

Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022-32

Annual update 2023-24



Acknowledgement

To receive this document in another format, email Equality at equality@dffh.vic.gov.au.

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

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

Queer is often used as an umbrella term for diverse genders or sexualities. Some people use queer to describe their own gender or sexuality, as an identity that does not correspond to heterosexual norms. For some people, especially older people, 'queer' has negative connotations, because in the past it was used as a discriminatory term.

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

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The strategy

Victoria's first whole-of-government LGBTIQ+ strategy *Pride in our future* was launched in February 2022. The strategy is our plan to advance equality and inclusion for Victoria's diverse LGBTIQ+ communities in all Victorian Government work over the next decade.

Working with LGBTIQ+ Victorians is central to the success of the strategy. We do this by working with the LGBTIQ+ Ministerial Taskforce, Health and Wellbeing and Justice Working Groups, and through consultation with communities. This ensures the voices, wisdom and experiences of LGBTIQ+ people guide us as we co-design policy and programs to improve equality for all Victorians.



We are already making progress in our four priority areas:



Priority area 1: Equal rights and freedoms

By strengthening existing legal protections for LGBTIQ+ Victorians and ensuring we create laws with an equity lens, we aim to make changes to benefit all community members.



Priority area 2: Equitable, inclusive and accessible services

Services should be approachable, welcoming, safe and inclusive for all Victorians throughout their whole lives and when accessing different services.



Priority area 3: Visibility to inform decision-making

Improving LGBTIQ+ data collection to build evidence will enable us to get a better picture of how LGBTIQ+ Victorians experience all parts of their lives.



Priority area 4: Safe, strong and sustainable communities

LGBTIQ+ people are a proud part of the Victorian community. By creating inclusive communities, we are making sure there is a place for all Victorians to be proud and live their life to the fullest.

Delivering early actions

This is our second annual report on the strategy's progress. This report is an opportunity to demonstrate our success to date in implementing early actions and delivering key policy commitments in 2023-24.

- ✔ Over the past twelve months we have launched our annual state-wide events program – Victoria's Pride – in February 2023, that delivered 23 rural and regional events.
- ✔ Victoria's Pride, the Rainbow Street Party and Midsumma Pride March were attended by more than 98,500 Victorians.
- ✔ We established a trial of Safe Spaces for LGBTIQ+ young people in western Victoria to improve mental health and wellbeing.
- ✔ We worked with trans and gender diverse communities to co-design a public awareness campaign.
- ✔ Additionally, we supported 28 emerging LGBTIQ+ leaders to participate in the 2023 rural and regional LGBTIQ+ Leadership Program.
- ✔ In 2022-23, we established a baseline to show us the gaps and opportunities with more to achieve more over time. We developed an outcomes framework to measure our impact and we can now report on the progress of key indicators in our annual updates.
- ✔ Now in the second year of the strategy, we report on the progress of key indicators by aligning the delivery of priority actions with outcomes in the *Pride in our future: outcomes framework*.
- ✔ We've continued to make flagship investments, including \$4.5 million for Switchboard to deliver the Pride in Ageing program which helps older LGBTIQ+ Victorians feel connected, safe and proud to live as their authentic selves, and \$1.85 million for Rainbow Health Australia to deliver How2 inclusion training to service organisations to make them more inclusive for LGBTIQ+ service users.
- ✔ We made significant progress on delivering early actions under *Pride in our future* to ensure equal rights and freedoms and improve services. We are working to transform the service experience of LGBTIQ+ Victorians of all ages by making sure services are equitable, inclusive and accessible.

A whole-of-government strategy

Pride in our future is the roadmap to becoming a state where all Victorians feel safe, are healthy, have equal human rights and can live wholly and freely.

We are working to reduce discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people by reforming Victorian laws.

We are not at the start of this journey here in Victoria, but we recognise that there is still much to be done. Our commitment to a future where LGBTIQ+ Victorians participate fully in the economic, educational, political, community and social life of our state is unwavering.

Through the implementation of *Pride in our future* we seek to build LGBTIQ+ communities that are self-sustaining, and create long term, systemic change across multiple service systems.


