

A vertical bar on the left side of the page, composed of seven equal-width stripes of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple, representing the colors of the rainbow.

Rainbow Resource

FOR VICTORIAN COUNCILS

Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,
Transgender, Intersex and Queer Diversity
and Inclusion in Local Government

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The VLGA and publishers acknowledge that a great deal of considered effort is undertaken by councils throughout Victoria when working with their diverse communities. While efforts were made to accurately and respectfully acknowledge contributions throughout this booklet, there are undoubtedly efforts by many in local government and the community that have not been mentioned or acknowledged herein. No harm was meant by any omission or misrepresentation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The VLGA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners, their elders past, present and future and to their cultures.



FOREWORD

The *Rainbow Resource for Victorian Councils* provides many examples of creative, innovative and imaginative work being done by agencies and councils supporting and engaging local LGBTIQ communities.

Local government plays a critical role in creating an environment in which all its residents may live safe, fulfilled and engaged lives.

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Many Victorian councils already work closely with their LGBTIQ population. This resource provides some of those examples and will hopefully inspire others to explore the possibilities with their own communities.

Every local government is different, every LGBTIQ community and individual is different. The most successful pieces of work are those that involve the local LGBTIQ community from the very beginning.

Thank you to all the agencies and individuals that helped create this great document, adding to the growing library of resources that exist to nurture meaningful engagement with LGBTIQ communities.

Cr Lambros Tapinos

VLGA President

ABOUT THE LGBTIQ COMMUNITY

“There is little quality data available on the demographics of the LGBTIQ communities... These numbers are conservative and inaccurate because they rely on self-reporting...”

Research suggests that:

1 in 10 people identify as **non-heterosexual**

1 in 100 people identify as **gender diverse***

1-2 per cent of babies are born with an **intersex variation**

15 per cent of same-sex couples report **having children**

This includes **1 in 4 female couples**.

In the **first year** of **marriage equality**,

6500 same-sex couples married.

*the number of gender-diverse people may in fact be higher than this based on newer research

LGBTIQ COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Broadly, people of diverse sexual orientations, sex and gender identity account for about 11% of the population.¹ Diversity in sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics is prevalent across the community.

There is little quality data available on the demographics of the LGBTIQ communities in Victoria, including by age, ethnicity, socio-economic and family status. In some places, there are no obviously visible LGBTIQ communities.

This may be because in these areas LGBTIQ people are geographically dispersed and do not have contact with others through social networks or community venues. It may also be because LGBTIQ people face social or personal pressures that prevent them from living openly, for fear of hostility toward their difference or potential discrimination.

It is important to be careful when we talk about LGBTIQ 'community'. Communities intersect and overlap. Not all LGBTIQ people are involved publicly with LGBTIQ organisations or feel comfortable attending LGBTIQ community events. LGBTIQ people may or may not know other LGBTIQ people and may have a variety of sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions. Many intersex people, for example, are heterosexual and cisgender.²

1 Department of Health, Australian Government, *National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Strategy* (2012) 4.

2 National LGBTI Health Alliance, *What do we mean when we talk about LGBTI communities?* (2015)

Same-sex couples have been counted in the Australian census since 1996, with numbers more than quadrupling in the two decades since.³ In 2016 same-sex couples accounted for 0.9% of all couples.

These numbers are conservative and inaccurate because they rely on self-reporting and only count couples that live together.

Fifteen percent of same-sex couples report having children including one in four female couples. Same-sex couples most often report living in a capital city, but LGBTIQ people are a part of every Victorian community and local government area.

There have been anti-discrimination protections for LGBTIQ people in state law since 2000⁴ and protections for LGBTIQ people in federal law since 2013.⁵

In December 2017, marriage equality was enshrined in the *Marriage Act 1961* following the Australian Marriage Postal Survey. The right to marry in Australia is no longer determined by sex or gender. In the first year, more than 6,500 same-sex couples married, accounting for one in twenty of all marriages in Australia that year.

Despite these legislative advancements and changes in community attitudes, many LGBTIQ people still face discrimination and inequality, especially outside larger urban centres. LGBTIQ people living more than 10 kilometres from the inner city face higher levels of discrimination and social isolation.⁶

3 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Same-sex couples in Australia, 2016* (2018).

4 Equal Opportunity (Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation) Act 2000 (Vic).

5 Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Act 2013 (Cth).

6 James Morandini (et al), 'Minority Stress and Community Connectedness among Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Australians: A Comparison of Rural and Metropolitan Localities' (2015) 39(3) *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* 260.

ISSUES FACING LGBTIQ PEOPLE

There is increasing acceptance of LGBTIQ people in society and greater visibility in the media. Research shows that LGBTIQ people generally live healthy, connected, happy and positive lives.

Even so, LGBTIQ people have particular needs and concerns. Some LGBTIQ people have poorer health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes than others in the community. These may include experiencing higher than average rates of violence, harassment and discrimination, and poorer mental health such as anxiety, depression, psychological distress, self-harm and risk of suicide. LGBTIQ people experience higher rates of isolation and rejection, and poorer life outcomes in terms of drug and alcohol use, homelessness, and early school leaving.

The prevalence of ongoing discrimination and marginalisation based on sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics directly impacts the health and wellbeing of many LGBTIQ people. The effects are well documented and include poorer health outcomes, reduced social participation and engagement, and avoidance or delay in help-seeking behaviours because of real or feared prejudice.

Not all LGBTIQ people experience these issues equally, with some people being more vulnerable than others to poorer health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes.

For example, while lesbian and gay people experience higher rates of anxiety, depression and suicide risk than the general population, these rates are even higher among people with intersex variations or who are transgender, gender diverse and non-binary.

Other factors influencing LGBTIQ health and wellbeing may include age (younger and older people), gender, cultural and religious background, living circumstance (city/rural/regional, homelessness), existence of a disability or coexisting mental health issue, and the presence or absence of supportive and accepting relationships.⁷

Intersectionality is a framework for describing how various overlapping social identities such as sexual orientation, gender, race, class and ability contribute to individual experiences of discrimination and disadvantage. The concept of intersectionality is important for understanding the experience of individual LGBTIQ people.

All of these experiences indicate a need for action from local governments to prevent and address poor health, discrimination and stigma; and promote safety, access, and inclusion.

Further discussion about the needs and interests of specific parts of the LGBTIQ community are discussed in later sections, along with case studies illustrating how some councils have responded to these needs.

⁷ [National LGBTI Health Alliance, The statistics at a glance: The mental health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Australia \(2016\)](#)

Ideas and actions

[Rainbow Health Victoria](#) and the [National LGBTI Health Alliance](#) have produced an extensive range of resources. These include research papers and practice guides available to support those working within many different contexts and with different parts of LGBTIQ communities.

LGBTIQ COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In 2016 the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) conducted a community survey in conjunction with the Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby (VGLRL), asking over 230 LGBTIQ Victorians what local government issues were important to them.

The survey was conducted at the Midsumma Carnival, a major cultural festival for LGBTIQ Victorians held in February each year. It was the first time ever that LGBTIQ Victorians had been asked about local government issues in the VGLRL's annual community survey.

Almost half of the survey respondents were aged under 30, about a third were between 30-49 and a sixth were over 50. One in ten survey respondents identified as trans or gender diverse. That is, their gender identity was different from that assigned to them at birth.

The survey found that LGBTIQ communities expect councils to advocate for and publicly support LGBTIQ residents. They want and expect local governments to provide inclusive health and community services, and to be consulted on the issues that affect them.

83% of respondents said they wanted to see their local government focus on **LGBTIQ inclusive health and community services.**

67% of respondents said they wanted to see **greater advocacy by local government on LGBTIQ issues**, including (at the time) marriage equality.

61% of respondents ranked **engagement and consultation with LGBTIQ residents and public statements and support of LGBTIQ residents** from local government as of high importance to them.

61% of respondents ranked **LGBTIQ community events and festivals** as of high importance to them.

56% of respondents said it was highly important to see **images of LGBTIQ residents** in council publications.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND LGBTIQ INCLUSION

In developing the *Rainbow Resource*, participating Victorian councils identified factors most important in supporting LGBTIQ-inclusive practice in their local government areas.

The most frequently cited factors, in order of frequency of mention, included:

Involvement of LGBTIQ communities

Councils identified a range of participation levels with directly affected LGBTIQ individuals and communities supporting consultation, partnerships, leadership and advocacy.

Leadership buy-in

Commitment by council leadership to be an inclusive employer supportive of an inclusive culture, including through the formal adoption of actions and directions by the leaderships team, CEO and Councillors.

Embedded practice and policy

Inclusion of explicit commitments in council plans, strategies, policies and procedures with shared cross-council implementation responsibilities to ensure leadership will be matched by resources and accountabilities.

Staff leadership

Involvement of a passionate team of staff with knowledge of the local community, expertise and/or lived experience, and their allies, to drive the work and advocate internally for increased awareness, resources and action.

Internal capacity building

Provision of education, awareness raising and other staff engagement activities to support improved practice and enable safe and supportive environments.

External relationships

Relationships with external service providers and LGBTIQ community organisations to build best practice, build networks and foster collaboration.

Public profile

Demonstration of public support for LGBTIQ communities through involvement in community events and celebrations, flag flying, and delivery of targeted activities.

These factors closely align with the findings of the 2019 evaluation of the Victorian Government's LGBTI Equality Roadshow⁸ that visited 23 rural and regional towns between November 2016 and June 2017. The evaluation found the Roadshow delivered a number of important community impacts across Victoria, enabled by its strong co-design focus and diverse approaches to engaging LGBTIQ communities, mainstream providers and local power-holders and influencers.

A number of these factors are discussed in the following section, and are highlighted in the case studies throughout the *Rainbow Resource*.

⁸ State Government of Victoria, *LGBTI equality roadshow: The co-design model and stories of impact (2018)*

CASE STUDY: DEVELOPING AN LGBTIQ ACTION PLAN

MOONEE VALLEY CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Provider

Engagement level: Involve

Focus activity: Diversity and inclusion planning

Moonee Valley's rainbow journey began with the formation of Council's LGBTIQ+ Working Group in mid-2014. Made up of diverse community members and chaired by a Councillor, the working group identified priorities to raise the LGBTIQ+ community profile in Moonee Valley and help address equity and access across Council.

Moonee Valley's first *LGBTIQ Action Plan 2015-17* was adopted in June 2015. Its development was underpinned by good practice principles including strong leadership, community governance, thorough planning and genuine engagement.

It involved a community survey, discussion evenings, background research and community consultations.

The success of the Action Plan can be attributed to partnerships across council departments, strong political support from councillors, champions within senior management, and guidance from the LGBTIQ+ Working Group.

The endorsement of a specific Action Plan demonstrates Council's genuine commitment to LGBTIQ+ inclusion in Moonee Valley. Council is accountable to deliver on adopted actions, and has been able to respond to emerging issues based on its policy position.

Following the adoption of Council's long-term plan, *Moonee Valley 2040* in 2018, Council is now developing integrated action plans that focus on collaboration and intersectionality. These action plans are currently in progress and will allow Council to build on its work through the *LGBTIQ Action Plan* and working group and look at how it can further progress the integration of LGBTIQ+ inclusion across all Council services.

Highlights of actions implemented through the *LGBTIQ Action Plan* included:

- adoption of a marriage equality statement and subsequent activities including lighting the Clocktower in rainbow colours, extensive social media and distribution over 800 rainbow lanyards to Council staff
- establishment of the [Rainbow Valley](#) social support group for young people
- [Rainbow Tick](#) accreditation within the Community Strengthening Department (Aged and Disability services programs)
- training, capacity building and support to staff through Council's training program and Diversity Committee
- participation in IDAHOBIT, Midsumma and Wear It Purple including film screenings, staff morning teas, representation at Pride March and Midsumma Carnival and community-led events, use of Incinerator Gallery in Midsumma since 2015, rainbow flags flown at major junctions throughout the municipality to across the year
- events, celebrations and groups at Council libraries and community centres, including *Rainbow Stories in the Valley* showcasing stories from local community members.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

The survey findings in the previous section challenge any suggestion that local government should only be concerned with rates, roads and rubbish. Of course, modern local government fulfils a more diverse range of roles and functions than councils of old.

Case studies showcased throughout the *Rainbow Resource* seek to demonstrate councils' work across these diverse roles and functions. Case studies have been chosen because collectively they demonstrate activities and opportunities across functions including:

Provider

Council leads and directly delivers projects, initiatives, programs and other work

Partner

Council participates in projects, initiatives, programs and other work led by others

Facilitator

Council supports the delivery of projects, initiatives, programs and other work by bringing interested parties together

Advocate (internal)

Council seeks to influence internal decision makers to respond to community needs and interests

Advocate (external)

Council seeks to influence external decision makers to respond to community needs and interests

Employer

Council employs staff to support delivery of its other roles and functions

Contractor

Council tenders, procures and contracts others to support delivery of its roles and functions

Planner & law maker

Council makes plans and local laws consistent with its powers under the Local Government Act that impact on the rights of its diverse residents

The majority of case studies explore councils' role as providers, partners or facilitators. A small number also highlight councils' roles as employers of diverse staff, including LGBTIQ staff, and as a contractors of services.

While only a small number of councils identified specific internal or external advocacy activities, advocacy and support for change are frequently implied in case studies across all other functions.

Examples include Wyndham City's advocacy as an employer to ensure gender transition / affirmation leave provisions were included in enterprise agreement negotiations (see page 18) and Darebin's advocacy as a facilitator of a multi-faith event, ensuring LGBTIQ faith experiences were programmed (see page 58).

Several case studies also refer to internal advocacy processes, frequently initiated by LGBTIQ-identified staff and their allies, that support longer-term engagement with LGBTIQ issues and communities (see for example Knox City Council, page 15 and Glen Eira City Council, page 17).

Only a small number of case studies make explicit reference to the recent marriage equality campaign and the related postal survey. Usually made in the context of other events happening during or immediately following the campaign, these passing references belie the important role many councils played during the campaign.

For the many LGBTIQ people who were confronted and traumatized by the campaign, the role many councils took to actively campaign for equality, to counter misinformation and to actively support LGBTIQ communities cannot be overstated.

Australia's first same-sex married mayor Cr Steve Stefanopoulos, City of Stonnington

As Australia's first and only same-sex married mayor, it is an absolute honour to represent members of the LGBTIQ+ community and their supporters. The position I hold, brings with it a high level of responsibility to advocate for the rights of the LGBTIQ+ community. It is vital, that as a representative of the closest level of government to the people, that I ensure I bring everyone along on the journey of understanding and acceptance of our diverse community.

It was a delight to see a number of local governments across the country stand up and support marriage equality in the lead up to the 2017 postal survey. Although my community may be seen as conservative, it is certainly a very progressive one, that overwhelmingly voted YES to change the Marriage Act.

Being appointed for an unprecedented third consecutive year as the Mayor of the City of Stonnington, I have continued to reach out to many LGBTIQ+ community groups. A large number of presidents, executive and committee members of sporting clubs, visual and performing arts groups; and other service providers, have been invited in to the mayor's office.

The Victorian Pride Centre was the charity of choice for the 2019 Mayoral Charity Fundraiser. Minus18, were the recipients of funds raised from the sale of programs and candles to thousands who attended our 2019 Christmas carols concerts. The Melbourne Gay and Lesbian Chorus were recipients of a community grant and free use of the historic Malvern Town Hall for a sell-out concert. Red ribbons were handed out by volunteers from Thorne Harbour Health on World AIDS Day in 2019 at the opening of Prahran Square. Stonnington has also provided in-kind support to VicTennis in 2017 and the Melbourne Smashers Badminton Club in 2019, as well as contributed to the successful Outings portrait photographic exhibition which explored the coming out narratives of LGBTIQ+ people in Melbourne, including myself, at Chapel off Chapel.

