



LGBTIQ+ Strategy Directions Paper



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 and that Aboriginal knowledge has the potential to enrich efforts towards LGBTIQ+ equality.

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 commonly 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 use of the words 'our' and 'we' throughout this document refers to the Victorian Government.

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Foreword

Message from the Minister for Equality



When we initially committed to develop the first whole of Victorian Government strategy for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) communities, we couldn't have predicted the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic which has so dramatically changed the way we live.

Despite the pandemic, more than 800 people and organisations have had their say on how the Strategy can contribute to ongoing efforts to improve equality for LGBTIQ+ communities. This is a testament to the determination of Victorians to work together to achieve this important goal.

I am so grateful to everyone who has shared their insights and expertise, including people from across a range of diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ organisations, mainstream organisations, and the public sector.

There are so many people and organisations committed to equality, and this LGBTIQ+ Strategy is aimed at helping us all collaborate on this journey.

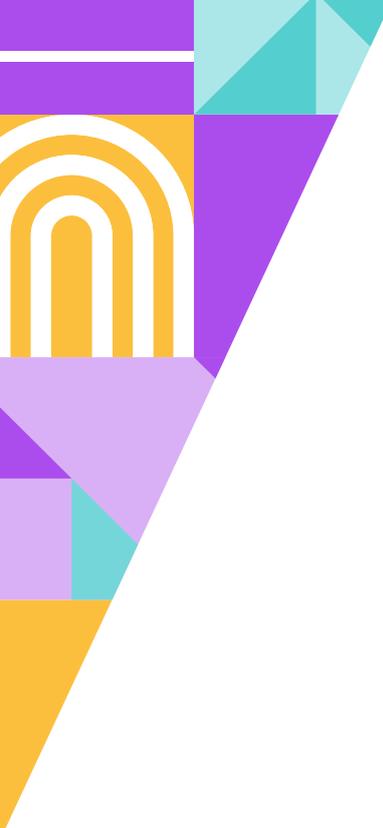
I am proud that this public consultation proactively sought out the views of a range of diverse communities. LGBTIQ+ Victorians aren't only members of rainbow communities - there are many parts that make up who they are. It's important that the LGBTIQ+ Strategy recognise this.

This LGBTIQ+ Strategy Directions Paper shows how the strategy is taking shape, based on what we have heard so far. Now, we are asking Victorians to help us ensure we are on the right track, by providing further feedback on where we've hit the mark, or what we've missed. I look forward to hearing from you.

We have made great strides towards equality in recent years, but we still have work to do. Together, I know we can make the Strategy a strong roadmap for a future Victoria which is fairer and more equal for every single person.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Foley', written in a cursive style.

Martin Foley MP
Minister for Equality



Message from the Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities



Amid the difficulties of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, hundreds of people and organisations who are part of rainbow communities gave up their time to have their say on the first whole of Victorian Government LGBTIQ+ Strategy.

I was humbled to attend every one of the more than 30 targeted consultations held online, and I know that for many people, making a contribution to this consultation wasn't simple. It meant thinking deeply about how Victoria can better support LGBTIQ+ people in the years ahead, and in some cases, reliving painful experiences of discrimination.

This is why I am enormously grateful to everyone who shared their stories and insights through a virtual meeting, survey or written submission.

This consultation has reinforced that while we have made great progress toward equality in recent years, there is still more work to do to ensure our state is inclusive in the years to come. Our LGBTIQ+ Strategy Directions Paper envisages how we can tackle some of the challenges that remain.

I would encourage all Victorians, particularly those in our LGBTIQ+ communities, to read this document and provide feedback on how this roadmap is taking shape.

This will be a valuable contribution to ensuring our state is an even more inclusive place for rainbow communities, both now and for generations to come.

Ro Allen
Commissioner for
LGBTIQ+ Communities



Introduction

The Victorian Government has committed to develop the first ever state-wide, cross-portfolio lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) policy document. This is an exciting opportunity to partner with Victoria's LGBTIQ+ communities and with organisations across the state to establish a long-term vision to improve the lives of LGBTIQ+ Victorians, supported by clear actions.

Through comprehensive consultations over May to October 2020, we received input from over 800 people and organisations through targeted community workshops, service provider and sector workshops, online surveys and written submissions.

This LGBTIQ+ Strategy Future Directions Paper (the Directions Paper) outlines what we heard through consultation. This is an important milestone to stop and acknowledge what you have told us is important to LGBTIQ+ communities. The Directions Paper also sets out the vision and early reform directions that will guide development of the LGBTIQ+ Strategy.

The directions detailed in this paper describe areas for potential change in systems, policies and services.

These directions are for action across the scope of the Victorian Government's work. This recognises the role of the state government in its various responsibilities as a legislator, policy maker, service provider, commissioner and funder.

Action by other levels of government, community and the private sector is outside the scope of the work, unless it directly relates to services funded or where policy is set by the Victorian Government. The exception is where the Victorian Government has influence over the activities through partnerships with other sectors or where policies are set in these areas.

While the Directions Paper focuses on the work of the Victorian Government, the important advocacy role of the LGBTIQ+ sector is recognised and acknowledged in its support for community, from peer support to health services and advocating for changes to improve the lives of LGBTIQ+ Victorians and their families. The significant contributions of the LGBTIQ+ sector have helped shaped the focus for the Victorian Government to support progress towards equality.



Who are we talking about?

The Equality portfolio and the LGBTIQ+ Strategy are aimed at creating equality for and improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, and queer people, families and communities.