Every Victorian has a role in making Victoria a safe, welcoming place for all LGBTIQ+ people. The words 'our' and 'we' in this document refer to the Victorian Government. Many LGBTIQ+ Victorians, allies, families, communities, departments and portfolio areas contributed to the achievements of the first year of the strategy. Even though we know there is much more to do, this work shows a whole-of-government and whole-of-communities commitment to come together and advance equality.



Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities highlights

The Commissioner plays a central role in ensuring the experiences and insights of diverse LGBTIQ+ communities directly inform the work of Government. The Commissioner forms a key part of the governance of the Equality portfolio and driving delivery of the strategy.

Key activities undertaken by the Commissioner in 2023 include:

-  Continuing to rollout the Rainbow Ready Roadmap to build inclusion across rural and regional communities.
-  Facilitating a NAIDOC week panel on the Voice Referendum held at the Victorian Pride Centre that was livestreamed across Victoria.
-  Hosting a session for LGBTIQ+ performers about 'How to Stay Safe Online' with Victoria Police and the eSafety Commissioner to support their preparation and engagement with the Melbourne Fringe Festival, Midsumma Festival and Regional Pride Festivals.
-  Hosting a 'Celebrating Libraries as Safe Spaces for LGBTIQ+ People' event in partnership with the State Library of Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria, which was attended by 100 stakeholders including librarians from across Victoria. The event was turned into a Radio National Big Ideas Podcast.
-  Supporting Pride in Our North's 'Beyond the Rainbow Lanyard' summit focused on inclusion for LGBTIQ+ people within outer suburbia.



What's next for the LGBTIQ+ strategy?

We have made significant progress on implementing early actions and an ambitious election pledge work program in 2023-24. Next, we will focus on completing early actions and progressing medium- and long-term actions, focused on ensuring all LGBTIQ+ Victorians are visible, safe and celebrated.

- We will deliver a LGBTIQ+ Justice Action Plan to improve outcomes for LGBTIQ+ Victorians in justice settings.
- We will continue to build the capacity and sustainability of the LGBTIQ+ community-led sector through the LGBTIQ+ Sector Strengthening program.
- We are supporting sustainable service delivery and growth through funding to increase the capacity of established LGBTIQ+ groups and organisations.
- We will increase visibility of LGBTIQ+ people and communities by improving LGBTIQ+ data collection and addressing data gaps to better understand the experiences of LGBTIQ+ Victorians and support evidence-based services, policy design and delivery.

To realise the vision of the LGBTIQ+ strategy through to 2032, we need to reform and transform data systems so we can make the evidence-based investments that are needed to improve economic, health, education and social outcomes for all LGBTIQ+ Victorians. This includes addressing critical issues such as LGBTIQ+ suicide rates, access to mental health support, homelessness and employment.



Strategy action priority areas



Priority area 1: Equal rights and freedoms

We are strengthening laws with an equity lens to protect more Victorians from vilification and create safe and inclusive communities.

Our second year of the strategy has delivered actions that support Victorians to have equal rights and live wholly and freely. We have delivered justice services for LGBTIQ+ communities, supported survivors of conversion or suppression practices and improved police responses to LGBTIQ+ communities.

We are implementing law reforms and upholding human rights and freedoms

- We supported survivors of conversion or suppression practices and responded to the trauma caused by these practices through the Civil Response Scheme and education and prevention program delivered by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. This Scheme was established following the introduction of the *Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021*.
- We consulted with Victorian communities and organisations, including LGBTIQ+ organisations, from July to October 2023 on how we can protect more Victorians from vilification, strengthen anti-vilification protections under civil law and strengthen and streamline anti-vilification offences under criminal law.
- Victoria Police implemented a communications and training package for police and protective services officers to improve their capacity to positively engage with sex workers. Over the long term we will deliver improved police reporting avenues for all sex workers experiencing discrimination, harassment, and violence.