Stonnington is also the home of the Positive Living Centre; Proud2Play; the Melbourne Queer Film Festival, Melbourne Rainbow Band and Melbourne Chargers rugby club. In 2020, Chapel off Chapel, our premier arts venue, was again a hub for Midsumma, showcasing talented local national and international artists.



SECURING LEADERSHIP AND STAFF BUY-IN

LGBTIQ people have the right to equal access to high quality public services. As detailed in following sections, councils have clear legislative responsibilities, including an obligation to not discriminate against LGBTIQ residents, visitors, service users and staff. Councils also have a positive duty to protect and promote human rights.

Across all council roles and functions, whether operating as elected representatives, service providers or community leaders, councils should aspire to provide services and practices that are not only non-discriminatory, but are fully inclusive, accessible and responsive to the needs of the LGBTIQ people who are a part of their local community.

For local governments to be representative of their local communities, they must be truly inclusive of all aspects of that community, including LGBTIQ residents. However, a lack of understanding, skills and knowledge about LGBTIQ community needs and experiences among frontline service providers, managers and Councillors can lead to institutional discrimination, marginalization, poor access and invisibility.

Councillors and council officers at all levels must play their part in fostering LGBTIQ inclusion and in developing relationships with LGBTIQ communities. They must demonstrate to LGBTIQ people that the council's interest is genuine and widely held, and to the wider community that LGBTIQ communities matter and are valid recipients of the council's support. By playing a leadership role, councillors and senior managers can demonstrate to the whole of council that LGBTIQ inclusion is an important aspect of their local government.

Cr Steph Amir - Darebin City Council

Every councillor has a vision for how they want their city or shire to be and for most councillors part of that vision is a thriving local community where people are happy, healthy and connected to each other and to council services that contribute positively to their quality of life.

To make this vision a reality, people must feel safe and included. Residents need public spaces, events and networks where they feel welcome but it doesn't happen by chance. It requires councils to demonstrate an understanding of what people need, which means going beyond "treating everyone the same", a frame that often assumes people to be heterosexual, cisgender (not transgender) and dyadic (not intersex).

Councils can also provide support by standing strong with LGBTIQ residents when the hateful messages come flying. This was particularly visible during the marriage equality survey.

Rather than turning a blind eye to the negative impacts on our residents, the City of Darebin launched a highly visible advocacy campaign. Council flew the rainbow flag at Preston Town Hall until marriage equality became legal, committed grant funding for community-led projects that tackled homophobia, biphobia or transphobia, and distributed "Darebin Supports Marriage Equality" posters for display around the municipality.

We also provided free access to Council facilities for LGBTIQ groups to support their wellbeing, such as an event celebrating diverse families that was attended by hundreds of people. LGBTIQ residents told us these actions had a positive impact for themselves and their children: they felt seen, valued and affirmed during a really difficult time.

Yet the risk of discrimination remains relevant in the lives of LGBTIQ people as they make assessments throughout each day about when it is safe for them to be themselves, so it's important that we do not become complacent.

As a councillor who is also a member of the LGBTIQ community, I feel lucky to live in a municipality where my family and I feel safe and included, and am excited to see an inclusive approach increasingly becoming the "new normal" across Victoria, contributing to the happy, health and connected communities that we all want to see.

"For example, when a council form forces people to choose between male and female, or a council staff member asks a mother about her baby's father, it demonstrates that systems are built for people who aren't LGBTIQ, making them feel like they aren't important or aren't meant to be there. By identifying these examples and taking direct action to improve inclusion, councils demonstrate that LGBTIQ people are important and do belong."



CASE STUDY: FOSTERING AND HARNESSING SUPPORTIVE LEADERSHIP

KNOX CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Employer;
advocate (internal)

Engagement level: Collaborate

Focus activity: Capacity building
(workforce)

In 2017, a group of interested and passionate Knox Council officers identified a need for a whole-of-Council approach to support and advocate for LGBTIQ+ people within the organisation and in the Knox community.

In March of that year, the officers approached the CEO for his endorsement and support for the creation of the working group. To their surprise and delight, he suggested a direct reporting arrangement to ensure support for a cultural change process that would also include Councillors through the engagement of the organisation's senior leadership.

The Knox LGBTIQ+ working group is now firmly established and ongoing.

A clear terms of reference with guidelines on governance, reporting, delegated authority and decision making has been helpful in creating a sound framework for communication and negotiation on strategic and operational matters.

The working group reports directly to the CEO through quarterly meetings between the CEO and working group Chair and Deputy Chair providing opportunities for discussion around work-plan progress, challenges and opportunities, and emerging issues.

This structure has been helpful in creating a direct connection between the working group and senior management, fostering leadership buy-in, insight into the "real world" experience of LGBTIQ+ staff and communities, and timely responses to issues impacting LGBTIQ+ people.

Among the working group's successes, have been LGBTIQ+ inclusive practice training for staff, design of a Knox Pride logo, painting of a rainbow path at the civic centre precinct and IDAHOBIT celebrations.

Group members report benefit from a reporting structure that is both effective and efficient. They feel well-supported by the organisation knowing that the CEO has direct interest in LGBTIQ+ rights and influence over the organisation's direction.

The Knox approach has been possible because its current CEO is demonstrative of his support for the LGBTIQ+ community and models good ally behaviour. For example, he wears a pronoun badge on his lanyard, attends key events, and uses electronic and in-person communication channels to promote internal events and initiatives.

Moving forward, the working group would like to focus more on engaging with local community and better understanding the needs of LGBTIQ+ people in Knox. With improved organisational understanding and awareness, the working group feel better equipped to undertake work in the external environment and strengthen the relationship between council and the local LGBTIQ+ community.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

Research indicates there is a strong link between inclusive policies and practices and improved performance. When people feel welcome and supported they are more likely to be engaged and more productive at work. Good practice as an inclusive employer helps councils become an employer of choice, attracting and retaining quality staff.

Having a diverse, inclusive and collaborative workplace increases workplace efficiency saving councils both money and time. If council workforces also reflect the diverse communities they serve, they are more likely to be accessible and effective, delivering positive outcomes for the community.

A failure to adhere to legislative requirements regarding non-discrimination can result in councils spending limited resources on dealing with complaints and discrimination claims. By taking a positive and proactive approach, councils can improve service delivery to LGBTIQ communities and attract LGBTIQ staff.

Councils don't have to spend a lot of money to create an inclusive workplace. Little things can send signals that your organisation is a great place to work.

Ideas and actions

The Victorian Government has identified a number of ways organisations can be more inclusive in the workplace⁹, including for example:

- show your inclusivity with posters and rainbow lanyards
- use gender neutral and inclusive language in conversations
- hold staff events on key days such as Wear it Purple day
- provide gender neutral toilets
- run an LGBTIQ awareness training program or add to existing induction programs
- set up a pride network for LGBTIQ staff and allies

It is important that councils reinforce their support of LGBTIQ communities and staff by ensuring that the visual indicators of inclusivity (like rainbow flags, email signatures etc) are backed up by actual inclusive practice across the organisation.¹⁰ This can be achieved through awareness training programs and existing induction programs that are available to all council employees.

⁹ State Government of Victoria, [LGBTIQ workforce inclusion plans: Get practical tips and ideas on how to create a more inclusive workplace \(2019\)](#)

¹⁰ St Kilda Legal Service, [LGBTIQ+ inclusive practice toolkit for community legal centres \(2020\)](#)

CASE STUDY: FROM CONSERVATIVE TO CELEBRATING LGBTIQ

GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Employer;
advocate (internal)

Engagement level: Collaborate

Focus activity: Diversity and inclusion
planning

In March 2016 an informal LGBTIQ Advisory Group was established at Glen Eira Council. The group formed to engage and provide support to LGBTIQ-identified Council staff in what was perceived at the time as being a fairly conservative workplace environment. The group also aimed to raise awareness of LGBTIQ issues and opportunities more broadly across Council.

This staff-led group of around ten staff members operated independently and informally until a change in CEO in 2017 enabled the group to formalise and begin to strengthen its influence and purposeful engagement across the organisation.

Since 2017, the Council LGBTIQ Advisory Group has worked across a growing number of Council departments and teams, reaching over 1400 staff members working in People and Culture, Libraries, Arts and Culture, Community Development and Care, City Futures and Youth Services.

In 2018 the LGBTIQ Advisory Group influenced the development of Council's Workforce Diversity Plan (2018) supporting a growing number of awareness raising activities/events, programs and services, and in 2019 successfully lobbied for the establishment of a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator position.

Services have been supported to be more LGBTIQ inclusive through staff training and awareness raising – including Rainbow Tick accreditation and inclusive language training – and LGBTIQ inclusion is now a priority in services being delivered for older adults (residential aged care, in-home care and social support), to children and to young people.

This raised awareness has led to numerous programs and service delivery initiatives in the wider community to improve LGBTIQ inclusion, including a Pride Book Club, Glen Eira PRIDE youth group, and LGBTIQ inclusive events in the annual Seniors Festival.

Referral information and connection to supports such as Switchboard is now advertised through the [Older adults' guide to Glen Eira](#), and rainbow stickers have been distributed to local traders, senior citizen centres and maternal and child health centres across the municipality.

Council also now participates in a growing number of community events and days of recognition - including Pride March (2017/18/19), IDAHOBIT day (2017/18/19), World Aids Day fundraising, Wear it Purple Day (2019).

These initiatives have been made possible through strong leadership support and involvement from the CEO, Councillors and Executive.

In 2020 opportunities to measure the impact of this work on the wider community will be explored, and the LGBTIQ Advisory Group plans to focus on developing a strategic plan and vision to present to the Executive.



CASE STUDY: SUPPORTING WORKPLACE GENDER TRANSITION AND AFFIRMATION

WYNDHAM CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Employer

Engagement level: Inform

Focus activity: Capacity building
(workforce)

In early 2019, Wyndham City renegotiated its Enterprise Agreement (EA) with staff and unions. Council employs 1,700 staff who deliver high quality services to a diverse community that requires an engaged, skilled and high performing workforce.

Council recognises that work conditions not only support the diverse needs of staff, but also talent attraction and retention. Practical ways to support staff needs and aspirations, as well as tools to support leaders in conversations and planning are important to an inclusive workplace.

Council's EA negotiating team sought to include initiatives to demonstrate this commitment to an inclusive workplace. The *Transition and Affirmation of Gender Leave* provision was one such initiative tabled in the Council's log of claims on the advice of staff groups.

The provision sought to support and validate staff who transition or affirm their gender, free of discrimination and without feeling they must leave the workplace. The provision enables staff to take five additional paid days of leave in a way that suits their needs and aspirations during a gender transition or affirmation process.

Because the clause was a proposal made by management, it was important to inform staff of the EA process, the entitlements offered and negotiated, and how to vote. It was made clear throughout negotiations that the clause was a significant part of Council's bargaining strategy that could not be traded, and while some education was required, ultimately there was broad support from the various union groups.

Staff voted on the EA in June 2019 with the new provisions included.

A policy and toolkit have since been drafted to support the clause. The policy clearly articulates Council's commitment to a safe and inclusive workplace and outlines support for staff. The toolkit is a resource for staff to support conversations and planning for gender transitions and affirmations that outlines a process the transitioning employee can control.

These resources are part of a suite of policies and procedures that articulate Council's broader commitment to diversity and inclusion, and support for staff wellbeing.

Council continues to engage staff through diversity staff groups, the celebration and recognition of key days, and increased information and education about health and wellbeing. Staff say they can see changes in the culture and feel more comfortable being themselves at work.

Council remains committed to developing policy and initiatives that ensure all employees feel included at work. The overarching goal is for all employees to be themselves when they are in the workplace, and Council anticipates it will continue to develop additional initiatives over the coming years.

REGION-BASED AND COMMUNITY NETWORKS

An important dimension of council leadership is how councils work to support and develop regional and community networks.

For most people their day-to-day activities cross municipal boundaries. How councils work together, and with other service providers to support LGBTIQ inclusion, can profoundly impact the spaces and places where LGBTIQ people live, work, learn, recreate and access services.

Many Victorian councils work in multi-sector, and cross-regional structures to support their LGBTIQ-inclusion work. Working together delivers many opportunities for councils to learn and strengthen their capabilities, as well as to more efficiently use their limited resources.

Councils identify many benefits to participating in regional and community LGBTIQ networks. Whole-of-region approaches help to overcome the capacity and resource limitations of individual local government areas by:

- increasing opportunities to share resources and knowledge, and seek advice and collegiate support;
- leveraging other organisations' and councils' networks;
- improving access to community linkages, expertise, information, research, training and resources;
- identifying emerging issues earlier and strengthening opportunities to innovate, address challenges and build on successes;
- improving service quality, integration, referral pathways and best practice; and
- reducing duplication by collaborating on shared events, activities and programs.

Across Victoria there are many community-led and regional networks supporting collaborative local effort to support and engage LGBTIQ communities.

CASE STUDY: A REGIONAL APPROACH TO COLLABORATION

HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Partner

Engagement level: Collaborate

Focus activity: Regional planning

Hobsons Bay has a proud history of supporting and being inclusive of each of the communities represented in the LGBTIQ+ acronym.

Hobsons Bay hosted a western region "LGBTI Queer Culture Forum" in February 2010; the first event of its kind hosted by a council in the western region of Melbourne, and one of the first such events by any local government in Australia.

The event helped identify issues relevant to LGBTIQ+ residents, how western region councils might be able to support and advocate for them, and methods to ensure ongoing engagement between the LGBTIQ+ community and councils.

The forum also resulted in Hobsons Bay being the second council in Australia to formally resolve to support marriage equality over five years before the national marriage equality postal survey.

In February 2015, 120 people from across Melbourne's west attended the 'Out is In' Forum, a joint collaboration of the Western Region Councils Working Group (WRCWG). The 'Out is In' forum was only possible because of the unprecedented collaboration between the western region councils coming together to support and celebrate LGBTIQ+ communities.

The forum provided a space to celebrate and reflect on LGBTIQ+ inclusion initiatives in Melbourne's west and identify a vision for the way forward for LGBTIQ+ communities in the west.

[Basketball Victoria](#), [cohealth](#) and the [Australian Research Centre for Sex, Health and Society](#) presented on then current LGBTIQ+ experiences, while the WRCWG presented on their various and collective achievements to date.

Forum attendees praised the progress that had been made to date, particularly praising the GOWEST initiative and local governments' willingness to support and engage LGBTIQ+ people. So too, attendees paid tribute to the west's unique approach in working together to undertake a range of LGBTIQ+ work.

The 'Out is In' forum provided a rare opportunity to explore what LGBTIQ+ people felt was missing in the west and what could be done better in the future.

The vision for a way forward articulated on the night was divided into seven themes:

- Recognising layers of LGBTIQ+ identity
- Promoting safe spaces
- Advocating for better access to health care
- Embedding what has been started
- Fostering LGBTIQ+ role models and visibility
- Supporting local schools
- Encouraging LGBTIQ+ networking

The final report provided direction for community, community organisations, service providers and western region councils to enable the establishment of stronger partnerships, policy development, action planning and implementation.

Four years later, a great deal of progress and change has been undertaken in the way partners have progressed their work with the LGBTIQ+ community, celebrating diversity of community, increasing visibility, and improving programs places and services. Collectively, the partnership continues to drive the conversation about exploring improvements in the role of local government.