LGBTIQ+ people and communities are diverse and intersectional. We recognise LGBTIQ+ people are diverse in their Aboriginality, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, colour, nationality, refugee or asylum seeker background, migration or visa status, language, religion, ability, age, mental health, socioeconomic status, housing status, and geographic location.

We also acknowledge that many intersectional groups within LGBTIQ+ communities are less visible and less well understood in the broader community. That's why it is important that all areas of the Victorian Government understand how they can create a more equitable state, where everyone can participate and prosper.

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Gender, sex and sexuality

GENDER is 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 combination of these or neither. A person's gender and their expression of their gender can be demonstrated in different ways, such as through behaviour or physical appearance.

SEX refers to a person's biological sex characteristics. The term 'sex' has historically been understood as either female or male.

SEX CHARACTERISTICS means a person's physical features relating to sex. This includes genitalia and other sexual and reproductive parts of the person's anatomy, and the person's chromosomes, hormones and secondary physical features emerging as a result of puberty.

SEXUALITY or sexual orientation describes a person's romantic and/or sexual attraction to others. A person's gender does not mean they have particular sex characteristics or a particular sexuality, or vice versa.

Every day I have to come out of my three closets: my disability, my sexuality and my culturally diverse background

Workshop participant, Disability consultation

Background

The Victorian Government acknowledges that much of the progress made towards LGBTIQ+ equality stems from the tireless work of community advocates, grass roots organisations and dedicated people over many years. Despite significant reforms, LGBTIQ+ Victorians continue to experience discrimination and inequalities that result in poorer economic and health and wellbeing outcomes than other Victorians.

That is why the Victorian Government has committed to developing a whole of government strategy, which will identify key priorities, directions and actions to ensure equality for LGBTIQ+ communities. The LGBTIQ+ Strategy will guide the work of the Victorian Government to ensure we are all working together towards equitable outcomes for LGBTIQ+ people in Victoria.

Over the past 100 years there have been significant shifts towards LGBTIQ+ equality, particularly in the past two decades. These changes reflect decades of campaigning by LGBTIQ+ activists, allies and advocates. They also demonstrate a government commitment to equality which has seen Victoria referred to as the Equality State.

The Victorian Government recognises that Aboriginal LGBTIQ+ Victorians have lived on these lands for more than 60,000 years, and there are thousands of years of LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal history that came before this. We acknowledge that the impact of colonisation still exists today, and we are seeking ways to rectify past wrongs, including through the development of Treaty. We are working together to create a better future for all Victorians and enable true self-determination for Aboriginal people.

The Victorian Government has implemented many initiatives and programs for LGBTIQ+ communities since the establishment of the Equality portfolio in 2015, demonstrating a significant movement towards equality. However, the available research and evidence collected through public consultation clearly indicates the need to continue to address inequalities and strengthen efforts to improve LGBTIQ+-inclusiveness.

This Directions Paper and the subsequent LGBTIQ+ Strategy focus on the work the Victorian Government can, and will, do, in partnership with the Victorian community.

Have your say

The first Victorian Government LGBTIQ+ Strategy will only be effective if it reflects the diverse experiences of people in LGBTIQ+ communities and those who support and work alongside them.

The input from over 800 individuals and organisations was essential in forming the proposed directions in this paper to progress equality for LGBTIQ+ Victorians. We thank Victorians for contributing to the development of the LGBTIQ+ Strategy and offer this opportunity to confirm what we've heard. **That is why we are asking Victorians and organisations who work with LGBTIQ+ communities to provide feedback on how the LGBTIQ+ Strategy is taking shape.**

We encourage you to read the information provided in this document on the Victorian Government's proposed vision for LGBTIQ+ equality in Victoria and have your say on what you think hits the mark and what we've missed.

Your insights and feedback will ensure we are on the right track as we develop a roadmap of future reforms and actions to keep building Victoria as the Equality State.

Key questions we ask you to consider are:

- ▶ Does the vision resonate with you?
- ▶ Do the directions cover all Victorian Government activity that should be in scope for the LGBTIQ+ Strategy?
- ▶ Are the directions clear in their intent, or do any areas need more explanation?
- ▶ Have we missed anything that you would like to see in the LGBTIQ+ Strategy?

Everyone can have their say via Engage Victoria or by emailing equality@dpc.vic.gov.au.

On Engage Victoria, you can complete an online survey providing your feedback on the vision and proposed directions.



What we heard

The LGBTIQ+ Strategy public consultation involved targeted workshops, a public survey on the Engage Victoria website and the opportunity to make a written submission.

We received input from over 800 people and organisations through these means.

Consultation process

The Department of Premier and Cabinet with the Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities convened 33 online workshops with key groups that may not typically have the opportunity to talk with government or who may not have their voices heard through other channels. For example, this included tailored workshops with people with a disability, people seeking asylum, sex workers, legal services, multicultural communities, and neuro-diverse/neuro-divergent people. Participation in these sessions was entirely voluntary and all information provided has been de-identified.

Tailored workshops were also held with key service providers and peak bodies from across multiple sectors including education, health and wellbeing, mental health, housing, family violence, transport, legal and local government. Participants were invited to identify opportunities

to improve the inclusiveness of their services and sector, and to provide advice on how the Victorian Government can better enable all sectors to improve its engagement with LGBTIQ+ communities, including through direct service delivery.