We are improving avenues for accessing justice and policing responses so LGBTIQ+ people receive fair treatment

- We responded to LGBTIQ+ Victorians' specialist legal needs by funding Q+Law, a free state-wide legal service, located at the Victorian Pride Centre. Q+Law is delivered through Fitzroy Legal Service and operates in partnership with Queerspace.
- Victoria Police continued efforts to improve police responses to LGBTIQ+ communities by delivering actions under the Victoria Police LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2024 and providing LGBTIQ+ awareness and sensitivity training for Victoria Police staff. Training included an immersive learning exercise focusing on human rights, professional and ethical standards and the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ content in foundation training.
- We started work to develop and deliver a LGBTIQ+ Justice Action Plan to improve outcomes for LGBTIQ+ Victorians in justice settings.



Case Study 1: Q+Law is responding to the unique and complex legal needs of LGBTIQ+ Victorians

Established in mid-2023, Q+Law is a specialist legal service to address the unique and complex legal needs experienced by LGBTIQ+ people in Victoria.

Q+Law provides a free, state-wide, safe entry point for LGBTIQ+ people to access justice and legal services by providing advice, information and referrals. Located at the Victorian Pride Centre, Q+Law is a proud partnership of Fitzroy Legal Service and Queerspace. Q+Law has outreach locations at Queerspace and Your Community Health.

For one parent, Jo, Q+Law helped them with a family law issue. In this case, Jo's ex-partner had denied them access to their child while requesting child support. While Jo is not biologically related to their child, they are on their child's birth certificate.

Jo expressed that Q+Law was the first legal service willing to take on their case.

"They were there for me as well, being able to relate to your story. Obviously, there's a lot of people in the community that have dealt with the same thing. It was nice to feel heard, and what you were wanting, and they didn't press you.

A lot of lawyers are like, "Oh, no, we don't do that. You have to find someone else".

Q+Law took on Jo's case as a high priority and provided Jo with queer-specific legal services. Q+Law provided a judgement-free service to give Jo the space to decide what parenting arrangement they wanted and helped them navigate the family court system to achieve that outcome. Jo expressed that their lawyer at Q+Law understood the nuances of LGBTIQ+ parenting in their case, which was not what they had experienced previously, and their lawyer was able to explain the legal process in a way that was easy to understand.

"Q+Law showed empathy as well of my situation and we ended up getting the result that we were wanting, so it was great."

Jo's case highlights the struggles some LGBTIQ+ parents can face in navigating custody disputes and how having inclusive and affirming services provides safer and more effective avenues for LGBTIQ+ people to access justice.





Priority area 2: Equitable, inclusive and accessible services

We are transforming the service experience of LGBTQIA+ Victorians of all ages.

We are establishing new and improving existing services to ensure LGBTQIA+ people of all ages can access services that meet their needs, across service sectors including education, health and mental health, housing and homelessness, and justice.

We are increasing inclusivity in mainstream services and supporting community-controlled organisations to deliver affirming services

- We partnered with Rainbow Health Australia to deliver statewide How2 inclusion training to service organisations to make sure they are safe and trusted by the LGBTQIA+ community.
- We engaged education experts to update relationships, sexuality and consent education teaching and learning resources in Victorian schools so they are LGBTQIA+ inclusive. Consultation included the LGBTQIA+ Education Reference Group, a Koorie Working Group, teachers, students and parents.
- We are building the capacity and sustainability of the LGBTQIA+ community-led sector through the LGBTQIA+ Sector Strengthening program and the LGBTQIA+ Organisational Development Grants program. The Organisational Development Grants program has been delivered annually since 2016 and has supported more than 100 LGBTQIA+ organisations and groups to strengthen their internal operations and continue delivering services to LGBTQIA+ communities.

We are delivering tailored services designed to meet the needs of LGBTQIA+ people

- Family Safety Victoria is building the capacity of LGBTQIA+ community organisations to apply the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework by funding Switchboard Victoria in 2022-23 to develop tailored initiatives to aid the implementation of MARAM.
- Switchboard's Rainbow Door, Thorne Harbour Health, and Drummond Street Services are delivering specialist services, including Rainbow Door's LGBTQIA+ helpline, to support to LGBTQIA+ victim survivors of family violence.
- We continued to deliver the Pride in Place program providing over 570 LGBTQIA+ people experiencing or at risk of homelessness with safe and inclusive and intersectional support. The program is delivered through a partnership between Drummond Street Services, Queerspace, VincentCare, Uniting and Family Access Network. Pride in Place also supported over 50 non-LGBTQIA+ specific services through secondary consultations and training events to deliver more inclusive support for LGBTQIA+ clients.
- Safe Schools delivered over 180 professional learning sessions to staff on supporting LGBTQIA+ students and responded to over 1,050 requests for assistance to support LGBTQIA+ students.

