

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



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1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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February 2022.



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ISBN 978-1-76096-708-6 (pdf/online/MS word)

ISBN 978-1-76096-713-0 (Print)

Available at **Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022-32**  
<<https://www.vic.gov.au/pride-our-future-victorias-lgbtq-strategy-2022-32>>

Printed by Hornet Press, Knoxfield (2108094).



# 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 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 or queer. 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 LGBTIQ+ Victorians have achieved – it's clear that not everyone feels completely safe, supported and equal in this state.**



LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022-32* strives to create a more inclusive and cohesive state, where LGBTIQ+ 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.

LGBTIQ+ 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Dan Andrews'.

**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 LGBTIQ+ communities.**



LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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, LGBTIQ+ advocates have shown remarkable strength by driving change to improve the lives of all LGBTIQ+ Victorians.

Our government has been so proud to build on the legacy of LGBTIQ+ advocates by working with LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022-32* is the direct result of LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ strategy will rally every part of the Victorian Government to do its bit in achieving LGBTIQ+ 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Foley'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue background.

**Martin Foley MP**  
Minister for Equality

## Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities

Victoria is leading the way in advancing the rights of LGBTIQ+ people, and as the Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ Communities has been an accepted and trusted voice for LGBTIQ+ Victorians, advocating to strengthen pride and equality for our communities. During this time, a significant amount of work has been done in transforming the LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ Communities will continue to play a key role, providing advice to government on the needs and priorities of LGBTIQ+ people and the organisations that serve our communities.

As the Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022-2032* strengthens our commitment to achieve the most significant growth for LGBTIQ+ people in Victorian history.

When we talk about LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people and their diverse communities.

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

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

*Todd Fernando*

**Todd Fernando**

Victorian Commissioner for  
LGBTIQ+ Communities

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgement</b>	<b>3</b>
Language statement	3
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
Premier	4
Minister for Equality	5
Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities	6
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
Vision statement	9
<b>LGBTIQ+ communities</b>	<b>10</b>
LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal experiences in LGBTIQ+ communities	13
Current outcomes for LGBTIQ+ Victorians	14
The power of peers	17
<b>The call for change</b>	<b>18</b>
Protection of human rights and access to justice	19
Intersectionality and inclusion	19
Representation and participation	20
LGBTIQ+ inclusive and accessible services and community	20
Connection within and between LGBTIQ+ communities	21
Data, research and evidence	21
Targets, monitoring and reporting	22
Challenging ageism by building connections	22
<b>Towards equality</b>	<b>23</b>
Timeline of major community, legal and policy developments in Victoria	24
<b>Framework for change</b>	<b>27</b>
LGBTIQ+ strategy framework	28
From roller derby to gala – how a regional community celebrated its LGBTIQ+ people	29
Priority area 1: Equal rights and freedoms	30
Recognition matters – making birth certificates inclusive	32
Priority area 2: Equitable, inclusive and accessible services	33
Equality is everyone’s responsibility	36
Priority area 3: Visibility to inform decision making	37
Changing attitudes with LGBTIQ+ voices	40
Priority area 4: Safe, strong and sustainable communities	41
<b>Delivering on the vision</b>	<b>44</b>
Roles and responsibilities	44
Community	44
Tracking outcomes	44
Reporting on progress	44
<b>Definitions and key terms</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>47</b>

# Introduction

**Victoria's first whole-of-government LGBTIQ+ strategy, *Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ 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 (LGBTIQ+) communities within all aspects of government work over the next decade.**

LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people, communities and organisations enjoy more freedoms and acceptance than as little as five years ago.

Over the past decade our understanding of LGBTIQ+ communities and diversity has grown. People who were on the margins of rainbow communities are now enjoying more inclusion. Like all Victorians, LGBTIQ+ people are diverse in multiple ways. This includes their culture, education, ability, where they live, ethnicity and faith. The understanding of LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ communities and understanding LGBTIQ+ diversity. But LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ (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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ leaders, organisational representatives, advocates and individuals. Their experiences and voices lay at the heart of the LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ Victorians.

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

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



## Vision statement

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

LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ equality, celebrating culture, community and taking sustained, enduring and measurable action.

We developed the LGBTIQ+ strategy vision with LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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.