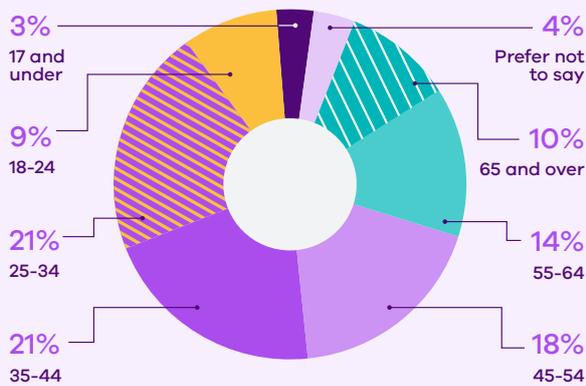
There was a high level of engagement through the Engage Victoria online platform, with more than 8,300 visitors to the site. A total of 492 survey responses were received through Engage Victoria.

A total of 97 written submissions were received, comprising:

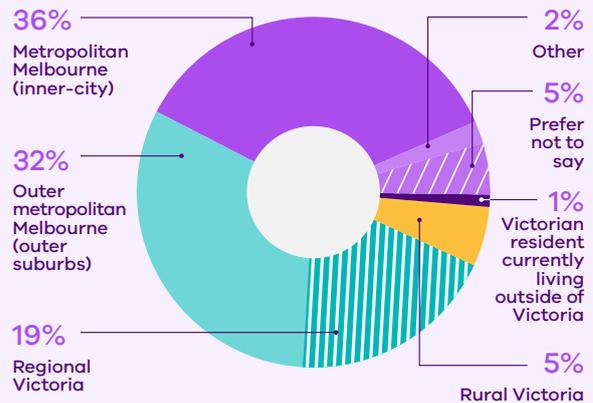
- ▶ 42 submissions from non-government organisations;
- ▶ 22 submissions from individuals;
- ▶ 16 submissions from LGBTIQ+ community organisations;
- ▶ 15 submissions from government organisations (including local councils); and
- ▶ 2 submissions from groups affiliated with universities.

The next section summarises the key themes of feedback heard through the consultation workshops, survey responses and written submissions.

SURVEY CONTRIBUTIONS BY AGE



SURVEY CONTRIBUTIONS BY LOCATION



Consultation themes

This section of the Directions Paper provides a summary of the key themes which emerged from the consultation process. These high-level themes are strongly inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing, and do not operate in isolation from one another. The contributions have been distilled into seven themes.





Protection of human rights and access to justice

The first thematic area regularly raised through consultation was the protection of rights and access to justice for LGBTIQ+ people, communities and their families.

People drew on international human rights obligations to express their expectations for how the human rights of all LGBTIQ+ people and their families should be respected, protected, promoted and fulfilled. Critically, this means ensuring LGBTIQ+ people and their families enjoy lives free of stigma, discrimination and violence of all kinds. It means that rights to safety, inclusion, agency and autonomy are upheld, and that LGBTIQ+ people experience equal outcomes through equitable access to resources, opportunities and influence across a full spectrum of rights.

Rights relevant to the lives of LGBTIQ+ people and their families include the civil and political rights protected in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, as well as the broader range of economic, social and cultural rights. These include rights to housing, employment, education and social security, and access to health, wellbeing, and justice services.

There are also a number of international conventions which are particularly relevant for LGBTIQ+ communities, including those which focus on the rights of children, women, people with disabilities, and refugees, to name a few.

People argued for improved legal protections and responsiveness, monitoring and sentencing for hate-motivated crimes, and stronger, enforceable sanctions.

People advocated that intensive LGBTIQ+ inclusion training should be provided to professionals working in the justice system. This includes legal service providers, police and prison staff, Corrections Victoria, magistrates and other court officials. People identified that training helps to create safer environments for LGBTIQ+ people by effectively challenging unconscious bias and effectively supporting changes to institutional cultures.

Tailored strategies to respond to street-based harassment and violence are critical to improving safety for LGBTIQ+ Victorians, particularly for people living in rural and regional areas. Ideas included more training for police in relation to LGBTIQ+ hate-motivated crime prevention, response and management, as well as street-based harassment that is gender and race-based. Training in relation to LGBTIQ+ elder abuse and family violence, which can be homophobic, biphobic or transphobic violence from other members, was also identified as an important area requiring more attention.

Many participants identified an extensive range of issues for trans, gender diverse and non-binary people in custodial settings. These included concerns over people's safety and extended periods of solitary confinement. People also raised issues over the inconsistencies in documenting preferred name and gender, as well as inconsistencies with staff mis-gendering and dead-naming (using a person's former name, that they no longer use) trans, gender diverse and non-binary people.

People advocated for more accountability and transparency within the justice system, proposing a range of opportunities to strengthen regulation, oversight and enforcement of protected rights. These included more effective and accessible complaint mechanisms and access to specialist legal supports and services for LGBTIQ+ people – both offenders and victims of crime.



High quality, inclusive and accessible services

The second consultation theme raised through consultation was the

need for high quality, inclusive and accessible services responsive to the diverse needs of LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities. People identified significant gaps and barriers and opportunities to support their vision for service systems that better reflects and responds to the needs of LGBTIQ+ people and their families and loved ones.

People identified the need for both services specifically for LGBTIQ+ people and inclusive

mainstream services across an intervention continuum, inclusive of primary prevention, early intervention and tertiary services. Services and programs need to consider the different needs and support requirements of LGBTIQ+ people at different ages, stages and transition points.

