Pride in our future: Victoria’s LGBTIQA+ strategy 2022–32 – accessible

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# Acknowledgement

The Victorian Government acknowledges Victorian Traditional Owners of Country and pays respect to their cultures and Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise that LGBTIQA+ people are living on lands that LGBTIQA+ Aboriginal people have lived on for millennia. Aboriginal knowledge has the potential to enrich efforts towards LGBTIQA+ equality.

We acknowledge that the impact of colonisation still exists today, and we are seeking ways to correct past wrongs, including through Treaty. We are working together to create a better future for all Victorians to enable true self-determination for Aboriginal people.

Through Treaty, the Victorian Government will continue to build understanding and respect of the intersection between Aboriginal and queer cultures to benefit all Victorians.

We acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal Victorians, their communities and cultures, and the intrinsic connection of Traditional Owners to Country.

## Language statement

We recognise the diversity of Aboriginal people living throughout Victoria. While the terms ‘Koorie’ or ‘Koori’ are used to describe Aboriginal people of southeast Australia, we have used the term ‘Aboriginal’ to include all people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who are living in Victoria.

The term ‘LGBTIQA+’ refers to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer or asexual. We use variations of the term throughout this strategy depending on the language originally used. We use other terms like ‘TGD’ (trans and gender diverse) or ‘LGBT’ depending on specific communities referenced. We also note that some Aboriginal communities use the terms ‘sistergirls’ and ‘brotherboys’.

Some data and research mentioned in this document is limited because it does not always account for the experiences of people with an intersex variation. For this reason, we sometimes use the term ‘LGBTQ+’ to reflect the research’s limitations.

The words ‘our’ and ‘we’ in this document refer to the Victorian Government.

# Foreword

## Premier

We’re proud to be a state that celebrates and embraces diversity, and where human rights are always defended and protected. Victoria has a long history of progress and improvement – and we’re a state that embraces the differences that help to make us stronger. But despite how far history has come, and the many wins LGBTIQA+ Victorians have achieved – it’s clear that not everyone feels completely safe, supported and equal in this state.

LGBTIQA+ Victorians continue to face disproportionately higher levels of poor mental health, suicidal thoughts and attempts, homelessness, harassment and abuse, and an increased risk of drug and alcohol abuse.

Our government has worked tirelessly to remove discrimination from our laws and strengthen the rights of individuals at work and in the community. And we will always support and promote LGBTIQA+ organisations, leaders and events.

But we know that this work is far from over, and so much more still needs to be done.

**Pride in our future: Victoria’s LGBTIQA+ strategy 2022–32** strives to create a more inclusive and cohesive state, where LGBTIQA+ Victorians can enjoy the same opportunities as any other Victorian.

It places human rights at its core – and over the next 10 years, it will help to drive change across every arm of the Victorian Government.

LGBTIQA+ Victorians will be supported to lead, build and create the strategy that supports them best.

This strategy will help make our state a safer, more equal, and more welcoming place for everyone.

Because in Victoria, equality is not negotiable.

And it never will be.

**The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP**Premier of Victoria

## Minister for Equality

As Victoria’s first Minister for Equality, I have had the privilege of meeting many of the proud and diverse people who make up Victoria’s LGBTIQA+ communities.

LGBTIQA+ Victorians have shared with me their lives, vibrant cultures, passion for community and love for their friends and families. Many have also shared with me the challenges they have faced and continue to face, simply by being who they are. They speak of the sting of rejection or hurt from loved ones who should support them. They talk about the difficulty of accessing services or living under laws that don’t include them.

Being LGBTIQA+ is just one part of who people are. These challenges can be even more difficult when people are also dealing with stigma or discrimination for other parts of who they are. This includes their cultural identity, disability or where they live.

Amid these challenges, LGBTIQA+ advocates have shown remarkable strength by driving change to improve the lives of all LGBTIQA+ Victorians.

Our government has been so proud to build on the legacy of LGBTIQA+ advocates by working with LGBTIQA+ communities to make our state more inclusive.

Establishing the Equality portfolio has helped spearhead important reforms. We have banned harmful conversion practices, opened Australia’s first purpose-built pride centre and worked with regional communities to build inclusion.

While we have made great progress over the past six years, there is still a lot to do.

**Pride in our future: Victoria’s LGBTIQA+ strategy 2022–32** is the direct result of LGBTIQA+ Victorians telling us what that work should look like over the next 10 years. You told us, and we listened.

Over the next decade, the LGBTIQA+ strategy will rally every part of the Victorian Government to do its bit in achieving LGBTIQA+ human rights. It recognises that we can only achieve equality by affirming all the parts that make up who people are.

I am so grateful to the many Victorians, from all backgrounds, who helped shape this strategy into a powerful roadmap.

We won’t stop until equality is achieved.

**Martin Foley MP**Minister for Equality

## Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities

Victoria is leading the way in advancing the rights of LGBTIQA+ people, and as the Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities, I am proud to ensure community voices are at the heart of our work.

Since the office was established in 2015, the Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities has been an accepted and trusted voice for LGBTIQA+ Victorians, advocating to strengthen pride and equality for our communities. During this time, a significant amount of work has been done in transforming the LGBTIQA+ landscape, for Victoria to truly become the Equality State.

But there is still more to do.

In partnership with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing’s Equality portfolio, the Office of the Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities will continue to play a key role, providing advice to government on the needs and priorities of LGBTIQA+ people and the organisations that serve our communities.

As the Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities, I see organisations and their champions meeting our people where they are. Organisations are setting the benchmark for the rest of Australia and the world, through listening to community needs and challenges and working alongside them to co-design responses.

**Pride in our future: Victoria’s LGBTIQA+ strategy 2022–32** strengthens our commitment to achieve the most significant growth for LGBTIQA+ people in Victorian history.

When we talk about LGBTIQA+ people, it’s much more than a group of letters.

Each person reflected in those letters has a different experience. And each can also be Aboriginal, or a person of colour, or disabled, or have faith, or have faced other experiences that form part of their identity. Intersectionality doesn’t fit neatly into a box. For many of us, our intersectional identities add up to who we are. Intersectionality is how we live our lives.

This strategy also provides a significant opportunity for mainstream organisations and government departments and agencies to play their part, enabling LGBTIQA+ people to flourish without barriers.

I look forward to working with areas across Victoria to implement this strategy, in a way that meaningfully meets the needs of LGBTIQA+ people and their diverse communities.

I am proud to work and partner with the Victorian Government to work towards our goal of our LGBTIQA+ communities flourishing openly and safely.

Together we must act to advance the pride in our future.

**Todd Fernando**Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities

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# Introduction

Victoria’s first whole-of-government LGBTIQA+ strategy, **Pride in our future: Victoria’s LGBTIQA+ strategy 2022–32**, provides the vision and plan to drive equality and inclusion for Victoria’s diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQA+) communities within all aspects of government work over the next decade.

LGBTIQA+ people and their allies have long fought for legal changes through grassroots campaigns to promote acceptance and understanding. Their tireless work – and recent progress – means Victorian LGBTIQA+ people, communities and organisations enjoy more freedoms and acceptance than as little as five years ago.

Over the past decade our understanding of LGBTIQA+ communities and diversity has grown. People who were on the margins of rainbow communities are now enjoying more inclusion. Like all Victorians, LGBTIQA+ people are diverse in multiple ways. This includes their culture, education, ability, where they live, ethnicity and faith. The understanding of LGBTIQA+ communities and diversity will continue to evolve and be enriched in the years to come.

We have made great progress towards creating a fairer Victoria for LGBTIQA+ communities and understanding LGBTIQA+ diversity. But LGBTIQA+ people continue to face unacceptable levels of discrimination and inequality in their everyday lives.

Discrimination and inequality have real effects for the one in 20 Victorians who openly identify as LGBTIQA+ (Victorian Agency for Health Information [VAHI] 2020). For example, they face greater social, health, wellbeing and economic challenges than the general population.

At the extreme, 73.2 per cent of LGBTQ+ Victorians have thought about taking their own life and 28.1 per cent have attempted suicide (Hill et al. 2021b). This experience is even more common among those who have been harassed or abused. This cannot go unaddressed.

Victoria’s LGBTIQA+ communities – in all their diversity – show strength and resilience even while facing systemic, widespread and ongoing prejudice. These communities overlap with each other and across many aspects of people’s lived experience.

We spoke with and listened to LGBTIQA+ leaders, organisational representatives, advocates and individuals. Their experiences and voices lay at the heart of the LGBTIQA+ strategy. Within government, we have a duty to lead in making the laws, policies and services of our state safe. These must be inclusive and equal for everyone, including LGBTIQA+ Victorians.

This strategy aims to prevent the varied forms of discrimination and inequality LGBTIQA+ people experience, and move Victoria towards celebration of our vibrant LGBTIQA+ communities. It sets a pathway for how we will work in partnership with all communities to improve the lives of LGBTIQA+ Victorians. This includes recognising all their overlapping identities and experiences.

Realising the 10-year vision of the LGBTIQA+ strategy will take leadership, commitment and perseverance. The Victorian Government will drive the LGBTIQA+ strategy. But every Victorian has a role to play in achieving the Equality State by making Victoria a safe and welcoming place for all LGBTIQA+ people.

## Vision statement

All Victorians feel safe, are healthy, have equal human rights and can live wholly and freely.

LGBTIQA+ Victorians experience the benefits of full participation in economic, educational, political, community and social areas at all stages of life.

Victoria leads the way in LGBTIQA+ equality, celebrating culture, community and taking sustained, enduring and measurable action.

We developed the LGBTIQA+ strategy vision with LGBTIQA+ communities. It will guide the reforms, actions and roll out of the strategy over its 10-year timeframe.