We are supporting LGBTIQ+ to live the life they want by improving the effectiveness of health and wellbeing services

- We continued to roll out public fertility care services across Victoria to offer more people the chance to become parents, including LGBTIQ+ people who need donor or surrogacy services. Australia's first public egg and sperm bank has also been established at the Royal Women's Hospital and is accepting donations from the Victorian community.
- We continued to develop the Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework to improve and support the mental health and wellbeing of people from diverse communities by engaging LGBTIQ+ community members and organisations. We received over 100 survey responses, adding to the significant input of over 500 community members through consultations in 2022.
- We provided \$4.2 million to 20 community-led organisations across Victoria that work with LGBTIQ+ communities, people with disability and multicultural communities through the 2023-25 Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Grants Program.
- We kicked off plans to scope a state-wide community-managed intersex Health and Wellbeing Centre to provide holistic, safe and co-designed lifelong care, education and peer-based support in a safe space and that is inclusive of virtual services to ensure regional access.
- We supported gender affirming care for around 1,000 people through the Trans and Gender Diverse in Community Health initiative which delivers two multidisciplinary clinics in Ballarat and Preston. We also delivered statewide training in gender affirming care for around 700 health practitioners including general practitioners, nurses, social workers, allied health and psychologists.
- We delivered a \$900,000 package to eight organisations to provide vital mental health and support services including counselling and family therapy, referrals and peer support to transgender and gender diverse Victorians, their families and carers.
- We held roundtable discussions with groups disproportionately impacted by suicide, including LGBTIQ+ community sector providers and co-design workshops with people with lived and living experience of suicide, as part of the development of the new intersectional Victorian suicide prevention and response strategy 2024-34. We continued to deliver suicide prevention and response programs including peer support and LGBTIQ+ Aftercare programs.



Case Study 2: Pride in Place is helping LGBTQIA+ people find safe and sustainable housing

Pride in Place offers LGBTQIA+ people experiencing or at risk of homelessness a safe and inclusive space to find housing and connect with support services they need. Pride in Place is delivered by VincentCare Victoria, Drummond Street Services in partnership with Uniting and Family Access Network.

Pride in Place helped Amelia, a transgender woman and refugee, overcome significant challenges.

After fleeing her home country due to discrimination and violence based on her sexuality and gender identity, Amelia arrived in Australia feeling lost and unsure of how to navigate housing, employment, and community. Unfortunately, the initial housing situation Amelia found wasn't safe, she suffered violence, including exploitation, forced sex work, and had her identification stolen.

Amelia's story took a turn for the better when she found Pride in Place. After a referral from a health service, they connected her with safe and welcoming support. A dedicated service navigator at Pride in Place knew just who could help. They arranged for Amelia to meet with a Family Violence Case Manager at Queerspace, a program specifically designed for LGBTQIA+ people experiencing violence run by Drummond Street Services.

The case manager used a specialised family violence risk assessment framework, called MARAM,

to understand Amelia's situation and the danger she faced. Together, Amelia, Pride in Place, and Queerspace worked as a team. They developed a plan to help Amelia leave her unsafe living situation safely. This included providing her with emergency accommodation, a crucial first step towards a brighter future.

From there, Pride in Place supported Amelia with a successful referral to a brand-new community housing build where she was offered a long-term lease. With the stability of housing now in place, Pride in Place's network provided her with help to find a counsellor to assist with processing past experiences. They also assisted her in navigating Centrelink and connected her with local LGBTQIA+ groups, fostering social connection and a sense of belonging.

Today, Amelia thrives in her new home. She has a supportive circle of friends for coffee dates and shared meals. She's secured employment and is saving to bring her mother to Australia for a visit.

The fear and instability she once faced have been replaced by a newfound sense of autonomy and peace. In her own words, Amelia credits Pride in Place with saving her life.