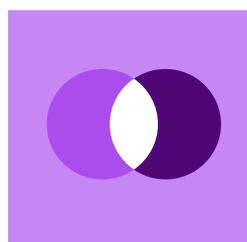
People raised concerns about system gaps where there is an absence of targeted services or specialist skills catering to the diverse health, wellbeing, employment, family services and justice needs of LGBTIQ+ people and their families. People also identified a lack of availability of LGBTIQ+ inclusive services. Where specialist health services do exist, people experience extended wait times due to high demand and long waitlists.

For many LGBTIQ+ people and their families, it can be hard to know about and find welcoming and accessible services, and many participants suggested it would be helpful to have a centralised location for access to information and referral sources, for LGBTIQ+ specific and LGBTIQ+ inclusive services.

One of the key barriers to LGBTIQ+ people and families accessing mainstream services identified by participants was the lack of consistent and predictable service safety and quality. This deters many LGBTIQ+ people from seeking out help and support when they need it. Services and programs would be improved by organisational leadership and staff having a better understanding of, and responsiveness to, the diverse needs and unique risk factors for LGBTIQ+ people.

This could be achieved by services being targeted, person and family-centred, and strengths-based. People suggested services should offer stepped models of care that prioritise support according to vulnerability and need.

Safety, inclusion and quality accreditation programs, including Rainbow Tick accreditation and Safe Schools, were seen as playing a pivotal role in improving the commitment, skills and capabilities of services and schools in responding to the needs of LGBTIQ+ people. Their application needs to be more consistent to be fully effective.



Intersectionality

People identified the importance of participation by LGBTIQ+ people at all levels of decision-making within government, community

and private sectors, and in the delivery of programs and supports intended for them.

Intersectionality is a way of understanding how systems of power, privilege and oppression interact with people's multi-layered and overlapping experiences in complex ways to create particular forms of vulnerability and discrimination.

Feedback highlighted the need to have a more nuanced understanding of intersectionality. Intersectionality is about more than having multiple identities added on to a core, central identity. For example, a person may experience sexuality and gender-based discrimination when accessing disability, aged or multicultural services, and experience ableism, ageism or racism when accessing LGBTIQ+ spaces. This was a very common and serious experience that many people identified as a priority to be addressed.

Participants widely reported that a person may experience overlapping forms of discrimination where there are a number of intersecting inequalities, in a broad range of settings. People noted that addressing overlapping systemic discrimination is not the sole responsibility of LGBTIQ+ communities, or even possible – every Victorian should take responsibility for the part that they can play in understanding intersectionality.

Participants also sought recognition of the overlapping forms of inequality that people may experience. This was seen as key to ensuring that LGBTIQ+ communities can truly celebrate diversity and meaningfully contribute to improving the lives of their members. A commitment to challenge systemic barriers and forms of discrimination presents opportunities for LGBTIQ+ communities to demonstrate true leadership and strength.

In considering the dimension of intersectionality within LGBTIQ+ communities, participants raised a broad range of overlapping inequalities related to Aboriginal history and culture, cultural and faith backgrounds, refugee and asylum seeker experience, disability, age, rurality, carer and family status, and socio-economic status.

A range of strategies were suggested throughout consultation to support the development of culturally appropriate, inclusive and safe services, community spaces and settings that cater to the whole person and prevent them from having to 'choose which aspect of themselves they present'.

PEER-LED DELIVERY OF LGBTIQ+ PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

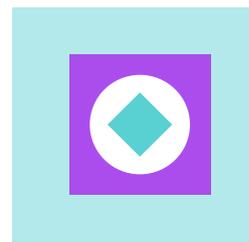
Consultation participants highlighted the crucial role of peer-led workforces in the context of both specialist LGBTIQ+ targeted services and programs in mainstream settings and community-controlled services. By recognising and drawing on lived experience, peer-led workforces have significant capacity to improve outcomes for other LGBTIQ+ people and families in all of their diversity.

Strategies to enable LGBTIQ+ community control, autonomy and agency were seen as fundamental for the protection of human rights and for improving health, wellbeing, justice and equality outcomes.

Peer-led and community-controlled models have a rich history in many contexts, including in Aboriginal, HIV, disability and mental health service settings. As well as directly delivering services, programs and supports, peer workforces have an important role to play in training and advising mainstream providers, providing secondary consultations, and engendering peer-led support, advocacy and self-advocacy.

Another facet of the representation theme was the broad principle of "nothing about us, without us". Participants advocated for the inclusion of diverse LGBTIQ+ voices in all policy, planning, research, evaluation and review processes impacting on their lives. Many people called for mandated co-design/co-production in the public policy process. Such inclusion should ensure diverse and equitable representation of all LGBTIQ+ communities, in order to meet their diverse participation requirements. The importance of remuneration for people's time and expertise was also highlighted.

Many participants argued for greater representation of LGBTIQ+ voices in the public sector, Ministerial and other advisory forums, such as Government Boards and Committees, in particular for sex workers, bi+, deaf and LGBTIQ+ people with disabilities. There was also a consistent theme of the need for the social contributions of LGBTIQ+ Victorians to be acknowledged, such as recognising participation in the sports and the arts by those marginalised within LGBTIQ+ communities.



Mainstream community inclusion

Throughout the consultations, people identified a broad range of opportunities

to address issues and gaps within mainstream community settings.

Participants identified that strategies are required to recognise and respond to barriers to employment for LGBTIQ+ people, especially through initiatives targeting LGBTIQ+ people (particularly trans and gender diverse people, and people with intersectional identities) most at risk of workplace discrimination, unemployment, precarious and low paid work, and a lack of economic security. Dedicated LGBTIQ+ inclusion workforce strategies are required across a range of industries to grow the number of LGBTIQ+ people in employment. These should include initiatives to create pathways into employment as well as leadership and development pathways within workplaces and industries.