### Definition: equality

This principle is about ensuring every LGBTIQA+ person has an equal chance to make the most of their lives and talents. It means that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or how they identify.

# LGBTIQA+ communities

LGBTIQA+ Victorians are valued members of our community who add to our diversity and make Victoria a better place to live. While LGBTIQA+ communities take strength in shared pride, LGBTIQA+ people have their own unique experiences, practices and culture.

Our understanding of LGBTIQA+ communities has changed and will continue to evolve. In the past 10 years, involvement from the margins of rainbow communities has increased. The visibility, presence and voices of communities like LGBTIQA+ people of colour, LGBTIQA+ people of faith and trans and gender diverse (TGD) people has increased. But, in many instances, increased visibility has increased experiences of discrimination. Over the next 10 years we will see an even greater community understanding of LGBTIQA+ communities and their diversity.

Just over one in 20 adult Victorians (5.7 per cent) openly identify as being LGBTIQA+ (VAHI 2020). It is difficult to know the exact number because of the different ways people feel attraction, how they behave and how they self-identify (Carman et al. 2020). This can change over time and by age. The statistics in this strategy only tell part of the story and are a snapshot from a point in time.

It is important to recognise the diversity of LGBTIQA+ experiences. Being LGBTIQA+ is only one part of any person’s identity. As well as being diverse in their sexuality, gender identity or sex characteristics, LGBTIQA+ people are diverse in other ways. This might include their Aboriginality, ethnicity, colour, nationality, refugee or asylum seeker background, migration or visa status, language, faith, ability, age, mental health, socioeconomic status, housing status or geographic location. For example, LGBTIQA+ Victorians from ethnic faith communities experience life as LGBTIQA+, as well as being a person of colour and a person of faith. This is especially true for first-generation Australians who have unique journeys to identify with all aspects of themselves.

Many people within LGBTIQA+ communities who live with other forms of discrimination and inequality are less visible. For example, LGBTIQA+ people who are people of colour, asylum seekers, refugees, people of faith or sex workers and their respective experiences are less visible. They can also face discrimination from within LGBTIQA+ communities, as well as broader community stigma.

In delivering the LGBTIQA+ strategy, it is important that our actions recognise the different experiences within LGBTIQA+ communities. They must contribute to building a better picture of LGBTIQA+ life and needs.

‘When I came out in the 1990s, I came out as a lesbian because it was too hard to be bi… If I appear as bi+ then people start to question my relationship.’

* Workshop participant, bi+ consultation

### Definition: intersectionality

This is an approach to understanding how social meanings related to the way we categorise and identify can overlap and interconnect. This creates different layers and types of discrimination or disadvantage for either an individual or group. Categories include gender, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, ethnicity, language, faith, class, socioeconomic status, ability and age.

Of Victorians:

* 1.8 per cent identify as being lesbian or gay
* 2.8 per cent identify as bisexual
* 1.1 per cent identify as transgender, gender diverse, queer, pansexual, asexual or having an intersex variation

Source: VAHI 2020

Although the data and research on LGBTIQA+ Victorians is limited, there is an emerging evidence base offering insight into LGBTIQA+ lives and community experience

* More Victorian adults aged 18 to 34 identify as LGBTIQA+ than other age groups
* LGBTIQA+ people are more likely to call metropolitan Melbourne home than rural and regional areas
* LGBTIQA+ people are just as likely to speak a language other than English at home
* LGBTIQA+ people are more likely to volunteer
* One-fifth of young LGBTQ+ people take part in an LGBTIQA+ group at school or university
* LGBTIQA+ people are more likely to use a mainstream health service that is LGBTIQA+ inclusive
* Most LGBTIQA+ people feel that taking part in LGBTIQA+ communities is a positive thing
* LGBTIQA+ people are more likely to have a bachelor’s degree or higher than the general population

Sources: VAHI 2020, Hill et al. 2021c

Compared with the general population, significantly more LGBTIQA+ adult Victorians:

* were born in Australia
* are members of community groups
* are Aboriginal
* have a total household income of less than $40,000

Source: VAHI 2020

Compared with the general population, significantly fewer LGBTIQA+ adult Victorians:

* are married or live with a partner
* are covered by private health insurance
* are members of a sports team

Source: VAHI 2020

### Definitions

We define several terms below, acknowledging that people have different definitions. Language continues to evolve.

**Gender:** Part of how you understand who you are and how you interact with other people. Many people understand their gender as being a man or woman. Some people understand their gender as a mix of these or neither. A person’s gender and their expression of their gender can be shown in different ways, such as through behaviour or physical appearance.

**Sex:** A person’s biological sex characteristics. We have previously understood the term ‘sex’ as either female or male.

**Sex characteristics:** A person’s physical features relating to sex. This includes genitalia and other sexual and reproductive parts of the person’s anatomy. It also includes the person’s chromosomes, hormones and secondary physical features emerging as a result of puberty.

**Sexuality or sexual orientation:** A person’s romantic or sexual attraction to others. A person’s gender does not mean they have certain sex characteristics or a particular sexuality, or vice versa.

**Trans (short for transgender) person:** Someone whose gender does not only align with the one assigned at birth. Not all trans people will use this term to describe themselves.

**Gender diverse:** An umbrella term for a range of genders expressed in different ways. Gender diverse people use many terms to describe themselves. Language in this area is dynamic, particularly among young people, who are more likely to describe themselves as non-binary.

**People with intersex variations:** An umbrella term for people born with natural variations to sex characteristics. This includes physical features relating to sex including genitalia and other sexual and reproductive parts of the person’s anatomy. It might also refer to the person’s chromosomes, hormones and secondary physical features emerging as a result of puberty. Some people with intersex variations describe themselves according to their specific intersex variation or use other context-dependent language. For example, someone may say they have Klinefelter (a common variation). Most people with intersex variations are cisgender and identify as male or female.

**Cisgender:** Refers to a person whose gender corresponds with their biological sex.

## LGBTIQA+ Aboriginal experiences in LGBTIQA+ communities

Alli Toby (she/her) manages Koorie Pride Victoria, established with Victorian Government funding. Koorie Pride Victoria is building the visibility, strength and connection for ‘Rainbow Mob’ – the Aboriginal LGBTIQA+ people, sistergirls and brotherboys across all of Victoria.

LGBTIQA+ Aboriginal Victorians have seen a lack of diversity in LGBTIQA+ leadership for decades. They describe the disruption of Aboriginal knowledge of sexuality and gender as a result of colonisation. This disruption has – at times – perpetuated the violence, racism, classism and discrimination against LGBTIQA+ Aboriginal people in social settings and places. This means the full cultural spectrum of their identities is excluded.

‘We are rarely included in the planning of queer events. And when we are included, we are relegated to perform the acknowledgement of country, but nothing else.’

– Alli Toby

As Alli explains, LGBTIQA+ Aboriginal Victorians feel excluded from decision-making processes in the design of LGBTIQA+ events and spaces. Being viewed as a ‘token’ and undesirable for leadership limits opportunities to be seen as legitimate curators and contributors to LGBTIQA+ life. It also means that LGBTIQA+ Aboriginal Victorians often feel these spaces are designed based on race and culture and not a shared queerness.

‘Sometimes being an Aboriginal queer lesbian in queer leadership is tough. It’s a constant battle between discrimination based on my Aboriginality and misogyny because I am a strong woman.’

– Alli Toby

Central to Alli’s idea of a ‘safe space’ is the ability to socialise in settings with non-Aboriginal LGBTIQA+ people and express her Aboriginal identity and culture without racial discrimination. Alli wants to socialise with non-LGBTIQA+ Aboriginal people and communities and express her LGBTIQA+ identity and culture without homophobic discrimination.

### Definition: brotherboy and sistergirl

Aboriginal communities use these terms to describe transgender people and their relationships as a way of validating and strengthening their gender identities and relationships. Non-trans but non-conforming Aboriginal people may also use these terms. For example, both lesbian and heterosexual Aboriginal women may refer to themselves as ‘sistergirls’, ‘sisters’ or ‘tiddas’, which is an Aboriginal English term for the word ‘sisters’. Gay Aboriginal men may also refer to themselves as sisters.

## Current outcomes for LGBTIQA+ Victorians

LGBTIQA+ Victorians face higher levels of discrimination, stigma and exclusion. This leads to poorer health, economic, social and mental health outcomes than other Victorians.

LGBTIQA+ people face social exclusion, verbal and physical abuse and sexual assault. Discrimination is found in many places – at school, at home, at work, in the community, when accessing services, through media representation, government institutions and the law. It is also important to understand the complexity of rural and regional areas, where LGBTIQA+ people face higher levels of discrimination and there are fewer inclusive supports in place.

In recent years the trauma of change and suppression (conversion) practices has come into focus. While Victoria has banned these harmful practices, work is ongoing to educate the community, including faith communities, on their impacts and to support victim survivors.

Experiences can change from place to place. They are also different for each person when discrimination based on gender, sexuality or sex characteristics intersects with other parts of their identity. This might include their age, cultural background, education, economic status or disability.

For example, a person may be disadvantaged based on their sexuality or gender identity when trying to use disability, aged care or multicultural services. The same person may face ableism, ageism or racism when using LGBTIQA+ spaces. For many LGBTIQA+ people, ongoing discrimination adds to a lifetime of exclusion and the constant weight of being treated differently.

‘…there are levels of disadvantage within our communities – adversities will vary within the cohorts.’