Many changes have occurred since this forum including legislation and policy, personnel at each agency, the networks that support regional work, and broader action from each local government, including but not limited to: libraries and community centres / neighbourhood houses, arts, festivals, community development, youth, families and children, aged services and economic development.

This limits direct attribution between the forum and current activities, however important conversations in 2017 and 2018 suggests it may have been one of the catalysts for change.

Presence at Midsumma is still a priority at a regional level, however individual councils are curating their own journey and presence locally, rather than through the GOWEST brand, proudly showing their leadership, relationship building and a more integrated approach to program design and service delivery.

While GOWEST is no longer the flagship branding for LGBTIQ+ events and investment in the west, it was widely revered as a foundation pillar to the work we see today and central to catalysing the early momentum and visibility locally across the west.

At Hobsons Bay City Council, leadership and investment is found across the organisation. Councillor Tony Briffa, former Mayor and Deputy Mayor, is same-sex attracted and the world's first openly intersex Mayor and public office-bearer.

Cr Briffa is a past winner of the McArthur Local Government Fellowship, supporting a current Victorian Councillor to undertake international research and study of a policy area of significance to the local government sector.

She has led changes towards the inclusivity of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and sex characteristics, as well as broader understanding and celebration of community diversity since being elected to the Council in 2008.



Hobsons Bay has maintained a regional commitment through western region presence at Midsumma and through the Midsumma Westside events marketing campaign. Within our municipality, we have sought both an intersectional approach to advocacy, programming and service provision. Activities continue to be facilitated by Community Development, Youth Services and Libraries, as well as facilitated and partnered with the community through Economic Development, Arts, Culture and Events. We have supported and hosted community events and major activities such as the [Miss Gay and Miss Trans Australia International](#) (2019 and 2020) and [Better Together Conference](#) in 2020.

Integrated thinking and an intersectional approach to service provision are central to our work and strategic policy direction. While at times this leads to discreet program design for specific populations, it should be recognised that this works towards a more inclusive society reflective of the local community and its values.

These initiatives include:

- Gender inclusive toilets in Council's Youth Services facility
- Street Gallery of part of the Silent Tears exhibition raising awareness of violence against women with disability, yet inclusive of older

people, young people, LGBTIQ+ community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples.

- Advocacy and partnership in violence prevention, gender equity, staff capacity building and training.
- Breaking down stereotypes through programs, forums, library cataloguing of gender inclusive books and accompanying booklet, events, programs and Council's website and forms.
- Communication and promotion of local inclusive programs, events and services to the broader community.

In support of people with variations of sex characteristics (i.e. intersex people), Hobsons Bay celebrates Intersex Awareness Day by displaying the intersex flag prominently outside the Council chambers and illuminating the Williamstown Town Hall in the colours of the intersex flag. The Council has also facilitated two local intersex awareness events at the Williamstown Library (in 2011 and 2019) in partnership with Intersex Human Rights Australia, attracting a large number of residents.

We are proud of the role GOWEST played in driving innovation and investment, catalysing local and regional presence, engagement and visibility. The energy spread across Melbourne's west and independent leadership enables Hobsons Bay to have a more local focus.

Cr Tony Briffa, Hobsons Bay City Council

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse, queer and intersex people and our families live, contribute, serve and participate in communities throughout Australia. We are members of sports and service clubs, school communities, local kindergartens, childcare centres and libraries. We utilise community services for elderly people, people with disabilities, youth, and multicultural people.

Gender equality and environmental sustainability are especially important to us, and we utilise all council services including planning, domestic animal registrations, swimming pools, parks and reserves, waste services, and local shopping precincts. We are a vibrant and significant part of the community.

It is vital local government understands the diversity of L, G, B, T and I communities and consider our needs when developing and delivering programs, services and infrastructure.

To do this effectively and efficiently, local government personnel and elected representatives must undergo awareness training and actively engage with their local L, G, B, T and I community. How else will they understand the needs and aspirations of the community they serve, and ensure continuous improvement?

An important aspect of local government is providing civic leadership. Councillors and senior local government management have an important role in leading by example and showing public support for their entire community, including L, G, B, T and I people. That said, it is vital the support is genuine and not tokenistic. Flying the rainbow, transgender or intersex flag on key days in itself isn't sufficient. They must be backed up with appropriate actions.

Maintaining a council LGBTI Advisory Group, providing LGBTI resources in libraries and on your council's website, having LGBTI relevant content as part of a council's local arts and festivals program, or even providing support and information services for LGBTI youth are just a few example of tangible ways councils can genuinely support their local L, G, B, T and I communities. LGBTI content should also be included in existing programs (for example, providing LGBTI material such as screening a LGBTI film as part of seniors week or a multicultural event) and encouraging community groups to similarly show support for L, G, B, T and I people; especially sports groups.

CASE STUDY: RURAL COLLABORATION AND CONNECTION

BASS COAST AND SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCILS

Council function: Partner

Engagement level: Collaborate

Focus activity: Capacity building
(community and workforce)

In 2017 a request by a Wonthaggi LGBTIQ community elder led to Bass Coast Shire Council working to bring the Commissioner for Gender and Sexuality's Equality Roadshow to the town. Since 2016 the Roadshow has promoted LGBTIQ inclusion across Victoria, particularly in rural and regional areas.

After the event, LGBTIQ community members worked with Council to establish the [South Coast Inclusion Network](#) (SCIN). Responding to the local need, SCIN quickly grew in size and reach with South Gippsland Shire Council also committing resources to its development.

Led by passionate mature-aged LGBTIQ local residents, workers and allies, SCIN encourages celebration of diversity within the Bass Coast and South Gippsland Shires. It demonstrates strong collaboration between community, both Councils and other organisations such as health services.

SCIN ensures local expertise and lived experience are incorporated into the decision-making of these large local organisations. The collaboration between councils has ensured SCIN's activities have regional coverage and support.

SCIN has undertaken many activities in its short life. It was funded to develop a series of short films. Launched on IDAHOBIT Day 2019 to an audience of over sixty people representing over twenty local organisations, the films are an open and honest portrayal of life as an LGBTIQ person living in a rural area.



The films now support inclusive practice workshops delivered by SCIN to local organisations. At Bass Coast Shire the workshops have contributed to policy changes and have increased LGBTIQ awareness among staff.

SCIN recently incorporated, enabling it to access both councils' community grants programs and other funding opportunities. This will assist the network's sustainability into the future.

Bass Coast and South Gippsland Shires are rural in nature. A cycle of invisibility can exist in rural areas, where LGBTIQ people do not feel safe to be themselves. As Commissioner for Gender and Sexuality Ro Allen says in one of SCIN's films, "in rural areas sometimes you have to come out to the whole community at once, and that can be confronting".

Both Shires also have an ageing population. This means that a significant part of our LGBTIQ-identified communities are older people who have endured a lifetime of discrimination and intolerance.

SCIN provides local LGBTIQ residents with an invaluable opportunity to come together, tell their stories in a meaningful way, and meet others with similar lived experiences.

SCIN is also a platform for the wider community to understand LGBTIQ issues, both historical and present day. SCIN contributes to real change in our organisations and community as it works towards celebrating diversity and being an inclusive place where everyone is free to be themselves and thrive.

ENGAGING WITH LGBTIQ COMMUNITIES

Strong engagement by councils with their LGBTIQ residents has been shown to be of great interest to the LGBTIQ community, and of great importance to many councils themselves.

Participants in the 2016 VGLRL survey discussed earlier were clear in their expectation of greater consultation and engagement by local councils with LGBTIQ residents (see page 8). Councils contributing to the development of the *Rainbow Resource*, most commonly cited engagement with LGBTIQ communities as one of the most important factors driving LGBTIQ-inclusive practice within their work.

Research also indicates there are benefits to including LGBTIQ people in policy development¹¹ and that 'the community that local government serves is a resource' when it comes to developing LGBTIQ-inclusive initiatives.¹²

In Victoria, legislation is being considered which aims to strengthen obligations on local council to engage with local communities in planning and the design and delivery of services and programs.

This includes reforms to the *Local Government Act*, as well as existing requirements in the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act* and the imminent introduction of the *Gender Equality Bill* (see 'LGBTIQ inclusive practice and the law', page 36 onwards).

These community expectations and legislative drivers mean it is important to integrate LGBTIQ community engagement into the heart of council corporate planning rather than just treating it as an add-on.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to supporting participation and engagement by LGBTIQ individuals, communities and organisations in council planning.

When we think about community engagement we often refer to "consulting with the public", but public participation involves many other levels of engagement with increasing levels of impact. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has identified a spectrum to describe different levels of participation.

The IAP2 model is presented (page 24) as adapted in 2015 by the Victorian Auditor General's Office in a public participation good practice guide.¹³ In this model, 'inform' is the simplest level of engagement and 'empower' is the most complex.¹⁴

To inform typically involves a one-way sharing of information, whereas to empower involves a transfer of power and decision-making to the community.

Implicit within the IAP2 model is that all participation methods are valid and valuable. Any one of the methods may be appropriate in a given context or environment, with a given group, or at a given time. Methods used are likely to change over time as skills, capabilities, expectations and opportunities develop and change. The choice of method involves a weighing up of opportunities and constraints, and considered use of a range of available tools.

Participatory good practice is founded on working together to inform decisions, build capacity, and strengthen relationships. Maximising outcomes in each of these dimensions means actively working to engage towards the empowerment end of the participation spectrum. What is important is that the terms of engagement and the commitments being made are clear and transparent.

To engage properly with LGBTIQ people, it is vital for councils to acknowledge the capacity of LGBTIQ communities.

¹¹ Nick Mule (et al), 'Promoting LGBT Health and Wellbeing through Inclusive Policy Development' (2009) 8(18) *International Journal for Equity in Health*; Surya Monro, 'Evaluating Local Government Equalities Work: The Case of Sexualities Initiatives in the UK' (2006) 32(1) *Local Government Studies* 19, 32-3.
¹² Monro (above n 6) 31.

¹³ Victorian Auditor General's Office, *Public participation in government decision-making: Best practice guide* (2015)
¹⁴ IAP2 *Public participation spectrum* (2014)

LGBTIQ communities often have a rich history of activism producing many talented campaigners committed to working for equality.

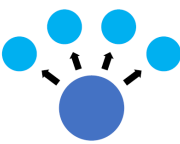
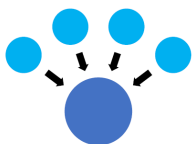
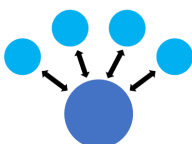
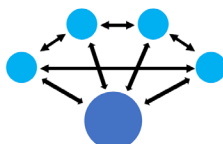
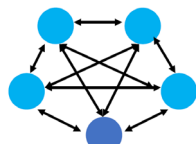
However, as a sector, LGBTIQ organisations can be relatively insecure and unstable due to a lack of funding, exclusion from the mainstream and institutional discrimination.

Councils need to consider what social, practical and financial support can be provided to help LGBTIQ organisations and community leaders develop capability, engage with the council and play a full role in the community.

Councils should be prepared to consider offering financial support to LGBTIQ groups and paying for their knowledge and participation. Councils should also work within a realistic timeframe and give adequate notice about any intentions to involve the LGBTIQ community, so that LGBTIQ community organisations can incorporate the planned activities into their work plans.

Engaging with LGBTIQ communities can result in considerable benefits for LGBTIQ people, the council and the wider community. However, it is important not to see engagement as an end in itself, but rather, engagement should be undertaken for a purpose, e.g. consulting with LGBTIQ community members on the inclusivity of a council service.

Councils need to keep taking stock of their work, re-checking their information and strengthening their relationships.

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
LEVELS					
OBJECTIVE	To provide balanced and objective information to support understanding by the public.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work with the public to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.	To engage with the public on each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and a preferred solution.	To create governance structures to delegate decision-making and/or work directly with the public.
COMMITMENT	To keep the public informed.	To listen to and acknowledge the public's concerns.	To work with the public to exchange information, ideas and concerns.	To seek advice and innovations from and amongst various public parties.	To work with the public to implement agreed-upon decisions.
DESCRIPTION	Participation The first two public participation levels— <i>Inform</i> and <i>Consult</i> —typically occur when a decision has already been made, and government wants to either communicate that decision to the public, or seek opinions on the decision. <i>From the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) 'Public Participation in Government Decision-making: Better practice guide' (2015), adapted from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum. The spectrum is printed here with permission from the IAP2 Federation.</i>		Engagement The third and fourth public participation levels— <i>Involve</i> and <i>Collaborate</i> —have two way information flows, and include sharing information within and across stakeholder communities during the decision-making process. When undertaking Engagement, decision makers commit to using stakeholder feedback to inform the decision and shape the outcome. Activity that occurs at the Collaboration level is also sometimes referred to as partnering.		Empowerment The fifth public participation level— <i>Empower</i> —is also often referred to as co-production, where decisions are made jointly between government and the community. This is typically when decision-making authority has been delegated to a group including members from both the government and the community/industry.

CASE STUDY: LGBTIQ COMMUNITIES DRIVING CHANGE

MONASH CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Provider

Engagement level: Consult

Focus activity: Diversity and inclusion planning

In 2018, several community members approached Council asking that it consider its role in improving the understanding, recognition and inclusion of LGBTIQ communities living in the City of Monash.

As a result, in February 2018 Council endorsed a Notice of Motion approving a formal consultation process to determine future priorities, programs and activities.

Monash committed through the consultation process to a fair and positive approach supported by the information and advice needed to ensure it was inclusive and participatory. It was a whole-of-Council process that engaged the Monash community, service providers and Council employees.

The consultation process included establishment of an internal project reference group comprising subject matter council officers to guide the project; a detailed literature and desktop review that included an audit of Council's existing LGBTIQ community engagement and support, and review of census data; widespread media and communications to promote and support community and service provider consultations; and the delivery of a final report with recommendations.

Over 85 community members participated in consultations through either an online survey or one of three workshops, while over 26 Monash service providers directly engaged via the online survey or a targeted workshop.

A number of community members opened up and shared their stories of living and identifying as LGBTIQ in Monash for the first time, and indicated the consultations were an important opportunity for them to feel empowered about contributing their lived experience in support of future priorities and action.

While Monash has had a long-standing commitment to equity and inclusion, this process was the first time a formal report had been considered in relation to LGBTIQ communities. A number of recommendations based on community feedback have since been endorsed, an important vehicle for strengthening Council's leadership and for advancing LGBTIQ residents' full and equal participation and inclusion in community life.

Council-endorsed recommendations assist and strengthen Council's approach to social inclusion and diversity by proposing concrete whole-of-Council actions across the municipality. They enable Council to better address discrimination and exclusionary practices based on sexuality or sex and gender diversity at the local level and make Monash a fairer and more cohesive community.

The recommendations and action plans are genuinely assisting Council ensure it can plan effectively as an organisation to develop and implement policies, programs and services that are more equitable and inclusive across all domains and for all LGBTIQ people.

CASE STUDY: RAINBOW VALLEY YOUTH GROUP CO-DESIGN

MOONEE VALLEY CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Provider

Engagement level: Collaborate

Focus activity: Support group / service / program

In 2016/17 Moonee Valley Council had been running a Queer Youth Group (QYG) youth group with a strong social focus, when a mix of factors including the closure of drop-in centre and staffing changes saw the group go into hiatus. This was a decision made in conjunction with the remaining young people who attended the QYG at the time.

By the end of 2017 Valley Youth was ready to re-engage its committed to working with and supporting LGBTIQ+ young people through the delivery of a safe, supportive and inclusive QYG.