# LGBTIQ+ communities

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

Our understanding of LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people of colour, LGBTIQ+ people of faith and trans and gender diverse 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 LGBTIQ+ communities and their diversity.

Just over one in 20 adult Victorians (5.7 per cent) openly identify as being LGBTIQ+ (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 LGBTIQ+ experiences. Being LGBTIQ+ is only one part of any person's identity. As well as being diverse in their sexuality, gender identity or sex characteristics, LGBTIQ+ 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, LGBTIQ+ Victorians from ethnic faith communities experience life as LGBTIQ+, as well as being a person of colour and a person of faith.

## 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.

This is especially true for first-generation Australians who have unique journeys to identify with all aspects of themselves.

Many people within LGBTIQ+ communities who live with other forms of discrimination and inequality are less visible. For example, LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ communities, as well as broader community stigma.

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

## 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 LGBTIQ+ Victorians is limited, there is an emerging evidence base offering insight into LGBTIQ+ lives and community experience



More Victorian adults aged 18 to 34 identify as LGBTIQ+ than other age groups



One-fifth of young LGBTIQ+ people take part in an LGBTIQ+ group at school or university



LGBTIQ+ people are more likely to call metropolitan Melbourne home than rural and regional areas



LGBTIQ+ people are more likely to use a mainstream health service that is LGBTIQ+ inclusive



LGBTIQ+ people are just as likely to speak a language other than English at home



Most LGBTIQ+ people feel that taking part in LGBTIQ+ communities is a positive thing



LGBTIQ+ people are more likely to volunteer



LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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.



## LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal experiences in LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people, sistergirls and brotherboys across all of Victoria.

LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal Victorians have seen a lack of diversity in LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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, LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal Victorians feel excluded from decision-making processes in the design of LGBTIQ+ events and spaces. Being viewed as a 'token' and undesirable for leadership limits opportunities to be seen as legitimate curators and contributors to LGBTIQ+ life. It also means that LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people and express her Aboriginal identity and culture without racial discrimination. Alli wants to socialise with non-LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal people and communities and express her LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ Victorians

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

LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ spaces. For many LGBTIQ+ 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 trans and gender diverse 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<sup>1</sup>

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

Research into the health, mental health, economic and social outcomes of LGBTIQ+ people shows they still face more challenges than the general population. The mental health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people is particularly worrying. Rates of depression, anxiety and suicide are high. Almost one in two LGBTIQ+ adults have been diagnosed with anxiety or depression compared with just over one in four non-LGBTIQ+ adults.<sup>2</sup>

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

Community consultation feedback

1 When compared with other genders.

2 44.8 per cent of LGBTIQ+ Victorian adults and 26.7 per cent of non-LGBTIQ+ adults.

LGBTIQ+ outcomes do not stand alone. They often increase for certain communities. For example, young LGBTIQ+ people are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of discrimination. There are worse mental health and wellbeing outcomes for trans and gender diverse 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 LGBTIQ+ people. But there is still more work to do to improve the data we have. For example, accurate LGBTIQ+ 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, LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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

## 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

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

Capturing the views, hopes and wishes of Victoria's diverse LGBTIQ+ communities is central to understanding how government can respond to the challenges facing LGBTIQ+ people, communities and organisations. Our consultation highlighted the various ways government can work in partnership with LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ Communities in bringing together LGBTIQ+ Victorians. The former Commissioner, Ro Allen, attended all 41 targeted community workshops.

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

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

## Definition

**LGBTIQ+ organisations** This includes organisations, communities or businesses that are community-led. This can mean LGBTIQ+ people run them, steer their boards, or that they are known in community for offering services for LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ community organisations
- **15 submissions** from government organisations (including local councils)
- **two submissions** from groups affiliated with universities

## Protecting human rights and access to justice

LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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.

### Definition

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

## Intersectionality and inclusion

Feedback highlighted the need to better understand intersectionality and the overlapping forms of discrimination that many LGBTIQ+ people face. Discrimination takes several forms such as subtle stereotyping, lack of protections within the law and obvious harassment and violence. Many LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ communities can celebrate diversity and contribute to improving all LGBTIQ+ 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.

