstrate a commitment to their safety and wellbeing.

### Building External Partnerships

- \* Collaborate with LGBTIQ+ organisations, industry bodies, and workplace inclusion specialists to implement best practices and stay informed on evolving workplace safety needs.

By taking these steps, leaders can actively reduce the risk of gendered violence, build trust with LGBTIQ+ employees, and create a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected, and safe.

# Collaboration Between Jurisdictions to Address Gendered Violence

Addressing gendered violence in the workplace requires coordinated efforts across multiple jurisdictions. Various regulatory bodies and commissions play distinct yet interconnected roles in ensuring workplaces are safer, more inclusive, and free from harm. Understanding how these organisations collaborate provides clarity on where to seek support, make complaints, and drive systemic change.

Each of the following bodies has specific responsibilities, and their collaboration strengthens protections against workplace gendered violence and discrimination.

## WorkSafe Victoria

WorkSafe Victoria is responsible for enforcing workplace health and safety laws, including those related to [gendered violence](#) and [sexual harassment](#). Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic), employers have a legal duty to provide a safe workplace free from risks to health and safety. This includes protecting employees from psychological harm such as bullying, harassment, and gender-based violence.

### Key Responsibilities:

- \* Investigating workplace complaints related to gendered violence, discrimination, and harassment.
- \* Enforcing employer compliance with occupational health and safety (OHS) regulations.
- \* Providing guidance on preventative measures to reduce workplace harm.
- \* Issuing penalties and improvement notices for unsafe workplaces.

## Fair Work Commission (FWC)

The FWC is Australia's national workplace relations tribunal, responsible for resolving disputes related to employment conditions, unfair dismissal, and workplace rights. It administers the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth), which includes protections against workplace sexual harassment and adverse actions related to gender identity, sexual orientation, or sex characteristics.

### Key Responsibilities:

- \* Handling cases of unfair dismissal, general protections, and workplace sexual harassment complaints.
- \* Enforcing protections against discrimination based on gender, sexuality, or other attributes.
- \* Issuing stop sexual harassment orders, preventing ongoing workplace harassment.
- \* Overseeing workplace agreements and dispute resolution processes.

## Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)

The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) promotes and enforces anti-discrimination laws at the federal level, including protections under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth). It plays a crucial role in addressing systemic discrimination and advancing human rights in workplaces.

### Key Responsibilities:

- \* Handling complaints about workplace discrimination and harassment under federal law.
- \* Conducting investigations and conciliations into gender-based discrimination complaints.
- \* Developing policy recommendations and guidelines for employers to improve workplace safety and inclusion.
- \* Leading national inquiries into gendered violence and workplace harassment.

## Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) administers Victoria's anti-discrimination laws, including the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic). It provides guidance on workplace rights and responsibilities and investigates breaches of equal opportunity laws.

### Key Responsibilities:

- \* Protect and promote human rights within Victoria.
- \* Investigating complaints of workplace discrimination, sexual harassment, and victimisation.
- \* Providing education, [guidelines](#) and training on equal opportunity rights.
- \* Offering conciliation services to resolve disputes.

## Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector

The Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector is responsible for implementing the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic), which applies to public sector organisations, universities, and local councils.

### Key Responsibilities:

1. Requiring public sector workplaces to develop Gender Equality Action Plans.
2. Monitoring compliance with gender equality targets and measurable inclusion strategies.
3. Overseeing the prevention of gendered workplace harm in public institutions.

## How These Bodies Work Together

Each of these bodies operates within specific legal and regulatory frameworks, but they collaborate in key ways to strengthen protections against gendered violence in workplaces:

- \* **WorkSafe Victoria** and **VEOHRC** may coordinate joint investigations where workplace safety and equal opportunity laws overlap.
- \* **FWC** works alongside **AHRC** to handle cases of sexual harassment in both national and state-level employment frameworks.
- \* **The Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector** collaborates with **WorkSafe Victoria** and **VEOHRC** to support inclusive policies across public institutions.

Employers and employees can engage with multiple jurisdictions, depending on the nature of the issue, to ensure workplace safety, inclusion, and compliance with legal protections. By working together, these bodies help create safer, fairer workplaces for LGBTIQ+ individuals and all employees facing gendered violence.

## Seeking Support and Making Complaints

If you are experiencing or witnessing gendered violence in the workplace, you can seek assistance through the following channels:

- \* **WorkSafe Victoria:** Report safety breaches related to workplace gendered violence, and make a claim for compensation from a work-related injury.
- \* **Fair Work Commission:** Lodge complaints related to workplace rights, dismissals, or sexual harassment.
- \* **AHRC:** File a complaint regarding systemic discrimination or harassment.
- \* **VEOHRC:** Seek support for equal opportunity violations and workplace discrimination.
- \* **Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector:** If you are working in the public sector, report non-compliance with gender equality action plans.

Understanding these processes ensures that individuals know their rights and avenues for seeking justice. Strengthened collaboration across these bodies reinforces a safer, more inclusive workforce for all.

# The Impact of Gendered Violence on LGBTIQ+ People in the Workplace

Gendered violence in the workplace has **serious and far-reaching impacts** on LGBTIQ+ employees. It can harm **mental health**, reduce **job satisfaction**, and limit **career advancement**. These effects are often **cumulative** and **interconnected**, making it difficult for LGBTIQ+ workers to feel safe, valued, or supported at work.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

Elevated levels of **stress, anxiety, and depression** due to ongoing discrimination and exclusion

- \* Higher rates of **burnout** and **emotional exhaustion**, particularly in unsafe or invalidating environments
- \* **Isolation and disconnection**, especially in workplaces with limited LGBTIQ+ visibility or support

## Workplace Engagement and Productivity

- \* **Reduced productivity** and focus due to the emotional toll of navigating hostile interactions
- \* **Increased absenteeism**, disengagement from workplace culture, and a sense of invisibility
- \* **Higher staff turnover**, with LGBTIQ+ employees seeking workplaces where they feel safer and more included

## Career Progression

- \* Missed or withheld **leadership and promotion opportunities** due to bias or marginalisation

Fear of being “too visible” or “too out” limiting participation in networking or professional development.

Research shows that

# 11%

of LGBTIQ+ employees leave jobs due to workplace discrimination.<sup>13</sup>

## Examples of the Impact

- \* A **lesbian employee** feels unsafe at work and frequently takes sick leave to avoid interactions with a **homophobic manager**.
- \* A **non-binary** worker withdraws from team meetings after repeated microaggressions, no longer sharing the **strategic and creative ideas** that once benefited the team.
- \* An **asexual employee** faces ongoing bullying and leaves the workplace entirely, having to **restart her career** in a new industry where she feels safer.

## The Business Case for LGBTIQ+ Inclusion

**Gendered violence doesn't just harm individuals — it also harms organisations.**

It reduces productivity, increases staff turnover, fosters toxic workplace cultures, and damages an organisation's **reputation and ability to attract and retain diverse, talented staff**.

Creating safer workplaces for LGBTIQ+ people is essential to building a culture of **respect, equity, and belonging**. When organisations commit to LGBTIQ+ inclusion, they foster environments where all employees feel valued, supported, and able to thrive.

This commitment not only enhances the wellbeing and performance of LGBTIQ+ staff, but also **strengthens the organisation as a whole**.

<sup>13</sup> Seek, P.R.I.D.E. Report, 13.

## Prioritising Safety and Inclusion Leads To:

- \* **Higher employee satisfaction** – Workers feel respected, empowered, and engaged.
- \* **Increased productivity and innovation** – Diverse teams contribute broader perspectives, fostering creativity and better decision-making.
- \* **Lower absenteeism and turnover** – Employees are more likely to stay when they feel safe and supported.
- \* **Stronger employer reputation** – Inclusive workplaces attract top talent and build positive brand recognition.

When inclusion is embedded, it signals that an organisation is serious about **fairness, accountability, and long-term success**.

**Safer workplaces aren't just good for LGBTIQ+ people – they're good for everyone.**

## Legal and Financial Consequences of an Unsafe Workplace

Under Victorian law, employers have a legal obligation to provide a safe, discrimination-free workplace for LGBTIQ+ employees. Key legislation includes:

- \* **Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic):** Prohibits discrimination based on sex characteristics, gender identity, sexual orientation, and lawful sexual activity.
- \* **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic):** Section 21(1) requires that employers, as far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and without risks to health – including **psychological safety**.

This legal duty includes addressing **psychosocial hazards**, such as:

- \* Bullying
- \* Sexual harassment
- \* Discrimination
- \* Workplace violence
- \* Unreasonable work demands

Employers are expected to be **proactive** – identifying risks and implementing preventative measures before harm occurs. Failure to act can lead to **legal penalties, financial liability, and loss of community trust**.

For more guidance, refer to the **VEOHRC LGBTIQ+ Workplace Guidelines**.

## Case Study: Emma's Story (she/her)

**Emma**, a receptionist at a mid-sized accounting firm, enjoyed her job – but dreaded interactions with her direct manager, who frequently made **homophobic remarks**.

When Emma casually mentioned her wife, he responded with comments like:

“You don't look like a lesbian.”

“I thought I've heard you speak about ex-boyfriends – have you always been so fickle”

Emma began calling in sick to avoid him. The stress impacted her sleep and left her emotionally drained, even on days when they didn't interact.

When she raised concerns with HR, she was told:

“ That's just his sense of humour – don't take it personally. ”

Feeling dismissed and unsupported, Emma continued taking sick leave, fearful of being labelled a troublemaker if she spoke up again. She shared her experience with her local LGBTIQ+ community – and word spread.

The firm soon developed a **reputation for being unsafe for LGBTIQ+ employees**, making it difficult to attract and retain talent. At home, Emma began looking for a new job – one where she could bring her whole self to work without fear.

### Case Study: The Cost of Incomplete LGBTIQ+ Inclusion in Fertility Care (they/them)

**Katya** and their non-binary partner were excited to begin fertility treatment at a clinic that prominently advertised its **LGBTIQ+ inclusive services**.

However, their experience didn't match the promise.

- \* The doctor assumed **Katya would carry** the child based on appearance, without asking for fertility plans.
- \* When the non-binary partner expressed interest in carrying the pregnancy, the doctor described it as "too complicated."
- \* A request to discuss dual egg retrieval was also dismissed as "too time-consuming."

Katya and their partner left the appointment feeling **deflated, dismissed, and "othered."** They shared their experience with another queer couple who also felt misled by the clinic's branding — both couples **discontinued treatment**.

This example highlights a critical point:

**Superficial inclusion is not just a missed opportunity — it's a risk.**

#### When Inclusion Isn't Genuine, Businesses Risk:

- \* **Loss of clients:** LGBTIQ+ patients seek more affirming providers.
- \* **Reputational damage:** Discrepancies between branding and experience quickly circulate, especially in tight-knit communities.
- \* **Staff stress and conflict:** Without proper training, staff may unintentionally cause harm, leading to workplace tension, complaints and feelings of inadequacy in their role.
- \* **Legal and ethical breaches:** Misgendering, dismissiveness, or inadequate care may violate anti-discrimination laws or patient rights.