In mid 2018, five co-design workshops (one public forum and four school-based forums) were held to determine the purpose of the new LGBTIQ+ youth group, to create a new group name, and investigate suitable meeting spaces within the municipality.

Promoted extensively through schools, online networks, and relevant organisations such as [Headspace](#), [Minus 18](#), [queerspace](#), [Ygender](#) and [YACVic](#), fifty-two young people participated in the co-design workshops leading to the establishment of the newly formed [Rainbow Valley](#) group.

A short video was created with three co-design workshop participants articulating what the co-design experience was like from young people's perspectives and what being member of the group has been like.

The *Rainbow Valley* group had a large turnout from its first week, and 18 months later is still meeting monthly delivering a wide range of activities including for example pride banner workshops, engagement with YGender, and queer self-defense classes. Participants have attended social outings together such as Valley Youth's [Loud in the Library](#) event, Minus18's [Queer Formal](#), and the Queer Youth Alliance Network's 'QYANs Get on Board Bus'.

A number of young people have built confidence to join other Valley Youth programs, including FReeZA where young people have performed publicly as musicians and MCs in their 'out' identities, as well as the two groups collaborating on a youth-led IDAHOBIT event in 2019.

The *Rainbow Valley* groups success has been built on collaboration with school pride groups and other relationship building directly with local schools. New members continue to join and are welcomed and accepted by the group.

More information about *Rainbow Valley* is available by calling 9243 1225.



CASE STUDY: RECOGNISING THE 'I' IN LGBTIQ

DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Facilitator

Engagement level: Involve

Focus activity: Event

In 2018, the need for Darebin Council to specifically focus on the inclusion, human rights and wellbeing of people with an intersex variation was raised by a member of Council's Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diversity Advisory Committee (SSGDAC).

Established in 2012, the SSGDAC is open to representatives from the local LGBTIQ community and agencies/organisations, but its membership had never included an identified intersex community member. As is common in many settings, references to LGBTIQ do not always translate into focused action and responses to the needs of the "I".

Noting these gaps, SSGDAC members discussed what could be done to ensure their focus, and Council's work more broadly, could reflect the needs and interests of people with an intersex variation. By linking this potential work to existing commitments in the Council Plan, a number of important acts of recognition were initiated.

In recognition of Intersex Awareness Day (26 October) and Intersex Day of Solidarity (8 November) Council raised the intersex flag over its main civic building for two weeks in 2018 becoming the first Australian local government area to do so. The initiating SSGDAC committee member linked Council to a local intersex advocate and resident, who in turn facilitated a panel discussion for staff on the experiences, rights and aspirations of people with an intersex variation.

A Council resolution in 2019 went a considerable step further by affirming the [Darlington Statement](#), a joint consensus statement by Australian and Aotearoa/New Zealand intersex organisations and independent advocates that outlines community aspirations and priorities.

The signing of this Statement was also a first for an Australian council. It commits Council to ongoing recognition of intersex people, mandates libraries to acquire relevant resources to support community education and bolsters continuing identification of other opportunities to include people with an intersex variation in Council services, programs and facilities.

This initiative was unusual in that it came about in somewhat of a community engagement vacuum. The advice of just one resident and the relevant peak body - [Intersex Human Rights Australia](#) guided thinking, planning and implementation.

"It was undertaken because of some honest reflection and recognition that Council's LGBTIQ work needed to be better informed by an understanding of the 'I'. It was also premised on the notion that "If we build it, they will come."

Our thinking is that by flying the flag, Council is signaling its commitment, good intentions and a willingness to learn and grow. The 2019 Council resolution affirming the Darlington Statement is a further trigger for actions which will get us ready/readier, making it easier for people with an intersex variation to find and form their own community/communities within our municipality (with Council support where/as needed).

More information about Darebin's Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diversity Advisory Committee is available by calling Darebin City Council on 8470 8888.



Ideas and actions

- Have an open discussion about LGBTIQ inclusion with colleagues in your workplace
- When developing or reviewing a plan or policy, including workplace policies, ask yourself if the needs of the LGBTIQ communities of your local government area have been considered and embedded into the policy
- Consider developing measures for evaluation and performance indicators to support the implementation of LGBTIQ inclusion initiatives
- When contracting out to service providers, consider whether the organisation you are engaging has provisions in its policies to promote equal opportunity and protect people against discrimination or whether you should make such requirements part of the contract
- Consider establishing an internal or external working group to advance LGBTIQ consultation and inclusion and, if doing so, ensure that the working group is representative of all aspects of the LGBTIQ community
- Participate in community events around the calendar to engage with and show your support for LGBTIQ communities (see the Appendix on page 62 for a calendar of significant community celebrations and events)

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA (IDAHOBIT)

IDAHOBIT was established in 2004 to draw the attention of policymakers, opinion leaders, social movements, the public and the media to the violence and discrimination experienced by LGBT people internationally.

The date of May 17 was specifically chosen to commemorate the World Health Organisation's decision in 1990 to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder.

In under a decade, May 17 has established itself as the single most important date for LGBT communities to mobilise on a global scale.

The day is now used to champion inclusion, celebrate the rainbow community and LGBTIQ-inclusive workplaces, and as a catalyst for highlighting the need for workplaces and services to be safe spaces for LGBTIQ people all year round.



SHOW YOUR PRIDE AT MIDSUMMA

29

Midsumma, Melbourne's annual LGBTIQ celebration, is a federation of arts and cultural events spread over 85 different venues throughout Melbourne and regional Victoria. The festival is presented over three weeks from mid-January to February and is a significant attraction on the Melbourne festival calendar. The festival program is made up of a wide range of events and activities including visual art, theatre, spoken word, cabaret, film, live music, parties, sport, social events and public forums.

CARNIVAL

Carnival is supported by the City of Melbourne, annually draws in approximately 100,000 people, and has become the traditional opening day event. Councils can hold a stall at the Carnival. Registrations are open from July to October.

PRIDE MARCH

Pride March is supported by the City of Port Phillip and annually brings throngs of people onto the streets of St Kilda. All councils are welcome to dress their brightest, let their flag fly high and take to Fitzroy St to show their pride to the world. Registrations are open from August to January.

EVENT REGISTRATIONS

Do you have a social event, forum or an exhibition to show? Councils can register events for Midsumma to promote their event to the estimated 200,000 festival goers throughout the three-week festival. Registrations are open from August to September.

SHOW US YOUR PRIDE

Councils can light council-owned buildings in rainbow colours during the festival. This has the ability to reach out to thousands of people with a message of pride for the LGBTIQ community.

A large, stylized orange cloud shape with two main lobes, one larger than the other, positioned on the left side of the page. The text is centered within the larger lobe.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE
HELPS BUILD SAFE SPACES

LGBTIQ, LGBTI, LGBTIQA+, SSAGD... People sometimes struggle with these acronyms and are not sure what they mean. Some may find it difficult to know how and where to use them.

Language is a powerful tool and shapes the reality we live in. How we name things makes a difference. The underlying assumptions behind the language we use can be the difference between whether people feel included or excluded.

As the Australian Human Rights Commission states,

“...terminology can have a profound impact on a person’s identity, self-worth and inherent dignity. The use of inclusive and acceptable terminology empowers individuals and enables visibility of important issues.”¹⁵

In this resource we mostly use the LGBTIQ acronym to refer to *lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex* and *queer* people and communities.

In some contexts, particularly when referring to young people, A+ may be added to denote *asexual* or *ally* identities and others (+). SSAGD may also be used to refer to (mostly) young people who are *same sex attracted* and *gender diverse*.

The term *queer* is used by some people to describe sexuality or gender identit(ies) not adequately described by other labels such as *lesbian, gay* or *bisexual*. It is sometimes used as an umbrella term to include all LGBTIQ people.

For some, the use of the term *queer* is an important act to reclaim previously hurtful language whereas for others, particularly older people who directly experienced its use as a term of derision, may actively avoid it for the same reasons.

The main thing to remember is that behind all these different combinations we are talking about people - people who deserve to be treated with respect and dignity just like anyone else. It is best to ask these people which terms they use to describe themselves, their relationships and families.

Like all language, terminology in this area is changing. There is not always clear consensus on what is appropriate. While recognising these limitations, there are some general guides that can help to understand how best to refer to LGBTIQ people and their relationships.

The Victorian Government has created an *Inclusive language guide* for public sector employees.¹⁶ The guide is the best source of current information about LGBTIQ-inclusive language use in Victoria and is regularly updated.

The guide is available at www.vic.gov.au/inclusive-language-guide and is also downloadable as a standalone resource.

The *Inclusive language guide* includes information about ‘the basics’. These include:

- Don’t assume a person is heterosexual
- Genders, sex and sexuality are all separate concepts
- LGBTIQ terminology is diverse and constantly evolving
- Don’t ask if you don’t have to

¹⁵ Australian Human Rights Commission, *SOGII Rights Snapshot Report – Background Paper* (2014) 2.

¹⁶ State Government of Victoria, *LGBTIQ inclusive language guide* (2019)

The guide defines a number of key terms, and provides guidance in how to refer describe LGBTIQ communities, people, families and relationships. It also provides tips for how to use inclusive language in specific settings, for example when greeting or introducing people, conducting interviews, talking on the phone or writing a letter, and collecting data.

Importantly, don't be afraid of making mistakes. No one will get the language right 100 percent of the time. Ask people what language they use and if you make a mistake acknowledge your error, apologise and move on. Practice makes perfect!

CASE STUDY: SAFE SPACES NEED MORE THAN STICKERS

CARDINIA SHIRE COUNCIL

Council function: Employer; Provider

Engagement level: Inform

Focus activity: Capacity building
(workforce)

Cardinia Shire Council has been delivering the *Safe and supported* initiative over the past three years. Originally funded through [HEY grants](#) administered by YACVic, and later through [VicHealth Bright Futures Challenge grants](#), the aim of the initiative is to build the capacity of council and community in supporting LGBTIQ young people.

Developed with input and feedback from young people, parents, schools and other organisations, *Safe and supported* has included a wide range of activities. These have included internal and external training, facilitation of social support group for GLBTIQ+ young people, events such as IDAHOBIT day and PRIDE Formal and fundraising/awareness raising activities within school settings.

Cardinia's *Safe and supported* initiative has been well received and highly regarded, particularly by VicHealth which has engaged Council to provide mentoring and support to other local government areas interested in delivering the initiative. Cardinia Shire Council has provided mentoring support to community organisations, groups and other councils.

Within Cardinia, one of the activities supported through the initiative has been the development

and delivery of workforce training to Council staff, with a particular emphasis on frontline staff who have direct contact with the community.

The need for training was first identified through Council's LGBTIQ+ Internal Action Group. The group was about to commence roll out of rainbow stickers across Council facilities when it was suggested that frontline staff might require additional support and training to effectively deliver the LGBTIQ+ inclusive environment the stickers were intended to signify.

With the support of a Council-approved training budget, a two-hour training package was developed to support inclusive language and practice among front-line staff. Within the first six months of roll out, Council's Youth Diversity Officer facilitated five training sessions attended by forty-four participants.

Staff feedback on the sessions was overwhelmingly positive. Participants reported feeling more confident when engaging with LGBTIQ+ community members and reduced concern or anxiety about making a mistake or causing offense.

The training facilitator has remained available to participants after each training session and has been contacted on numerous occasions by staff needing to clarify learnings or ask follow up questions. Council plans to deliver more training sessions to ensure that more staff have the opportunity to attend.

With the delivery of training and the visual presence of the rainbow stickers, community members know that Council facilities are welcoming, safe and LGBTIQ+ inclusive spaces where they can be confident they will be treated with respect.

More information about *Safe and supported* is available from Cardinia Shire Council's Youth team (1800 496 884).

CASE STUDY: CHALLENGING GENDER STEREOTYPES AND NORMS

BANYULE CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Facilitator

Engagement level: Empower

Focus activity: Information resource/
publication

In May 2018, 120 young people participated in the Banyule Youth Summit to explore a range of issues important to them. At the end of the Summit participants presented recommendations to representatives of different levels of government and other key decision makers.

A number of participants chose to discuss gender equality and the ways that community education and awareness raising could challenge and support young people to defy gender stereotypes and see gender equality as being positive for everyone.

Summit participants proposed that a publication be created through submissions from young people. The resource would explore experiences of gender, gender norms and stereotypes, highlight the importance of young people being able to participate in a community that accepted them for who they are, and show active interest in challenging outdated perceptions of identity.

After the event, the Banyule youth services team established a working group of interested young people that worked for many months to support the development of the resource. Working group members were involved in all aspects of its editing and design. They received submissions and supported other young people aged 12-25 to contribute. A diverse group of young people took part, with the majority of members identifying as LGBTIQ+.

The final resource, *Do not judge this book by its cover*, was launched at the 2019 Banyule Youth

Summit Report Card. The event showcased the ways Council had actioned young people's recommendations from the previous year's Youth Summit.

Featuring submissions from over twenty young people, *Do not judge this book by its cover* is a sixty-page publication in four chapters – Feminine, Masculine, Beyond the Binary and Being You.

Each chapter explores how gender stereotypes can be confusing, rigid and unhelpful for young people as they develop their identity and sense of self. The final chapter explores the positive impact on young people's wellbeing when they are accepted and validated in their personal identity.

The publication release was met with a fantastic response, including overwhelming support from attending State MPs. A copy was shared with the Victorian State Library and is continuing to be shared with local libraries, schools and community centres.

"This book has helped me to be myself! It has shown me that my self-expression is my own and I can own that!"

"Having access to the stories of others who have been able to transition into themselves has given me so much hope"

Copies of *Do not judge this book by its cover* are available by contacting Banyule Youth Services on 9457 9855.



CASE STUDY: LOOS FOR YOU

MAROONDAH CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Provider

Engagement level: Empower

Focus activity: Safe spaces

Throughout 2018 significant consultations and other initiatives led by LGBTIAQ+ young people at EV's Youth Centre revealed a need for the centre to be more inclusive of transgender and gender diverse young people.

Young people identified that one of the biggest barriers to inclusion was that existing bathroom facilities contained gendered artwork and no gender-neutral options.

Council jumped at the opportunity to ensure its youth centre was a safe space for all, and initiated an arts project designed and delivered by LGBTIAQ+ young people.

A professional artist and six LGBTIAQ+ young people were recruited to the project, delivered between July and September 2018. The artist's role was to mentor the group to design and create three gender neutral artworks for the Centre's toilet doors.

Two workshops were delivered to design the artwork and test the spray artwork medium, with another two workshops to create the agreed artwork. The artist and young people also worked alongside the [Zoe Belle Gender Collective](#) (ZBGC) who provided guidance on appropriate language and signage to accompany the artwork.

The completed artwork was launched at an event to explain its significance, and was attended by the professional artist, participating young artists and their families, and a number of other young people who frequent the youth centre.

Since the launch of the new artwork and signage, more than five hundred community members have utilised the youth centre. There has been a substantial increase in LGBTIAQ+ young people attending programs.

The work has also encouraged other activity. Council's leisure services were prompted to deliver LGBTIAQ+ inclusion training to their staff, while others have remarked on the clear inclusion message the artwork sends internally, to partners, and to the community. One partner organisation was inspired to develop a similar initiative at their own site.

The project was seen to encompass best practice because it was led by LGBTIAQ+ young people from beginning to finish, and engaged professional secondary consultation via ZBGC to ensure the project aligned with current best practice.

Maroondah Council is extremely proud of the work and the difference it has made for LGBTIAQ+ young people and the experience they now have with their local community.