– Workshop participant, queer carer consultation

### Key discrimination, harassment and violence statistics

In the past 12 months:

* **58 per cent** of LGBTQ+ Victorians have faced unfair treatment based on sexual orientation
* **77.7 per cent** of TGD Victorians have faced unfair treatment based on their gender identity
* **33 per cent** of LGBTQ+ people from multicultural backgrounds feel they have faced unfair treatment based on their ethnicity, cultural identity or heritage

Discrimination and harassment targeted at LGBTQ+ Victorians takes on several forms. In the last 12 months:

* **36.4 per cent** faced social exclusion
* This is higher for Victorians located in outer suburban, regional and rural areas
* **32.7 per cent** faced verbal abuse
* This increases to **37.3 - 44.5 per cent** for LGBTQ+ people with disabilities
* **22.6 per cent** faced harassment such as being spat at or offensive gestures
* This increases to 26.6 per cent for LGBTQ+ people from multicultural backgrounds
* **10.3 per cent** experienced sexual assault
* This increases to **13.6 per cent** for LGBTQ+ people from multicultural backgrounds and **13.0 - 19.0 per cent** for LGBTQ+ people with disabilities
* **3.4 per cent** suffered a physical attack or assault with a weapon

LGBTQ+ Victorians experience high rates of intimate and partner violence:

* **42.9 per cent** report being in an intimate relationship where they face abuse
* **38.1 per cent** report abuse from a family member
* Trans men and non-binary people are more likely to experience verbal abuse from a family member[[1]](#footnote-2)

Sources: Hill et al. 2020, 2021a, 2021b

Research into the health, mental health, economic and social outcomes of LGBTIQA+ people shows they still face more challenges than the general population. The mental health and wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ people is particularly worrying. Rates of depression, anxiety and suicide are high. Almost one in two LGBTIQA+ adults have been diagnosed with anxiety or depression compared with just over one in four non-LGBTIQA+ adults.[[2]](#footnote-3)

‘Safety is not just physical but emotional, psychological, economic and social.’

– Community consultation feedback

LGBTIQA+ outcomes do not stand alone. They often increase for certain communities. For example, young LGBTIQA+ people are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of discrimination. There are worse mental health and wellbeing outcomes for TGD and bisexual communities. And although the data on people with an intersex variation is less available, the research highlights poor mental health outcomes (Hill et al. 2020).

Data and research offer valuable glimpses into the lives of LGBTIQA+ people. But there is still more work to do to improve the data we have. For example, accurate LGBTIQA+ suicide rates are not available because of inconsistent data collection. This is something we aim to fix through this strategy.

### Key outcomes statistics

Across a range of measures, LGBTQ+ Victorians experience poorer outcomes:

* **38.1 per cent** report having a disability or long-term health condition, including mental health, compared with 17.7 per cent of the general Australian population
* More LGBTIQA+ people in rural and regional areas rate their health as ‘poor’ or ‘fair’ compared with outer and inner suburban communities
* **21.3 per cent** have been homeless
* **24 per cent** of young LGBTQ+ people have been homeless
* **54.3 per cent** report high or very high levels of psychological distress in the past four weeks compared with 13 per cent of the general Australian population
* Victorians in outer suburban, regional and rural areas report higher rates of psychological distress compared to those living in inner city areas
* **73.2 per cent** have considered suicide compared with **13.2 per cent** of the general Australian population
* **9.4 per cent** of young LGBTQ+ Victorians have attempted suicide in the past 12 months
* Victorians in outer suburban, regional and rural areas are more likely to have recently attempted suicide compared to those living in inner city areas
* **17.9 per cent** have struggled to manage their alcohol use in the past 12 months

Compared with the general population, significantly more LGBTQ+ adult Victorians:

* could not raise $2,000 within two days in an emergency
* experienced food insecurity in the previous year

Compared with the general population, significantly fewer LGBTIQA+ adult Victorians:

* could get help from family or neighbours when needed
* could get a relative or friend to care for them or their children in an emergency

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019; Department of Health and Human Services 2018; Hill et al. 2020, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; VAHI 2020

## The power of peers

Tony Briffa (she/her) is the president of Intersex Peer Support Australia (IPSA). Tony was born with an intersex variation called androgen insensitivity syndrome. This means that although Tony’s body looks female on the outside, she had some typical male traits internally. ‘I was subjected to a lot of unnecessary intervention without my consent when I was a child,’ says Tony.

Tony’s experience is not unique. It shows a lack of understanding and knowledge that starts at birth for the estimated 113,000 Victorians with an intersex variation. The view that there is something wrong or disordered about having an intersex variation can lead to feelings of shame and stigma for some.

‘Having an intersex variation is still often treated like a shameful secret.’

– Tony Briffa

Established in 1985, IPSA is run by and for people with an intersex variation. It aims to provide support to people with an intersex variation and their families, raise awareness of intersex variations and tackle stigma. IPSA delivers training on how to be a good intersex ally. It teaches how to combat misconceptions that blend intersex with gender, including being trans or gender diverse.

‘The importance of peer support… cannot be overstated. It is often life changing...’

– Tony Briffa

The Victorian Government has supported IPSA to roll out YellowTick. YellowTick is a community-led initiative that helps groups to improve intersex inclusion and develop affirmative practices for programs, clients and staff. YellowTick raises awareness about people with an intersex variation, helps reduce shame and stigma and creates better allies.

# The call for change

LGBTIQA+ voices are at the heart of Victoria’s first LGBTIQA+ strategy. These voices are central as we design programs and deliver on our commitments.

Capturing the views, hopes and wishes of Victoria’s diverse LGBTIQA+ communities is central to understanding how government can respond to the challenges facing LGBTIQA+ people, communities and organisations. Our consultation highlighted the various ways government can work in partnership with LGBTIQA+ communities to achieve greater equality.

We thank all the Victorians who shared their personal experiences and stories during consultation by attending a workshop, making a submission or completing a survey. Victorians made these contributions during a time of heightened stress for communities, as we contended with the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We must also acknowledge the support of Victoria’s Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities in bringing together LGBTIQA+ Victorians. The former Commissioner, Ro Allen, attended all 41 targeted community workshops.

Through the generous contributions of LGBTIQA+ Victorians, their families, advocates, allies and the broader community, we came up with seven themes for improving the lives of LGBTIQA+ communities:

* protecting human rights and access to justice
* intersectionality and inclusion
* representation and participation
* LGBTIQA+ inclusive and accessible services and community
* connecting within and between LGBTIQA+ communities
* data, research and evidence
* targets, monitoring and reporting.

### Definition: LGBTIQA+ organisations

This includes organisations, communities or businesses that are community-led. This can mean LGBTIQA+ people run them, steer their boards, or that they are known in community for offering services for LGBTIQA+ people. They are not the same as non-government organisations or mainstream services that may have completed Rainbow Tick accreditation or similar to ensure they are LGBTIQA+ inclusive.

### Key consultation statistics

* 1,600+ contributions from people and organisations, some more than once
* 1,280 Engage Victoria survey responses
* 41 online workshops
* 97 written submissions:
* 42 submissions from non-government organisations
* 22 submissions from individuals
* 16 submissions from LGBTIQA+ community organisations
* 15 submissions from government organisations (including local councils)
* two submissions from groups affiliated with universities

## Protecting human rights and access to justice

LGBTIQA+ people and their families should enjoy lives free of stigma, discrimination and violence. They have rights to safety, inclusion and agency. They should experience equal outcomes through equal access to resources, opportunities and influence across the full spectrum of rights enjoyed by Victorians.

Rights relevant to LGBTIQA+ people and their families include the civil and political rights protected in the **Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities**. There is also a broader range of economic, social and cultural rights.

## Intersectionality and inclusion

Feedback highlighted the need to better understand intersectionality and the overlapping forms of discrimination that many LGBTIQA+ people face. Discrimination takes several forms such as subtle stereotyping, lack of protections within the law and obvious harassment and violence. Many LGBTIQA+ people also experience forms of prejudice like racism, ableism and classism. This is on top of and combined with prejudice based on their gender, sexuality or sex characteristics.

Recognising intersectionality is vital to ensuring LGBTIQA+ communities can celebrate diversity and contribute to improving all LGBTIQA+ lives. Building on existing Victorian Government approaches will be critical. This includes recent work that takes an intersectional approach to family violence, gender equality and mental health services. By connecting services and embedding inclusion in our work, we can ensure better experiences that recognise a person’s diverse identities.

### Definition: inclusion

Empowering access to opportunities, dealing with structural inequalities, tackling unconscious bias to have equal access to all parts of society.

‘My diverse identities are a barrier to employment. I have to separate out my disability from being LGBTIQA+. You have to put your cards out on the table before you even begin. It’s really difficult.’

– Workshop participant, disability consultation

## Representation and participation

In our consultations, participants noted the importance of LGBTIQA+ people taking part at all levels of decision making. This includes within government, the community and private sectors, and in delivering programs and supports intended for them.

‘We need everyday LGBTIQA+ people represented in a positive way as role models.’

– Workshop participant, rural and regional consultation

A key part of LGBTIQA+ representation is the broad principle of ‘nothing about us, without us’, a term with its origins in disability activism. This calls for including and supporting the diversity of LGBTIQA+ people in the design, delivery and review of government policies, services and programs.

## LGBTIQA+ inclusive and accessible services and community

Like all Victorians, LGBTIQA+ people take part in community life and use services. People called for high-quality, inclusive and accessible services that meet the diverse needs of LGBTIQA+ people, families and communities.

LGBTIQA+ Victorians may seek care from a health provider, support from a legal service, contribute to their workplace, play in a local sports club, use a housing service and take part in a school community. These settings – for example sports clubs and cultural groups – are important locations for building LGBTIQA+ connection and inclusion and celebrating community strengths. But LGBTIQA+ people may face more barriers than other Victorians when accessing those settings.

We need to look at barriers and discrimination in community settings like in the workplace, schools, community activities and when using services. Not all settings are welcoming for LGBTIQA+ people. For LGBTIQA+ people on the margins, access can be even more difficult because of homelessness, unemployment, level of literacy or living in a regional area.

‘Inclusion shouldn’t be a box-ticking process. It should be an ongoing commitment.’