People identified the lack of LGBTIQ+ inclusive employment, training and education support for unemployed and underemployed LGBTIQ+ people. They noted for example that there is currently only one employment agency in Victoria specialising in work with trans, gender diverse and non-binary people, and it is located within a disability employment service. They advocated for targeted employment programs including early career supports, internships and mentoring, as well as reforms within education settings to support inclusive pathways towards employment for LGBTIQ+ people across all sectors.

Significant attention was paid to the needs of LGBTIQ+ children and young people and their families in schools, and also the needs of people across the education sector. Within

school settings, people identified that a range of strategies could be adopted to ensure safe and inclusive environments for students, such as the use of age-appropriate education materials which recognise diverse bodies, sexualities and gender identities and strengthening mandatory implementation of LGBTIQ+ inclusive guidelines and policies in all schools. Early childhood and early years education advocates also called for better recognition of the needs of trans and gender diverse children and their families in early childhood education and care settings to ensure that LGBTIQ+ children and families feel included from a young age.

For LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities, factors influencing their health and wellbeing include:

- ▶ experiences of stigma, discrimination and violence, including family violence
- ▶ social and economic exclusion
- ▶ poverty and homelessness
- ▶ poor access to justice
- ▶ education and employment
- ▶ lack of access to antenatal and other parenting support services
- ▶ intersecting forms of discrimination related to race, class, gender, ability, age, location, and the legacy of Australia's colonial history.

People identified the need for improved affordable housing and homelessness services, particularly given research continues to identify homelessness disproportionately affecting trans and gender diverse people. LGBTIQ+ inclusive housing was also identified as a critical need for people seeking asylum and refugees.

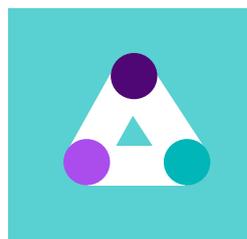
The complexity of these interactions means a range of supports are needed to improve health, wellbeing and equality outcomes. Mainstream community settings are crucial intervention points for this work, encompassing all of the places where LGBTIQ+ people and their families congregate and participate in work, study, exercise, worship, commerce, cultural practice and other aspects of daily life. Community settings also include key institutions such as family and the media.

Sport and cultural settings are important community locations for building connection and inclusion, promoting LGBTIQ+ inclusion and

visibility, and celebrating individual contributions and community strengths. Sport and the arts, cultural and creative industries play a key role in promoting LGBTIQ+ mental and physical health and wellbeing. People asked for stronger visibility of LGBTIQ+ cultures, histories and community narratives. The ability to share diverse stories and histories from LGBTIQ+ communities with mainstream audiences helps to counteract negative community beliefs and attitudes, and place importance on LGBTIQ+ lived experience.

Recognising that LGBTIQ+ cultural and social practice is often volunteer-led and unfunded, participants advocated for stronger recognition and profiling of the contribution LGBTIQ+ communities make to Victoria's arts and cultural life, as well as to the economy, tourism, and the State's reputation as a safe and welcoming place for all people.

A key issue relevant to LGBTIQ+ families identified by many participants was family violence – whether intimate, parent-child, partner violence, violence from family of origin, instances of elder abuse, or sibling-perpetrated violence. People identified that mainstream service provision is currently not adequately addressing the needs of community and placing LGBTIQ+ people at risk of not receiving the services they need to stay safe. Participants highlighted the importance of prioritising action in this area, including by applying and adapting learning from post-Royal Commission work to LGBTIQ+ communities.



Connection within and between LGBTIQ+ communities

People outlined a vision where LGBTIQ+ people have equitable access to opportunities, resources, visibility and representation. People shared many ways in which a strong community contributes to individuals' sense of self and wellbeing. Community is where LGBTIQ+ people and their families come together to connect, practise culture and create language. Community settings safeguard against isolation and help LGBTIQ+ people describe and celebrate their experience, and create, advocate and plan for better futures.

The Victorian LGBTIQ+ community's flagship institutions, and many diverse groups, organisations and events were identified as vital community infrastructure that deliver widespread benefits to LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities, as well as the broader community. The Victorian Pride Centre signals an important and exciting new phase in the evolution and life of Victoria's LGBTIQ+ communities.

People identified opportunities to increase the accessibility of LGBTIQ+ spaces to ensure that people of all cultures, genders, economic backgrounds, ages, disabilities and abilities can feel safe and welcome. The opportunity to create places where people can be their full selves, particularly those with intersectional identities, will reduce experiences of stigma, discrimination and lateral violence and affirm welcoming and inclusive LGBTIQ+ communities and celebrations.

Acting on this would see community leaders and institutions committing to cultural inclusion and physical accessibility including to resources, leadership and decision making, meeting spaces and places of congregation, events and programming.



Data, research and evidence

One of the most significant and consistently raised gaps that needs to be addressed was the lack of access to reliable, accurate and consistent data about LGBTIQ+ people and their families.

Participants identified a range of challenges associated with a lack of data, a robust evidence base and program evaluation. These included demonstrating need and prioritising effort accordingly. Utilising accurate data can enable greater buy-in and provide a greater evidence base for groups seeking funding from a range of stakeholders. Improved data and evidence can also support developing, refining and tailoring effective interventions for specific communities in relevant contexts.

Almost without exception, people advocated for improved collection and dissemination of high quality, disaggregated population-level data capturing demographic information, need, service access and outcome data. Data collection should include appropriate and inclusive options that reflect how LGBTIQ+ people choose to identify, support local area needs analyses, and support the translation of research into policy and practice.