More information about *Loos for you* is available from Maroondah City Council Youth and Children's Services on 9294 5704.

CASE STUDY: BUILDING COMMUNITY ASSETS

CITY OF PORT PHILLIP

Council function: Provider

Engagement level: Involve

Focus activity: Social and economic development

In April 2016 the Victorian Government announced that \$15 million had been allocated from the 2016/17 State Budget for the establishment of a [Victorian Pride Centre](#) (VPC). Council submitted an expression of interest valued at \$13 million to provide the site location. In March 2017 the Victorian Government announced that Fitzroy Street, St Kilda would become the home of the VPC, which will open its doors in 2020.

The City of Port Phillip is committed to the health, wellbeing and inclusion of LGBTIQ community members. It has a longstanding history with the LGBTIQ community, including the annual Midsumma Pride March along Fitzroy Street.

The City of Port Phillip was the third highest Yes (82%) vote in favour of marriage equality of any electorate in Australia. The overall community response to the Centre has been very positive and it is anticipated the Centre will have far reaching positive community impact.

It will contribute to the proud and continuing history of Victoria's LGBTIQ communities and will be warmly embraced by the people of St Kilda, cementing the City's place as a recognised leader in the rights of all LGBTIQ community members.

The VPC will be a safe place where the community can feel empowered to be who they are. It will catalyse the community, fostering innovation, collaboration and connection as home to up to eight major LGBTIQ community organisations, as well as the more than 40 community groups that will create a vibrant community at the VPC.

It will provide unprecedented access to technology, resources and shared learning opportunities for the benefit of this and future LGBTIQ generations and their allies.

The establishment of the VPC is a priority for Council as identified in the Council Plan 2017-27. The case for Council's investment in the VPC is built around the economic and social impact of additional demand from a socially contributory anchor institution.

In addition to providing capacity for health care, advisory and support services for LGBTIQ community members, it is expected the VPC will deliver an additional \$46 million of socio-economic benefits to the precinct over the next 20 years, including contribution to the rejuvenation of Fitzroy Street. It will act as a major visitor attractor, enhancing St Kilda's role as an iconic visitor destination and generating ongoing economic activity and employment.

The VPC will provide a space that enables the LGBTIQ community to celebrate its identity, achievements and culture through events, performance, radio, a gallery, and provide a home for the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives. This is in line with Council's Art and Soul - Creative and Prosperous City Strategy 2018-22, where Council envisions building a prosperous City that connects and grows business as well as bringing arts, culture and creative expression to everyday life and contributing to Melbourne's liveability.





LGBTIQ INCLUSIVE PRACTICE AND THE LAW

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Whether you are a council officer managing staff or delivering services to the community or a councillor performing public functions, it is important to know your legal rights and obligations. These legal obligations extend to a range of council activities, from employment to local law-making to delivering goods and services.

It is important that in the performance of these functions you do not discriminate against LGBTIQ people and, proactively think about how to better include the needs and human rights of LGBTIQ people in your work.

This section does not provide a comprehensive overview of all laws relevant to the rights and interests of LGBTIQ people, or of council obligations to respect, protect and promote those rights. Promoting LGBTIQ-inclusive practice in your work is important as a matter of good practice, but it can also help minimise your council's legal liability in these and other areas.

HUMAN RIGHTS LAW

In Victoria, the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic) requires public authorities including local councils to act compatibly with human rights, to give consideration to human rights when making decisions, and to interpret and apply laws compatibly with human rights.¹⁷ Public authorities' obligations cannot be avoided by outsourcing their work to others such as contractors.¹⁸

The Charter protects twenty civil and political rights including equality before the law and of the law, rights to freedom from discrimination, to privacy and freedom of expression, and other human rights.¹⁹

The Charter is founded on human rights established in international law, including in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. International human rights law can be helpful when considering what public authorities' Charter obligations mean in practice.

In 2006 the [Yogyakarta principles](#) were developed to articulate how international human rights instruments specifically apply to LGBTIQ people. Further expanded in 2017 (the Yogyakarta Principles +10), the Principles outline state responsibilities in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.

Although the Yogyakarta principles are not binding on Victorian local councils, they are the most comprehensive statement on LGBTIQ human rights. Like other international human rights documents and frameworks, they can help understand what rights-based practice means for LGBTIQ people in Victoria.

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LAW

The concept of equality is at the heart of equal opportunity and discrimination law. Equality can be either formal or substantive. *Formal equality* is the idea that everyone should be treated the same, or at least should not be treated less favourably because of a protected attribute such as their gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics. Formal equality is embodied in the prohibition against direct discrimination.

Substantive equality recognises that treating all people the same can lead to disadvantage or poorer outcomes for some people because of certain attributes such as their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics. Substantive equality is embodied in the prohibition against indirect discrimination. Indirect discrimination means imposing an equal requirement, condition or practice on everyone that would have the effect of disadvantaging certain people or groups.

Australian anti-discrimination law includes an intersecting mixture of state and federal laws that cover certain types of treatment (direct and indirect discrimination as above), in certain areas of life, on the basis of certain characteristics or attributes.

Relevant laws include:

- Commonwealth anti-discrimination law – the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- State anti-discrimination law – the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- Commonwealth employment law – the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

¹⁷ *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2016* (Vic) ('CHRR') s 38

¹⁸ *Metro West v Sudi* [2009] VCAT 2025 (9 October 2009).

¹⁹ CHRR ss 8-27

The coverage of Victorian and federal equal opportunity laws is complex.

While the federal *Fair Work Act 2009* prohibits discrimination in employment, it does not provide protection on the basis of gender identity or intersex status. The Victorian *Equal Opportunity Act 2006* includes gender identity but not intersex status, whereas the federal *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* includes both.

The *Fair Work Act 2009* only applies to discrimination in employment,²⁰ whereas anti-discrimination statutes also prohibit discrimination in relation to:

- employment, recruitment and contract work²¹
- provision of goods, services and facilities²²
- provision of accommodation²³
- education²⁴
- clubs²⁵
- recreational sport²⁶
- performance of a councillor's public functions.²⁷

Under Victorian law employers and service providers including local councils have a duty to eliminate discrimination as far as possible.²⁸

Between them, state and federal statutes make it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of certain protected attributes or characteristics, including:

- sex²⁹
- marital and relationship status³⁰
- sexual orientation or preference, which includes homosexuality, bisexuality and heterosexuality³¹
- gender identity³²
- intersex status.³³

Discrimination based on an attribute also includes discrimination on the basis a person is presumed to hold that attribute or associates with a person who holds or is assumed to hold that attribute.

Certain areas are exempt from the operation of anti-discrimination laws. These include:

- provision of domestic or personal services³⁴
- genuine occupational requirements of employment – in relation to sex only - e.g. fitting of clothing, body searches, and dramatic and artistic work for the purposes of credibility or authenticity³⁵

20 *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) ('FWA') s 342(1)

21 *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) ('SDA') ss 14-16; *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic) ('EOA') ss 16-22

22 SDA s 22; EOA s 44

23 SDA s 23; EOA ss 52-53

24 SDA s 21; EOA s 38

25 SDA s 25; EOA ss 64-65

26 SDA s 42; EOA ss 71-72

27 EOA s 73

28 EOA s 15

29 SDA s 5; EOA s 6(o); FWA s 351(1)

30 SDA s 6; EOA s 6(h); FWA s 351(1)

31 SDA s 5A; EOA s 6(p); FWA s 351(1)

32 SDA s 5B (includes gender expression); EOA s 6(d)

33 SDA s 5C

34 SDA s 14(3); EOA s 24

35 SDA s 30; EOA s 26

- certain jobs involving the care of children³⁶
- acts done with statutory authority³⁷
- competitive sport – in relation to sex, gender identity and intersex status only – where strength, stamina or physique is relevant.³⁸

Organisations can apply for special exemptions and take special measures or affirmative action.³⁹ This can include special programs targeted at the needs of a vulnerable group.

BIRTHS AND MARRIAGES

In December 2017, the Marriage Act 1961 was amended to extend the right to marry to all people of marrying age, regardless of sex and gender. The legislative change followed a lengthy campaign for marriage equality that culminated in the Australian Marriage Postal Survey. The voluntary survey attracted majority community support with 61.6% of participants voting in favour of reform.

The marriage equality campaign, and the postal survey in particular, were highly charged for many LGBTIQ people and their supporters. For some the experience was traumatic. Elements of the organised NO campaign targeted some of the LGBTIQ communities' most vulnerable people, including young people, and transgender and gender diverse people of all ages.

Although a majority of people supported the reform, the legacy of the campaign continues to be felt by some LGBTIQ people. These include for example some people whose families voted against marriage equality and those living in communities where the overall YES vote was lower.

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In 2019, two years after the marriage laws were changed, new [religious freedom laws](#) were introduced into the Federal Parliament. Widely interpreted as a response to marriage equality, the bills propose changes to discrimination law that would undermine current protection to LGBTIQ and other people under the guise of protecting religious freedoms. These new laws highlight the importance of continuing to advocate to protect the rights of LGBTIQ people and other marginalized groups.

In Victoria, the passage of federal marriage equality laws also prompted legislative changes to state legislation. In August 2019 the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment Act 2019* was passed into law.⁴⁰

The Act enables transgender and other gender diverse people to change the sex on their birth certificate without first having to undergo gender affirmation surgery. This reform was important for ensuring gender diverse people could obtain a birth certificate reflective of their identity without having to undergo expensive and painful surgery that may not be of their choosing.

From 1 May 2020, gender diverse Victorians are able to self-nominate their sex on their birth certificate as male or female, or a wide range of other non-binary descriptors of their choice. The Act also applies to children with parental support and includes a process to follow to indicate the change is in the child's best interest, and if they are under 16, that they have the capacity to consent.

³⁶ SDA s 35; EOA s 25

³⁷ SDA s 40; EOA s 75

³⁸ SDA s 42; EOA s 72.

³⁹ SDA ss 42, 44; EOA ss 72, 89. See e.g. *Royal Victorian Bowls Association [2008] VCAT 2415* (26 November 2008); *Darebin City Council Youth Services v Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission [2011] VCAT 1693*; *Peel Hotel [2007] VCAT 916* (24 May 2007).

⁴⁰ *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Amendment Act (2019) (Vic)*

Support for the broader LGBTIQ community Cr Michael Schilling, Cardinia Shire Council

On 20 March 2017 Cardinia Shire Council voted to take a public stance on marriage equality. Council resolved to:

- publicly support marriage equality irrespective of sex or gender identity
- write to Federal Members of Parliament and the Australian Human Rights Commission advising them of council's support
- investigate ways as a council, we can make our community and council facilities an inclusive place for the LGBTIQ community.

I initially approached my council colleagues in December 2016, informing them of my intention to bring forward a motion in support of marriage equality.

Council officers prepared a comprehensive report on the current issues facing our local LGBTIQ community. This report was presented to council in February 2017 and was a crucial step in the process. It briefed councillors on the facts and enabled us to have an open and honest debate about the issue.

While I was the councillor who drafted the motion, it certainly was a team effort. I was humbled by the overwhelming support shown by my council colleagues. Both council and our LGBTIQ community were incredibly proud and excited on the night to see the motion pass. The wider community in Cardinia has also been overwhelmingly supportive, with only a handful of people voicing their dissatisfaction.

This motion meant a lot to many locals, who took the time to send me and other councillors their individual messages of thanks. The motion and its subsequent actions highlighted to the community that Cardinia Shire Council supports all residents, irrespective of who they love.

Highlights of the recommendations endorsed by Council include:

- Provide LGBTI inclusiveness training for staff in frontline positions – compulsory for customer service staff, maternal and child health (MCH) staff, human resources (HR) staff and other parties on an interest basis.
- Include a LGBTI example in the online Equal Opportunity induction and include matters of LGBTI inclusion in the new social inclusion policy.
- Review Council's online and hard copy forms to scan for gender specific terms – especially recruitment forms.
- Review Council's facility standards to include unisex toilets, gender inclusive signage and female change facilities.
- Include a statement on the website on the website about inclusiveness for all regardless of gender, orientation, disability, etc. Include inclusive language and images in communications and publications, and a statement on recruitment advertisements.
- Create an internal action team to monitor the progress of these actions.

Overall, the campaign has been extremely successful in improving outcomes for the LGBTIQ community. Council now has an internal LGBTIQA+ working group, which closely monitors the outcomes of each action committed to by council. Cardinia Shire Council now takes part in IDAHOBIT day and attends the annual Pride March. The entrances to all council buildings have a 'rainbow' sticker, and our LGBTIQA+ programs at the council all remain very popular.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (1989)

The *Local Government Act 1989* is the primary framework for the establishment and operation of councils in Victoria.

The Act defines the primary objective of a council as endeavouring to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions.⁴¹

Among its facilitating objectives are to:

- promote social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability
- ensure resources are used efficiently and effectively to best meet the needs of the local community
- improve the overall quality of life of people in the local community
- promote appropriate business and employment opportunities
- ensure services and facilities provided by the Council are accessible and equitable
- ensure transparency and accountability in Council decision making.⁴²

In order to effectively meet these objectives, councils must give regard to the specific attributes and needs of their local communities in all their diversity, including those of LGBTIQ community members.

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In November 2019 the *Local Government Bill 2019* was introduced to the Victorian Parliament. The Bill is intended to modernise local government including by improving services through more rigorous planning and community engagement.

The Bill will establish new service performance principles based on fairness, accessibility, quality, cost, and continuous improvement that will apply to all council roles.⁴³

A stronger voice for the community will be delivered by placing communities at the centre of local decisions and requiring that all councils have long term plans. To support them to fully engage with the community, councils will be expected to have comprehensive engagement plans and transparent policies and procedures.⁴⁴

The Bill is intended to enable councils to tailor services and programs that are responsive to the needs of their local communities. The diverse needs and interests of all parts of the community, including LGBTIQ community members need to be considered.

41 [Local Government Act \(1989\) \(Vic\) \('LGA'\) s 3c \(1\)](#)

42 [LGA s 3c \(2\) \(a\)-\(e\) \(g\)](#)

43 [Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, *Local Government Bill 2019 Theme 1 – Improved services* \(2019\)](#)

44 [Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, *Local Government Bill 2019 Theme 5 – A new relationship* \(2019\)](#)

PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLBEING ACT (2008)

The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* aims to achieve the highest attainable standard of public health and wellbeing by protecting public health and preventing disease, illness, injury, disability or premature death; promoting conditions in which persons can be healthy; and reducing inequalities in the state of public health and wellbeing.⁴⁵

The Act outlines a range of council functions which give rise to councils' development of municipal public health and wellbeing plans. These functions include:

- creating an environment which supports the health of members of the local community and strengthens the capacity of the community and individuals to achieve better health
- initiating, supporting and managing public health planning processes at the local government level
- developing and implementing public health policies and programs within the municipal district
- developing and enforcing up-to-date public health standards and intervening if the health of people within the municipal district is affected
- facilitating and supporting local agencies whose work has an impact on public health and wellbeing to improve public health and wellbeing in the local community
- co-ordinating and providing immunisation services to children living or being educated within the municipal district
- ensuring that the municipal district is maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.

As outlined briefly in the 'About the LGBTIQ community' section and throughout the *Rainbow Resource*, LGBTIQ people face a range of poorer health and wellbeing outcomes as a result of discrimination, marginalisation and isolation.

Obligations contained in the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act* are an important means by which councils can and should work to address these health inequalities.