'My diverse identities are a barrier to employment. I have to separate out my disability from being LGBTIQ+. 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people represented in a positive way as role models.’**

**Workshop participant, rural and regional consultation**

A key part of LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people in the design, delivery and review of government policies, services and programs.

## LGBTIQ+ inclusive and accessible services and community

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

LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ connection and inclusion and celebrating community strengths. But LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people. For LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ services and programs in mainstream settings.



## Connecting within and between LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ community delivers widespread benefits to LGBTIQ+ people, including better health. People mentioned opportunities to increase the accessibility of LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ experiences is building. But we need more work that looks at the gaps in getting reliable, accurate and consistent data across all LGBTIQ+ groups and their families. People advocated for improved collection and better sharing of high-quality data about LGBTIQ+ Victorians. Data collection should include best practice methods of collecting data that is appropriate and includes how LGBTIQ+ people identify.



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

**Workshop participant, mental health services consultation**

LGBTIQ+ organisations and researchers raised the need to build an evidence base that strengthens arguments for funding effective LGBTIQ+ programs. Community-led research will help capture the lived experience of all LGBTIQ+ communities. It can lead to better outcomes for everyday LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ inclusion at the local community level. Local councils, education settings with professional teaching standards, and government statutory bodies must better consider LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people by working in partnership with them to implement strategies for change. Much of this work focuses on building intergenerational connections within LGBTIQ+ communities to help protect older LGBTIQ+ 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 trans and gender diverse (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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ communities, but it is something we can all work to address. Acknowledging the unique challenges faced by older LGBTIQ+ people and being open to connection are an important start.

# Towards equality

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

Aboriginal LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal history that has come before this.

Over the past five decades, we have seen significant shifts towards LGBTIQ+ equality, particularly in the past 20 years. These changes reflect decades of campaigning by LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ cohorts and groups.

Understanding LGBTIQ+ progress in Victoria gives a glimpse into the history of LGBTIQ+ repression and ongoing struggles for equality. Discrimination was often enshrined in the state's law and institutions. The LGBTIQ+ strategy is the logical next step in advancing LGBTIQ+ 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, LGBTIQ+ 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 2010*

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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal people

LGBT couples can adopt children



## 2016 continued

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 LGBTIQ+ communities, with later budget investment in LGBTIQ+ specialist family violence services and LGBTIQ+ 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 Yapaneyepuj '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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ community of practice meetings held to build rural and regional LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people

The Victorian Inquiry into Anti-Vilification Protections recommends extending protections to include LGBTIQ+ attributes

Respect Victoria campaign to address LGBTIQ+ family violence launched

Victorian Pride Centre opens

The attribute of sex characteristics is added to the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, protecting against discrimination for intersex Victorians

## 2022

The Victorian Government adopts its first LGBTIQ+ strategy



# Framework for change

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

The LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ strategy needs to reflect the diverse experiences of all LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ community. This ecosystem includes:

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

The Victorian Government holds many of the levers to drive LGBTIQ+ equality in Victoria. But we all have a role to play – including the broader Victorian community (refer to Figure 1).

The actions undertaken as part of the LGBTIQ+ strategy aim to drive a range of immediate and longer term outcomes to improve the lives of LGBTIQ+ 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.

Figure 1: The Victorian LGBTIQ+ ecosystem



# LGBTIQ+ strategy framework

## Vision

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

LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ equality, celebrating culture, community and taking sustained, enduring and measurable action.

## Priority areas

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

			
<b>Priority area 1</b>	<b>Priority area 2</b>	<b>Priority area 3</b>	<b>Priority area 4</b>
Equal rights and freedoms	Equitable, inclusive, and accessible services	Visibility to inform decision making	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 LGBTIQ+ outcomes.

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

Gippsland Ranges Roller Derby – located in Victoria’s regional south-east – estimates that 30 per cent of its members identify as LGBTIQ+. Combining this with a knowledge that for many LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ Gippslanders.