Case Study 3: Supporting LGBTIQ+ mental health and wellbeing through the Diverse Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Grants Program

We are delivering a grants program for community-led organisations from diverse communities to support the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people, multicultural and multifaith communities, and people with disability.

The final report of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System recognised the strength and knowledge of diverse community leaders and community-led organisations in understanding the mental health and wellbeing needs of their communities and supporting the delivery of safe, responsive and inclusive mental health services.

In 2023-24 and 2024-25, the Victorian Government will be providing \$4.2 million for projects that will deliver an extensive range of programs, direct services, advocacy, research and workforce development to help create a more diverse and inclusive mental health and wellbeing system. Organisations supporting LGBTIQ+ people through the grants include:

- **Candella:** for trans and gender diverse people with psychosocial disabilities
- **Flat Out:** for trans and gender diverse people in custodial settings
- **Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health:** for older LGBTIQ+ people
- **Three for All Foundation:** for LGBTIQ+ refugees
- **Youth Projects Limited:** for LGBTIQ+ youth with disabilities

This builds on the 2021–22 and 2022–23 grants, which established the foundations of the grants program and supported diverse communities to engage in mental health reforms. Organisations supporting LGBTIQ+ people in 2021–22 and 2022–23 included:

- **Thorne Harbour Health:** for amplifying LGBTIQ+ Voices
- **Switchboard:** for developing a national lived experience network and growing the Suicide Prevention Program
- **Drummond Street Services:** for improving intersectional practice
- **Drummond Street Services:** for an affirming mentoring internship program
- **Minus18:** for building workshop capacity and capability of Minus18 workshop facilitators to better support LGBTIQ+ young people
- **Thorne Harbour Health:** for raising awareness of mental health issues experienced by LGBTIQ+ community members from multicultural and multifaith communities.





Priority area 3: Visibility to inform decision-making

We are addressing data gaps to better understand the experiences of LGBTIQ+ Victorians and support evidence-based policy design and delivery.

In the second year of the strategy, we have laid the foundations to address LGBTIQ+ data gaps by starting a nation-first LGBTIQ+ data availability and reform agenda across the Victorian Government.

We are continuing to build the evidence base to better understand what LGBTIQ+ people need

- We have delivered an outcomes framework that aligns actions with outcomes in the *Pride in our future* strategy so we can measure our impact and report on the progress of key indicators. The outcomes framework will evolve as we achieve strategy actions and as we improve our LGBTIQ+ data capture and analysis.
- We have made changes to hospital data collections so that health services are required to collect a patient's sex at birth as well as their gender. A guidance document has been published on the Department of Health website to support staff in Victorian health services to understand, plan and implement changes to sex and gender data reporting requirements.
- The Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) is improving and standardising how Victorian Public Service departments collect demographic data from their employees to support data collection across government to be inclusive and appropriate.
- We are supporting LGBTIQ+ data and research to build the evidence base for effective and inclusive services. This includes partnering with Drummond Street Services to deliver the LGBTIQ+ Health and Wellbeing Project to investigate the experiences of LGBTIQ+ peoples' mental health, wellbeing and mental health help-seeking.
- We engaged the Victorian Government's Centre for Evaluation and Research Evidence to collate and identify program evaluations that have an LGBTIQ+ focus to improve the understanding of how LGBTIQ+ specialist and mainstream services can deliver supports for LGBTIQ+ communities.

We are co-designing policies and programs with LGBTIQ+ people and communities to support evidence-based decision making

- We are increasing diverse LGBTIQ+ representation on Victorian Government boards including through the fifth term of the LGBTIQ+ Taskforce and Health and Wellbeing and Justice Working Groups, the LGBTIQ+ Disability Inclusion Expert Advisory Group and the Education Reference Group.
- We partnered with Switchboard to deliver the Pride in Ageing program, in collaboration with community, to meet the needs of LGBTIQ+ Victorians as they age so they can feel connected, safe and able to live freely as their authentic selves. The program aligns with the Victorian Government's *Ageing Well Action Plan 2022-2026*. It will be co-designed in 2024.
- We co-designed multiple programs with LGBTIQ+ people and communities to support the delivery of tailored and evidence-based services including QHub, Pride in Ageing, Pride in Place, LGBTIQ+ Suicide Aftercare program.