– Workshop participant, youth consultation

Stopping discrimination is critical: the single strongest and most consistent predictor of poor mental health and wellbeing among LGBTIQA+ communities is experiences of abuse, harassment or assault (Abelson et al. 2006; Bariola et al. 2016; Dolan et al. 2020; Strauss et al. 2020).

In some cases, targeted and inclusive services or specialist skills catering to LGBTIQA+ needs are absent. Where specialist health services do exist, people endure longer wait times due to high demand and limited capacity. There is also an opportunity to reinforce the crucial role of peer-led workforces in both specialist LGBTIQA+ services and programs in mainstream settings.

## Connecting within and between LGBTIQA+ communities

Community is where people and families come together to connect, practise culture and create language. Community means different things for different people. And people shift between different communities based on things like their culture, faith and family, as well as gender, sexuality and sex characteristics.

For many LGBTIQA+ people, community settings protect against isolation and help describe and celebrate their history and experience. They are places where they can develop, advocate and plan for better futures. Community events, institutions and organisations are vital for many LGBTIQA+ people.

‘You see us, but you don’t hear us. Hopefully in 10 years you can hear more about us.’

– Workshop participant, Pasifika consultation

Being a part of the LGBTIQA+ community delivers widespread benefits to LGBTIQA+ people, including better health. People mentioned opportunities to increase the accessibility of LGBTIQA+ spaces to ensure people of all cultures, genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, ages, disabilities and abilities can feel safe and welcome.

## Data, research and evidence

Evidence of LGBTIQA+ experiences is building. But we need more work that looks at the gaps in getting reliable, accurate and consistent data across all LGBTIQA+ groups and their families. People advocated for improved collection and better sharing of high-quality data about LGBTIQA+ Victorians. Data collection should include best practice methods of collecting data that is appropriate and includes how LGBTIQA+ people identify.

‘There’s a huge diversity in LGBTIQA+ communities and we need a more nuanced approach.’

– Workshop participant, mental health services consultation

LGBTIQA+ organisations and researchers raised the need to build an evidence base that strengthens arguments for funding effective LGBTIQA+ programs. Community-led research will help capture the lived experience of all LGBTIQA+ communities. It can lead to better outcomes for everyday LGBTIQA+ people.

## Targets, monitoring and reporting

Consultations highlighted the importance of ensuring we roll out, embed and evaluate quality assurance measures and targets. Monitoring and reporting systems help to ensure accountability and continuous improvement, and inform meaningful investment in the future.

People asked for a specific focus on LGBTIQA+ inclusion at the local community level. Local councils, education settings with professional teaching standards, and government statutory bodies must better consider LGBTIQA+ inclusion within the scope of their roles.

## Challenging ageism by building connections

Over the past decade there has been growing recognition of the unique challenges faced by older LGBTIQA+ people. Most of that focus has been on developing inclusive aged care services. Dr Catherine Barrett (she/her), the director of Celebrate Ageing Ltd, wanted to broaden the focus to include age-inclusive families and communities. In 2015, she established Alice’s Garage and later received funding from the Victorian Government.

‘It’s so important that older people co-lead change.’

– Dr Catherine Barrett

Alice’s Garage empowers older LGBTIQA+ people by working in partnership with them to implement strategies for change. Much of this work focuses on building intergenerational connections within LGBTIQA+ communities to help protect older LGBTIQA+ people from abuse and discrimination in families, communities and aged care.

For the increasing numbers of older people coming out or transitioning later in life, conflict can emerge in families and communities. Alice’s Garage worked with three older TGD people to co-lead a project called Kinfolk. Together, they developed guides for families, older TGD people and service providers to support older TGD people asserting their right to gender expression.

‘When we listen to older LGBTIQA+ people, and I mean really listen – then we can understand what they have experienced and what it is that they need. I guarantee that connection and respect are at the top of the list for so many.’

– Dr Catherine Barrett

Ageism is not unique to LGBTIQA+ communities, but it is something we can all work to address. Acknowledging the unique challenges faced by older LGBTIQA+ people and being open to connection are an important start.

# Towards equality

As we look to the future of LGBTIQA+ equality in Victoria, it is important to know where we have come from and what progress we have made.

Aboriginal LGBTIQA+ Victorians have lived on these lands for more than 60,000 years. While we look at recent progress, it is crucial to recognise the thousands of years of LGBTIQA+ Aboriginal history that has come before this.

Over the past five decades, we have seen significant shifts towards LGBTIQA+ equality, particularly in the past 20 years. These changes reflect decades of campaigning by LGBTIQA+ older people and emerging leaders, activists, allies and advocates. They also show a government commitment to equality that has seen Victoria referred to as the Equality State. More recent reforms recognise inequalities across the diversity of LGBTIQA+ cohorts and groups.

Understanding LGBTIQA+ progress in Victoria gives a glimpse into the history of LGBTIQA+ repression and ongoing struggles for equality. Discrimination was often enshrined in the state’s law and institutions. The LGBTIQA+ strategy is the logical next step in advancing LGBTIQA+ equality in Victoria, ensuring a coordinated response across the Victorian Government.

‘We need to pay full respect to our elders – acknowledging their pioneering work in our communities, leading the way.’

– Workshop participant, LGBTIQA+ elders consultation

## Timeline of major community, legal and policy developments in Victoria

### 1980

* Parliament decriminalises sex between men

### 1981

* Decriminalisation of sex between men comes into effect

### 2000

* ‘Gender identity’ added as a protected attribute under the **Equal Opportunity Act 2010**
* ‘Sexual orientation’ added as a protected attribute under the **Equal Opportunity Act**
* Victoria Police establishes LGBTI liaison officers to build trust

### 2001

* Same-sex couples get rights equal to heterosexual de facto couples

### 2005

* ‘Gay panic’ defence abolished

### 2008

* Assisted reproductive technology becomes legal for female same-sex partners
* Same-sex couples can register their relationship as a domestic partnership

### 2010

* The Safe Schools Coalition of Victoria established for LGBTIQ students

### 2014

* Process to enable TGD people to change gender on their driver’s licence
* Victoria Police apologises for the 1994 Tasty Nightclub raid
* Victoria Police starts the ‘Equality is not the same’ process to build trust

### 2015

* Victorian Government establishes the Equality portfolio
* Australia’s first Minister for Equality and Commissioner for Gender and Sexuality (now titled Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities) created
* Couples can register their same-sex marriage from another jurisdiction as a domestic relationship in Victoria
* Scheme to expunge historical convictions for homosexual activity
* Victoria’s 10-year mental health plan focuses on LGBTI communities

### 2016

* The Aboriginal health, wellbeing and safety strategic plan commits to LGBTIQA+ Aboriginal people
* LGBT couples can adopt children
* Kunghah Brotherboys and Sistergirls weekend retreat for Aboriginal TGD people to share their experiences and knowledge, and address community issues
* LGBTIQ Equality Roadshow visits 29 towns in rural and regional Victoria
* Premier Daniel Andrews makes a formal apology in Parliament to those convicted under laws that criminalised homosexuality
* The Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence recommends strengthening the response for people from LGBTIQA+ communities, with later budget investment in LGBTIQA+ specialist family violence services and LGBTIQA+ inclusion in mainstream services
* Victorian Pride Centre announced

### 2017

* The Corrections Victoria Commissioner revises requirements detailing prison management of people who are trans, gender diverse or intersex
* Department of Premier and Cabinet forum on LGBT inclusion in sport
* Justice Health policy includes health care for TGDI prisoners
* Marriage equality legalised under Commonwealth law, following Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey

### 2018

* All Victorian Government secondary schools become Safe Schools
* Fair Play Code addresses discrimination in sport and recreation
* Nanyubak Yapaneyeputj ‘dreaming together’ retreat for Aboriginal LGBTI people
* The Victorian Government releases the **Everybody matters: inclusion and equity statement** 10-year vision for the family violence system
* Statewide two-day community of practice meeting of rural and regional LGBTI stakeholders, held in Melbourne to advance rural and regional inclusion

### 2019

* Adults can apply to alter the record of their sex in their Victorian birth registration without the need to be unmarried (end of ‘forced divorce’)
* Sexual reassignment surgery is no longer needed to change a birth certificate
* First LGBTIQA+ Aboriginal roundtable convened; Koorie Pride Victoria established
* Intersex Policy and Resource Project launched
* Trans parents can change their sex and name on their child’s birth certificate
* Victoria Police apologises for the way police enforced historical laws related to homosexuality
* 10 rural and regional LGBTIQA+ community of practice meetings held to build rural and regional LGBTIQA+ inclusion

### 2020

* Rainbow Health Victoria launches Pride in Prevention: a guide to primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities
* The **Youth justice strategic plan 2020–30** focuses on LGBTIQA+ young people

### 2021

* Law passed to ban harmful LGBTQ+ change or suppression (conversion) practices
* The Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System final report includes a focus on LGBTIQA+ people
* The Victorian Inquiry into Anti-Vilification Protections recommends extending protections to include LGBTIQA+ attributes
* Respect Victoria campaign to address LGBTIQA+ family violence launched
* Victorian Pride Centre opens
* The attribute of sex characteristics is added to the **Equal Opportunity Act**, protecting against discrimination for intersex Victorians

### 2022

* The Victorian Government adopts its first LGBTIQA+ strategy

# Framework for change

The Victorian Government commits to improving the lives of all LGBTIQA+ people and communities. This includes ensuring the systems, policies and services we provide and fund are accessible and inclusive.

The LGBTIQA+ strategy provides the vision and pathway to drive the long-term and systemic change we need. Through consultations with Victorians, we have developed four priority areas within which to organise the actions we commit to in this strategy.