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

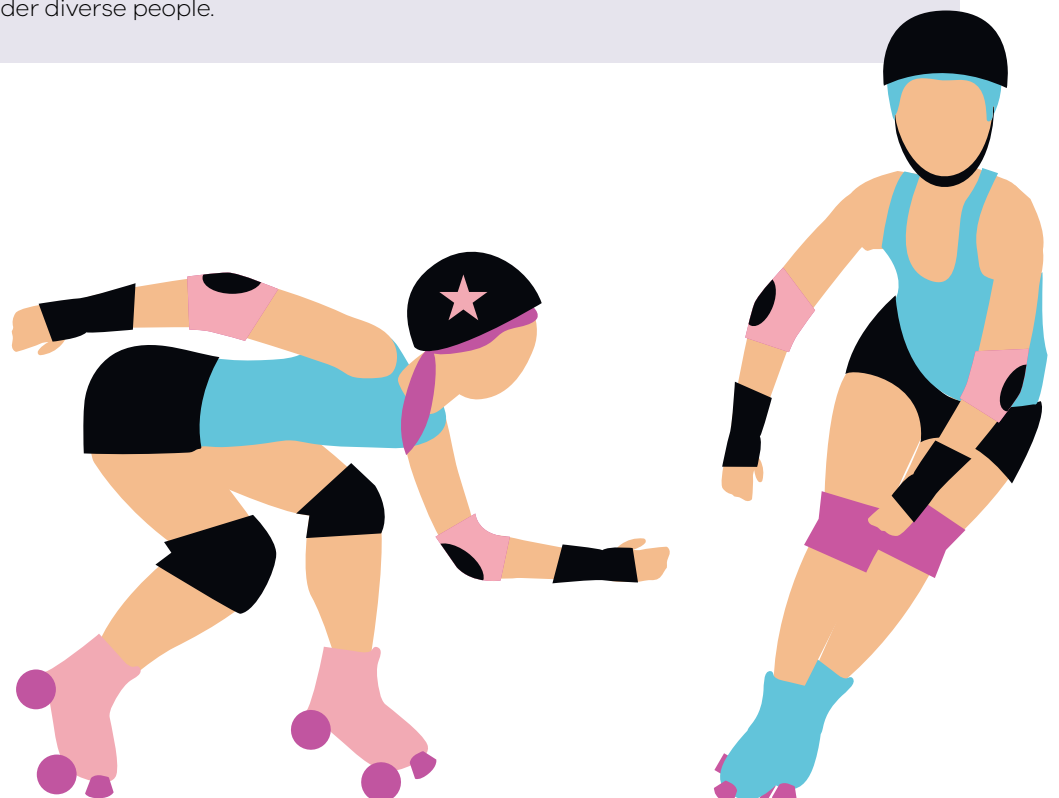
**Bodye Darvill (she/her), Gippsland Ranges Roller Derby president and LGBTIQ+ ally**

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 LGBTIQ+ 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 trans and gender diverse 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 LGBTIQ+ people, their friends, families and allies come together to dance the night away. The events were particularly emotional for older LGBTIQ+ people, who had not experienced such local LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

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





## Priority area 1: Equal rights and freedoms

**Strengthening existing legal protections for LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people the same as other Victorians.

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

**Workshop participant, LGBTIQ+ Taskforce and Justice Working Group consultation**

Not having equal rights or not making laws that ensure equal rights means LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people in different ways

For many in the LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ experiences are not all the same. Many LGBTIQ+ people face intersecting and other inequalities under the law. An LGBTIQ+ person may also face racial or gendered discrimination under the law on top of discrimination based on their LGBTIQ+ identity. For example, although Aboriginal LGBTIQ+ people may have greater LGBTIQ+ 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 2010* to better protect LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people face. As we get to work on legal reforms, consulting with community will be critical.

We will also ensure new laws include LGBTIQ+ experiences and potential impacts on LGBTIQ+ communities. This will include developing an LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 2010*



Reform anti-vilification laws to respond to the needs of LGBTIQ+ Victorians



Implement the *Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021*



Support specialist legal services for LGBTIQ+ Victorians who experience discrimination and disadvantage associated with their sexuality or gender identity



Develop and deliver the LGBTIQ+ Justice Action Plan to improve outcomes for LGBTIQ+ Victorians



Deliver improved police responses to LGBTIQ+ communities, including implementing the Victoria Police LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan and providing access to LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ Victorians, this priority area will see actions that support LGBTIQ+ communities to feel safe in their everyday lives. They will live lives free from harassment, physical abuse, harmful hate speech and discrimination.