People suggested that improved data collection would require a full review of existing data classification and collection content and processes. The accessibility of funded agency data collection systems needs to improve, and an intersectional focus within existing data collection processes needs to be strengthened.

To support meaningful research that is relevant to lived experience and capable of driving improved outcomes on the ground, many people advocated for stronger peer-led research, undertaken and interpreted by communities themselves. This was regarded as particularly important when engaging highly vulnerable communities or in circumstance where research is highly contested (such as with intersex research).

Related were recommendations to support research centres of excellence. Some participants advocated the re-funding of a LGBTIQ+ youth research clearinghouse, while others argued for the establishment of a LGBTIQ+ legal needs centre of excellence. More broadly, participants advocated for research funding to Victorian universities and institutes to increase engagement with other globally renowned research universities and institutes.



Targets, monitoring and reporting

People identified the importance of ensuring that quality assurance measures, targets and

other practical strategies are implemented and evaluated.

Monitoring and reporting systems form an important part of system accountability. They add to and draw on data, research and evidence to support a continuous assessment of gaps and barriers and areas for further investment. Monitoring and reporting systems are also crucial for providing access to mechanisms for review and redress.

Indicators to measure LGBTIQ+ inclusion, which were highlighted in the LGBTIQ+ Strategy Discussion Paper released in early 2020, expand upon the World Bank and United Nations Development Program index. An analysis against the index shows that Victoria may be a world leader in LGBTIQ+ equality, particularly in the areas of specialist services, family violence, homelessness, substance abuse, disability services, inclusive health services and sports. Providing indicators to measure progress were highlighted as a need for Victoria.

People proposed public reporting on the progress of implementing the LGBTIQ+ Strategy when it is released, including through the development of action plans by each government departments, local government areas, organisations in receipt of government funding and businesses of a certain size. Examples raised that could form a model for reporting were the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic) provisions and the work of the national Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

People asked for a specific focus at a local community level, calling for strengthened relationships with local councils to develop municipal-level indicators and reporting mechanisms. These should be aligned and integrated with other equity-based reporting obligations such as those within the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, *Gender Equality Act 2020* and *Local Government Act 2020*.

In education settings, people called for greater clarity about teachers' and schools' duty of care and role to prevent, protect against and respond to student bullying, harassment and violence. People identified the need for improved accountability through clearer articulation, monitoring and reporting of professional standards tied to teacher registration and annual professional development processes – an approach also advocated for other professions. Some participants also advocated for a specific equity framework for education.

A range of government statutory bodies were identified as requiring an explicit mandate to consider LGBTIQ+ inclusion within the scope of their roles and mandate. These included various service and complaints Commissioners (for example within health, mental health and disability), as well as proposals to establish LGBTIQ+-specific roles within offices such as the Victorian Multicultural Commission or the Commissioner for Children and Young People, similar to the role of the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People. Many people also advocated for a strengthened monitoring and oversight role for the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission in protecting LGBTIQ+ people.

A vision for Victoria

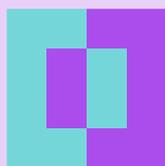
In light of the feedback gathered through consultation as outlined in the previous section, this Directions Paper proposes a vision for Victoria and reform directions that will be further refined and developed in 2021.

Through the consultation process, we asked community members and organisations what outcomes they would like to see for LGBTIQ+ Victorians in the medium to long term. They described a hopeful vision for the future, and we are following their lead.

LGBTIQ+ Strategy

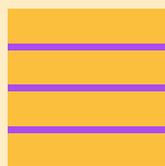
VISION

All Victorians feel safe, have equal rights and can live wholly and freely.
LGBTIQ+ Victorians experience the benefits of full participation in economic, educational, community and social areas at all stages of life.
Victoria leads the way in LGBTIQ+ equality, celebrating the community and taking sustained, enduring and measurable action.



DIRECTION 1

Equal rights and freedoms



DIRECTION 2

Equitable and accessible service systems



DIRECTION 3

Visibility to inform decision-making



DIRECTION 4

Safe, strong and sustainable communities

In Directions Paper for feedback

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT PRIORITY ACTIONS

GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING MECHANISMS,
INCLUDING INDICATORS

To be developed

Future directions for development

The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring the systems, policies and services we provide and fund are accessible and inclusive, to improve the lives of all LGBTIQ+ people and communities.

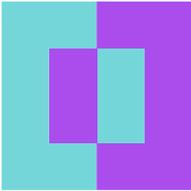
From available research and evidence, and from what Victorians told us, we know we can and must do more. Four key directions have been identified which reflect the role of government to improve outcomes for LGBTIQ+ individuals and communities.

These directions will organise the activities the Victorian Government will implement through the LGBTIQ+ Strategy. The directions are not specific to one area of the Victorian Government but sit across all Victorian Government responsibilities.

The directions interlink with each other and are framed around the levers and mechanisms that the Victorian Government can utilise to achieve the vision for Victoria.

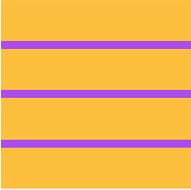
The directions are also underpinned by a recognition that the LGBTIQ+ Strategy needs to reflect the diverse experiences of all LGBTIQ+ Victorians.

This Directions Paper provides Victorians with an opportunity to review the future directions and proposed focus areas and provide us with feedback. As this is the first Victorian LGBTIQ+ Strategy, it is important that we get this right.