#### True inclusion requires action — not just promotion.

To create genuinely inclusive environments, organisations must embed LGBTIQ+ safety, respect, and responsiveness at every level of service and operation.



# Preventing Gendered Violence

## Step 1: Identify Hazards

This section provides guidance for employers of all business sizes on recognising workplace gendered violence risks specific to LGBTIQ+ employees.

### Review Workplace Data Through an LGBTIQ+ Lens

To effectively prevent gendered violence, it's essential to understand how risks may uniquely impact LGBTIQ+ employees. Many forms of harm – such as misgendering, exclusion, or sexual harassment – can go unnoticed if workplace data isn't disaggregated or reviewed with an LGBTIQ+ lens.

Capturing LGBTIQ+-specific data helps identify hidden patterns, highlight support gaps, and ensure that prevention strategies are **targeted and effective**. This may include reviewing complaints, engagement surveys, or exit interviews to uncover systemic issues.

For leaders, this data isn't just numbers – it's a tool to track progress, inform evidence-based action, and improve safety and inclusion for all employees.

#### Key Areas to Assess:

- \* **Incident Reports & Complaints** – Review patterns in formal and informal reports involving homophobia, transphobia, and exclusion.
- \* **Bullying & Microaggressions** – Identify trends in misgendering, deadnaming, harassment, or exclusionary behaviours.
- \* **Turnover & Retention Rates** – Examine LGBTIQ+ employee turnover, leadership representation, and access to promotion.
- \* **Industry-Specific Risks** – Acknowledge if your industry is known for higher levels of LGBTIQ+ discrimination (e.g. healthcare, hospitality, trades).<sup>14</sup>

#### Identifying Hidden Patterns:

LGBTIQ+ workplace violence is often underreported. Consider:

- \* Are LGBTIQ+ employees resigning without providing clear reasons?
- \* Are workplace bullying or sexual harassment reports frequently linked to LGBTIQ+ identities but not formally recognised gendered violence?
- \* Do LGBTIQ+ employees take more sick leave or avoid workplace social events?

**A lack of formal complaints does not mean the absence of gendered violence.**

#### Case Study: Exclusion at Workplace Social Events Misty (they/them)

At a workplace dinner, the chosen venue lacked all-gender bathrooms. Misty, a **trans and non-binary employee**, declined drinks due to anxiety about needing the bathroom. When they eventually checked the facilities, a **waiter blocked them from entering the women's bathroom** and pointed to the men's, saying, "Go there, mate."

Misty quietly left the event to use a nearby venue's facilities. They didn't report the incident – fearful that speaking up might label them as 'difficult' and risk their contract renewal. From then on, Misty **avoided all off-site social events**.

#### Why LGBTIQ+ Employees May Not Report Incidents:

- \* **Coming out concerns** – Reporting may require identity disclosure before someone is ready.
- \* **Fear of outing, ridicule, or retaliation**
- \* **Job insecurity** – Especially where financial stress, family rejection, visa status, or safety are at risk.
- \* **Lack of trust in HR** or leadership response
- \* **Normalisation of discrimination** – Reporting may feel pointless if harmful behaviours are embedded in workplace culture.

<sup>14</sup> Benjamin Owens, Suzanne Mills, Nathaniel Lewis, and Adrian Guta, "Work-related stressors and mental health among LGBTQ workers: Results from a cross-sectional survey", *PLoS One* 17, no. 10 (October 2022): 9/14. DOI: doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0275771  
Tania Ferfolja and Efty Stavrou, "Workplace Experiences of Australian Lesbian and Gay Teachers: Findings from a National Survey", *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 173 (November 2015), 122-123.

## Review Workplace Structure for Power Imbalances

Power dynamics can increase vulnerability for LGBTIQ+ staff. Consider the following:

### Key Areas to Assess

- \* **Representation** – Are LGBTIQ+ staff in leadership roles?
- \* **Hierarchy & Access** – Do staff feel safe reporting concerns?
- \* **Job Security** – Are LGBTIQ+ employees disproportionately in casual or contract roles?
- \* **Pay & Benefits** – Are packages inclusive of gender-affirming care and LGBTIQ+ EAP options?

### Warning Signs:

- \* LGBTIQ+ staff fear retaliation if they report harm.
- \* LGBTIQ+ employees are only hired into lower-level or temporary positions.
- \* New staff are not inducted with LGBTIQ+ inclusive language or policy info.

## Review Workplace Culture for Exclusion or Discrimination

Workplace culture directly affects LGBTIQ+ employee wellbeing.

### Key Areas to Assess

- \* **Tolerance of Homophobia/Transphobia** – Are slurs or jokes normalised?
- \* **Social Segregation** – Are LGBTIQ+ employees excluded from informal networks?
- \* **Parental Leave Equity** – Are gender-diverse and non-birth parents supported?
- \* **Management Response** – Are reports ignored, downplayed, or dismissed?
- \* **Engagement in Inclusion Efforts** – Do staff avoid training or LGBTIQ+ days of significance?

### Warning Signs:

- \* Pronoun sharing leads to transphobic debate.
- \* LGBTIQ+ employees avoid staff areas due to exclusion.
- \* LGBTIQ+ workers stop bringing partners to events or “tone down” visibility.
- \* Staff avoid LGBTIQ+ events or education days.
- \* LGBTIQ+ workers try to avoid having to work in person and opt to work at home where possible.
- \* LGBTIQ+ workers contribute less to discussions or informal work conversations and very rarely share any information about themselves with others.

## Review Systems, Practices, and Policies

Organisational systems can unintentionally exclude LGBTIQ+ staff if not designed inclusively.

### Key Areas to Assess

- \* **Dress Codes** – Are they gendered without inclusive options?
- \* **Name & Pronoun Recognition** – Are chosen names/pronouns respected in systems and communication?
- \* **Name & Pronoun Updates** – Are there clear, accessible and comfortable processes for staff to update or flag their chosen name and pronouns across workplace systems and communications?
- \* **IT Systems** – Are there only binary gender options? Can updates be made easily?
- \* **Privacy & Protection** – Is sensitive information kept confidential? Some LGBTIQ+ people won't be out to friends or family and workplaces need to ensure that this information is kept safe.
- \* **Workplace Events & Travel** – Are venues safe? Are travel risks considered and equitably distributed? Can work-related travel place LGBTIQ+ staff in positions of risk due to local laws, social attitudes towards sexuality and/or gender identity?
- \* **EAPs** – Are services LGBTIQ+-affirming and culturally competent?

### Warning Signs:

- \* Staff must “prove” gender identity to update records.
- \* Uniform policies reinforce binary gender roles.
- \* LGBTIQ+ staff face risks at events or during work-related travel.

## Review the Online Working Environment

LGBTIQA+ employees face unique risks in digital spaces.

### Key Areas to Assess

- \* **Anonymity Risks** – Are online platforms being used for bullying or harassment?
- \* **Involuntary Outing** – Are personal details shared without consent?
- \* **Online Discrimination** – Are LGBTIQA+ staff targeted in workplace chats or forums?
- \* **Tokenism in Visibility** – Are staff featured in LGBTIQA+ campaigns without consent or support?
- \* **Vulnerable Roles** – Are LGBTIQA+ staff placed in high-risk, public-facing digital roles?

### Warning Signs:

- \* No digital harassment policy.
- \* LGBTIQA+ staff manage public-facing content without protection.
- \* LGBTIQA+ employees are featured in Pride campaigns without adequate preparation or consent.

### Case Study: Sonny's Story (he/him)

**Sonny**, an intersex man, was asked by his employer to feature in an educational video for the workplace's social media, explaining what it means to be intersex and outlining the organisation's steps toward creating a safer environment for intersex employees.

While Sonny agreed in good faith, **no safeguards were put in place to protect his safety online**. He was tagged in the post without consent, and **no training or preparation was provided to help him understand the potential risks or manage public exposure**.

Once published, the video was **shared widely**, reaching hundreds of people – many of whom left **violent, abusive, and discriminatory comments**. Because Sonny was tagged, individuals were able to **message him directly**, resulting in sustained online harassment.

Over time, the video was **downloaded onto private devices** and **reposted across multiple platforms**, making it impossible for Sonny to have it fully removed. The harassment continued for years, deeply affecting his:

- \* **Emotional wellbeing**
- \* **Mental health**
- \* **Career progression**
- \* **Sense of safety at work as well as his safety within his personal life**

Despite the harm, Sonny received little support from his employer. The experience left him feeling **betrayed and unsafe**, ultimately leading to his resignation after losing trust in the organisation's commitment to protecting him.

## Review the Physical Working Environment

The physical workplace must support comfort and safety for LGBTIQA+ employees.

### Key Areas to Assess

- \* **Inclusive Facilities** – All-gender restrooms, private changing areas, etc.
- \* **Affirming Needs** – Availability of menstrual products and safe disposal options.
- \* **Safety Measures** – Lighting, entry/exit security, safety when leaving work.

### Warning Signs:

- \* LGBTIQA+ staff leave to use restrooms elsewhere.
- \* Workspaces create unwanted physical proximity.
- \* Workers report feeling unsafe leaving the building.

## Review Patterns of Absenteeism and Leave

Unexplained leave may indicate workplace exclusion, stress, or discrimination.

### Key Areas to Assess

- \* **Sick Leave Disparities** – Are LGBTIQ+ employees using more personal leave?
- \* **Social Avoidance** – Are staff opting out of team events or meetings?
- \* **Parental Leave Access** – Are diverse family structures supported?

### Warning Signs:

- \* LGBTIQ+ staff avoid events or take frequent leave.
- \* Gender affirmation leave is not offered, leading to unpaid time off.
- \* Intersex workers exhaust personal leave for medical appointments.
- \* Same-gender partners or chosen families are not recognised for carers' leave.



# Step 2: Assessing Risks

## Guidance for Employers on Conducting an LGBTIQ+ Workplace Gendered Violence Risk Assessment

### Understanding Risk Assessments

Risk assessments help employers **proactively identify and evaluate potential harm** to LGBTIQ+ employees. A thorough assessment should consider:

#### Seriousness of the Risk

- \* What are the potential consequences (e.g. psychological harm, exclusion, burnout, disengagement)?
- \* Could these risks impact retention, wellbeing, or career progression?

#### Likelihood of Harm

- \* How likely is harm to occur due to workplace culture, policies, or external interactions?
- \* Are reporting processes accessible, enforced, and inclusive?

#### Who Is at Heightened Risk?

- \* LGBTIQ+ staff in **high-exposure roles** (e.g. hospitality, healthcare, education, retail).
- \* Employees in **non-diverse environments** or in **industries with historical exclusion**.
- \* Workers experiencing **compounded risks**, such as racism, ableism, or classism.