Case study 4: Delivering an outcomes framework to track our impact and make and evidence-based decisions to improve the lives of LGBTIQ+ Victorians

We have developed an outcomes framework to set the key impacts we want to see in Victoria's LGBTIQ+ communities over the life of *Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022-32*.

The outcomes framework is a system to track the impact actions under of the strategy's four priority areas. It will support us know if our actions are driving change in the short, medium and long term. By informing our actions with evidence about what is working and what is not, we can drive equality and inclusion for Victoria's LGBTIQ+ communities and achieve our vision.

Our outcomes recognise and consider intersectionality and the diversity within LGBTIQ+ communities. To develop the outcomes framework, we consulted with key stakeholders over 18 months. This consultation included the LGBTIQ+ Taskforce, Justice and Health and Wellbeing Working Groups, Office of the Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities, and stakeholders across the Victorian Public Service.

The outcomes framework will also help us to improve the way we collect and use data about LGBTIQ+ people and overcome significant data gaps for LGBTIQ+ people and communities. We will report to the public on the outcomes framework through our annual updates.

The Government's intended outcomes to improve the lives of LGBTIQ+ Victorians are organised according to the four priority areas of the *Pride in our future* strategy.

Priority 1: Equal rights and freedoms

- **Outcome 1.1:** A more empowering legislative environment upholding the human rights and freedoms of LGBTIQ+ people
- **Outcome 1.2:** LGBTIQ+ people have safe and effective ways to access justice

Priority 2: Equitable, inclusive and accessible services

- **Outcome 2.1:** Services are inclusive, affirming and available to LGBTIQ+ people
- **Outcome 2.2:** Equitable and effective services are provided to LGBTIQ+ people
- **Outcome 2.3:** Health and wellbeing services support LGBTIQ+ people to live the life they want

Priority 3: Visibility to inform decision making

- **Outcome 3.1:** Data collection about LGBTIQ+ people is appropriate and effective for building an evidence base
- **Outcome 3.2:** Decision making affecting LGBTIQ+ people is evidence-based

Priority 4: Safe, strong and sustainable communities

- **Outcome 4.1:** LGBTIQ+ people are free from harassment, abuse, hate speech and discrimination
- **Outcome 4.2:** LGBTIQ+ people are safe and secure in their everyday lives
- **Outcome 4.3:** Victoria's communities are welcoming and inclusive for LGBTIQ+ people





Priority area 4: Safe, strong and sustainable communities

We celebrate and connect LGBTIQ+ communities and LGBTIQ+ people of all ages feel safe and have security.

We are ensuring that Victoria's communities are welcoming through supporting events and festivals and social inclusion in sport. We are also supporting LGBTIQ+ people to have safety and security in their everyday lives through supporting employment and driving changes to government policy and systems to be more inclusive.

We are working to ensure that LGBTIQ+ people are free from harassment, abuse and discrimination

- Rainbow Health Australia continued to deliver the LGBTIQ+ Family Violence Prevention Project which builds the capability of the LGBTIQ+ prevention of family violence sector, through delivering training and support services. The project has developed resources including The Pride in Prevention and the Pride in Prevention Partnership Guide.
- We are reducing discrimination by implementing robust processes across the Victorian Public Sector (VPS) to support VPS employees who need to change their sex or gender listed in internal systems. The VPSC completed a co-design project to improve employment forms and diversity workforce data collection and provided case management support to individuals navigating VPS employment systems.
- Respect Victoria worked with Jesuit Social Services on The Man Box 2024 survey, a comprehensive study that focuses on the attitudes to manhood and the behaviours of Australian men aged 18 to 45. The 2024 survey will have a strengthened emphasis on investigating men's endorsement of homophobia and transphobia.
- We released *Our equal state: Victoria's gender equality strategy and action plan 2023-27* that recognises that trans and gender diverse people have distinct experiences of gender inequality. The strategy affirms the Victorian Government's commitment that gender equality is – and must always be – trans and gender diverse inclusive.