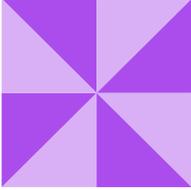
Direction 1

Equal rights and freedoms



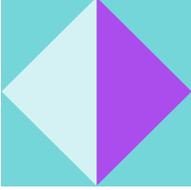
Direction 2

Equitable and accessible service systems



Direction 3

Visibility to inform decision-making



Direction 4

Safe, strong and sustainable communities

Direction 1 Equal rights and freedoms

Strengthening existing legal protections for LGBTIQ+ Victorians and ensuring laws are created with an equality lens will benefit all community members.

All Victorians have rights detailed in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, including the right to recognition and equality before the law. However, not all Victorian legislation currently treats LGBTIQ+ people equally to other Victorians.

This will lay the foundations for an equal society. Legislation is one mechanism that clearly articulates societal expectations and sends a message that preventing experiences of discrimination is critical to creating a safe and inclusive community.

In some cases, this is due to historical policy decisions or decisions which have had unintended consequences. Not having equal rights, or failing to have them implemented, means LGBTIQ+ people can't live with confidence that they have access to the same protections and opportunities as other people.

Rectifying this will make a difference to LGBTIQ+ Victorians. It will ensure their rights are upheld, which will in turn help them to have the same prospects in life as others. It is critical that any legislative amendments consider the diverse needs of LGBTIQ+ communities by reviewing how legislation impacts the rights of people with diverse sex characteristics, gender identities and sexualities.

Intersectional experiences can increase the likelihood of experiencing inequality and discrimination when it comes to the on the ground interactions with systems which are governed by legislation, such as the justice system.

Not only does legislation support equal rights for individuals, it also sets responsibilities for organisations that provide services to Victorians. Legislation sets a standard for how government provided, and funded services are expected to operate, such as the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*. The implementation of these types of legislation needs to take into account the diverse needs of Victorians.

Examples of actions for this direction

- ▶ Strengthening legal protections, including additional and/or modernised coverage for various attributes including broader trans, gender diverse and non-binary identities, sex characteristics (people with intersex variations), HIV/AIDS status, profession, trade, occupation or calling (sex workers), and irrelevant criminal record.
- ▶ Ensuring language is inclusive of all gender identities across all Victorian laws and official forms and documents.

While we tolerate laws that discriminate, we tolerate discrimination

Workshop participant, LGBTIQ Taskforce and Justice Working Group



Direction 2 Equitable and accessible service systems

Service systems should be approachable, welcoming and inclusive for all Victorians at the point of entry, exit and throughout their journey. LGBTIQ+ people must be able to access the services that meet their needs, and their experience through Victorian Government service systems should result in improved life outcomes.

LGBTIQ+ Victorians experience of services, delivered and funded by the Victorian Government, will improve through ensuring design and access supports equitable service systems. Building inclusive service systems will improve accessibility and quality for all service users. LGBTIQ+ Victorians visit community health centres, get their driver licence, go to school, TAFE, university and participate in work and community life. It is critical that we eradicate barriers to access, including experiences of discrimination, and improve inclusiveness across all sectors and in all areas of government service delivery. All Victorian communities, in their diversity, need to be considered as part of the design of policies, services, and programs that they use.

As LGBTIQ+ people are diverse, it is important that cohort-specific services are also inclusive of other identities and abilities. This recognises that LGBTIQ+ communities are not a homogeneous community, but consist of distinct and diverse populations, and that each needs to be considered. For example, this means that not only should services for multicultural communities be LGBTIQ+ inclusive, but LGBTIQ+ services should also be inclusive for multicultural communities. Another example is to consider the ways in which LGBTIQ+ services can be more culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and multicultural communities.

Through responding to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we have seen that the most successful strategies are those which include the expertise and lived experience of community within the design and implementation process. This means that Victorian Government service systems need to factor in diversity and co-design as standard. This will ensure that Victorians do not have to hide any part of who they are to access a service.

We recognise that victimisation of LGBTIQ+ communities occurs in the broader community and within family settings. People have the right to feel safe in public and in their own home. Prejudice motivated crime and safety can only be addressed if our systems and the people within them are able to recognise the needs and services required for LGBTIQ+ people.

We know that people's health and wellbeing is impacted by their economic situation, environment, education and community context. This is why it is critical that all Victorian Government systems are inclusive and provide equitable access.

When LGBTIQ+ Victorians come into contact with the health and wellbeing, education, housing and justice systems, it is also important for them to receive the same level of support as people who are not in LGBTIQ+ communities. Otherwise, there is a risk these systems will pose greater challenges to them than others. This means advice and services need to be available to LGBTIQ+ Victorians. Victorian Government systems must also be inclusive and recognise people's unique experiences and needs.

The Victorian Public Sector has a role in leading the way in being a model for LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the workplace. This includes ensuring representation across all levels of the public sector. An LGBTIQ+ inclusive workplace will enable all employees to bring their full selves to work. We can then continue to encourage Victorian businesses and non-government services to build their capabilities in playing their role to improve the economic outcomes of LGBTIQ+ Victorians.