### When to Conduct a Risk Assessment

Risk assessments should be conducted:

- \* **Annually** (or as reasonably practicable depending on business size and nature).
- \* When the presence of LGBTIQ+ gendered violence is **unclear**.
- \* After reports of **homophobia, transphobia, or LGBTIQ+ exclusion**.
- \* When workplace changes (leadership, policy, restructure) may **affect risks**.
- \* If **multiple hazards may be interacting** and increasing harm.

### Conducting a Risk Assessment

A meaningful risk assessment should be led by someone with:

- \* **Knowledge of LGBTIQ+ workplace issues**
- \* **Access to relevant data and employee feedback**
- \* **Support from trained staff or external inclusion consultants**

#### Consultation & Stakeholder Engagement

- \* Diversity and inclusion committees
- \* LGBTIQ+ employee working groups or ride networks
- \* Union representatives
- \* Health and safety officers
- \* Paid LGBTIQ+ consultants or organisations

### Key Steps in the Risk Assessment Process

1. **Data Collection**  
Use anonymous surveys, one-on-one interviews, and focus groups to gather insights.
2. **Policy & Structural Review**  
Examine workplace policies, systems, and practices for inclusion gaps.
3. **Incident Analysis**  
Identify patterns and trends in bullying, harassment, or discrimination reports.
4. **Ongoing Evaluation**  
Risk assessment should be part of a continuous improvement cycle.

### Tailoring the Risk Assessment

#### Small Workplaces

May use informal methods (e.g. regular check-ins, open conversations, small focus groups).

#### Larger or High-Risk Workplaces

Should incorporate:

- \* Comprehensive employee surveys
- \* Focus groups or roundtables
- \* External audits or reviews by LGBTIQ+ experts

## Key Questions for Assessing Risks

- \* What is the **likelihood** of LGBTIQ+ employees experiencing gendered violence?
- \* Who or what is the **source of risk** (colleagues, clients, contractors)?
- \* How **frequently** does exposure occur?
- \* What are the **potential consequences** (psychological, reputational, legal)?
- \* Do **multiple risk factors interact** (e.g. being both queer and a person of colour)?
- \* Are **protections and policies** in place? How effective are they?

## Factors That Increase Risk

### Exposure to Discrimination

- \* Frequent misgendering, slurs, or microaggressions
- \* Hyper-masculine or rigid gendered workplace cultures

### Lack of Intersectional Awareness

- \* Failure to acknowledge compounding discrimination (e.g. racism, ableism, classism)
- \* No training or clear LGBTIQ+ policies

### High-Exposure Roles & Industries

- \* Customer-facing roles in sectors like healthcare, education, hospitality
- \* Workplaces affiliated with **religious groups** or **anti-LGBTIQ+ communities**
- \* Locations with anti-LGBTIQ+ laws or sentiment

### Work with Age-Specific Populations

- \* Young people (potentially influenced by online misinformation)
- \* Older people (may hold more entrenched anti-LGBTIQ+ beliefs)

### Unsafe Working Conditions

- \* Late-night shifts, unsafe public transport, lack of lighting or CCTV
- \* No confidential or anonymous reporting systems
- \* High reliance on casual labour or contract workers

## Social & Structural Exclusion

- \* LGBTIQ+ people not represented in leadership
- \* Networking and social events held in unsafe or exclusionary venues
- \* Inadequate access to mental health support tailored for LGBTIQ+ people

## Case Study I: Improving Experience for Clients and Workers within the Hair & Beauty Industry

A salon received a complaint from a client and similar feedback from staff regarding ongoing misgendering and exclusionary policies. Gendered pricing, uniform requirements, and bathroom access contributed to client attrition and staff discomfort.

The salon leadership team took the following steps to assess risks and develop solutions:

### Gathering Insights

- \* **Reviewed client complaints and informal feedback** from LGBTIQ+ customers.
- \* **Conducted anonymous staff surveys** to understand the workplace culture and identify areas of concern.
- \* **Consulted with local LGBTIQ+ inclusion experts** to better understand their current issues and what best practice in their industry would look like.
- \* **Employed LGBTIQ+ experts to review their workplace policies and all marketing materials**, including pricing structures, social media content, and website copy.

### Risk Assessment Findings:

- \* No policies on respectful interactions
- \* Gendered services and marketing alienated non-binary clients
- \* Uniform rules and restroom policies failed to accommodate gender diversity
- \* Staff lacked awareness of inclusive language and best practice

### Outcome:

**Salon leadership worked with LGBTIQ+ consultants to redesign their service model, marketing materials, and staff policies.**

## Case Study 2: Addressing Workplace Outing and Discrimination in a Panel Beating Business

A trans male employee was outed without his consent in a small panel beating business. He faced misgendering, transphobic jokes, and isolation. Management initially dismissed his concerns as "banter." After recognising his distress and increased sick leave, leadership initiated a risk assessment.

### Risk Assessment Findings:

- \* Toxic workshop culture allowed gendered violence to go unchecked
- \* No LGBTIQ+ policies or training in place
- \* Inadequate change facilities and lack of sanitary bins
- \* Lack of privacy and gender-affirming facilities contributed to further harm

### Outcome

**Management engaged external support, introduced privacy policies, updated facilities, and began workplace-wide LGBTIQ+ training.**



## How to Identify Risk Factors in Your Workplace

Use the following **Workplace Risk Checklist** to assess how your workplace is performing. Any response of “No” or “Unsure” may indicate areas for improvement.

Identifying Workplace Risks	Yes	No or Unsure
<b>Workplace Policies</b>		
There is an LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Policy with zero tolerance for discrimination or inappropriate behaviour. The policy is easily accessible to all staff (and service users, if applicable).		
Workplace policies explicitly reflect LGBTIQ+ inclusivity (e.g. gender-inclusive parental leave, dress code flexibility, inclusive language).		
Inclusion policies include a clear reporting process for gendered violence and outline appropriate response procedures		
Reporting systems for gendered violence are accessible, safe, and effectively actioned		
Support plans are available for staff undergoing gender affirmation, attending medical appointments, or accessing LGBTIQ+ inclusive EAP services		
Inclusion policies, support plans, and reporting systems are reviewed at least annually		
All staff are educated about inclusion policies during onboarding, and updates are regularly communicated		
<b>Workplace Systems</b>		
All staff and leadership complete regular LGBTIQ+ inclusion and gendered violence prevention training		
Employee records (e.g. payroll, HR files, ID badges) reflect a person’s chosen name and gender identity where legally possible, and can be easily updated		
Workplace systems uphold safety by providing gender-neutral facilities, safe travel plans, and protecting confidential LGBTIQ+ information		
Where possible, there is a designated LGBTIQ+ contact officer or workplace Pride group		
LGBTIQ+ staff are represented across all levels of the organisation, including leadership positions		
<b>Workplace Practices</b>		
Inclusive practices are embedded (e.g. staff email signatures include pronouns, participation in LGBTIQ+ days of significance, visible affirming signage)		
The organisation partners with LGBTIQ+ organisations for training, recruitment, or sponsorship, and avoids affiliations with discriminatory entities		
Shift scheduling and task assignments consider safety risks and avoid placing LGBTIQ+ employees in unsafe environments		
Anonymous employee feedback surveys are conducted at least annually and include questions about LGBTIQ+ safety and inclusion. Findings are actioned		

# Step 3: Controlling Risks

## Guidance for Employers on Minimising the Risk of LGBTIQA+ Gendered Violence at Work.

Employers have both a **legal** and **ethical** obligation under the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004** and the **Equal Opportunity Act 2010** to eliminate risks where reasonably practicable and to minimise them to the lowest possible level.

To control risks associated with gendered violence against LGBTIQA+ employees, employers should take the following steps:

1. Improve organisational culture
2. Develop safer workplace infrastructure
3. Introduce effective LGBTIQA+ inclusion policies and support mechanisms
4. Organise regular LGBTIQA+ inclusion training
5. Ensure accessible reporting and response systems
6. Address safety in situations involving criminal offences



# Key Strategies to Reduce the Risk of LGBTIQ+ Workplace Gendered Violence

## 1. Improve Organisational Culture

Workplace culture is shaped by leadership, values, behaviours, and communication. A safe and respectful culture must:

- \* **Set clear expectations for inclusive behaviour**
- \* **Encourage reporting without fear of retaliation**
- \* **Proactively address root causes of harm**
- \* **Hold staff accountable for discriminatory actions**
- \* **Recognise intersectionality, particularly for employees who are First Nations, disabled, neurodivergent, or culturally and linguistically diverse**

### Practical Actions

- \* **Diverse Leadership** – Ensure LGBTIQ+ staff are represented in leadership and decision-making roles
- \* **Formal Behavioural Standards** – Embed inclusive conduct into all policies
- \* **Transparent Communication** – Create space for employees to speak up and feel heard
- \* **LGBTIQ+ Action Plan** – Set goals and track progress on inclusion
- \* **Regular Inclusion Audits** – Annually review policies and culture

- \* **Celebrate Days of Significance** – Engage meaningfully in events such as Wear It Purple, IDAHOBIT, Bi+ Visibility Day, and more
- \* **Avoid Tokenism** – Only participate in visibility campaigns when backed by genuine inclusion initiatives
- \* **Ongoing Training** – Offer refresher sessions, leadership-specific training, and more than just onboarding
- \* **Compensate Emotional Labour** – Resource and remunerate LGBTIQ+ employees for leading inclusion work
- \* **Inclusive Supply Chains** – Partner only with organisations aligned with LGBTIQ+ inclusion values

Date	LGBTIQ+ Days of Significance Celebrated within Victoria
Jan/Feb	Midsumma Pride
31 March	Trans Day of Visibility
17 May	IDAHOBIT
June	Pride Month
Last Friday of Aug	Wear it Purple Day
Sept	Bi+ Visibility Month
23 Sept	Bi+ Visibility Day
Late Oct	Asexual Awareness Week
26 Oct	Intersex Awareness Day
8 Nov	Intersex Day of Solidarity
13 – 19 Nov	Trans Awareness Week

## 2. Develop Safer Workplace Infrastructure

LGBTIQ+ employees should feel physically safe, respected, and included. Core infrastructure improvements include:

### All-Gender Bathrooms

- \* **Provide clean, accessible, clearly signed all-gender bathrooms**
- \* Avoid requiring staff to have to request access or use distant facilities.
- \* Include sanitary bins in all restrooms
- \* Label bathrooms by features (e.g. "stalls only", "urinals and stalls")
- \* Ensure accessible bathrooms are available in addition to all-gender options

### Confidential & Accessible Reporting Mechanisms

- \* **Clearly document and communicate reporting processes**
- \* Protect employees from retaliation
- \* Use trauma-informed practices and ensure timely responses
- \* Provide wellbeing support for all parties involved
- \* Regularly review the reporting process and act on feedback

### Visible Signs of Inclusion

- \* **Offer pronoun badges or name tags**
- \* Use inclusive language in all materials
- \* Display LGBTIQ+ affirming signage, art, or representation in recruitment campaigns

### Private & Inclusive Changing Facilities

- \* **Offer private cubicles to ensure comfort and privacy for all genders**

### Gender-Neutral Dress Codes

- \* **Remove gendered clothing expectations**
- \* Allow all staff to choose the uniform option they are most comfortable in
- \* Use non-gendered language (e.g. "closed-toe shoes" instead of "men must wear...")