These priority areas are not specific to one area of government but sit across all Victorian Government responsibilities. The Victorian Government controls ways to drive and embed change in each area. The recognition that the LGBTIQA+ strategy needs to reflect the diverse experiences of all LGBTIQA+ Victorians underpins the priority areas.

The actions we take as the Victorian Government are only one part of the ecosystem that affects the life of an individual from the LGBTIQA+ community. This ecosystem includes:

* LGBTIQA+ communities
* LGBTIQA+ organisations and their projects
* government and non-government organisations
* the broader Victorian population.

The Victorian Government holds many of the levers to drive LGBTIQA+ equality in Victoria. But we all have a role to play – including the broader Victorian community. The LGBTIQA+ ecosystem includes LGBTIQA+ communities, LGBTIQA+ organisations and their projects, government and non-government organisations, industry, project funders, allies and the broader Victorian population.

The actions undertaken as part of the LGBTIQA+ strategy aim to drive a range of immediate and longer term outcomes to improve the lives of LGBTIQA+ Victorians. We will develop an outcomes framework to track the impact of our actions and how they are delivering against our priority areas and the strategy’s vision.

## LGBTIQA+ strategy framework

### Vision

All Victorians feel safe, are healthy, have equal human rights and can live wholly and freely.

LGBTIQA+ Victorians experience the benefits of full participation in economic, educational, political, community and social areas at all stages of life.

Victoria leads the way in LGBTIQA+ equality, celebrating culture, community and taking sustained, enduring and measurable action.

### Priority areas

Areas of reform that organise our actions to realise the vision.

* **Priority area 1:** Equal rights and freedoms
* **Priority area 2:** Equitable, inclusive, and accessible services
* **Priority area 3:** Visibility to inform decision making
* **Priority area 4:** Safe, strong and sustainable communities

### Victorian Government actions

Actions we will deliver to realise the priority areas.

### Outcomes framework

How we will know if our actions are having a positive impact.
Key impacts we want to see under each priority area.
Developed over the life of the strategy to track LGBTIQA+ outcomes.

## From roller derby to gala – how a regional community celebrated its LGBTIQA+ people

Gippsland Ranges Roller Derby – located in Victoria’s regional south-east – estimates that 30 per cent of its members identify as LGBTIQA+. Combining this with a knowledge that for many LGBTIQA+ people in regional areas life is not always safe or welcoming, the club set out on a mission in 2019 to show its support for LGBTIQA+ Gippslanders.

‘We wanted to celebrate our LGBTIQA+ members, create visibility and make a space to talk about inclusion.’

– Bodye Darvill (she/her), Gippsland Ranges Roller Derby president and LGBTIQA+ ally

The club tapped into its networks and local community partners to raise $70,000. This included $10,000 from the Victorian Government to deliver three events. In May 2019, the club held a ‘Pride 101’ community forum to raise awareness of LGBTIQA+ issues. In June 2019, they held Australia’s first Roller Derby Pride Cup. The Pride Cup included an exhibition game between Gippsland Ranges Roller Derby and Gender Ending Story, a roller derby team for TGD people.

The jewel in the crown was the inaugural Gippsland Pride Gala, which took place on the night of the Pride Cup. The gala saw about 400 LGBTIQA+ people, their friends, families and allies come together to dance the night away. The events were particularly emotional for older LGBTIQA+ people, who had not experienced such local LGBTIQA+ visibility and celebration.

Nothing like this had ever been done in Gippsland, but it created a ripple effect. After these events, the Gippsland Pride Initiative was established – made up of community members and allies across Gippsland – to continue to drive local pride. The awareness led to other conversations in community and to local businesses and services improving their LGBTIQA+ inclusion.

So, what can others learn? Partnerships are key – with local LGBTIQA+ groups, community, business and government. At the core, we must drive efforts with LGBTIQA+ people, not for them.

# Priority area 1: Equal rights and freedoms

Strengthening existing legal protections for LGBTIQA+ Victorians and ensuring we create laws with an equity lens will benefit all community members. Laws free from discrimination that reflect who we are, are critical to creating a safe and inclusive community. They will help lay the foundations for an equal society.

## The law matters

The law plays an important role in a range of areas of public life for LGBTIQA+ communities, as it does for all communities. All people in Victoria have the human rights detailed in the **Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities**, including the right to recognition and equality under the law. But not all Victorian law treats LGBTIQA+ people the same as other Victorians.

‘While we tolerate laws that discriminate, we tolerate discrimination.’

– Workshop participant, LGBTIQA+ Taskforce and Justice Working Group consultation

Not having equal rights or not making laws that ensure equal rights means LGBTIQA+ people can’t live with confidence that they get the same protections and opportunities as other people.

Not only does the law support equal rights for individuals, it also sets responsibilities for organisations that provide services to Victorians. The law sets a standard for how we expect government-provided and funded services to operate. The rollout of these types of laws must account for the diverse needs of Victorians.

## The law affects LGBTIQA+ people in different ways

For many in the LGBTIQA+ community, Victorian laws and legal institutions continue to be sources of trauma. This might be due to past wrongdoings, present inequalities or through a lack of recognition and inclusion. We also recognise that for Aboriginal people, Aboriginal lore, passed down through generations, is important to community life and setting social expectations.

It is important to understand that LGBTIQA+ experiences are not all the same. Many LGBTIQA+ people face intersecting and other inequalities under the law. An LGBTIQA+ person may also face racial or gendered discrimination under the law on top of discrimination based on their LGBTIQA+ identity. For example, although Aboriginal LGBTIQA+ people may have greater LGBTIQA+ equality under Victorian law in recent years, the journey towards Treaty is ongoing to seek to address past wrongs.

## The work already underway

We have already started this important legal reform work including:

* banning harmful LGBTQ+ change and suppression (conversion) practices
* allowing couples to adopt a child regardless of their sexuality or gender identity
* removing legal barriers for trans, gender diverse and intersex Victorians for birth certificates to reflect their gender identity
* narrowing and removing religious exceptions to discrimination.

The **(I) am Equal: Future directions for Victoria’s Intersex community** paper outlines a vision to uphold the human rights of people with intersex variations so they can achieve the best health and wellbeing outcomes. This includes developing a scheme to end deferrable and unnecessary medical interventions on people with an intersex variation without their personal consent.

‘We want to not have to talk about this stuff anymore.’

– Workshop participant, people with an intersex variation consultation

The government will deliver on its commitment to narrow religious exceptions under the **Equal Opportunity Act** to better protect LGBTIQA+ students, teachers and staff. We will action our response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Vilification Protections. This included recommendations to extend anti-vilification protections to gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics.

## Applying an equity point of view

To realise the ambition of this priority area, we will look at relevant laws where previous policy decisions or unintended consequences have meant that LGBTIQA+ people have not received fair treatment. This will involve considering the impact laws have when being viewed from the perspective of gender, sexuality, sex characteristics and culture to help address all forms of discrimination that LGBTIQA+ people face. As we get to work on legal reforms, consulting with community will be critical.

We will also ensure new laws include LGBTIQA+ experiences and potential impacts on LGBTIQA+ communities. This will include developing an LGBTIQA+ justice action plan to guide the work of the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

### Definition: equity

This principle builds on equality and is about ensuring just and fair inclusion for all LGBTIQA+ people and communities. An equitable society is one where everyone can take part and prosper. The goals of equity are to create conditions that allow all people to reach their full potential. These conditions must recognise that experiences, inequalities and outcomes are not the same across communities.

## Supporting legal changes

To have its intended impact, we will need to help pave the way for new laws. This includes reforms to build public understanding and awareness.

For example, under the **Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021**, government funding supports the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission to set up its civil response scheme. We are already working with faith-based groups and diverse communities to ensure resources are in place to help communities support survivors. Including change and suppression practices as an example of family violence under the **Family Violence Protection Act 2008** and of harassment in the **Personal Safety Intervention Orders Act 2010** will strengthen the civil response scheme.

## Actions we will deliver

* Deliver on the government’s commitment to narrow religious exceptions under the **Equal Opportunity Act**
* Reform anti-vilification laws to respond to the needs of LGBTIQA+ Victorians
* Implement the **Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act** **2021**
* Support specialist legal services for LGBTIQA+ Victorians who experience discrimination and disadvantage associated with their sexuality or gender identity
* Develop and deliver the LGBTIQA+ Justice Action Plan to improve outcomes for LGBTIQA+ Victorians
* Deliver improved police responses to LGBTIQA+ communities, including implementing the **Victoria Police LGBTIQA+ inclusion strategy and action plan** and providing access to LGBTIQA+ awareness and sensitivity training for Victoria Police staff

## Signs of impact

To know we are on the right track to achieving equal rights and freedoms for LGBTIQA+ Victorians, this priority area will see actions that support LGBTIQA+ communities to feel safe in their everyday lives. They will live lives free from harassment, physical abuse, harmful hate speech and discrimination.

LGBTIQA+ Victorians will know and understand their rights and have culturally safe avenues to resolve issues when they arise. LGBTIQA+ Victorians will have autonomy over their bodies and the law will reflect and protect their gender and sexuality. By achieving these things, we can help drive down LGBTIQA+ experiences of discrimination from 34.2 per cent[[3]](#footnote-4) (VAHI 2020). This statistic compares with 15.6 per cent of the general Victorian population (VAHI 2020).

## Recognition matters – making birth certificates inclusive

In August 2019 the Victorian Parliament passed amendments to the **Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1996**. Amendments allow people in Victoria to change the record of sex shown on their birth certificate without having to undergo gender reassignment surgery. This legislative reform came after years of advocacy from TGD communities and their allies.

‘Having ID that matches our identity is vital for the health and wellbeing of trans and gender diverse people’

– Isabelle, transgender community member, 16 at the time of the legislative change

The Victorian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM) convened an Implementation Advisory Group of key people from the TGD community and their allies to guide the rollout. The definition of ‘relevant person’ who can support applications for those under 18 years wanting to change their birth certificate was broadened. This happened because of advocacy from the group and the community – in particular young people.