⁴⁵ [Public Health and Wellbeing Act \(2008\) \(Vic\) \('PHWA'\) s 4 \(2\) \(a\) – \(c\)](#)

GENDER EQUALITY BILL (2019)

In November 2019 the *Gender Equality Bill 2019* was introduced into the Victorian Parliament. The Bill aims to improve gender equality in Victorian workplaces, including local councils, and to deliver improved policies, programs and services to the community.⁴⁶

The Bill recognises that gender equality benefits people of all genders and that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination a person may experience on the basis of other attributes, including age, race, ability, religion, gender identity, and sexual orientation (intersectionality).

The Bill will create a range of new duties and obligations for councils including:

- development of a Gender Equality Action Plan every four years, including strategies for improving gender equality in the workplace
- progress reporting every two years
- consideration and promotion of gender equality in the community by thinking about how their work affects Victorians of different genders and making appropriate changes to policies, programs and services
- making measurable progress by meeting targets and quotas

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45 Gender Equality Bill (2019) (Vic)

Ideas and actions

- Review policies and processes for gender neutral language and inclusion of LGBTIQ people
- Consider the needs of LGBTIQ people at every stage of your policy planning and development
- Join the employer support program such as [Pride in Diversity](#) or [Diversity Council Australia](#)
- Attend training on LGBTIQ inclusion and cultural capability (for example, Rainbow Health Victoria's [HOW2 Program](#))
- Establish LGBTIQ reference groups to get advice and input from LGBTIQ communities (and consider paying sitting fees)
- Undertake Rainbow Tick accreditation (see the next section)

RAINBOW TICK ACCREDITATION

LGBTIQ-inclusive practice standards

1. Organisational capability
2. Cultural safety
3. Professional development
4. Consumer participation
5. Disclosure and documentation
6. Access and intake processes

In recent years, a growing number of LGBTIQ individuals and organisations including local governments have been interested to ensure the development of LGBTIQ-inclusive health and community services.

As discussed earlier, services can show they are LGBTIQ friendly by placing a rainbow flag on their door or website or by listing their service in LGBTIQ media. These are important symbolic actions but they must also be backed up by comprehensive assurances that services understand and will be responsive to the diverse needs of LGBTIQ people and communities.

In response, Rainbow Health Victoria (RHV) - an independent, state government funded LGBTIQ health and wellbeing policy and resource unit at La Trobe University - developed the [Rainbow Tick](#) accreditation program in consultation with Quality Innovation Performance (QIP).

Rainbow Tick is a systemic approach to helping organisations understand and respond to the needs of LGBTIQ consumers, staff and volunteers. It is a quality assessment and improvement framework that establishes a benchmark for LGBTIQ-inclusive practice underpinned by six practice standards, practical strategies and quality-based indicators.

The development of these standards and indicators provides a benchmark against which services can be independently accredited for the first time in Australia. Rainbow Tick accreditation can be applied to a whole organisation, or as is more commonly the case in local government, a particular section or type of service within an organisation may get the tick, for example, aged care.

Understanding the aims of LGBTIQ-inclusive practice is important. Some service providers believe that the success of inclusive practice can be measured by an increase in the number of LGBTIQ consumers who are willing and able to be open about their sexual orientation or gender identity. While this may be one indicator of the inclusivity of a service, it is important to remember that the aim of LGBTIQ inclusive practice is to ensure that the needs of LGBTIQ consumers are understood and that they feel valued and respected, regardless of whether or not they disclose.

It is also expected that the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ consumers will improve as a result of services understanding their needs.

The Rainbow Tick accreditation cycle involves a staged approach in which organisations are assessed against the LGBTIQ-inclusive practice standards and are engaged in building quality improvement into their operations. Gaining Rainbow Tick accreditation requires considerable planning, resources, and commitment. For organisations that are only just beginning the process of becoming LGBTIQ-inclusive, the road from internal audit to Rainbow Tick may take up to 18 months.

Aims of LGBTIQ-inclusive practice

- Assist organisations to understand and acknowledge the needs of LGBTIQ consumers
- Support organisations to develop services that meet the needs of LGBTIQ consumers
- Improve the quality and safety of services provided to LGBTIQ consumers
- Enable LGBTIQ consumers to access a database of services that have been accredited as LGBTIQ inclusive

CASE STUDY: ACHIEVING THE RAINBOW TICK IN AGED SERVICES

STONNINGTON CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Provider

Engagement level: Involve

Focus activity: Diversity and inclusion planning

That distinctive rainbow located at the bottom of our e-mail signatures, client newsletters and website may be small in size, but represents an ethos of LGBTIQ inclusive practice and a long journey towards [Rainbow Tick](#) accreditation for the City of Stonnington's aged services.

Seeking Rainbow Tick accreditation was the result of consultation conducted in 2007 in preparation for the development of Council's older persons strategy. Feedback indicated that Council needed to develop its aged services to make them more accessible and responsive to older LGBTIQ people.

Once Council became aware of the Rainbow Tick, it was keen to be involved. The Rainbow Tick consists of six standards against which services can be formally accredited to demonstrate LGBTIQ inclusive practice and service delivery. In June 2012, Council took part in the pilot of the Rainbow Tick audit and accreditation process. By June 2018, the City of Stonnington's aged services received their third Rainbow Tick accreditation.

Undergoing this process has reaffirmed the immense benefit that accreditation can provide an organisation. Some of these include improved staff awareness, greater sensitivity with regards to an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity, an understanding of better practice, and the development of an inclusive service delivery model.

The Rainbow Tick is achievable for all councils. With some additional training, Stonnington found that achieving accreditation was a matter of formalising processes already in place and improving existing documents.

As with previous Rainbow Tick (and other) accreditation cycles, the third time round we had to allocate existing resources to support evidence collection, staff briefings and on-site audits. Although we had been down this road before, we still had a few challenges because the Rainbow Tick does not allow an organisation to rest on its laurels.

As a result of the work by aged services, other areas of Council have also embedded LGBTIQ practices and are exploring participation in the Rainbow Tick accreditation process.

Council has also embedded IDAHOBIT into its corporate calendar of events where staff raise funds for the [SwitchBoard Victoria](#). This annual gathering serves to build staff capacity and reaffirm our support and respect for LGBTI rights. Council's annual participation in the Midsumma Carnival has been met with positive feedback from Stonnington community members and other carnival visitors alike.

In Council's most recent aged services survey, the vast majority of respondents (97%) agreed that Council is committed to providing services to our diverse community, including sexual and gender diversity.

The Rainbow Tick journey is sometimes challenging, but also exciting and achievable. The City of Stonnington's aged services will continue to refine the skills of its staff, and engage in self-reflection in an effort to remain LGBTIQ inclusive.

YOUNGER LGBTIQ PEOPLE

Councils across Victoria deliver, fund and partner on a wide range of services and programs to young people in their municipalities. These services and programs include those specifically targeting LGBTIQ young people.

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Research shows that LGBTIQ young people experience a range of health and wellbeing challenges as they navigate the complexities of school and families, their developing selves and emerging identities.

The largest national survey about the sexual, emotional and physical health and wellbeing of same-sex attracted and gender question (SSAGQ) young people is the *Writing themselves in* series produced by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) at La Trobe University. The most recently available research report is *Writing themselves in 3* (2010), with a fourth in the series due for release in 2020/21.

Among the key findings of *Writing themselves in 3* were that participating SSAGQ young people:

- Experience complex interactions of sexual attraction, identity and behaviour and their intersections with other experiences including religion and rurality
- Were more likely to be sexually active at an earlier age, less likely to use a condom, twice as likely to become pregnant and more likely to contract a sexually transmitted infection than their heterosexual peers
- Suffered high levels of verbal and physical homophobic abuse in the community, particularly at school, with strong links to feeling unsafe, excessive drug use, self-harm and suicide attempts
- Were less likely to experience the destructive impacts of abuse if they had the support of family, friends and to a lesser extent, professionals
- Had mostly disclosed their same sex attractions to at least one person (97.5%), especially to peers
- Were just as likely as not to attend a school with social and structural supports⁴⁷

There is currently very little research available on the health and wellbeing needs and challenges of young people with intersex variations.

In 2019 the Victorian Government released an Information and resource paper that documented some of these issues, including that intersex infants, children and young people continue to experience unwanted and irreversible medical interventions with lifelong consequences.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Lynne Hillier (et al), 'Writing themselves in 3: The third national study on the sexual health and wellbeing of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people', Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University (2010).

⁴⁸ Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, 'Health and wellbeing of people with intersex variations:

These statistics highlight the critical importance of ensuring that youth services and programs delivered by local councils are accessible to LGBTIQ young people, that they offer safe and accepting spaces free of discrimination and harassment, and that they assist to promote the proactive factors shown to enhance LGBTIQ young people's health and wellbeing.

Council engagement with LGBTIQ young people is among local government's greatest strengths. Many case studies provided to the *Rainbow Resource* showcase activities in many council contexts that target and respond to the needs of LGBTIQ young people.

information and resource paper', initially prepared by T. Jones and W. Leonard; revised and edited J. Rostant on behalf of Department of Health and Human Services 2016–2018 Intersex Expert Advisory Group. (2019)

CASE STUDY: YOUNG PEOPLE HAVING A BALL

CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO

Council function: Facilitator

Engagement level: Involve

Focus activity: Event

In September 2018 the first ever Bendigo Rainbow Debutant Ball was held for young people from across the Greater Bendigo area. The idea for the event originally came from *Ball in the Mall* - a deb ball targeting disadvantaged young people designed to make a positive difference in their lives by providing an experience they wouldn't normally have.

Recognising many LGBTIQ young people also miss the opportunity to go to a deb ball, local young people were consulted via an online survey and two workshops at Headspace to gauge their interest in the event.

It was agreed that a Rainbow Ball would offer an inclusive, safe and welcoming space for LGBTIQ young people across the Greater Bendigo region, and so planning commenced for a drug, alcohol and smoke free event targeting 16-25 year olds who identify as LGBTIQ+.

City of Greater Bendigo staff worked in partnership with [Headspace](#), [Thorne Harbour Country](#), Bendigo Police GLLOs, [Anglicare](#), the [Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health \(CERSH\)](#), [FAB-CV](#) (a volunteer-run organisation connecting Bendigo's diverse LGBTI community through monthly events), other members of the LGBTIQ+ community and young people to bring the Rainbow Ball together.

Young people participated in an organizing committee, advising on elements such as quiet spaces, gender neutral toilets, music, venue, creating promotional material and ticket price points.

The Rainbow Ball was held at Ulumbarra on 28 September 2018. It was a colourful night celebrating Bendigo's diversity, and was a huge success. It attracted over one hundred people young people, their families, supporters and allies.

LGBTIQ community elders took on the role of guardian angels to welcome young people through a rainbow guard of honour.

For many of these community elders, the night was a culmination of years of campaigning to change laws. The event came less than a year after 68.7% of Bendigo's 92,264 voters voted 'yes' in the marriage equality postal survey. With 82% of voters returning their marriage survey form, Bendigo's survey participation rate and its 'yes' response rate were both higher than those recorded across Victoria and Australia.

For many young people, the Rainbow Ball was the first opportunity they had to come together in a safe and inclusive space to celebrate LGBTIQ diversity in Bendigo. For them, the ball signified a sense of acceptance and safety.

Due to the success of the night, the organising committee reconvened and held another successful Rainbow Ball in October 2019.



CASE STUDY: PROMOTING YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

GREATER DANDENONG COUNCIL

Council function: Provider

Engagement level: Collaborate

Focus activity: Capacity building (community)

In 2014 Greater Dandenong Council established the [Unite Alliance](#), a platform to support young LGBTIQ+ young people and their allies aged 14-25 years to develop campaigns and projects to tackle homophobia and discrimination in the community.

Recognising schools can be an unsafe environment for many LGBTIQ young people, a more targeted approach was needed and the *Inclusive Youth Ambassadors* program was born.

Inclusive Youth Ambassadors is a structured ten-week program that works in partnership with schools and students to increase young peoples' understanding of LGBTIQ+ issues. It supports them to plan and implement school-based projects that create a safer and more inclusive environment for same-sex attracted and gender diverse (SSAGD) students.

The program includes three building blocks. The first builds student capacity (weeks 1-5) to understand LGBTIQ+ experiences, build leadership and conflict management skills, and increase young peoples' capacity to challenge homophobic and transphobic discrimination.

The second building block (week 6) focuses on cross-school collaboration through a full-day event where students from participating schools share project ideas with each other and a panel of LGBTIQ+ professionals.

The third building block (weeks 7-10) involves weekly meetings for students to refine project ideas at their schools. Council staff support planning but projects are driven by students and school personnel to embed an inclusive whole-of-school approach.

To date the program has been delivered in four secondary schools. Fifty-three students have directly participated with around 510 young people reached. Outcomes have included improved LGBTIQ+ content in libraries, the creation of gender-neutral toilets, and the establishment of a "queer lounge".

A key strength of this program is its three-step, building block approach. The approach supports students' knowledge and understanding, and encourages open discussion with peers from other schools in a safe and supportive environment.

The program format supports schools to adopt nuanced approaches reflective of their needs. By utilising a whole-of-school approach and student-led projects, the *Inclusive Youth Ambassadors* program positively influences the physical, social and structural features impacting on SSAGD wellbeing, while the supports offered by Council staff and LGBTIQ+ professionals ensure the effects of the positive change are able to be sustained.

More information about the *Inclusive Youth Ambassadors* program is available by calling Greater Dandenong Youth and Family Services on 9793 2155.

"It was well run and very educational."

"I really enjoyed learning more about the LGBTIQ community."

"It was great having the opportunity to help plan a safer environment in school."

CASE STUDY: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO SUPPORTING LGBTIQ YOUNG PEOPLE

CITY OF GREATER GEELONG

Council function: Provider

Engagement level: Empower

Focus activity: Support group / service / program

Geelong City Council's [Gender and Sexuality Project](#) (GASP) is an example of local government going 'all out' to support LGBTIQ young people. GASP was formed in 1996 when a volunteer youth worker advocated on behalf of young people who said they needed a safe place to meet other LGBTIQ young people.

Support for GASP has built up gradually over the past two decades. It was given a major boost in 2010 thanks to significant State Government funding to deliver a three-and-a-half-year suicide prevention pilot program. This enabled Council to employ staff to provide training, education, capacity building and support to local communities and organisations, and social and community connection support groups in community and school settings.

When State Government funding was nearing its conclusion, Council supported an allocation of recurrent funding to ensure the program could continue. It is understood that this commitment of recurrent resources to LGBTIQ+ young people in the community was a first for any local government area in the country.

Each year the GASP team facilitates a wide variety of programs for young people and other community members, each of which is directly linked to the City's Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan and Clever and Creative Community Vision.

GASP currently delivers in excess of ninety groups aimed at improving social and community connections for LGBTIQ young people, thirty education programs, twelve holiday programs and five events.

GASP's success has been built on Council's vision, shared by the youth workers who have led and contributed to the project over its two-decade existence. GASP's vision is a Geelong community where LGBTIQ young people belong, are safe and connected.

All GASP programs, education and engagement opportunities are conducted within a youth and evidenced-informed approach, supported by partnerships across Council, schools, and community and other government organisation across the region.

For more information about Geelong City Council's Gender and Sexuality Project contact 5272 6120.



OLDER LGBTI PEOPLE

Councils often provide or are a first point-of-call for a range of aged care services, notably home and community care (HACC) services, and are actively engaged in planning for positive ageing. When undertaking this planning or providing these services, it is important that the specific needs of older LGBTI people be considered.⁴⁹ However, a recent review has shown that only 35% of Victorian HACC agencies have LGBTI strategies in their diversity policies.⁵⁰

Due to a number of factors, it is less likely that older LGBTI people will actively come forward or disclose being LGBTI.