### Safe Shift Scheduling

- \* Avoid placing LGBTIQ+ staff in unsafe environments alone (e.g. late nights)
- \* Offer safe transport options for after-hours work or travel to high-risk areas

### Inclusive Travel Policies

- \* Acknowledge risks of travel for LGBTIQ+ employees (e.g. queerphobic regions)
- \* Offer opt-out options without professional penalty
- \* Provide access to safety resources like Smartraveller's LGBTIQ+ travel advice

### Inclusive Communal Spaces

- \* Design communal spaces to be inclusive and non-gendered where possible

### LGBTIQ+ Employee Input on Safety Measures

- \* **Involve LGBTIQ+ employees in the development of safety policies**
- \* Establish an internal advisory group for continuous feedback and acknowledge the labour this would involve by reducing hours elsewhere or paying staff for the additional work.

## Case Study: Developing Safer Workplace Infrastructure in Hospitality

A restaurant hosted a booking for a queer performance art group but faced internal concerns about how to create a safe environment.

### Key Issues Identified:

- \* No LGBTIQ+ inclusion training
- \* Gendered bathrooms only
- \* Staff have previously made inappropriate jokes about LGBTIQ+ people
- \* Lack of inclusive signage or materials
- \* General lack of understanding about trans identity and inclusive language

## Action Steps Taken:

### 1. Training & Policy

- ◇ Hired a consultant for LGBTIQ+ inclusion training
- ◇ Created and communicated a zero-tolerance discrimination policy
- ◇ Trained staff on respectful greetings, language, and pronoun use

### 2. Physical Infrastructure

- ◇ Replaced signage with all-gender labels
- ◇ Committed to long-term renovations (private cubicles, sanitary bins)
- ◇ Offered pronoun badges to all staff

### 3. Customer-Facing Improvements

- ◇ Updated confirmation emails with inclusive language and accessibility details
- ◇ Reviewed promotional content to ensure LGBTIQ+ representation
- ◇ Trained staff on responding to discrimination from patrons

## Download some of our Being Valued resources today!

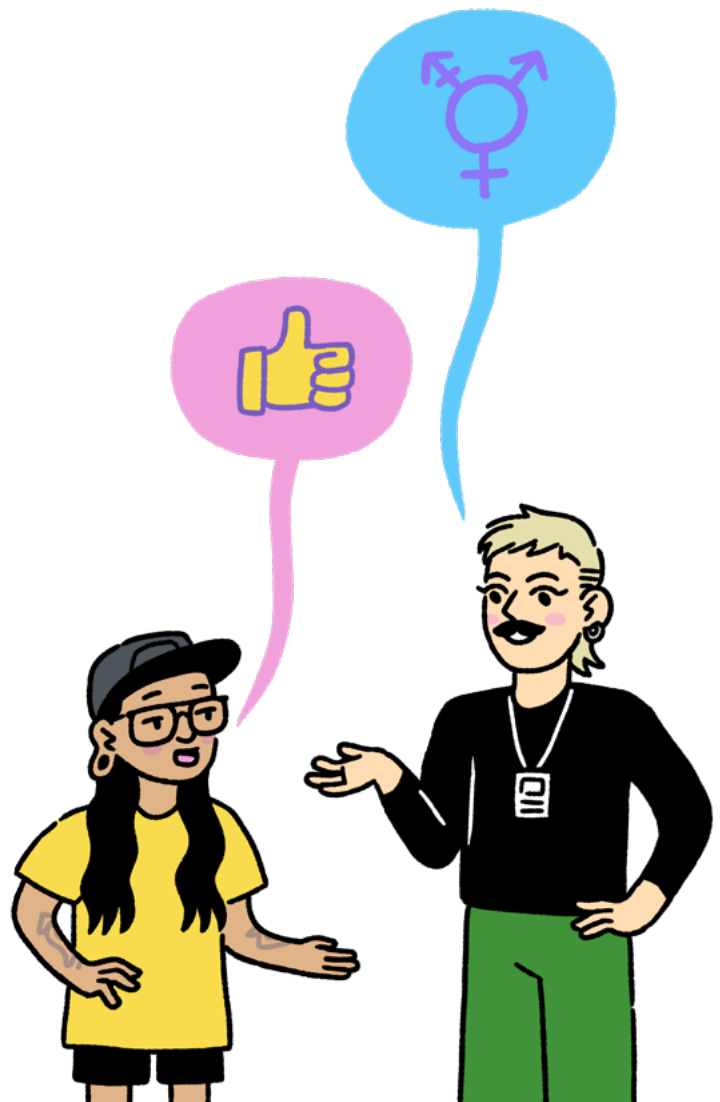
- \* *Pronoun Badges* – Use our Being Valued badge templates or design your own
- \* *Safer Bathrooms Poster* – Promote respectful bathroom access
- \* *All Gender bathrooms Signage* – Use clear, inclusive signage for bathrooms and changing areas

## Outcome:

**\* Staff confidence increased**

**\* All-gender restrooms supported wider staff and customer comfort**

- \* The LGBTIQ+ guests reported feeling safe and respected
- \* Online feedback praised the venue's inclusivity
- \* Management committed to ongoing training and updates



### 3. Introduce Effective LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Policies & Support Mechanisms

Workplace policies and supports should explicitly address LGBTQIA+ gendered violence and provide tangible, ongoing support for LGBTQIA+ employees.

#### Actions to Improve Workplace Policies & Support Mechanisms

##### Develop a Comprehensive LGBTQIA+ Workplace Inclusion Policy

A strong LGBTQIA+ Workplace Inclusion Policy must go beyond a basic anti-discrimination statement. It should actively work to create safe, equitable, and affirming workplaces for LGBTQIA+ staff, clients, and stakeholders.

Include the following:

- \* **A clear zero-tolerance statement** on discrimination, harassment, and gendered violence.
- \* **A reaffirmation of your organisation’s legal responsibilities** under the *Equal Opportunity Act*, stating that discrimination based on protected personal attributes is unlawful and will not be tolerated.
- \* **Background on key terms and concepts**, including LGBTQIA+ identities, gendered violence, and relevant case studies tailored to your sector.
- \* **A definition of inclusive workplace behaviours** and set clear expectations for all employees.
- \* **Transparency about how the policy was developed** – including who contributed, whether LGBTQIA+ staff or communities were consulted, and how intersectionality was considered.
- \* **Clear explanation of staff rights and responsibilities**, including how to raise concerns or lodge complaints if issues arise.
- \* **Manager responsibilities** – including modelling inclusive behaviour and responding to incidents of gendered violence promptly and effectively.
- \* **Strategies and protections** your organisation has in place to keep LGBTQIA+ workers, clients, and customers safe.
- \* **Transparent reporting and response mechanisms** – clarify how complaints are handled, the process involved, and potential consequences for policy breaches.
- \* **Acknowledgement of intersectionality** and ensure the policy addresses the unique needs of LGBTQIA+ employees who are First Nations, disabled, neurodivergent, migrants, or people of colour.
- \* **Gender-neutral and inclusive language** throughout all policy documents.
- \* **An attached LGBTQIA+ Action Plan** with specific steps, timelines, and measurable goals to improve safety, wellbeing, and inclusion across your organisation.



# Create Gender Affirmation Support Plans

Workplaces should establish clear, proactive processes that support trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse employees to work safely, confidently, and with dignity.

A Gender Affirmation Support Plan is a practical and affirming tool that helps employees navigate workplace changes related to gender affirmation.

## These changes may include:

- \* Updating pronouns and names
- \* Using different bathrooms or change rooms
- \* Accessing gender affirmation leave
- \* Adjusting uniforms, rosters, or communication preferences

A well-implemented plan reduces the emotional and administrative burden on the employee and ensures transitions at work are handled with care, respect, and confidentiality.

## Key Components of a Gender Affirmation Support Plan

### Administrative Updates

- \* A **confidential, accessible process to update names, pronouns, and gender markers** across all systems.
- \* Legal documentation should not be required wherever possible.
- \* All records should be updated simultaneously to avoid deadnaming or misgendering.

### Affirmed Name Use

- \* **Employees should be able to use their affirmed name** in all internal communications and systems.
- \* This includes email accounts, directories, rosters, name tags, business cards, etc.

### Gender Affirmation Leave

- \* **Offer paid leave for medical appointments, social transition, mental health support, or legal processes related to gender affirmation.**
- \* This leave should be additional to standard personal or sick leave entitlements.

### Practical Workplace Support

- \* **Provide flexible arrangements** such as duty adjustments, facility access, and dress code changes.
- \* Offer referrals to support services and access to LGBTIQ+ networks or peer support.

## Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- \* **Respect employee privacy at every step.**
- \* Include plans for who should be informed, how, and what information is to remain confidential.

## Example Planning Questions:

- \* Would you prefer to inform your team personally or have your manager do so?
- \* Are there individuals you do not want informed (e.g. clients, external stakeholders or emergency contact?)?
- \* How can we support you during this time (e.g. adjusted workload, access to counselling)?

## Create Intersex Support Plans

Intersex employees may have specific needs relating to medical care, privacy, and workplace accommodations.

### To support intersex staff:

- \* Provide **intersex-specific leave** to attend medical appointments.
- \* **Develop individualised support plans** that may include flexible scheduling, neurodiversity accommodations, or adjustments for privacy and comfort.
- \* **Prevent unnecessary disclosure** – workplace culture and policy should never require employees to share personal or medical history.

## Implement All Gender Parental Leave Policies

Parental leave policies should reflect diverse families and parenting roles.

- \* Use **gender-neutral language** (e.g. “parental leave” instead of “maternity” or “paternity”).
- \* Ensure **equal access** for adoptive, non-birth, and gender-diverse parents.
- \* Include **leave for surrogacy, adoption, and IVF processes.**
- \* **Provide inclusive lactation/chestfeeding supports** for trans and non-binary parents.

## Establish LGBTIQ+ Peer Support Networks

LGBTIQ+ employees benefit from peer connection, advocacy, and community. To create a Pride group or working group:

1. **Define the group's purpose** – peer support, culture change, events, or all of the above.
2. **Identify initial organisers and survey interest.**
3. **Secure visible leadership support.**
4. **Choose a structure that suits your organisation** (e.g. working group, mentorship program).
5. **Create a safe, accessible, and inclusive environment.**
6. **Promote the group sensitively and widely.**
7. **Start with low-pressure activities** (e.g. morning teas, drop-ins).
8. **Collect feedback and continuously improve.**

## Compensate Inclusion Work

Diversity work is real work – and it should be recognised.

- \* Pay LGBTIQ+ employees who speak at events, lead working groups, or share lived experience.
- \* Prevent unpaid emotional labour by formalising inclusion contributions in role descriptions and KPIs.
- \* Pay external LGBTIQ+ trainers appropriately for professional services.