LGBTIQ+ Victorians will know and understand their rights and have culturally safe avenues to resolve issues when they arise. LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ experiences of discrimination from 34.2 per cent<sup>3</sup> (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 trans and gender diverse (TGD) communities and their allies.

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 LGBTIQ+ families, it can be chosen by any family to celebrate the birth of their child.

**‘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.

These reforms have been welcomed across LGBTIQ+ 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.

<sup>3</sup> 34.2 per cent of LGBTIQ+ adults experienced discrimination or were treated unfairly by others in the past year. This statistic is not only about LGBTIQ+ based violence but all forms of discrimination LGBTIQ+ people encountered.



## 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. LGBTQ+ 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, LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ people are more likely to use a mainstream service accredited as LGBTQ+ inclusive or LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ inclusiveness, safety and accessibility in mind will improve the experience LGBTQ+ Victorians have when using government services.

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

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

Access also means providing LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ friendly services. For example, LGBTQ+ services should be culturally suitable for Aboriginal and multicultural communities. Likewise, Aboriginal and multicultural communities' services should be LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people are understood, respected, considered and embedded in service delivery. For example, the victimisation of LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ communities. We will need to continue and build on this work to realise the LGBTIQ+ strategy. Rainbow Tick accreditation and other targeted LGBTIQ+ inclusion initiatives are great examples of how we can build services that are safe, inclusive and affirming for LGBTIQ+ Victorians.

Safe Schools ensures Victorian schools are safe and inclusive environments for all students, including LGBTIQ+ students. This is a great example of how we can prevent discrimination that harms LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ specialist and mainstream services in the provision of adequate supports for LGBTIQ+ communities



Embed LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ inclusive, including supporting resources



Develop LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ jobseekers



Improve LGBTIQ+ inclusion in family violence and sexual assault sector, including addressing key service gaps and strengthening LGBTIQ+ capability



Improve public fertility care access for LGBTIQ+ families by delivering on recommendations from the Review of Assisted Reproductive Treatment in Victoria



Support LGBTIQ+ inclusive employment practices, including resources and supports for employers



Implement the recommendations of the review into decriminalising sex work in Victoria



Support young LGBTIQ+ people to foster connections with peers and older LGBTIQ+ communities

## Bringing LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ mental health and wellbeing needs. LGBTIQ+ specialist services like the LGBTIQ+ 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.

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



Develop LGBTIQ+ inclusive resources and provide targeted access to LGBTIQ+ inclusion training for mainstream services



Improve LGBTIQ+ inclusion in government-funded mainstream services through the implementation of best practice standards for service delivery



Support the capability building and sustainability of the LGBTIQ+ community-led sector to continue support for LGBTIQ+ Victorians



Support health and wellbeing supports for trans and gender diverse communities in Victoria, through clinical and peer support services



Co-design services with LGBTIQ+ communities and organisations

### Definition

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

## Signs of impact

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



LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people attempting suicide in the past 12 months. We want to see it fall from the current 5.2 per cent of LGBTIQ+ adults (Hill et al. 2020) and 9.4 per cent of young LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ clients. It wanted to create an affirming and culturally safe workplace for its LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ clients reporting feeling welcomed, respected and safe. Their needs are better met by staff who understand their experiences. LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ data collection to build evidence will enable us to get a better picture of how LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people.

### Identifying needs

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

### Driving visibility and accountability with inclusive data

We can achieve greater visibility of LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people choose to identify. It must help pinpoint LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ data is a complex yet important piece of the puzzle in ensuring LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ data in our systems. The recently launched Prevention Of Family Violence Data Platform is an example. This platform draws together data from various LGBTIQ+ surveys to help focus on LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people.