This means that young TGD people can seek support for their application from people who they know and are comfortable with. It ensures that more young people can have their gender reflected and respected.

Since 1 May 2020 Victorians have been able to apply to change the record of sex on their birth certificate under the reforms. To mark the occasion, BDM commissioned cartoonist Judy Horacek to create the artwork for a Rainbow Commemorative Birth Certificate. Although it was designed for LGBTIQA+ families, it can be chosen by any family to celebrate the birth of their child.

These reforms have been welcomed across LGBTIQA+ communities. When Transgender Victoria conducted annual ‘Change Your ID Days’ to provide support for TGD people, the St Kilda Legal service helped out. VicBears also donated money so anyone could get help to change their birth certificate.

‘…now my ID reflects my identity – now I can apply for a job, or a Medicare card without fear. It means I won’t be outed to everyone who sees my ID documents.’

– Isabelle, transgender community member

As at 17 January 2022, since the birth certificate changes came into effect, 920 Victorian-born people have had their birth certificate updated to reflect their gender. The rollout shows the importance of continued community engagement – to make sure reforms are delivered for and with communities from start to finish.

# Priority area 2: Equitable, inclusive and accessible services

Services should be approachable, welcoming, safe and inclusive for all Victorians throughout their journey and when moving between services. LGBTIQA+ people must be able to access the services that meet their needs. Their experience through Victorian Government services should result in improved life outcomes.

## Services shape our lives

Like all Victorians, LGBTIQA+ Victorians use a broad range of government services. These include our health and wellbeing, mental health, justice, child protection, family violence, sexual assault, housing and education systems. We also know that LGBTIQA+ people are more likely to use a mainstream service accredited as LGBTIQA+ inclusive or LGBTIQA+ specialist services (Hill et al. 2020).

‘I should be able to be myself and be comfortable in any locality – in any situation.’

– Workshop participant, deaf consultation

It is critical that we remove barriers to access, including anticipated discrimination, and improve inclusiveness across all sectors and in all areas of government service delivery. An example is for people with an intersex variation who, due to an earlier negative medical experience, may be less likely to use services later in life for fear of lack of understanding.

## Designing with inclusivity in mind

We need to consider all Victorian communities, in their diversity, when designing the policies, services and programs they use. Commissioning, designing and delivering with LGBTIQA+ inclusiveness, safety and accessibility in mind will improve the experience LGBTIQA+ Victorians have when using government services.

Some of the ways to improve LGBTIQA+ experiences include ensuring access to:

* inclusive housing and homelessness services
* LGBTIQA+ suitable health care
* safety in the justice, family violence, sexual assault and child protection systems.

Access also means providing LGBTIQA+ people with information and supports to use different services.

A focus on Aboriginal self-determination, intersectionality, inclusion, lived experience and co-design will need to be standard to create LGBTIQA+ friendly services. For example, LGBTIQA+ services should be culturally suitable for Aboriginal and multicultural communities. Likewise, Aboriginal and multicultural communities’ services should be LGBTIQA+ inclusive.

The most successful programs are those that include the expertise and lived experience of community within design and delivery. The Royal Commission into Family Violence and the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System have recognised this important need. These royal commissions recommended redesigning both systems with diverse communities’ voices and lived experience in mind, including LGBTIQA+ communities.

## Building workforce capability

‘Peer-based, peer-led responses by people with lived experience are incredibly important.’

– Workshop participant, HIV+ consultation

The people delivering services will be key enablers to creating inclusive services, where the needs of LGBTIQA+ people are understood, respected, considered and embedded in service delivery. For example, the victimisation of LGBTIQA+ people occurs in the broader community and within families. We can only deal with these kind of prejudice-motivated actions and threats to safety if our systems and the people delivering them can recognise the services LGBTIQA+ people require.

We will align this work with the work already being done under the Victorian Government’s **Building from strength: 10-year industry plan for family violence prevention and response**. The industry plan aims to build the capability of all workforces – including those working with LGBTIQA+ Victorians – to help prevent and respond to family violence.

## The work already underway

We are already carrying out a range of important work to improve government services for LGBTIQA+ communities. We will need to continue and build on this work to realise the LGBTIQA+ strategy. Rainbow Tick accreditation and other targeted LGBTIQA+ inclusion initiatives are great examples of how we can build services that are safe, inclusive and affirming for LGBTIQA+ Victorians.

Safe Schools ensures Victorian schools are safe and inclusive environments for all students, including LGBTIQA+ students. This is a great example of how we can prevent discrimination that harms LGBTIQA+ people’s mental health before it takes place. Under this strategy, we will continue and extend on Safe Schools to drive safe and positive learning environments by updating resources and we will build more inclusive TAFEs and Learn Locals.

Within the justice system, recent policies better support and care for people in prison who are trans, gender diverse or have an intersex variation. Telehealth access to gender services, including the Monash Health and Gender Clinic, is also provided for trans, gender diverse and non-binary people in prison.

## Early actions we will deliver

* Improve the understanding of LGBTIQA+ specialist and mainstream services in the provision of adequate supports for LGBTIQA+ communities
* Embed LGBTIQA+ voices in the diverse communities’ mental health and wellbeing framework and governance model
* Implement **(I) am Equal: Future directions for Victoria’s Intersex community** with resources and supports to improve the health and wellbeing of people with an intersex variation
* Ensure relationship, sexuality and consent education is LGBTIQA+ inclusive, including supporting resources
* Develop LGBTIQA+ health and wellbeing action plan to improve health and wellbeing outcomes
* Build the capacity of Jobs Victoria service providers to support pathways to employment for LGBTIQA+ jobseekers
* Improve LGBTIQA+ inclusion in family violence and sexual assault sector, including addressing key service gaps and strengthening LGBTIQA+ capability
* Improve public fertility care access for LGBTIQA+ families by delivering on recommendations from the Review of Assisted Reproductive Treatment in Victoria
* Support LGBTIQA+ inclusive employment practices, including resources and supports for employers
* Implement the recommendations of the review into decriminalising sex work in Victoria
* Support young LGBTIQA+ people to foster connections with peers and older LGBTIQA+ communities

## Bringing LGBTIQA+ voices to government reform

There are opportunities to use existing strategies and reforms and those in development to make sure we design and implement them with LGBTIQA+ voices.

We have developed the state’s Second action plan 2018–2021 under Free from Violence: Victoria’s strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women. Greater understanding into LGBTIQA+ experiences of family violence and what works to prevent it informed this action plan.

As Victoria delivers its next state disability plan, taking an intersectional view will ensure we hear and consider the voices of LGBTIQA+ people with disability across government policies, programs and services.

The Victoria Police **LGBTI inclusion strategy and action plan 2018–2021** is putting into action Victoria Police’s intention to create an inclusive organisation that respects everyone regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status. The Victoria Police Gender Equality and Inclusion Command will also achieve gender equality and recognises the non-binary nature of gender.

## Building on existing work to improve systems

There is an important focus on people with an intersex variation in the LGBTIQA+ strategy, particularly in the health system. Building on work to date, we will develop resources to raise awareness of intersex variations. We will target these to:

* parents, children and families
* health professionals
* service providers
* community members.

The Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System highlighted that we need to do more to support LGBTIQA+ mental health and wellbeing needs. LGBTIQA+ specialist services like the LGBTIQA+ family counselling service and Rainbow Door are solid foundations to expand on and learn from. All community interactions are an opportunity to ensure inclusion, respect and safety.

### Definition: community-led

This refers to organisations, projects, programs or services led by LGBTIQA+ communities on behalf of and for LGBTIQA+ people.

## Actions we will deliver over the life of the strategy

* Develop LGBTIQA+ inclusive resources and provide targeted access to LGBTIQA+ inclusion training for mainstream services
* Improve LGBTIQA+ inclusion in government-funded mainstream services through the implementation of best practice standards for service delivery
* Support the capability building and sustainability of the LGBTIQA+ community-led sector to continue support for LGBTIQA+ Victorians
* Support health and wellbeing supports for trans and gender diverse communities in Victoria, through clinical and peer support services
* Co-design services with LGBTIQA+ communities and organisations

## Signs of impact

We will know we are on track for success in building equal, inclusive and accessible services against this priority area when LGBTIQA+ people have improved health and wellbeing.

LGBTIQA+ people will access the services they need when they need them and their experience will be positive. Services they access will reflect their diverse perspectives and needs.

A key sign will be that LGBTIQA+ people feel treated with dignity and respect when using government services. By achieving these things, we want to see a reduction in the number of LGBTIQA+ people attempting suicide in the past 12 months. We want to see it fall from the current 5.2 per cent of LGBTIQA+ adults (Hill et al. 2020) and 9.4 per cent of young LGBTQ+ Victorians (Hill et al. 2021c).

## Equality is everyone’s responsibility

VincentCare delivers a range of specialised services to people going through or at risk of:

* homelessness
* family violence
* alcohol and other drug dependency
* mental ill health
* disability
* needing financial and social isolation services.

The not-for-profit organisation wanted to improve the outcomes and experiences of its LGBTIQA+ clients. It wanted to create an affirming and culturally safe workplace for its LGBTIQA+ staff and volunteers. Since undertaking Rainbow Tick accreditation, staff, volunteers and clients have stated that the service is a place of pride where their gender and sexuality is acknowledged and respected.

VincentCare got Victorian Government funding to support its work towards achieving Rainbow Tick accreditation. Rainbow Tick accreditation is a Rainbow Health Australia framework that helps organisations become safe, inclusive and affirming for LGBTIQA+ communities.

The entire VincentCare community worked towards accreditation. They applied a solid process of cultural change, client and staff consultation and volunteer and employee training. This led to developing LGBTIQA+ inclusive services.