## Implement Online Safety Measures

LGBTIQ+ staff featured in public-facing materials may be at risk of online abuse.

- \* Use moderation tools on social media to remove anti-LGBTIQ+ content.
- \* Provide opt-out options for public-facing campaigns.
- \* Offer digital safety training and direct support to impacted staff.
- \* Protect staff managing public platforms from burnout and vicarious trauma.
- \* Ensure LGBTIQ+ staff are informed about the potential risks of being publicly featured in Pride campaigns or LGBTIQ+ workplace advertising. Provide clear information about the safety, wellbeing, and support mechanisms available to them in case of backlash or harm.

## Provide Lateral Violence and Vicarious Trauma Training

LGBTIQ+ communities are not immune to intra-community harm. Training should:

- \* Address lateral violence, unconscious bias, internalised discrimination, and vicarious trauma.
- \* Acknowledge intersectionality within LGBTIQ+ spaces.
- \* Offer constructive conflict resolution pathways.

## LGBTIQ+ Affirming Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

- \* Partner with providers trained in LGBTIQ+ mental health.
- \* Allow employees to choose affirming external counsellors, with reimbursement where possible.
- \* Do not require staff to disclose their identity to HR to access support.

## Require the use of Inclusive Language

- \* Use gender-neutral, LGBTIQ+-affirming language across all documents.
- \* Train staff in respectful and accurate language use.
- \* Review data collection practices – only ask what is necessary, and allow people to self-describe or opt out.

## Strengthen Leadership Accountability & Enforcement

- \* Train all managers in LGBTIQ+ inclusion.
- \* Ensure policies are enforced, not just written.
- \* Include inclusion metrics in performance reviews.

## Develop LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Recruitment & Career Progression

- \* Use inclusive job ads and avoid binary gender expectations.
- \* Encourage LGBTIQ+ applicants, especially in leadership roles.
- \* Value lived experience and offer mentorship programs.

## Embed Intersectionality Across Workplace Policies

- \* Ensure policies consider First Nations LGBTQIA+ people, people of colour, migrants, disabled and neurodivergent staff.
- \* Recognise overlapping systems of oppression and address multiple marginalisations in policy design and implementation.

## Conduct Regular Policy Audits & Continuous Improvement

- \* Review inclusion policies annually.
- \* Use anonymous staff feedback and climate surveys to inform improvements.
- \* Offer refresher training and policy updates each year.

## Need Support Creating Inclusive Workplace Policies?

- \* *LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Policy Template* – Use our Being Valued template to build a strong, actionable foundation.
- \* *Gender Affirmation Support Plan Template* – Access our ready-to-use plan to guide respectful, supportive processes for trans and gender-diverse staff.
- \* *All Gender Parental Leave* – find information on how to develop your own today.



## 4. Organise LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Training

Education is a key tool in preventing LGBTIQ+ gendered violence. Inclusion training should be **mandatory, ongoing**, and **tailored** to the specific risks and dynamics of each workplace.

### Effective Training Should Ensure All Employees:

- \* **Understand LGBTIQ+ inclusive language** and use respectful communication strategies.
- \* **Address unconscious bias and systemic discrimination.**
- \* **Recognise workplace risks** that contribute to LGBTIQ+ gendered violence.
- \* Learn practical **strategies to improve LGBTIQ+ safety, access, and inclusion.**
- \* **Gain skills in bystander intervention** and how to effectively respond to discrimination.

### Best Practices for LGBTIQ+ Workplace Training

#### Make Training Mandatory

All staff – including senior management – must complete LGBTIQ+ inclusion training during onboarding and at regular intervals. Inclusion training should be a standard part of onboarding for all staff, with refresher sessions provided annually.

#### Employ External Trainers

Engage experienced trainers from reputable organisations that are led by, or include, LGBTIQ+ people. Content should be grounded in current research and community-informed practice.

**Important:** Do not ask LGBTIQ+ staff to deliver inclusion training unless they are appropriately paid and the work is recognised as additional to their existing role—not simply absorbed into their regular duties—as this can contribute to burnout and reinforce existing inequities. Best practice is to engage external organisations that are specifically trained and compensated to deliver this important work.

#### Support LGBTIQ+ Staff Throughout Training

Let LGBTIQ+ staff know they are welcome to step out of training if content becomes distressing or triggering, or if participant discussion creates discomfort. Prioritising **psychological safety** ensures inclusion efforts do not cause unintended harm.

#### Address Intersectionality

Training should explore how gendered violence is compounded by other forms of oppression, such as racism, ableism, and classism. Ensure inclusion strategies reflect the experiences of First Nations people, disabled, neurodivergent, migrant, and racially diverse LGBTIQ+ individuals.

#### Conduct Annual Refreshers

Regular refresher training ensures employees stay up to date with evolving language, workplace practices, and legal protections.

#### Tailor Training to Industry-Specific Risks

LGBTIQ+ workplace challenges vary across industries (e.g. healthcare, hospitality, education, construction). Customised content ensures training feels relevant and actionable.

#### Embed Training in Workplace Culture

Training should be part of broader professional development, not a one-off event. Encourage continuous learning and discussion through leadership workshops, team debriefs, and learning resources.

#### Measure Impact

Track participation rates, collect anonymous feedback, and assess workplace changes (e.g. reduction in complaints, increased inclusion in surveys). This helps identify what's working and what needs improvement.

## Recommended LGBTIQ+ Training Providers in Victoria

- \* **Transgender Victoria (TGV)** – Specialists in trans and gender-diverse workplace inclusion.
- \* **Unicorns (with delsi)** – Experts in celebratory queer inclusion training, tailored through an intersectional lens.
- \* **Thorne Harbour Health (THH)** – LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing experts, offering workplace safety and inclusion training.
- \* **Minus18** – Australia’s largest youth-driven LGBTIQ+ organisation, providing training for workplaces and education settings.
- \* **Pride in Diversity** – National leaders in LGBTIQ+ inclusion, with a focus on corporate and government settings.
- \* **Rainbow Tick Accreditation** – Supports organisations in achieving Rainbow Tick certification for LGBTIQ+ inclusive service delivery.
- \* **InterAction (Health and Human Rights)** – Delivers intersex-inclusive training via the Yellow Tick program.

## Additional Resources for Workplace Education

- \* *LGBTIQ+ Inclusivity Guide* – Build inclusive practices, policies, and culture within your workplace.
- \* *Example Scenarios* – Navigate real-world workplace challenges using LGBTIQ+ inclusive responses and decision-making.



## 5. Ensure Inclusive Reporting & Response Systems

To encourage reporting and prevent workplace violence, organisations must implement **clear, confidential, and trauma-informed** reporting pathways. These systems must protect LGBTIQ+ employees from retaliation and demonstrate that complaints are taken seriously and acted upon.

### Key Actions for Effective Reporting Systems

#### Anonymous Reporting Options

**Provide confidential and anonymous mechanisms** such as secure online forms, internal reporting tools, or third-party services. This enables employees to raise concerns without fear of retaliation or negative repercussions.

#### Promotion of Reporting Mechanisms

**Ensure all staff are aware of how to report.** Promote reporting pathways during onboarding, through regular training, internal newsletters, posters, and staff meetings.

#### LGBTIQ+ Trained Contact Officers

**Appoint designated contact officers** who are trained in LGBTIQ+ inclusion, gendered violence prevention, and anti-discrimination practices. These officers must provide affirming, confidential, and culturally safe support.

#### Recognise Organisational Capacity

If your organisation lacks the expertise to manage complaints internally, acknowledge this. Partner with external professionals or services to ensure complaints are managed independently, appropriately, and safely.

#### Support for Impacted Individuals

**Offer access to counselling, peer support, debriefing, or referrals to LGBTIQ+-affirming, trauma-informed professionals.** Support must be offered to anyone impacted – including complainants, respondents, or witnesses.

#### Clear Disciplinary Actions

**Clearly define consequences for behaviour such as discrimination, harassment, or gendered violence.** Apply policies consistently across all levels to demonstrate accountability and integrity.

#### Regular Updates on Investigations

**Keep complainants informed throughout the process.** Provide timely updates on the status, next steps, and outcomes of investigations. Transparency builds trust in the reporting system.

#### Reflect and Learn

**Treat every report as a learning opportunity.** After resolution, conduct a review to identify systemic issues and improve workplace policies, training, and culture to reduce future harm. Commit to continuous improvement.

### Additional Resources for Workplace Reporting

*Educational Workplace Posters* – Download posters to promote a zero-tolerance approach and normalise reporting LGBTIQ+ gendered violence.

*LGBTIQ+ Gendered Violence Reporting Template* – A customisable form to help organisations strengthen reporting systems and ensure accountability.

## 6. Addressing Criminal Offences Safely

Some forms of workplace violence, discrimination, and harassment are not just breaches of workplace policy – they may be **criminal offences** under Australian law. Employers have a legal and ethical responsibility to support impacted individuals and ensure all incidents are handled with confidentiality, care, and compliance.

### Recognising Criminal Offences in the Workplace

The following behaviours may constitute criminal offences when committed in the workplace:

#### Physical and Violent Offences

- \* Physical violence based on a person's gender identity, sexuality, or sex characteristics.
- \* Sexual assault and unwanted touching (including coercion or intimidation).
- \* Verbal or written threats of violence.

#### Harassment and Stalking

- \* Stalking, persistent unwanted contact, or intimidation.
- \* Malicious complaints or false allegations aimed at damaging someone's reputation.
- \* Doxing (the sharing of private information without consent to incite harassment).

#### Hate Crimes and Online Abuse

- \* Hate speech or incitement to violence.
- \* Hate mail, slurs, or targeted harassment via work systems or personal channels.
- \* Image-based abuse, including revenge porn, non-consensual sharing of images, or deep fakes.

#### Property Damage and Vandalism

- \* Defacing LGBTIQ+ employees' workspaces with offensive materials.
- \* Damaging personal belongings or workplace property as intimidation.

### Legal Responsibilities of Employers

Employers must respond to criminal conduct under the following legislation:

- \* **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)** – Requires employers to ensure a safe working environment, free from psychological and physical harm.
- \* **Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)** – Prohibits discrimination, workplace harassment, and adverse treatment.
- \* **Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)** – Deems workplace sexual harassment unlawful.

Failing to respond to workplace criminal behaviour may result in legal liability, financial penalties, and reputational harm.

### Steps for Addressing Criminal Offences in the Workplace

#### 1. Support the Affected Employee

- \* Ensure immediate safety. Remove the person from risk and call emergency services if needed.
- \* Provide trauma-informed care such as counselling, peer support, or leave options.
- \* Respect their autonomy. Do not pressure them to report to the police. Instead, help them understand their rights and options.

#### 2. Reporting the Offence (With Consent)

If the employee wants to report the offence, they may:

- \* Call **000** in an emergency.
- \* Contact the **Police Assistance Line** (131 444) or visit a local police station.
- \* Seek support from an **LGBTIQ+ Liaison Officer** (LLO) trained to support LGBTIQ+ people.