## Achieving consistency

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

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

### Early actions we will deliver



Develop an LGBTIQ+ strategy outcomes framework to measure impact and progress



Support key LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ inclusive workplaces



## 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 LGBTIQ+ homelessness services informs the LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people feeling safe and willing to share their personal information. We will introduce LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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



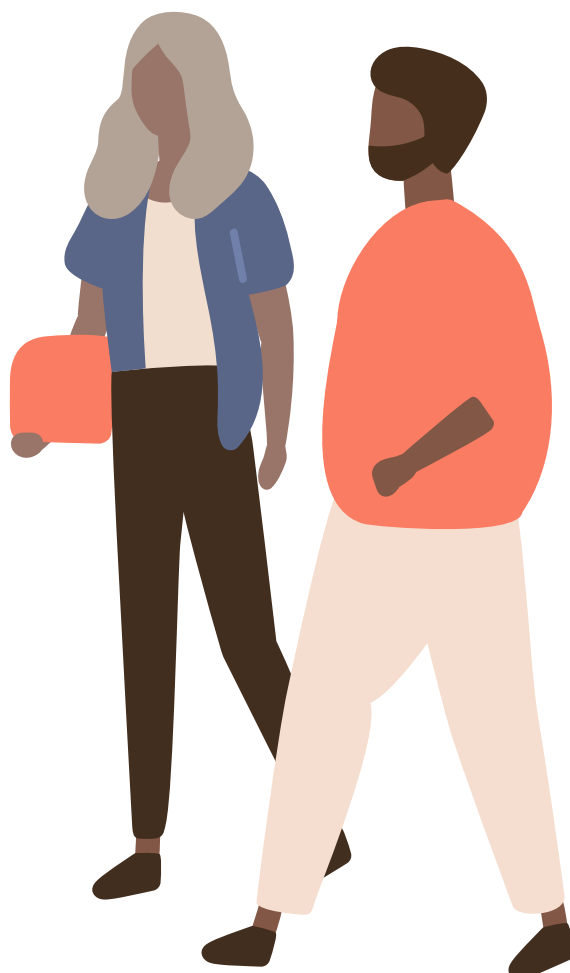
Increase diverse LGBTIQ+ representation on Victorian Government boards



Ongoing support for LGBTIQ+ communities' voice to government, such as the LGBTIQ+ Taskforce and other advisory groups



Continue the work of the Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities as a crucial role in advocating for improved LGBTIQ+ outcomes across government



## Signs of impact

All LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ visibility to inform decision making.



We will increase LGBTIQ+ voices and experiences across government, and LGBTIQ+ people will feel comfortable engaging with data channels. LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ inclusive data collection in government initiatives, programs and services.

## Changing attitudes with LGBTIQ+ voices

Family can be an important source of support for all of us – especially for LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people within families.

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

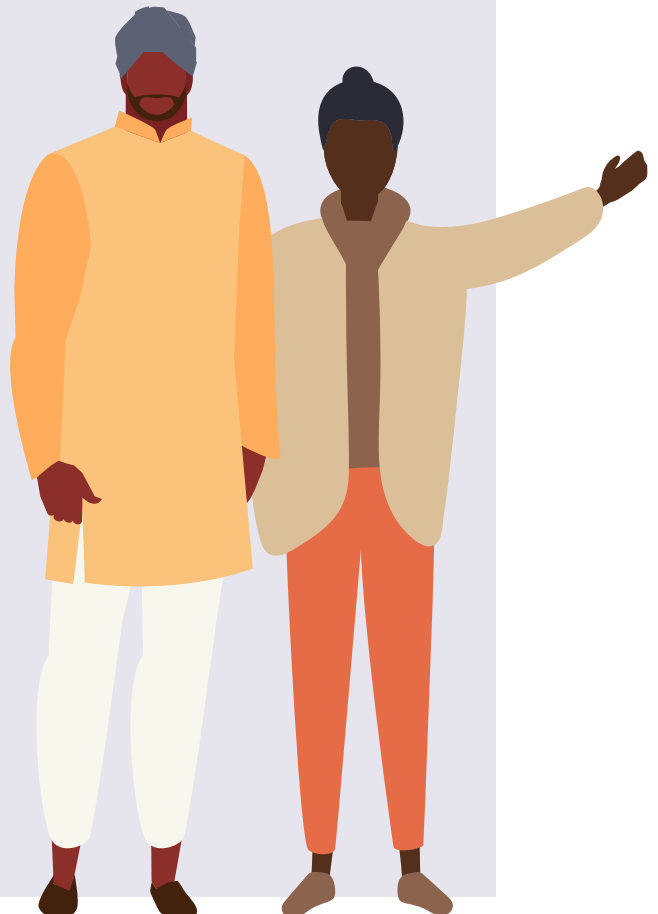
Statewide advertising showed how discrimination by family members can make LGBTIQ+ people feel, and how a family member’s support and inclusion helps. The campaign also includes a series of videos sharing stories of support. LGBTIQ+ people shared stories of their family’s support and how this has been 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people. The success of the Pride, Respect, Equality campaign can be built on by placing LGBTIQ+ 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

LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ discrimination, stigma and abuse before it happens, we can remove the influences that we know lead to poorer health and wellbeing outcomes for LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ Victorians' lives. The bonds, friendship and allyship formed within these communities provides a 'chosen family' where LGBTIQ+ people can live freely and find acceptance. For LGBTIQ+ 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, LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ people from all over the country and world. We need to continue to build safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ people in the workplace, at home and when in the community. We want a Victoria where LGBTIQ+ Victorians are not discriminated against or harassed just for being who they are.

We also want to prevent family violence against LGBTIQ+ Victorians through primary prevention programs that promote respectful, loving and safe relationships. LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ groups and diverse LGBTIQ+ communities can build their leadership capacity and ability to influence.

### Early actions we will deliver



Deliver a state-wide awareness raising campaign to celebrate and raise awareness of LGBTIQ+ experiences, including diverse communities



Support LGBTIQ+ events to celebrate LGBTIQ+ diversity and increase community connections



Increase LGBTIQ+ employment opportunities in government-funded major transport infrastructure initiatives and projects



Drive a centralised approach to support LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ Victorians. We will also influence other public awareness campaigns to make sure they represent LGBTIQ+ Victorians.

We need to continue along the path of social change and increasing community acceptance across the board. But within LGBTIQ+ communities, we must still address other forms of discrimination. Understanding and addressing all forms of family violence against people from LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+.'*

### 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 LGBTIQ+ equality work, have a unique environment and set of needs. We will build on the success of the LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ sector

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

**Workshop participant, LGBTIQ+ Taskforce and Justice Working Group consultation**

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

## Leading by example

The Victorian public sector is an important employer of LGBTIQ+ people. About 4.4 per cent of Victorian public sector employees openly identify as LGBTIQ+ (Victorian Public Sector Commission [VPSC] 2020).<sup>4</sup> As a subgroup, 6.1 per cent of Victorian public service employees openly identify as LGBTIQ+ (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’ LGBTIQ+ inclusion and diversity policies and practices.

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



Develop a plan to ensure LGBTIQ+ inclusion is embedded in the design of safer public spaces



Continue to support the capacity of professional and community sports to be LGBTIQ+ inclusive



Continue our commitment to improve LGBTIQ+ inclusion in government policies, programs and services

## Signs of impact

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

LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ communities and diversity will grow.



To track progress, we want to see LGBTIQ+ people’s feeling of their value in society increase from the current 41.4 per cent<sup>5</sup> (VAHI 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Excluding government schools and as a percentage of responses to the People Matter Survey.

<sup>5</sup> Respond ‘yes, definitely’ to feeling valued by society.

# Delivering on the vision

We have the vision and the reforms to deliver the LGBTIQ+ strategy and improve the lives of LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ Taskforce includes LGBTIQ+ community representatives. The Taskforce will provide community advice and oversight for delivering actions and tracking outcomes.

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 LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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.

## Community

LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ strategy. We also want to build a better picture of LGBTIQ+ communities in Victoria that can feed into policy and service design.

### Definition

**Outcomes framework** A system to track the impact of the LGBTIQ+ strategy's actions over time. This system will use key data to track how Victorian LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ communities on behalf of and for LGBTIQ+ people.

**Equality** This principle is about ensuring every LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ 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.

**LGBTIQ+ organisations** This includes organisations, communities or businesses that are community-led. This can mean LGBTIQ+ people run them, steer their boards, or that they are known in community for offering services for LGBTIQ+ 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 LGBTIQ+ inclusive.

**Outcomes framework** A system to track the impact of the LGBTIQ+ strategy's actions over time. This system will use key data to track how Victorian LGBTIQ+ 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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