‘What I hope is that other people learn this is a conservative and faith-based organisation and yet that did not stop us from achieving Rainbow Tick accreditation.’

– Jac Tomlins (she/her), Manager, Gender and Sexuality, VincentCare

The positive changes have led to LGBTIQA+ clients reporting feeling welcomed, respected and safe. Their needs are better met by staff who understand their experiences. LGBTIQA+ staff and volunteers feel safe, acknowledged and celebrated – with a huge sense of pride at work.

# Priority area 3: Visibility to inform decision making

Improving LGBTIQA+ data collection to build evidence will enable us to get a better picture of how LGBTIQA+ Victorians experience all parts of their lives. By building this picture we can better identify needs, understand how services are performing and know where we need more investment to support LGBTIQA+ people.

## Identifying needs

The Victorian Government and the service-delivery organisations it funds collect data to understand community need. By improving LGBTIQA+ data collection, we will better understand who is using our services and where there are gaps. Better data will also help LGBTIQA+ communities improve LGBTIQA+ led services and inform decision making on community priorities.

## Driving visibility and accountability with inclusive data

We can achieve greater visibility of LGBTIQA+ communities and their needs through improving how we collect and distribute data that is broken down into separate components. This data needs to have demographic information, health and wellbeing needs, service access and outcome information. It should also capture data on key communities such as people with intersex variations for whom there is a lack of information on treatment and care in Victoria.

‘If we don’t have data, we don’t exist.’

– Workshop participant, mental health services consultation

Collecting data is only useful if we understand how to analyse and use it to improve outcomes. Being transparent with data will ensure we hold government and funded programs and services to account and can show they are meeting the needs of all Victorians.

Data collection must also include suitable and inclusive options that reflect how LGBTIQA+ people choose to identify. It must help pinpoint LGBTIQA+ needs that can feed into better practice, services and research. Datasets also need to be accessible, useful and link to each other to ensure effectiveness.

Connecting with priority area 2, it is important that staff are trained, comfortable and capable to ask the right questions in the safest way. This includes communicating how data will be used to inform and improve services, and ensuring data is always stored securely while maintaining confidentiality.

## The work already underway

Changing the way we collect, analyse and report on LGBTIQA+ data is a complex yet important piece of the puzzle in ensuring LGBTIQA+ visibility. We recognise that systems, processes and standards across the Victorian Government differ and that we need significant reform work to bring them up to standard.

We are starting to improve LGBTIQA+ data in our systems. The recently launched Prevention of Family Violence Data Platform is an example. This platform draws together data from various LGBTIQA+ surveys to help focus on LGBTIQA+ family violence and its causes.

The Department of Health’s standards include the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics’ data standards on gender, sexuality and sex characteristics. Adopting best practice standards between systems will help build consistency and, in turn, a better picture of LGBTIQA+ people.

## Early actions we will deliver

* Develop an LGBTIQA+ strategy outcomes framework to measure impact and progress
* Support key LGBTIQA+ data and research to build the evidence base for effective and inclusive services
* Improve Victorian Government data standards and support resources, including for funded services
* Support tools and training for Victorian public service senior leaders to create LGBTIQA+ inclusive workplaces

## Achieving consistency

Recognising the important role data can have in improving services, Victoria will continue to drive consistent and improved LGBTIQA+ data. Our example will lead the way for other states, territories and organisations to keep improving their own systems.

We will help improve LGBTIQA+ data standards and capability in Victoria. This will in turn help improve the experience of LGBTIQA+ Victorians using non-Victorian Government services.

## Using research

We will continue to build the evidence base for designing better targeted and inclusive programs. For example, a research-based framework for designing tailored LGBTIQA+ homelessness services informs the LGBTIQA+ Homelessness Program. This leads to better targeting of services and better outcomes for vulnerable service users.

## Making data collection inclusive

Inclusive communication when collecting and reporting data is vital to LGBTIQA+ people feeling safe and willing to share their personal information. We will introduce LGBTIQA+ data standards across the Victorian Government and develop guidance materials for collecting, analysing and reporting on data by government and funded services.

## Seeking representative input

Government community advisory groups like the LGBTIQA+ Taskforce will continue to play a role in offering first-hand community and service-user advice to improve data. It will also be important to work with other advisory groups to build a better understanding of LGBTIQA+ intersecting experiences. These include the Victorian Youth Congress and newly established Anti-Racism Taskforce.

‘…it would be good to have queer Indigenous people controlling the collection and interpretation of data about Aboriginal LGBTIQA+ people. Self-determination is critical for queer Indigenous people.’

– Workshop participant, Aboriginal consultation

## Actions we will deliver over the life of the strategy

* Support data collection across government to be inclusive and appropriate
* Increase diverse LGBTIQA+ representation on Victorian Government boards
* Ongoing support for LGBTIQA+ communities’ voice to government, such as the LGBTIQA+ Taskforce and other advisory groups
* Continue the work of the Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities as a crucial role in advocating for improved LGBTIQA+ outcomes across government

## Signs of impact

All LGBTIQA+ communities will have access to data they can use to show clear evidence for need. This will help us know we are having an impact and building LGBTIQA+ visibility to inform decision making.

We will increase LGBTIQA+ voices and experiences across government, and LGBTIQA+ people will feel comfortable engaging with data channels. LGBTIQA+ people will see an increase in policies and services designed with their needs in mind.

We will track and report the number of Victorian Government departments and agencies employing LGBTIQA+ inclusive data collection in government initiatives, programs and services.

## Changing attitudes with LGBTIQA+ voices

Family can be an important source of support for all of us – especially for LGBTIQA+ people. Respect Victoria is the state’s independent statutory authority dedicated to stopping family violence before it starts. In 2021, Respect Victoria launched the Pride, Respect, Equality campaign to inspire people to call out violence in all of its forms against LGBTIQA+ people within families.

The campaign aims to support families to ensure their LGBTIQA+ loved ones are safe, respected and supported. Respect Victoria researched extensively and worked closely with community, victim survivors and LGBTIQA+ advocates to develop the campaign.

Statewide advertising showed how discrimination by family members can make LGBTIQA+ people feel, and how a family member’s support and inclusion helps. The campaign also includes a series of videos sharing stories of support. LGBTIQA+ people shared stories of their family’s support and how this has been critical to their own sense of self and wellbeing.

‘Campaigns like the Pride, Respect, Equality campaign share the message that LGBTQIA+ people are just people. People who deserve to be loved, cared for and respected just like any other person in the world.’

– Zay Canters (they/them), Pride, Respect, Equality participant

There is more to understand about how family violence affects LGBTIQA+ people, including unpacking the gendered drivers that underpin both family violence and sexual violence.

Family attitudes also do not exist in isolation and are part of wider discrimination and violence against LGBTIQA+ people. The success of the Pride, Respect, Equality campaign can be built on by placing LGBTIQA+ voices at the heart of campaigns for positive change, and by showcasing positive stories of support and respect.

# Priority area 4: Safe, strong and sustainable communities

LGBTIQA+ communities are a proud part of the Victorian community. It is critical that we build a society where all people can be themselves and support one another. By creating inclusive communities, we are making sure there is a place for all Victorians to be proud and live their life to its fullest.

## Targeting discrimination at its root

‘I’m tired of struggling for even just acceptance or tolerance. I want more than that – I want celebration.’

– Workshop participant, multicultural consultation

By targeting LGBTIQA+ discrimination, stigma and abuse before it happens, we can remove the influences that we know lead to poorer health and wellbeing outcomes for LGBTIQA+ people. Addressing stigma and discrimination would begin to enable equal access to all parts of society and create a stronger, more cohesive community.

## Community improves lives

Community is an important part of many LGBTIQA+ Victorians’ lives. The bonds, friendship and allyship formed within these communities provides a ‘chosen family’ where LGBTIQA+ people can live freely and find acceptance. For LGBTIQA+ people, being a part of community is a valued and positive part of life. It leads to better physical and mental health outcomes (Hill et al. 2020).

Community can take on a range of forms and may represent Victoria as a whole, LGBTIQA+ specific cohorts, a faith community or a rural and regional township. We each live, work and take part in many community settings. It is important all Victorians can live, celebrate and flourish openly and safely in all forms of community life, which contributes to positive wellbeing.

## Building safe spaces

We want to ensure Victoria is a diverse and welcoming place for residents and visitors. That it is a place that continues to attract LGBTIQA+ people from all over the country and world. We need to continue to build safe spaces for LGBTIQA+ people in the workplace, at home and when in the community. We want a Victoria where LGBTIQA+ Victorians are not discriminated against or harassed just for being who they are.

We also want to prevent family violence against LGBTIQA+ Victorians through primary prevention programs that promote respectful, loving and safe relationships. LGBTIQA+ people should be able to identify and seek support for family violence in a way that minimises harm and ensures safety and support.

## Public representation

Representations and celebrations of LGBTIQA+ communities across all parts of life will drive understanding, visibility and acceptance. This includes in the media, in public campaigns and in positions of leadership. The Victorian Government, as well as the broader community, businesses, clubs and non-government organisations must provide space for LGBTIQA+ people to contribute and take part in community.

## Understanding diverse community-building needs

Acknowledging the diversity and range of community settings is vital to build safe, strong and sustainable communities. A focus on data and research will allow us to better understand the community settings that most need support. Taking an equity view to community building means that less resourced LGBTIQA+ groups and diverse LGBTIQA+ communities can build their leadership capacity and ability to influence.