If they do **not** consent to reporting:

- \* Internally document the incident to monitor patterns.
- \* Offer other reporting pathways (e.g. WorkSafe Victoria, Fair Work Commission, Q+Law).
- \* Take internal disciplinary action if appropriate.

### 3. Maintain Privacy and Confidentiality

- \* **Handle complaints discreetly**, sharing details only on a need-to-know basis.
- \* **Allow the complainant to withdraw** if they no longer feel safe proceeding.
- \* If legal escalation is required, **inform the employee before taking action**.

### LGBTIQA+ Communities and Law Enforcement

Many LGBTIQA+ people do not feel safe engaging with police due to historical and ongoing discrimination. Employers must understand and honour this context.

#### Historical Context

- \* **Same-sex relationships were criminalised until 1993** in Tasmania, leading to decades of persecution.
- \* **Police raided LGBTIQA+ spaces** such as bars and nightclubs, reinforcing systemic discrimination.
- \* **Institutional bias and profiling** have contributed to ongoing distrust.

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# Only 1.7%

of LGBTIQA+ individuals in Victoria who experienced workplace violence reported it to police.<sup>15</sup>

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#### Current Barriers to Reporting

- \* Many anticipate dismissal or discrimination when seeking justice.
- \* Not all LGBTIQA+ employees recognise their experiences as legally protected.
- \* Some LGBTIQA+ people won't feel safe talking to police

### Workplace Considerations

Employers should:

- \* Respect employees' hesitation to involve police.
- \* Offer alternatives such as mediation or community legal services.
- \* Ensure HR and leadership are trained in trauma-informed responses.
- \* Be transparent and consultative if police contact becomes necessary.

### Alternative Reporting and Legal Support

If an LGBTIQA+ employee **does not wish to involve police**, they can still seek support from:

- \* **WorkSafe Victoria** – Call 1800 136 089 for workplace safety concerns.
- \* **Fair Work Commission** – For workplace discrimination, unfair treatment, or adverse action complaints.
- \* **Q+Law** – LGBTIQA+ legal advocacy service.
- \* **Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)** – For discrimination complaints.
- \* **Employee Unions** – Workplace advocacy
- \* **eSafety Commissioner** – For online harassment, hate speech, or doxxing complaints.

### Preventing Workplace Violence Before It Escalates

While reactive strategies are vital, prevention is key. Workplaces should:

- \* **Implement strong security measures** – Lighting, surveillance, and protection for at-risk employees.
- \* **Screen new hires** – Conduct reference checks to avoid bringing known offenders into the organisation.
- \* **Conduct culture audits** – Identify early warning signs like exclusion, microaggressions, or escalating behaviour.
- \* **Provide regular LGBTIQA+ inclusion training** – Equip all staff to intervene early and build a culture of safety.

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<sup>15</sup> Being Valued, 2024 Survey of LGBTIQA+ Experiences in the Workplace, (WorkSafe, 2025).

# Step 4: Review and Revise Risk Control Measures

Creating a safe and inclusive workplace requires **ongoing evaluation** of the systems in place. Preventing LGBTIQ+ gendered violence is not a one-off action – it requires continuous review to ensure workplace measures remain effective, relevant, and responsive to emerging risks.

## The Importance of Regular Review

Scheduled reviews help to:

- \* Ensure control measures are effectively preventing harm and addressing unlawful behaviour.
- \* Identify gaps and weaknesses in current policies or procedures.
- \* Respond to shifts in workplace structure, laws, or employee needs.
- \* Strengthen protections and support for LGBTIQ+ staff.

## Key Triggers for Reviewing Risk Control Measures

In addition to scheduled reviews, workplaces should assess and revise policies when:

- \* **Laws change** – Legislation around LGBTIQ+ inclusion, discrimination, or workplace safety is updated.
- \* **Workplace changes create new risks** – Restructures, leadership changes, or new technology or systems may introduce new vulnerabilities.
- \* **New risks emerge** – Discrimination, harassment, or gendered violence incidents indicate current controls may not be sufficient.
- \* **Employee consultation highlights concerns** – LGBTIQ+ employees or workplace inclusion groups raise concerns about existing practices.
- \* **HR or compliance officers request review** – Internal oversight identifies areas requiring improvement or legal alignment.

## Monitoring and Evaluating Your Workplace

A strong monitoring and evaluation process enables workplaces to:

- \* Identify patterns of harm or exclusion.
- \* Assess the impact of policies and procedures.
- \* Ensure LGBTIQ+ staff feel safe and supported.
- \* Act on feedback and adapt to change.

This process must be **proactive, inclusive**, and informed by the lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ employees.

## Steps to Monitor and Evaluate Workplace Safety

### 1. Regular Surveys and Feedback Mechanisms

- \* **Anonymous surveys** – Collect data on employee experiences, workplace safety, and inclusion.
- \* **Privacy-first design** – Avoid questions that might identify individuals, especially in regional teams or smaller organisations.
- \* **Inclusive language** – Ensure survey tools use LGBTIQ+ affirming and respectful terminology.
- \* **Ongoing feedback loops** – Use digital tools to allow continuous anonymous feedback and issue tracking.

### 2. Continuous Improvement Plans

- \* Conduct **regular reviews** of workplace policies, training content, and complaint procedures.
- \* Publish **progress reports** that show how your organisation is improving LGBTIQ+ safety and inclusion.

### 3. Integration and Accountability

- \* Embed workplace safety policies into **HR and leadership frameworks**.
- \* Create **LGBTIQ+ inclusion KPIs** to track responsiveness and safety outcomes.
- \* **Close the feedback loop** – Respond to concerns, share outcomes with staff, and adjust practices accordingly.
- \* Use **accessible digital tools** for reporting, feedback, and learning modules.

#### 4. Enforcement and Consequences

- \* **Apply disciplinary action** for repeat offenders to reinforce zero-tolerance for gendered violence.
- \* Use internal communication, training, and onboarding to consistently reinforce these expectations.

#### 5. Periodic Evaluation and Adaptation

- \* Assess whether your **monitoring systems remain effective** and responsive to LGBTIQ+ needs.
- \* Adapt strategies based on new legal requirements, employee feedback, and sector best practice.

**Access our** "Monitoring and Evaluating Your Workplace" Survey tool to assess how safe LGBTIQ+ employees currently feel and to guide future improvements.



# Overcoming Challenges in LGBTIQ+ Workplace Inclusion

While embracing LGBTIQ+ diversity strengthens workplace culture and safety, it can also elicit resistance. **Effective inclusion work requires organisations to anticipate and manage backlash, while continuing to centre the wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ employees.**

## Understanding Potential Sources of Resistance

### External Resistance

- \* Anti-LGBTIQ+ organisations may attempt to discredit workplace inclusion efforts.
- \* Public complaints, misinformation, or online abuse targeting LGBTIQ+ workplace initiatives.

### Internal Workplace Resistance

- \* Employees resisting LGBTIQ+ initiatives due to personal beliefs or biases.
- \* Managers or leaders failing to uphold and model inclusion policies.

### Resistance Within LGBTIQ+ Communities

Some LGBTIQ+ employees may feel concerned about tokenism or inequitable representation.

Conflict over which parts of community or issues are prioritised in workplace diversity initiatives.

### Behaviours That Reflect Resistance

- \* **Passive resistance** – Limited cooperation with LGBTIQ+ efforts.
- \* **Avoidance** – Skipping inclusion training, Pride events, or cultural celebrations.
- \* **Task evasion** – Refusal to engage in responsibilities linked to diversity and inclusion.
- \* **Denial** – Dismissing LGBTIQ+ concerns or workplace experiences.

## Addressing Resistance

### Reinforce Leadership Accountability

Ensure all **leaders actively promote and model inclusive behaviour**. Change must be championed from the top down.

### Make Inclusion Non-Negotiable

Require **all staff to complete LGBTIQ+ inclusion training**. Embed inclusive values into policies, performance reviews, and organisational expectations.

### Create Space for Open Dialogue – With Boundaries

Encourage respectful questions, while affirming that inclusion is not up for debate – it's a core organisational value.

### Monitor Workplace Culture

**Identify early signs of exclusion, microaggressions, or unsafe behaviours. Intervene early and provide targeted support.**

### Enforce Clear Consequences

Make it clear that **behaviour undermining inclusion will not be tolerated**. Prioritise the safety and dignity of LGBTIQ+ staff.

## Case Study: Managing Internal Resistance in a Tech Company

A mid-sized tech company launched an internal LGBTIQ+ inclusion initiative following staff feedback about the lack of visibility and safety. An external LGBTIQ+ educator was invited to deliver a foundational training session.

### Challenges Identified

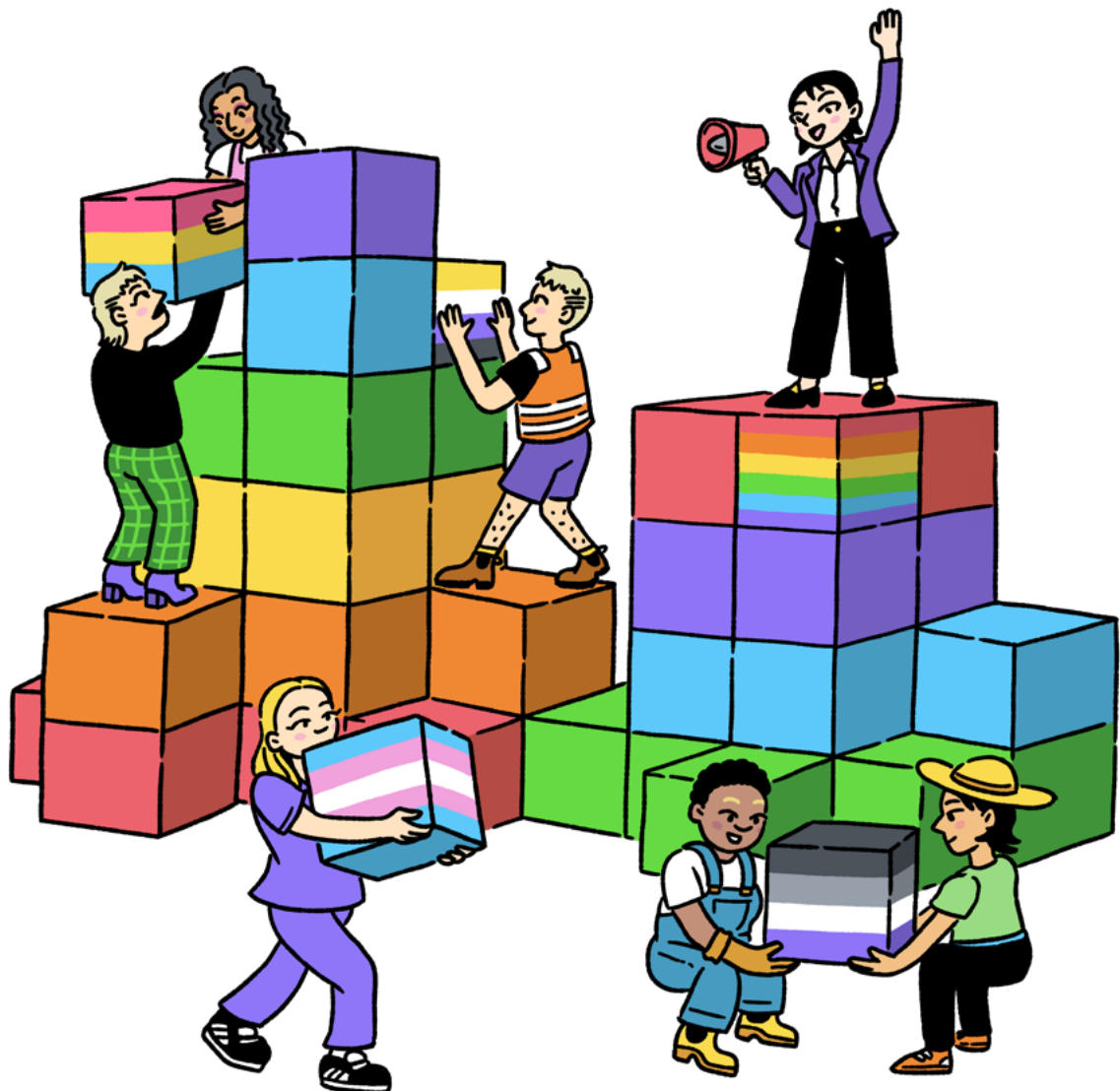
- \* Nearly 50% of employees called in sick or worked remotely the day of the training.
- \* Those who attended were already LGBTIQ+ or active allies – not the employees who most needed to learn.
- \* Informal feedback revealed some staff felt the training “wasn't relevant” or that it was “being forced on them.”
- \* LGBTIQ+ employees expressed disappointment and increased hesitation about being out at work.