Older LGBTI people grew up knowing they could be imprisoned or forced to undergo medical 'cures' if their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status was known. A lifetime experience of oppression and needing to pretend to not be LGBTI for their own security means many older LGBTI people do not feel safe disclosing their identity to service providers. Older LGBTI people may not trust service providers and may feel significant shame, anxiety and resentment regarding some personal services. For some, certain supports may trigger past memories and abuse. In rural areas these fears may be heightened where workers are more likely to be related or known to a client, making disclosure less likely.

While approximately 11% of local populations is LGBTI, older LGBTI people may prefer to remain invisible, losing the opportunity to have their needs articulated and met. This can cause a greater sense of isolation and can lead to depression, anxiety and unmet care needs.

⁴⁹ Aged Care Act 1997 (Cth) s 11.3(h).

⁵⁰ HDG Consulting Group, *HACC Diversity Planning and Practice Implementation Review Project* (May 2015).

Some LGBTI people accessing HACC services develop elaborate strategies to manage their privacy. This may involve hiding personal material, such as photographs and cards in their homes before carers visit. It may mean a refusal to talk about the past or about family connections, or even about what they did at the weekend. Councils that provide seniors in the community with social and support services need to be aware that a number of LGBTI clients may hide or 'closet' their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status, believing they need to do this to be safe. Creating an environment that is inclusive and welcoming of older LGBTI people is therefore important if their needs are to be considered.

Others may be 'out' but have low expectations of accessing positive support through councils, fearing that council workers will not be well-informed or trained to meet their needs. They may be reticent to engage in group programs because of concerns about discrimination from other clients also accessing the service and the ability of staff to manage this.

This is why there are increasing requirements for HACC services to consider people who may be experiencing barriers to accessing services, including older LGBTI people. Councils can play a key role in responding to these needs by making their aged services more accessible and responsive to older LGBTI people living within their municipality.

Ideas and actions

- Determine the needs of older people through extensive consultation
- Audit services to clarify existing practices, identify service gaps and implement modifications
- Develop a Statement of Commitment for Aged Services
- Undertake training to provide staff with knowledge of older LGBTI people and their needs
- Promote aged services to the LGBTI community in LGBTI media and local papers
- Evaluate this work through activities like surveys

Celebrate Ageing is a social enterprise challenging ageism and building respect for older people, with a lot of activities and resources for older LGBTIQ people.

All The Queens Men is an independent arts organisation that conducts celebratory events, such as the Coming Back Out Ball, and semi-regular LGBTI+ Elders Dance Clubs.

CASE STUDY: LGBTI ELDERS' SOCIAL SUPPORT

CITY OF YARRA

Council function: Provider

Engagement level: Empower

Focus activity: Support group / service / program

According to the 2016 Census, Yarra City Council has the highest proportion of LGBTI-identified couples in its municipality (5.26 %) compared to other LGAs, with older couples making up 7% of these. These figures likely underrepresent true numbers since many LGBTI elders live on their own, in shared accommodation, and/or apart from their partners, while others choose not to self-identify in the census at all.

When Council's Willowview Centre and Aged and Disability branch identified few or no LGBTI elders in their services, they started to question how accessible and inclusive their service were. When the opportunity came up to trial a pilot social support group the Willowview Centre took the opportunity to address this apparent gap in service.

Delivered for twelve weeks from May to August 2019 the pilot project targeted LGBTI elders 60+ and their friends and allies living in or connected with the City of Yarra.

Input and advice was sought from key community resources to establish the project, including from [Transgender Victoria](#), [Vals LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care](#), [Switchboard](#), the [St Kilda Legal LGBTI clinic](#) and [HAAG LGBTI elders housing](#).

Pilot participants were also actively involved as equal partners at all stages in the co-design of the program which was underpinned by client-centred, strength-based and asset-based community development principles.

The pilot ensured a safe environment by training a culturally safe workforce, protecting participant privacy and anonymity at all times, and ensuring an inclusive physical environment through the use of LGBTI symbols and gender-neutral bathrooms and signage.

The project model sought to facilitate social connections between participants and with LGBTI support services, social groups and venues, as well as with other mainstream services and social and civic participation opportunities.

On average 10-15 participants attended the Bent Twigs Alliance (BTA) during the pilot phase with members continuing to meet fortnightly since the pilot concluded. The initiative has made a significant and ongoing impact for BTA elders as well as others in the community.

The BTA established a [Facebook page](#) during the pilot phase. Initially intended to share information between members, the page has attracted and connected LGBTI elders interstate and internationally and has become a platform for communications, discussions, and information sharing about fun social activities and LGBTI-related events, as well as advocacy actions and policies.

As the result of the initiative, group members have made significant connections to local LGBTI and Council services. BTA is now connected to a supportive Councillor who can provide pathways and advice to ensure elders have a voice in Council's policy-making and service planning. BTA is linked to Council LGBTI networks and external LGBTI services, and members have recently participated in the national Silver Rainbow Roundtable discussions.

With further support BTA members hope to become incorporated to become eligible for Council grants, and the group has plans to extend their connections to other LGAs to support similar social groups to set up in outer suburbs and regional towns.

Yarra City Council now has a dedicated area of community links and information specifically for LGBTI elders on its website, and actively promotes its Active Ageing Advisory Group to LGBTI elders.

These activities join a range of other LGBTI inclusion strategies across Council.



The Willowview Centre will soon start work with Switchboard to address social group access barriers for higher need elders and Council's Aged and Disability branch will start to develop a new carers support program to increase respite hours to LGBTI carers and/or care recipients living in the City of Yarra.

For more information about these projects and programs, contact the Community Programs Coordinator on 9205 5442 and the Willowview Coordinator on 9205 5276.

CASE STUDY: CARING FOR LGBTQI CARERS

CITY OF MELBOURNE

Council function: Partner

Engagement level: Collaborate

Focus activity: Support group / service / program

In early 2019 [Carers Victoria](#) approached the City of Melbourne with an identified need for a specific support group for LGBTIQ+ identified carers. A partnership soon established between both organisations and [queerspace](#) to co-design and co-deliver a pilot program targeting LGBTIQ+ identified people over the age of 18 in unpaid caring roles.

The purpose of the pilot was to provide information, social connection and referral pathways for LGBTIQ+ carers via six sessions delivered over twelve weeks. After the first six sessions, participants expressed an interest to continue meeting so an extra three sessions were delivered. The project also aimed to collect feedback and other data about the group's needs to develop a proposed LGBTIQ+ carer support model that could be adapted elsewhere in Victoria.

The pilot was designed through an iterative planning process. It was informed by input from participant expressions of interest and consultation with key LGBTIQ+ community sector stakeholders in the planning phase, and participant feedback during the delivery phase.

The program attracted a diverse cohort of carers aged 25 to 66 with diverse caring roles, sexualities and gender identities, widely dispersed across Melbourne. Seventeen people participated in the pilot with a network of thirty carers developed that continues to grow.

Sessions included yoga/meditation, creative art, a Carers Victoria workshop on setting

boundaries, pampering with therapy dogs and massage therapy, and a trip to Collingwood Children's Farm. Participation in some sessions was modest although positive feedback and a reported strong sense of carer community suggest the program's longer-term value.

Project partners' complementary expertise and resources were integral to the pilot's success with each having a role to play. Carers Victoria provided the 'carer lens' offering information, support and referrals relevant to carers. Without this, the program would have become a social support group rather than a carer support group.

As a trusted service provider within the LGBTIQ+ community, queerspace provided cultural safety, project profile and community connection, while the City of Melbourne is a provider of the Victorian Support for Carers Program and could assess carer needs and fund support activities. The absence of any one partner would have prevented the project's success.

The program was evaluated using session feedback forms, a final online program survey and observations from the facilitation team. Feedback indicates the program was well received and that improved social connection, opportunities to relax and unwind, and increased knowledge, understanding and access to information were realised by participants.

Participants identified benefits including practicing self-care, feeling understood, building capacity for healthy communication and boundary-setting, and having a sense of relaxation and happiness. All participants were interested to stay involved.

To access the project evaluation report contact: healthyageing@melbourne.vic.gov.au





RAINBOW FAMILIES

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Families come in all shapes and sizes, including LGBTI-parented families. Children may have two mums or two dads, or more than two parents caring for them. Some sole parents are LGBTI. Some families may include known donors or surrogates, and some may be created through fostering or adoption.

Children with LGBTIQ parents have always existed, but in recent times these 'rainbow families' have increased in number and visibility and their children are now attending early childhood services in greater numbers. LGBTIQ parents or prospective parents tend to self-select or shop around to find service providers with a reputation for supporting their families and understanding their needs.

As providers of services to families and children, councils need to take this diversity into account in order to respond positively to the needs of these families and deliver fully inclusive services. Parents and children should be able to attend services that are welcoming, supportive and informed.

Given the diverse nature of rainbow families, it is generally best to create opportunities for parents and children to describe their family to you. This can be done easily and simply with some door opening questions: 'Can you tell me about your family?' 'Who is involved in the care of your child?' 'What does your child call you and your partner?'

It is not uncommon for other children to ask questions about another child who has two mums or two dads. This can be managed with simple age-appropriate answers and does not need to involve discussions about sexuality: 'All families are different.' 'Families come in all shapes and sizes.' 'Some children have two mums and no dad.'

Most rainbow families do not distinguish between the biological and non-biological parent, so service providers should not either. When in doubt about what to call a parent or guardian, just ask.

It is important to remember that some rainbow families may not be out or open with everyone about their family structure. It is best to clarify this with each family.

Diverse families can access information and support from [Rainbow Families Victoria](#). Other organisations that provide support and information to LGBTIQ families include: [Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays \(PFLAG\)](#), [Intersex Human Rights Australia \(IHRA\)](#), [Intersex Peer Support Australia \(IPSA\)](#), [Transcend](#), and [Parents of Gender Diverse Children](#).

Ideas and actions

There are many simple, effective ways to make council childcare services welcoming to rainbow families.

1. At the first appointment, at enrolment, or when putting their child's name on the waiting list, ask the parents or guardians questions like:
 - “Who are the members of your family?”
 - “Whom should we mention when talking to your child about their family?”
 - “What names or terms does your child use in talking about their family?”
2. Ensure childcare centre enrolment forms, permission slips, medical forms and so on use inclusive language such as “parent(s) or guardian(s)” instead of “mother” and “father” and options for “other” where gender is asked. Refer to guidance provided on page 17.
3. Put up the [“Who is in your family?” posters](#) in the entrance hall, children's rooms, consulting rooms and office spaces.
4. Include [books that reflect family diversity](#) in the library, and encourage children and their families to bring in books they read at home. Include inclusive songs and games in play sessions.
5. When parents or guardians drop off or pick up their children, refer to them the same way the child does. In particular, service providers need to be mindful of correct pronoun use when working with transgender parents (refer to page 13).
6. Ask the parents or guardians how they would like to handle questions from other children about their family, e.g. why their child has two mothers or two fathers or one parent.
7. Respond to stereotypes or attitudes that are heterosexist or homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or intersexphobic in the same way you would respond to racism, sexism or discrimination against people with disabilities. Heterosexism is the assumption that only heterosexuality is “normal” and right. Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and intersexphobia are fear or hostility to people who identify, or are perceived, as gay or lesbian, bisexual, trans or intersex.
8. Include images and stories of rainbow families when producing newsletters and other resources.
9. Promote the organisation and/or service in the LGBTIQ community.
10. Allow time for self-reflection in a supportive team setting for staff working with rainbow families.

CASE STUDY: SUPPORTING A RAINBOW FAMILIES PLAYGROUP

FRANKSTON CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Facilitator

Engagement level: Empower

Focus activity: Support group / service / program

In 2018 a Frankston Council staff member attended the Playgroup Victoria conference where she heard Felicity Marlowe from [Rainbow Families Victoria](#) (RFV) deliver an inspiring presentation about the needs and experiences of rainbow families.

Having delivered parenting sessions in the local area, the staff member was aware there were a number of lesbian families living locally. She assumed that because LGBTIQ culture and communities were generally invisible in and around Frankston, that many of these families could be quite isolated.

Inspired to set up a rainbow families playgroup, Council had to find the local families! RFV offered to help and sent a survey to their members to determine if there was interest in the Frankston area.

Interested parents were invited to an informal discussion with Council's Playgroup Development Officer at the proposed venue. None of the parents who attended were already part of a playgroup and were keen to learn more about playgroups and share their expectations.

Part of the discussion was explaining the support that Council could offer the group - initially for around 6 weeks with the aim of the group functioning independently. Council was able to offer training, free venue hire, help with advertising, and links with playgroup networks.

In the set-up phase, the playgroup was promoted through social media channels. Although there were generally positive responses, a troll also responded with a nasty comment. The organisers were worried by this, but Council's communications team advised to sit and wait. The broader community came back in style, challenging the troll and indicating their backing for the initiative. The community understood the importance of the project and the need for playgroups for all families in the community.

The playgroup was supported to come up with its own 'flavour' and not feel they had to be a replica of inner-city LGBTIQ culture. They were able to develop a safe and welcoming group that drew on the local lifestyle features and open spaces they value as rainbow families with children.

Since establishing, the Rainbow Families playgroup has progressed to be an independently running playgroup providing connections to LGBTIQ-parented families in the local area. This support has now also extended to families coming from other municipalities who are looking for connection to peers.

Other community elements have also evolved. The group meets beyond the usual venue in the park for family picnics and play time and the group has established a social media group to communicate and connect between their in-person gatherings. The approach and model have been adopted by RFV to support other councils.

MULTICULTURAL AND MULTI-FAITH LGBTIQ PEOPLE

All people are multi-dimensional and multi-faceted. The nexus of cultural and faith identity and sexual orientation, and gender identity often goes unexplored.

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Many cultural and faith-based communities, especially their elders, find conversations about LGBTIQ issues challenging and even taboo. People who identify as both LGBTIQ and culturally diverse may face additional challenges in coming out to their communities due to a lack of awareness, language and understanding. The animation [In My Shoes](#) from the Centre for Multicultural Youth offers a good insight into the issues that arise when sexuality, culture and generations collide. The [Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council](#) (AGMC) is a national body that advocates for the rights of multicultural and multi-faith LGBTIQ individuals and communities, and is an important source of resource and social support contact information

Aboriginal people who are LGBTIQ face additional hurdles as their multi-faceted identity is rarely acknowledged or considered by mainstream services and organisations such as councils. More information on how local government can engage with Aboriginal communities is available on the [Maggolee](#) website while [Outblack](#) is an important connection point for Victoria's Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ, Sistergirl & Brotherboy communities. There is also a newly forming Koori Pride Network, based out of VACCHO.

If they are to serve their community in its full diversity, councils need to be aware of these connections between sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status and faith and culture. However, there are challenges about where to start and how to introduce LGBTIQ inclusiveness when there are cultural barriers.

Ideas and actions

- Do not wait for multicultural communities to come to the council on LGBTIQ inclusiveness; take a proactive approach and make contact with culturally-sensitive advocacy and support groups in the [Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council Directory](#)
- Include translations on information that is targeted to LGBTIQ people or their families, such as posters or guides, recognising that for some of these people English is not their first language
- Develop a range of culturally appropriate LGBTIQ inclusivity messages

CASE STUDY: YOU GOTTA HAVE FAITH

DAREBIN CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Partner

Engagement level: Collaborate

Focus activity: Event

In late 2015, Darebin City Council offered to host the 2016 Victorian Interfaith Network Conference (VINC). The event is the main multi-faith conference in Victoria and attracts hundreds of participants.