We are supporting LGBTIQ+ people to feel safe across Victoria and have security in their everyday lives

- We supported Pride in Employment at the Victorian Pride Centre to build the capacity of employment services and service providers to create and support pathways to employment for LGBTIQ+ jobseekers. This included delivering a one full-day seminar at the Victorian Pride Centre for 100 Jobs Victoria service provider representatives in September 2023.
- We increased employment and economic security for transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse Victorians through Project Purple at Fitted for Work by improving to access employment opportunities.
- The Department of Transport and Planning have researched the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people on public transport networks. This initiative address data gaps by building an understanding of the LGBTIQ+ community's needs and experiences on public transport to create safer and more inclusive transport networks.
- Victoria Police appeared on JOY 94.9 radio to discuss issues that affect LGBTIQ+ communities, new initiatives and general police news. Victoria Police shared 128 content pieces across various social media platforms, highlighting Victoria Police's ongoing commitment to supporting LGBTIQ+ inclusion. This content received 2 million impressions and over 190,000 engagements.



We are supporting inclusion across Victoria and celebrating LGBTIQ+ communities

- We launched two new safe spaces for young LGBTIQ+ Victorians – QHub in Ballarat and Geelong. Co-designed with communities, the hubs are a central, safe, affirming and inclusive space for LGBTIQ+ youth aged up to 25, providing access to crucial mental health support, social connection opportunities and wellbeing activities.
- We supported the Pride Cup to deliver community engagement initiatives at the Melbourne Victory vs Adelaide United A-Leagues double header to support social inclusion and to increase awareness about diverse LGBTIQ+ communities.
- We funded events and festivals with a focus on celebrating the diversity of LGBTIQ+ communities. This includes people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, communities from low socio-economic status backgrounds, faith-based communities, trans and gender diverse communities, intersex people, older LGBTIQ+ people, bi+ communities and peri-urban, regional and rural communities. We have funded almost 200 LGBTIQ+ events across Victoria since 2018-19.
- We funded LGBTIQ+ arts and culture organisation Midsumma to deliver annual statewide celebrations Victoria's Pride and the annual Pride March held in February each year in St Kilda.
- We supported projects through the \$3.4 million Together More Active Program 2023-27 to increase LGBTIQ+ inclusion and participation in sport and active recreation. This includes Proud 2 Play to deliver 2 projects with the Victorian Amateur Football Association, Rainbow Ready Clubs to provide community clubs with tools to embed LGBTIQ+ inclusion, Tennis Victoria to deliver the Accessibility, Community Equity program and Basketball Victoria to deliver the Free Throws program.
- Sport and Recreation Victoria established the Pilot Equity and Inclusion Community Consultation group to consult with community members with diverse lived experiences including LGBTIQ+ communities to improve participation in sport and active recreation for underrepresented groups.

Case study 5: QHub is creating safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ young people

Launched in 2023, QHub provides mental health and wellbeing services for LGBTIQ+ young people aged up to 25 and their families, allowing them to access safe, affirming and inclusive support when they need it, close to home. QHub also provides social connection opportunities and wellbeing activities.

QHub is delivered through a partnership between Drummond Street Services Queerspace, Wellways, and Cafs Ballarat, with two physical spaces in Geelong and Ballarat, along with outreach services for young people on the Surf Coast and online.

QHub is offering Riley, a 15-year-old young person, a safe peer space to explore their gender and support their mental health.

Riley was referred into QHub by Headspace and Orange Door for LGBTIQ+ Peer Work. Riley meets regularly with two Peer Workers at QHub.

Both Riley and one of the Peer Workers identify as LGBTIQ+ and share cultural identity, which has supported the peer connection and intersectional focus in the peer sessions.

During sessions, Riley and their peer workers have undertaken activities such as badge making and drawing whilst unpacking and exploring each person's understanding, experiences, and connection to gender, including experiences of both gender euphoria and dysphoria. Riley is being supported to access a binder through a Trans and Gender Diverse Clothes Swap. QHub has also engaged with Riley at their school including by attending community events.

Both Riley and their family are receiving inclusive and affirming support through QHub, as Riley's primary parent is also linked with a Youth and Family Practitioner. QHub will continue to provide a safe space for Riley to explore their gender and for their parent to work collaboratively with the Youth and Family Practitioner. Together they will continue to check-in on Riley's mental health support needs and re-refer into Headspace as needed.