## Actions Taken

- \* Senior leadership publicly acknowledged the poor attendance and reaffirmed their commitment to inclusion.
- \* LGBTIQ+ training was made mandatory for all staff, with deadlines and follow-up sessions.
- \* Managers were trained to model inclusive behaviours and respond to resistant attitudes constructively.
- \* Additional modules were added, including unconscious bias, bystander intervention, and psychological safety.
- \* LGBTIQ+ employees were offered dedicated support throughout the process.

## Outcomes

- \* **LGBTIQ+ employees reported feeling more visible and supported.**
- \* **The company received positive recognition – including new LGBTIQ+ clients and a nomination for an inclusion award.**
- \* Within six weeks, 100% of staff completed the training.
- \* Post-training surveys showed improved confidence using inclusive language and better understanding of LGBTIQ+ workplace experiences.
- \* A staff-led LGBTIQ+ working group was launched to sustain momentum and drive cultural change.
- \* Inclusive practices were embedded into recruitment, policy reviews, and internal communications.



# Referral Pathways

If you want to provide additional support to LGBTIQ+ employees but are unsure where to start, there are several well-established organisations in Victoria that can assist.

These organisations also serve as valuable resources for LGBTIQ+ employees who may not be receiving adequate support from their workplace and want to explore their options.

## Health Services

### Rural Health Connect

Rural Health Connect links regional LGBTIQ+ individuals with LGBTIQ+ informed psychologists via an online platform.

For more information, visit [Rural Health Connect](#).

### Your Community Health (YCH)

YCH offers:

- \* Gender-affirming healthcare
- \* Trans and gender-diverse peer navigation services
- \* Mental health support

For services, visit [YCH](#).

## Intersex Resources

### InterAction for Health and Human Rights (InterAction) – formerly Intersex Human Rights Australia

InterAction is a not-for-profit organisation advocating for the human rights and bodily autonomy of intersex people. The organisation provides information, education, and peer support for intersex individuals and their families.

### Workplace Inclusion Support

- \* Yellow Tick Program – Standardised intersex inclusion training for workplaces.
- \* Employer Guides – Free resources for businesses to create supportive environments for intersex employees.

For more information, visit the [InterAction website](#).

### InterLink Counselling Service

InterLink offers one-on-one and group counselling services tailored to intersex individuals.

For support, visit the [InterLink website](#).

### Intersex Peer Support Australia (IPSA)

IPSA is a peer support, information, and advocacy group for people born with variations in sex characteristics and their families.

For more information, visit the [IPSA website](#).

## Legal and Advocacy Support

### Justice Q

Justice Q is a specialist legal service for LGBTIQ+ individuals in Victoria's south-east, offering free legal consultations by phone or in person.

Contact Information

- \* Springvale Office: (03) 9545 7400  
Email: [info@smls.com.au](mailto:info@smls.com.au)
- \* Narre Warren Office: (03) 9038 8002  
Email: [info\\_narrewarren@smls.com.au](mailto:info_narrewarren@smls.com.au)

For appointments, visit the [Justice Q website](#).

Justice Q link:

[www.smls.com.au/justice-q](http://www.smls.com.au/justice-q)

### Q+Law

Q+Law provides free legal assistance to all LGBTIQ+ Victorians, covering:

- \* Discrimination, harassment, and violence based on LGBTIQ+ identity
- \* Trans and gender-diverse legal issues
- \* Family violence and related legal matters
- \* Employment law and tenancy rights

### Contact Q+Law:

- \* Phone: (03) 9968 1002
- \* Email: [qlawadmin@fls.org.au](mailto:qlawadmin@fls.org.au)
- \* Website: [Q+Law](#)

## LGBTIQA+ Mental Health and Counselling Support

### Queerspace

Queerspace, part of Drummond Street Services, offers individual, relationship, and family counselling.

- \* Low-cost or free confidential support for LGBTIQA+ individuals.
- \* **Not a crisis service.**
- \* For urgent support contact Qlife (1800 184 527), Rainbow Door, SuicideLine, Lifeline or emergency services

For more information, visit [Queerspace](#).

### Rainbow Door

Rainbow Door is a specialist LGBTIQA+ peer support service providing assistance for:

- \* Mental health and wellbeing
- \* Family and intimate partner violence
- \* Social isolation and discrimination

#### Contact Rainbow Door:

- \* Phone: 1800 729 367
- \* SMS: 0480 017 246
- \* Email: [support@rainbowdoor.org.au](mailto:support@rainbowdoor.org.au)
- \* Website: [Rainbow Door](#)

### Switchboard Victoria

Switchboard Victoria provides peer-led support services, including:

- \* QLife – A national LGBTIQA+ peer-support hotline.
- \* Phone support: 1800 184 527 (Available 3pm – midnight daily)
- \* Webchat: Available via the [QLife website](#).

For more details, visit [Switchboard Victoria](#).

## LGBTIQA+ and Culturally Diverse People

### Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council

[agmc.org.au](http://agmc.org.au)

The AGMC advocates for and educates on the needs of LGBTIQ people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The website includes a list of multicultural and faith-based LGBTIQA+ groups.

### Black Rainbow Australia

Black Rainbow is a community-led platform supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIASB+ people. It promotes inclusion, social justice, and visibility.

Note: Black Rainbow is not a crisis service.

For more information, visit [Black Rainbow](#).

**For 24/7 crisis support, contact:** 13 YARN – Speak with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter

[13yarn.org.au](http://13yarn.org.au)

**Call: 13 92 76**

### LGBTIQA+ Multilingual Terminology

[rainbowterminology.org](http://rainbowterminology.org)

This resource provides LGBTIQA+ terms across multiple languages to support inclusive and culturally sensitive communication in English, Arabic, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Korean, Spanish, Thai, and Vietnamese.

### Koorie Pride Victoria

[koriepridevic.org.au](http://koriepridevic.org.au)

Advocates for and connects First Nations LGBTIQA+ people, offering community support and cultural connection.

### Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)

VACCHO delivers culturally safe, Rainbow Tick Accredited health services and offers LGBTQIASB+ cultural safety training.

[vaccho.org.au](http://vaccho.org.au)

## Violence Prevention

### Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASAs)

Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASAs) are specialist services in Australia that provide free and confidential support to people who have experienced sexual assault. They also play a critical role in violence prevention, community education, and advocacy.

In **Victoria**, the umbrella organisation is [Sexual Assault Services Victoria \(SASVic\)](#).

### Respect Victoria

Respect Victoria focuses on preventing family and gendered violence before it occurs.

**1800RESPECT** – 24/7 national sexual assault, domestic and family violence service: **1800 737 732**

For workplace resources, visit [Respect Victoria](#).

## Workplace and Community Training Providers

### Transgender Victoria (TGV)

#### TGV provides:

- \* Peer Support Navigation – Advice on transitioning at work, social changes, and gender affirmation services.
- \* Training and consulting – Custom workshops for LGBTIQ+ and gender diversity awareness.

For more information, visit [TGV](#).

### Zoe Belle Gender Collective (ZBGC)

#### ZBGC offers:

- \* LGBTIQ+ inclusion training
- \* Consultation services for organisations and workplaces

For bookings, visit [ZBGC](#).

### Unicorns

Unicorns is a grassroots LGBTIQ+ organisation focused on:

- \* Custom workplace training on LGBTIQ+ inclusion.
- \* Celebratory LGBTIQ+ events and community-building initiatives.

For more details, visit [Unicorns](#).

## Union Support for LGBTIQ+ Employees

### How Unions Can Assist

LGBTIQ+ employees experiencing workplace gendered violence may seek support from their industry union, which can provide:

- \* Legal advocacy and representation for workplace disputes.
- \* Assistance with workplace discrimination and safety concerns.
- \* Support in securing gender affirmation leave and other entitlements.

### Joining a Union

- \* Union fees are tax-deductible and vary by industry.
- \* To find or join a union, visit the [Australian Unions website](#) or call 1300 486 466.

## What to Do If These Organisations Do Not Meet Your Needs

If none of the above services are suitable, Switchboard Victoria can provide personalised advice and help connect LGBTIQ+ employees with alternative resources. The [Victorian Pride Centre](#) also has a helpful LGBTIQ+ resource directory for services within Victoria.

By providing multiple support pathways, workplaces demonstrate a strong commitment to safety, inclusion, and employee wellbeing.

# Glossary

**Affirming/Affirmation:** Environments, policies, or actions that validate and support a person's gender identity or sexual orientation.

**Agender:** A person who does not identify with any gender.

**Ally:** A non-LGBTIQ+ person who supports and advocates for LGBTIQ+ rights.

**Allosexual:** Individuals who experience sexual attraction. This is the opposite of asexual.

**Aromantic (Aro):** An umbrella term for people who feel little to no romantic attraction to others.

**Asexual (Ace):** An umbrella term for people who experience little to no sexual attraction to others.

**Biphobia:** Prejudice, discrimination, or hostility toward bisexual people. It often includes stereotypes, such as the belief that bisexuality is 'just a phase'.

**Bisexual (Bi+):** People who feel attraction to more than one gender identity.

**BIPoC:** An acronym for Black and Indigenous People of Colour.

**Brotherboy/Brothaboy:** Is a term used by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to describe gender diverse people who have a male spirit and take on traditional men's roles. Brotherboy is a term that implies cultural connection as well as gender diversity.