## Early actions we will deliver

* Deliver a statewide awareness raising campaign to celebrate and raise awareness of LGBTIQA+ experiences, including diverse communities
* Support LGBTIQA+ events to celebrate LGBTIQA+ diversity and increase community connections
* Increase LGBTIQA+ employment opportunities in government-funded major transport infrastructure initiatives and projects
* Drive a centralised approach to support LGBTIQA+ Victorian Public Service employees through the Victorian Public Sector Commission
* Review Victorian Public Service workforce inclusion policies to identify improvements

## Public education

We will deliver community-wide education and awareness campaigns to build understanding, acceptance, celebration and visibility of LGBTIQA+ Victorians. We will also influence other public awareness campaigns to make sure they represent LGBTIQA+ Victorians.

We need to continue along the path of social change and increasing community acceptance across the board. But within LGBTIQA+ communities, we must still address other forms of discrimination. Understanding and addressing all forms of family violence against people from LGBTIQA+ communities and their underpinnings in broader discrimination is critical. This includes family-of-origin violence and intimate partner violence.

‘I want the ability to walk down the street – to be acknowledged as me, not specifically as transgender, not specifically as LGBTIQA+.’

– Workshop participant, elder consultation

We need strategies to understand and tackle how this broader systemic discrimination can play out in violence within communities. They will help us build safer, more welcoming and supportive communities.

It is critical we work across government policy areas to realise this ambition and ensure inclusive actions underpinned by an intersectional approach. These areas include Aboriginal, multicultural, disability, youth and older Victorians.

## Regional and rural communities

Rural and regional communities, which have already been a strong focus for Victorian Government LGBTIQA+ equality work, have a unique environment and set of needs. We will build on the success of the LGBTIQA+ Equality Rural and Regional Roadshow and the Rainbow Ready Roadmap to help create safe and inclusive communities. Rural and regional mainstream providers and decision-makers need to work together with local LGBTIQA+ Victorians to promote inclusion.

## Physical spaces to be

We need to design physical spaces, especially for trans and gender diverse Victorians, with an inclusive lens. This extends from developing suburban precincts to public transport vehicles and facilities.

## Strengthening the LGBTIQA+ sector

‘Surviving is a kind of resilience, but we need to move to thriving.’

– Workshop participant, LGBTIQA+ Taskforce and Justice Working Group consultation

We will also build the profile and sustainability of LGBTIQA+ organisations, businesses and leaders so they can influence and lead positive change. A critical feature of this is ensuring LGBTIQA+ people have agency and Aboriginal community members can practise self-determination.

## Leading by example

The Victorian public sector is an important employer of LGBTIQA+ people. About 4.4 per cent of Victorian public sector employees openly identify as LGBTIQA+ (Victorian Public Sector Commission [VPSC] 2020).[[4]](#footnote-5) As a subgroup, 6.1 per cent of Victorian public service employees openly identify as LGBTIQA+ (VPSC 2020).

The Victorian public sector will play a role in setting the standard for inclusive and safe workplaces. The VPSC will act as a central point for all Victorian Government departments’ LGBTIQA+ inclusion and diversity policies and practices.

## Actions we will deliver over the life of the strategy

* Develop a plan to ensure LGBTIQA+ inclusion is embedded in the design of safer public spaces
* Continue to support the capacity of professional and community sports to be LGBTIQA+ inclusive
* Continue our commitment to improve LGBTIQA+ inclusion in government policies, programs and services

## Signs of impact

To achieve safe, strong and sustainable LGBTIQA+ communities, LGBTIQA+ people will see their identities embraced and celebrated. Understanding of LGBTIQA+ diversity will increase – both in and between LGBTIQA+ communities, and within the broader Victorian community.

LGBTIQA+ Victorians, no matter where they live in the state, will feel safer and more confident to lead and contribute to their communities. The Victorian community support for and knowledge of LGBTIQA+ communities and diversity will grow.

To track progress, we want to see LGBTIQA+ people’s feeling of their value in society increase from the current 41.4 per cent[[5]](#footnote-6) (VAHI 2020).

# Delivering on the vision

We have the vision and the reforms to deliver the LGBTIQA+ strategy and improve the lives of LGBTIQA+ Victorians. To get us there, we will work with communities to deliver on actions and keep them informed as we progress this important roadmap for change.

## Roles and responsibilities

The Minister for Equality will lead the LGBTIQA+ strategy. Victorian Government ministers and their departments will work together to deliver whole-of-government actions, as well as those actions falling under their department.

The Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities will play a critical role engaging with community and representing community perspectives as we develop and deliver actions. The Commissioner will report back to community.

The Victorian Government’s LGBTIQA+ Taskforce includes LGBTIQA+ community representatives. The Taskforce will provide community advice and oversight for delivering actions and tracking outcomes.

## Community

LGBTIQA+ communities’ voices and involvement are critical to the success of the strategy. We will embed their voices and contributions in the design and delivery of reforms. We will provide opportunities for community to lead the change they want to see for themselves.

## Tracking outcomes

Knowing how we are tracking, where we are having an impact and where we can improve our approach is vital to realising the LGBTIQA+ strategy. We also want to build a better picture of LGBTIQA+ communities in Victoria that can feed into policy and service design.

To do this, under priority area 3 we will develop an outcomes framework. The outcomes framework will tap into existing government outcomes measures and build new data points that reflect LGBTIQA+ outcomes.

## Reporting on progress

We will report each year across the strategy’s 10-year lifetime on the delivery of actions under each priority area. We will develop a dedicated LGBTIQA+ strategy webpage to keep Victorians updated on our progress, including between annual reporting periods. As it matures, the outcomes framework will provide valuable insights to report back to community.

### Definition: outcomes framework

A system to track the impact of the LGBTIQA+ strategy’s actions over time. This system will use key data to track how Victorian LGBTIQA+ outcomes change, basing it on the **Victorian Outcomes Reform Statement**.

# Definitions and key terms

We define key terms below and acknowledge that people have different definitions. Language has changed and continues to evolve.

**Brotherboy and sistergirl:** Aboriginal communities use these terms to describe transgender people and their relationships as a way of validating and strengthening their gender identities and relationships. Non-trans but non-conforming Aboriginal people may also use these terms. For example, both lesbian and heterosexual Aboriginal women may refer to themselves as ‘sistergirls’, ‘sisters’ or ‘tiddas’, which is an Aboriginal English term for the word ‘sisters’. Gay Aboriginal men may also refer to themselves as sisters.

**Cisgender:** Refers to a person whose gender corresponds with their biological sex.

**Community-led:** This refers to organisations, projects, programs or services led by LGBTIQA+ communities on behalf of and for LGBTIQA+ people.

**Equality:** This principle is about ensuring every LGBTIQA+ person has an equal chance to make the most of their lives and talents. It means that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or how they identify.

**Equity:** This principle builds on equality and is about ensuring just and fair inclusion for all LGBTIQA+ people and communities. An equitable society is one where everyone can take part and prosper. The goals of equity are to create conditions that allow all people to reach their full potential. These conditions must recognise that experiences, inequalities and outcomes are not the same across communities.

**Gender:** Part of how you understand who you are and how you interact with other people. Many people understand their gender as being a man or woman. Some people understand their gender as a mix of these or neither. A person’s gender and their expression of their gender can be shown in different ways, such as through behaviour or physical appearance.

**Gender diverse:** An umbrella term for a range of genders expressed in different ways. Gender diverse people use many terms to describe themselves. Language in this area is dynamic, particularly among young people, who are more likely to describe themselves as non-binary.

**Inclusion:** Empowering access to opportunities, dealing with structural inequalities, tackling unconscious bias to have equal access to all parts of society.

**Intersectionality:** This is an approach to understanding how social meanings related to the way we categorise and identify can overlap and interconnect. This creates different layers and types of discrimination or disadvantage for either an individual or group. Categories include gender, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, ethnicity, language, faith, class, socio-economic status, ability and age.

**LGBTIQA+ organisations:** This includes organisations, communities or businesses that are community-led. This can mean LGBTIQA+ people run them, steer their boards, or that they are known in community for offering services for LGBTIQA+ people. They are not the same as non-government organisations or mainstream services that may have completed Rainbow Tick accreditation or similar to ensure they are LGBTIQA+ inclusive.

**Outcomes framework:** A system to track the impact of the LGBTIQA+ strategy’s actions over time. This system will use key data to track how Victorian LGBTIQA+ outcomes change, basing it on the Victorian Outcomes Reform Statement.

**People with intersex variations:** An umbrella term for people born with natural variations to sex characteristics. This includes physical features relating to sex including genitalia and other sexual and reproductive parts of the person’s anatomy. It might also refer to the person’s chromosomes, hormones and secondary physical features emerging as a result of puberty. Some people with intersex variations describe themselves according to their specific intersex variation or use other context-dependent language. For example, someone may say they have Klinefelter (a common variation). Most people with intersex variations are cisgender and identify as male or female.

**Sex:** A person’s biological sex characteristics. We have previously understood the term ‘sex’ as either female or male.

**Sex characteristics:** A person’s physical features relating to sex. This includes genitalia and other sexual and reproductive parts of the person’s anatomy. It also includes the person’s chromosomes, hormones and secondary physical features emerging as a result of puberty.

**Sexuality or sexual orientation:** A person’s romantic or sexual attraction to others. A person’s gender does not mean they have certain sex characteristics or a particular sexuality, or vice versa.

**Trans (short for transgender) person:** Someone whose gender does not only align with the one assigned at birth. Not all trans people will use this term to describe themselves.

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1. When compared with other genders. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. 44.8 per cent of LGBTIQA+ Victorian adults and 26.7 per cent of non-LGBTIQA+ adults. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. 34.2 per cent of LGBTIQA+ adults experienced discrimination or were treated unfairly by others in the past year. This statistic is not only about LGBTIQA+ based violence but all forms of discrimination LGBTIQA+ people encountered. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Excluding government schools and as a percentage of responses to the People Matter Survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Respond ‘yes, definitely’ to feeling valued by society. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)