As host and partner, Council had the opportunity to not just support the logistics of the event but also to shape and influence its themes. One area of interest for Council was to explore the intersections between faith, culture, sexuality and gender identity.

In recent years Council's community Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diversity Advisory Committee (SSGDAC) had brought these intersections to Council's attention but observed that their implications for LGBTIQ people of faith tended to be unnoticed or dismissed. In response, community conversations had been held locally for IDAHOBIT in 2014 and 2015.

Building on these conversations and the community links they developed, in 2016 Council sought to convince the Faith Communities Council of Victoria (FCCV) – the main organiser of VINC – to include a workshop specifically dedicated to faith, sexuality and gender identity. FCCV were initially cautious but receptive, and ultimately supportive.

A panel discussion was included in the VINC 2016 program. Centred on both personal experiences of the intersections of faith and sexuality / gender diversity, and community responses and journeys, the panel included community members with lived experience as well as representatives from the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, the Victorian Council of Churches and the Islamic Council of Victoria.

As local LGBTIQ communities had reminded us through SSGDAC, the experiences of LGBTIQ people of faith and the multiple layers of discrimination they encounter often go unrecognised.

As a credible and trusted organising partner for VINC, Council was able to amplify LGBTIQ voices and bring forward a topic not previously considered by many in the multi-faith audience.

Highlighting both individual experiences and the collective responses and journeys from different faiths in regard to LGBTIQ issues, the workshop provided a fantastic opportunity to raise the bar and contribute to building bridges and understanding around this topic. Merely having the panel discussion on what was (is) still a challenging or controversial topic for some of the audience was in itself an indication of success.

Collaboration was key in securing FCCV support, and the idea for the panel evolved from collaborative work previously undertaken with LGBTIQ communities. The panel itself was planned with LGBTQ people of faith. Nothing could have happened without their openness and willingness to share their experiences.

More information about Darebin's Sexuality, Sex and Gender Diversity Advisory Committee is available by calling Darebin City Council on 8470 8888.



SPORT AND RECREATION

As is described elsewhere throughout this resource, many LGBTIQ people face a range of poorer health and wellbeing outcomes arising from experiences of discrimination and harassment and poorer access to mainstream settings.

These poorer health and wellbeing outcomes are further exacerbated by the range of barriers to participation often experienced by LGBTIQ people in relation to sport and recreation.

Research has shown that many LGBTIQ people report feeling unsafe or vulnerable in sporting environments as a result of their gender identification or sexuality, and many hide their identities in order to participate.⁵¹

At a local level, councils play an important role in enabling and supporting LGBTIQ inclusion in healthy and active lifestyles given they also frequently own leisure infrastructure and deliver or contract a range of health, fitness, sport and leisure activities.

You may also find the Victorian Human Rights Commission [resources and guidelines](#) on trans and gender diverse inclusion in sport (which include a template for a policy for sporting clubs) useful.

⁵¹ See for example research by Professor Murray Drummond, Flinders University, cited in 'LGBT discrimination in sport highlighted after a week in the headlines', ABC News (5 May 2019); Caroline Symons (et al), 'Come out to play: The Sports experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Victoria', Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living (ISEAL) and the School of Sport and Exercise at Victoria University (May 2010)

CASE STUDY: LET'S GET PHYSICAL

MORELAND CITY COUNCIL

Council function: Contractor

Engagement level: Involve

Focus activity: Support group / service / program

In July 2017 Moreland City Council allocated \$30,000 to support the development of safe and welcoming cultures and services for LGBTIQ community by council, sporting and community organisations. This was the catalyst for a new LGBTIQ+ inclusive gym and swim program at Brunswick Baths.

Brunswick Baths is a year-round facility with indoor and outdoor heated swimming pools, children's pools and gym, cardio, personal training and group fitness spaces. It is owned and funded by Council but operated by YMCA Victoria as one of several sites under the Active Moreland brand.

Facility staff recognised a programming gap and need to improve access and inclusion for LGBTIQ+-identified people. A significant proportion of Moreland resident who identify as LGBTIQ+ live within Brunswick. As a group they experience higher rates of mental health issues, but also report feeling unsafe accessing the leisure facilities that can contribute to their improved physical, mental and social health.

With inspiration from a trans swim event at Reservoir Leisure Centre, an LGBTIQ+ inclusive program and communications plan was developed for Active Moreland. Council engaged [Proud2Play](#) to undertake community consultation and [Transgender Victoria](#) to train staff.

Three inclusive gym and swim events have been held at the Brunswick Baths in September 2018, March 2019 and most recently in December 2019.

Delivered outside of usual operating hours, more than 1000 patrons accessed these events at low or no cost. The most recent event in December

2019 was held during the day to enable families to attend.

As well as the swim and gym events, Brunswick Baths piloted a 6-week strength training program - Q-Fit (Queer friendly, inclusive training) - with a queer friendly trainer. Two more Q-Fit programs followed, and due to the overwhelmingly positive response the program became a regular weekly class in September 2019.

These events were the first of their kind for leisure centres and the YMCA in Victoria. They generated significant print, radio and social media interest. Since running the first event, several other recreation centres are now delivering inclusive events including at Carlton Baths, Yarra Leisure, Maribyrnong and Monash Sport.

The events have fostered a safe and supportive space for LGBTIQ+ communities to participate in physical activity they might otherwise have felt excluded from. They have also played an important role in educating staff and other patrons.

"I exercise for a living, I'm constantly in non-judgmental environments, but still I haven't felt so comfortable in my body in... years. So. Many. Years."

"Just that it was really great for me and got me back into exercise after about 10 years!"

"So many happy people feeling comfortable and safe. I really enjoyed the opportunity to socialize and exercise in such a wonderful, inclusive environment"

More information about the Brunswick Baths inclusive gym and swim event is on the [Active Moreland website](#). Brunswick Baths runs Q-Fit [Queer-friendly, inclusive strength training](#) drop in class on Tuesday evenings 7 – 8 pm.

Council will continue to advocate for and support the delivery of LGBTIQ+ inclusive leisure and recreation programs across the municipality.





CASE STUDY: PRIDE CUP

YARRA RANGES COUNCIL

Council function: Partner

Engagement level: Collaborate

Focus activity: Support group / service / program

Pride Cup was initiated by the Yarra Glen Football Netball Club (YGFNC) in 2015 in response to player, Jason Ball, feeling he had to hide his sexuality to be able to continue to play.

Recognising that Pride Cup presented a unique opportunity for Council to advance the social justice movement for LGBTIQ people in football and netball in the Yarra Ranges, Council worked closely with Jason Ball to initiate and lead the development of a working group tasked with strategically engaging local and state partners.

Partners were selected for their ability to shape, influence and advocate for Pride Cup. They included the [Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission](#), mental health services, community organisations, and sports clubs, leagues and governing bodies.

Further to the core working group the project engaged staff from across Council including Built and Active Spaces, Economic Youth and Community Development, Arts Culture and Heritage, Parks and Bushlands and Infrastructure Services.

More recently, a separate working group was established to focus exclusively on education. Pride Cup education is designed to meet the

needs of the LGBTIQ players and club members by supporting cultural changes in clubs. The educational components include education for players, a luncheon with keynote speakers, and a forum to educate broader club members.

Pride Cup is a unique event. Very few sports locally, nationally and internationally have tackled homophobia in sport, yet a little country football netball club in Yarra Glen took on the challenge with gusto.

Now in its fifth year, Pride Cup is an annual event that includes a football and netball game alongside the educational events outlined above. Its vision is to make all sport more inclusive and welcoming to the LGBTIQ community.

Pride Cup is inspiring a cultural transformation across sport and recreation by making sport more welcoming and inclusive. While the project's aim was to develop welcoming and inclusive clubs in the region, it simultaneously advocated to community and national sport the importance of developing inclusive sport environments.

In 2016 the inaugural AFL Pride Match was held between St Kilda and the Sydney Swans. Now an annual game on the AFL fixture, Pride Cup was credited by the St Kilda Football Club CEO, as inspiration for the AFL Pride Game.

Pride Cup's successful campaign has been acknowledged with the VicHealth *Building Health through Sport Award*, the Parks and Leisure Australia (Vic- Tas) *Inclusive and Connected Communities Award* and GLOBE *Health Community Award*.

YGFNC has actively sought to extend the reach of the Pride initiative into other sports and in 2019 was successful in gaining a grant from Yarra Ranges Council to do so. Meanwhile, Pride Cup has been established as a national not-for-profit organisation that supports all sporting codes and clubs to run their own education sessions and Pride Cup matches/rounds.



APPENDIX A: ANNUAL DATES OF SIGNIFICANCE

Midsumma Festival – January/February

Midsumma, Melbourne's annual queer celebration, is a federation of arts and cultural events spread over 85 different venues throughout Melbourne and regional Victoria. The festival is presented over three weeks from mid-January to February and is a significant attraction on the Melbourne festival calendar. Midsumma's largest iconic events are Carnival and Pride March. Carnival is supported by the City of Melbourne, annually draws approximately 100,000 people and has become the traditional opening day event. Pride March is supported by the City of Port Phillip and annually brings throngs of people onto the streets of St Kilda.

midsumma.org.au

ChillOut Festival - March

ChillOut is the biggest and longest-running country queer pride event in regional Australia and the largest festival in Hepburn Shire. The festival showcases gay and lesbian arts and culture and other events in a relaxed, country setting. ChillOut's annual Street Parade is a brash and colourful celebration of queer country pride along the main street of Daylesford.

chilloutfestival.com.au

Transgender Day of Visibility - 31 March

Transgender Day of Visibility is dedicated to celebrating the accomplishments and victories of transgender and gender non-conforming people while raising awareness of the work that is still needed to save trans lives.

tdov.org

Melbourne Queer Film Festival – March/April

Australia's largest and longest running queer film festival, MQFF presents more than 100 films from across the world, showcasing the best in LGBTIQ features, shows and documentaries over twelve days each March. There are a number of regional Queer Film Festivals being held across Victoria - follow MQFF to find out more about these events.

mqff.com.au

International Family Equality Day – 7 May

International Family Equality Day (IFED) is a worldwide celebration of LGBTIQ-parented families, acknowledging that rainbow families are a global phenomenon. Organisations can organise activities to celebrate rainbow families under the IFED banner.

internationalfamilyequalityday.org

IDAHOBIT – 17 May

International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) was created to draw attention to the violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTQ people internationally and is the single most important date for LGBTQ communities to mobilise on a worldwide scale. The date was specifically chosen to commemorate the World Health Organisation's decision in 1990 to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder.

dayagainsthomophobia.org

Wear It Purple Day – 26 August

Wear it Purple Day seeks to raise awareness about the issues faced by LGBTQ young people and the need to eradicate bullying based on sexuality and gender diversity by encouraging people to wear purple to work.

wearitpurple.org

Celebrate Bisexuality Day – 23 September

Celebrate Bisexuality Day is an international awareness day that is also referred to as Bi Visibility Day or Bisexual Pride Day. Celebrate Bisexuality Day is marked with events around the world celebrating bisexual culture, community and history.

bivisibilityday.com

International Lesbian Day – 8 October

International Lesbian Day is a day for lesbians the world over to celebrate lesbian culture. The date is believed to have been set to commemorate the anniversary of lesbian feminist Anna Rüling's address at an International Scientific and Humanitarian Committee in 1904, when she criticised the women's movement for not taking an active role in ending the oppression of lesbians.

qahc.org.au/ild

Intersex Awareness Day – 26 October

Intersex Awareness Day is an internationally observed awareness day that highlights human rights issues faced by intersex people. The date marks the first public demonstration by intersex people in North America outside a conference of the American Academy of Pediatrics in 1996.

intersexday.org

Out in the Open Festival – November

Out in the Open is Shepparton's newest festival celebrating community diversity, and was developed to address some of the inequalities faced by the local GLBTIQ and allied communities and to build a more inclusive community in Shepparton. Out in the Open is led by Goulburn Valley Pride and is proudly supported by many other organisations and community groups. The festival consists of a Carnival Day and other events across the City of Greater Shepparton.

outintheopen.org.au

Intersex Day of Solidarity – 8 November

Intersex Day of Solidarity is an internationally observed civil awareness day designed to highlight issues faced by intersex people. It marks the birthday of Herculine Barbin, a famous French intersex person.

intersexday.org

Transgender Day of Remembrance – 20 November

Transgender Day of Remembrance was set aside to memorialise those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. Transgender Day of Remembrance raises public awareness of hate crimes against transgender people, publicly mourns and honours the lives of transgender people deceased, and expresses love and respect for transgender people living.

tdor.info

World AIDS Day – 1 December

World AIDS Day raises awareness across the world and in the community about the issues surrounding HIV and AIDS. It is a day for people to show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died.

worldaidsday.org.au

APPENDIX B: FURTHER INFORMATION & CONTACTS

All The Queens Men: <https://allthequeensmen.net/projects/lgbti-elders-dance-club/>
Australian Human Rights Commission: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/>
Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS): <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/arcshs>
Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council: <https://www.agmc.org.au/>
Bi Alliance Victoria: <http://www.bi-alliance.org/>
Carers Victoria: <https://www.carersvictoria.org.au/>
Celebrate Ageing: <https://www.celebrateageing.com/>
Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health (CERSH): <https://www.cersh.com.au/>
Diversity Council Australia: <https://www.dca.org.au/>
Drummond Street Services: <https://ds.org.au/>
Equality Australia: <https://equalityaustralia.org.au/>
HAAG LGBTI Elders Housing: <https://www.older tenants.org.au/lgbti-elder-housing>
Intersex Human Rights Australia: <https://ihra.org.au/>
Intersex Peer Support Australia: <https://isupport.org.au/>
LGBTIQ Equality: <https://www.vic.gov.au/lgbtiq-equality>
Melbourne Bisexual Network: <https://www.melbournebisexualnetwork.com>
Midsumma Festival: <https://www.midsumma.org.au/>
Minus18: <https://www.minus18.org.au/>
National LGBTI Health Alliance: <https://lgbtihealth.org.au/>
Outblack: <https://www.facebook.com/OutBlackVictoria/>
Parents of Gender Diverse Children: <https://www.pgdc.org.au/about>
Proud2Play: <https://www.proud2play.org.au/>
Pride in Diversity: <https://www.prideinclusionprograms.com.au/>
Queerspace: <https://www.queerspace.org.au/>
Rainbow Families Victoria: <https://www.facebook.com/RainbowFamiliesVictoria/>
Rainbow Health Victoria: <http://www.rainbowhealthvic.org.au/>
St Kilda Legal LGBTI Clinic: <https://www.skls.org.au/legal-help/lgbtiq-outreach-service/>
Switchboard Victoria: <http://www.switchboard.org.au/>
Thorne Harbour Health: <https://thorneharbour.org/>
Transcend: <https://transcendsupport.com.au/>
Transgender Victoria: <https://transgendervictoria.com/>
Vals LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care: <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/arcshs/health-and-wellbeing/lgbti-ageing-and-aged-care>
Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission: <https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/>
Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby: <http://vgllr.org.au/>
Victorian Pride Centre: <https://pridecentre.org.au/>
YGender: <https://www.ygender.org.au/>
Zoe Belle Gender Collective: <http://zbgc.org.au/>

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- Rainbow Working Group members (June 2015 to December 2016)
- Contributing agencies:
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 - Intersex Human Rights Australia
 - Rainbow Families Victoria
 - Transgender Victoria
 - Val's LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care
- Local Government Victoria
- Department of Premier and Cabinet – Gender Equity Branch
- Contributing councils:



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