**Chosen Family:** Non-biological relationships that provide emotional and social support, often replacing or supplementing family ties for LGBTIQ+ individuals.

**Cisgender (Cis):** Someone whose gender aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Dead-Naming:** Referring to a transgender person by their previous or 'dead' name, often causing emotional distress.

**Demiromantic:** Romantic attraction only after an emotional bond.

**Demisexual:** Sexual attraction only after forming an emotional bond.

**Emotional Labor:** The mental effort required to educate others or navigate expectations related to one's identity.

**Endosex:** People whose physical sex characteristics align with typical definitions of 'male' or 'female'.

**Gay:** Typically refers to a man (trans or cis) who is attracted to other men but can also describe anyone who is same-gender attracted.

**Gender:** Refers to how someone feels and experiences their gender identity. This might match the sex they were assigned at birth or maybe be different from this.

**Gender affirmation:** The process of affirming one's gender, which may include changes to name, pronouns, clothing, hairstyles, makeup, and other aspects of expression or identity.

**Gender dysphoria:** The distress experienced when a person's gender identity does not align with their assigned sex.

**Gender euphoria:** Positive and affirming feelings someone experiences when their gender identity is validated, expressed, or recognised in ways that align with their authentic self.

**Gender fluid:** A person whose gender identity shifts over time or depending on the context.

**Genderqueer:** A gender identity that is outside or beyond the binary of man and woman.

**Greyromantic:** A person who rarely or situationally feels romantic attraction.

**Greysexual:** A person who rarely or situationally experiences sexual attraction.

**Heteronormativity:** The assumption that heterosexuality is the default, contributing to discrimination against LGBTIQ+ individuals.

**Heterosexual (Straight):** A person who is attracted to the opposite binary gender. This term is often associated with cisgender people but can also apply to trans and gender-diverse individuals.

**Homophobia:** Prejudice, fear, or hatred directed at individuals who are because they are perceived as to be gay, lesbian, or otherwise attracted to people of the same gender.

**Intersectionality:** A framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities (e.g., race, gender, sexuality, class, ability) combine to create unique experiences of discrimination or privilege.

**Intersex:** An umbrella term used to describe people born with innate variations in sex characteristics – such as chromosomes, hormones, or anatomy – that do not fit typical definitions of male or female. These variations occur naturally and may become apparent at birth, during puberty, or later in life.

**Lesbian:** A woman (trans or cis) who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other women. This term is also sometimes used by trans men and non-binary people.

**LGBTIQA+:** An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and all the other identities within our community.

**Microaggression:** Are subtle, often unintentional comments or actions that communicate bias or discrimination toward marginalised groups, causing cumulative harm.

**Misgendering:** Using incorrect pronouns or terms for someone's gender identity.

**Neopronouns:** Pronouns outside traditional sets (e.g., he/she/they) used to affirm diverse gender identities, these can include pronouns such as xe/xem or ze/zir.

**Non-binary:** Someone who does not exclusively identify as man or woman.

**Outing:** Revealing someone's LGBTIQA+ identity without their consent.

**Pansexual:** People who are attracted to people of all gender identities or people that are attracted to others regardless of gender identity.

**Pinkwashing:** Using LGBTIQA+ support as a public relations strategy to distract from harmful practices.

**PoC (People of Color):** A broad, collective term used to describe individuals and communities who are not white and are likely to have shared or differing experiences of being racialised.

**Pronouns:** Words people use to refer to themselves (e.g., he/him, she/her, they/them).

**QTIPoC:** An acronym for Queer, Trans, and Intersex People of Colour.

**Queer:** An umbrella term for individuals who fall outside the cisgender, heterosexual norm. Some have reclaimed queer as a proud identity, but for some, it remains a painful slur.

**Queer Capitalism:** The commercialisation of LGBTIQA+ identities, where businesses profit from the community by marketing inclusivity without necessarily supporting LGBTIQA+ rights meaningfully.

**Questioning:** Individuals who are exploring or uncertain about their sexual orientation, romantic attraction, or gender identity.

**Safer Spaces:** Environments designed with intentional mechanisms to foster accessibility, inclusion, and safety for all participants. No space can ever be 100% safe and inclusive for everyone, so use the word 'safer' instead of 'safe'.

**Sex:** Refers to a person's biological characteristics, including anatomy, chromosomes, and hormone levels. A person's sex is often assigned at birth with a doctor declaring a newborn to be male or female.

**Sexuality:** Describes a person's intimate and/or sexual attractions to others.

**Sistergirl (Sistagirl):** Is a term used by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to describe gender diverse people who have a female spirit and take on traditional women's roles. Sistergirl is a term that implies cultural connection as well as gender diversity.

**Tokenism:** Including individuals from marginalised groups to give the appearance of inclusivity without providing meaningful support.

**Transgender (Trans):** An umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity does not align with their assigned sex. These identities include labels such as non-binary, trans woman, trans man, etc.

**Trans and Gender Diverse (TGD):** A term used to describe individuals whose gender identity or expression does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Trans femme:** A feminine-identifying individual assigned male at birth. This includes transgender women and some non-binary people.

**Trans man:** A man who was assigned female at birth.

**Trans masc:** A masculine-identifying individual assigned female at birth. This includes transgender men and some non-binary people.

**Trans woman:** A woman who was assigned male at birth.

**Transphobia:** Prejudice, discrimination, or hostility directed at transgender people and people because they are perceived as transgender

**Two-Spirit:** A term used by some Native American communities to describe individuals with both masculine and feminine spirits, recognised as a distinct gender.

# Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the development of this resource. Your insights, lived experiences, and commitment have been instrumental in shaping this Toolkit and advancing the vision of safer, more inclusive workplaces for LGBTIQ+ people.

## Being Valued Project Team

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**Project Director:** Son (they/them) CEO of Transgender Victoria.

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**Peer Support Lead:** Keria (she/her) LGBTIQ+ Lead for Your Community Health.

## Governance Committee

**Committee Member** – Ruby (they/them) is a public speaker, queer and disability advocate and currently works within local government.

**Committee Member** – Aram (he/they) is a proud queer trans person, public affairs professional and is the Chief of Staff at Save the Children.

**Committee Member** – Fidan (she//they) Doctor of Medicine, Health Educator and Board Member at Transgender Victoria.

## Video Production Team

**Kate (she/they)** is a queer film editor, DOP and animator who uses her expertise in State Government and as a freelancer to champion LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

**Carol (she/her)** is an award winning local queer freelance filmmaker, who specialises in documentary and factual entertainment for broadcast and digital platforms.

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**Lachy (he/they)** – is a queer freelance product designer, digital and user interface and user experience designer.

**Sean (they/them)** – is a Melbourne-based illustrator, graphic designer and cactus enthusiast.

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**Camelia (they/them)** is a transgender, bisexual, neurodivergent person of colour who works as a researcher in the university sector. They are also a Victorian committee member of Queers in Science.

**Ez (they/them)** is a black, queer, non-binary person who works in retail and is an inclusion advocate.

**Flynn (he/him)** is a gay, cisgender man and theatre producer who works in the LGBTIQ+ cultural arts sector.

**Katia (she/her)** is a queer deaf sex worker and passionate disability advocate who also works in the not-for-profit sex worker advocacy sector.

**Sirena (she/he/they)** is a pangender, pansexual, and First Nations person who is a dancer and small-business owner.

**Susannah (she/her)** is a strategic communications consultant to community organisations in the LGBTIQ+, mental health, drug and alcohol sectors.

**Wolfie (they/them)** is a queer, non-binary person of colour, a queer rights advocate and union delegate who works in the transport industry.

## Regional Co Design Team

**Adrian (he/him)** is a transgender man who works in the construction and labour industry.

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**Suzanne (she/her)** is a queer artist and photographer alongside a career in local government and the not-for-profit sector.

## Lived Experience Consultants

**Blume (they/them)** is a queer, femme-presenting, non-binary and intersex musician, social media influencer and lead singer in an alt-rock band, Mystic Tea Party.

**Dakota (she/her)** is an intersex advocate and community educator within the Anti-Violence Project Inc (ACP).

**Kellin (they/them)** is a grey-aromantic, biromantic, asexual, transmasculine and non-binary person who works in customer-facing roles in the arts and culture industry, hospitality and youth programming.

**Max (they/she)** is an intersex and non-binary person and proud singer-songwriter.

**Paul (he/him)** is an intersex man who is an intersex advocate, a Victorian Peer Support Representative for Intersex Peer Support Australia, Australian Ambassador for the Chromodiversity Foundation and the host of The I in Us on JOY94.9, the only intersex radio show in Australia.

## LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Evaluators

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## User Testing Team

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**Cristina (she/her)** is an ally, leading secondary teacher and owner of a small business that specialises in Taiwanese cooking workshops.

**Eloise (she/her)** is a cisgender woman working as a Senior Social Marketing and Communications Officer within government

**James (he/him)** is a proud QPOC working as a HR professional across various industries for the past decade.

**Marc (he/him)** is a cisgender man working as a carpenter and a construction team manager.

**Sarah (she/they)** is a queer Filipino with 10 years of retail management experience within technology sales.

**Stuart (he/him)** is a licensee and general manager working in hospitality and events.

**Vic (she/her)** is a cisgender, heterosexual woman working in Technology and software business HR across Melbourne and London.

**Victoria (she/her)** is a cisgender woman working in the social sector supporting people leaving domestic violence.

## Illustrations

**Awksity/Mitch (he/she/they)** is an orange-obsessed proud queer person and the first ever non-binary bear title holder in Australasia.

**Beau (he/him)** is a trans guy from Naarm, musician, producer, DJ, and composer.

**Blume (they/them)** is a queer, femme-presenting, non-binary and intersex musician, social media influencer and lead singer in an alt-rock band, Mystic Tea Party.

**Camelia (they/them)** is a transgender, bisexual, neurodivergent person of colour who works as a researcher in the university sector and is an active committee member of Queers in Science.

**Hayden (they/he)** is a proud queer Wiradjuri Brotherboy, a performer and an advocate for his communities.

**Jet (she/her)** is a queer woman in STEMM and works as a botanist and environmental educator.

**Katia (she/her)** is a queer deaf sex worker and passionate disability advocate who also works in the not-for-profit sector.

**Sala (she/her)** is a LGBTIQA+ advocate, BIPOC creative and communications professional who founded the queer party, Femme Daddy.

**Sarah (she/they)** is a queer Filipino, Retail Manager, record collector and sandwich artist.

**Shelley (she/her), Lou (she/her) and Riley (she/her/TBC)** are a rainbow queer family who feel really grateful to have a child within their lives as they didn't think kids could be an option for them.

**Siera (they/them)** is a queer and agender person who works as an IT specialist, and enjoys dancing, photography, and costume-making.

**Triana (she/they/it)** is a queer trans broadcaster, public speaker, and digital creative.

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