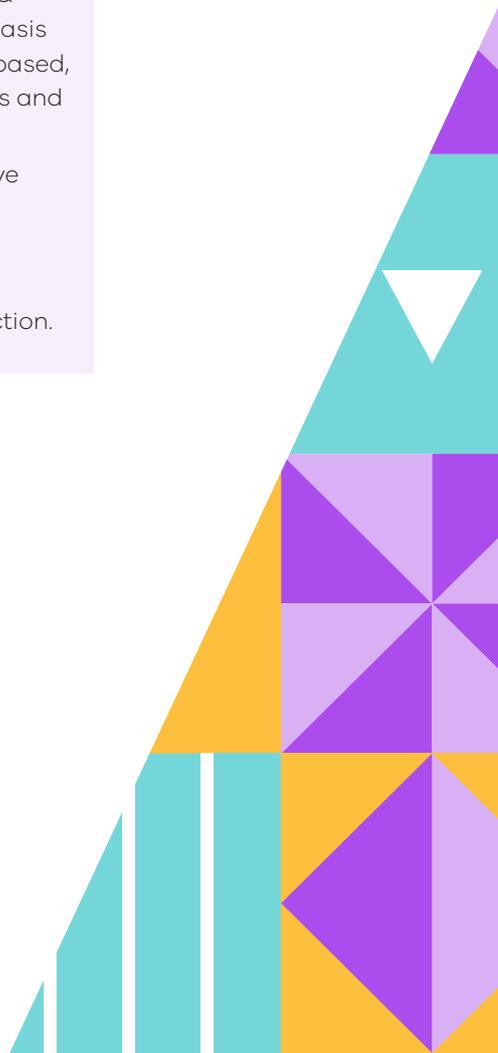
Where existing government strategies and frameworks interlink with the LGBTIQ+ Strategy, work will be done to ensure alignment, consistency and equity of service for LGBTIQ+ people in all service settings.

Examples of actions for this direction

- ▶ LGBTIQ+ inclusion practice standards be integrated within other practice standards and requirements and quality accreditation schemes, including within health and human services, housing and homelessness, aged care, disability, child safe, family violence, sexual assault, mental health and education sectors.
- ▶ Targeted resources, training and support be provided to all mainstream services funded by the Victorian Government to support diversity, LGBTIQ+ inclusion and quality accreditation and that these be prioritised on the basis of need, gap analysis and impact (for example multicultural, NDIS, faith-based, rural/regional and emergency services; in justice, education, housing, arts and sports settings).
- ▶ Increase the number of Victorian Government funded services which have undertaken LGBTIQ+ inclusive practice accreditation.
- ▶ Review preventative public health and wellbeing services to ensure engagement with LGBTIQ+ people and families across their lifespan are inclusive and provides the best models of care, language and data collection.

▼ I don't want to have to choose which identity I present to someone

Workshop participant, Deaf consultation





Direction 3 Visibility to inform decision-making

Improving data and evidence will enable us to get a better picture of where LGBTIQ+ people live, study, work and spend their time. Increased evidence of need and experiences supports the Victorian Government to understand how services are performing and where investment is required.

The Victorian Government collects data and evidence to understand community need for funding and delivering services to Victorians. Funded services are also required to provide evidence when reporting on the outputs and outcomes it has been funded for.

One of the most significant and consistently raised gaps for delivering improved outcomes for LGBTIQ+ people and their families, was the lack of access to consistent, reliable data. There are a range of challenges associated with a lack of data, a robust evidence base and program evaluation demonstrating need and prioritising effort accordingly.

This will also allow us to better understand who is using our services and where there are gaps and needs that are not being addressed. Increasing collection and dissemination of high quality, disaggregated population-level data including that which captures demographic information, health and wellbeing need, service access and outcome data is critical to supporting improved service deliver. However, collecting data is only useful if we understand how to analyse and use the data to support improved outcomes. Being transparent with data will ensure government and funded programs and services are held accountable and able to demonstrate they are meeting the needs of all Victorians.

Where there is a need to collect sex and gender information, data collection should include appropriate and inclusive options that reflect how LGBTIQ+ people choose to identify, support local area needs analyses, and support the translation of research into practice. Improved data collection is critical to ensure consistency and accessibility, as well as link to each other to ensure its effectiveness.

Data collection must include appropriate and inclusive options that reflect how LGBTIQ+ people choose to identify, support local area needs analyses, and support the translation of research into practice. Increasing collected data is critical, however, data sets also need to be accessible, useful and link to each other to ensure its effectiveness.

Examples of actions for this direction

- ▶ Supporting consistent and accurate data collection, particularly through forms and data sets, across all 40 government departments and agencies when collecting relevant data on gender, sex characteristics and sexuality.
- ▶ Victorian Government work with industry peak bodies and employment groups to build data on LGBTIQ+ people in employment and business and identify opportunities for growth.
- ▶ Create and publish guidance materials for Victorian Government funded services on collecting, analysing and reporting data.



Operating in dark

Workshop participant on the need for data,
young people consultation



Direction 4 Safe, strong and sustainable communities

The LGBTIQ+ community is a proud part of the Victorian community. It is critical that we build a community where all people can be themselves and support one another.

This means building safe and inclusive environments both in the broader society and within LGBTIQ+ community settings. We need to continue along the path of social change and increasing community acceptance. It also means building the profile and sustainability of LGBTIQ+ organisations and businesses. A critical feature of this is ensuring LGBTIQ+ people have agency and Aboriginal community members are able to practise self-determination.

The single strongest and most consistent predictor of mental ill-health, suicide or self-harm among LGBTIQ+ communities is having had an experience of abuse, harassment or assault. We want to ensure that Victoria is a diverse, resilient and welcoming place for residents and visitors - a place that attracts LGBTIQ+ people from all over the country and world. We need to continue to build a safe space for LGBTIQ+ people by creating a society where we prevent discrimination or harassment of LGBTIQ+ Victorians, just for being who they are.

We need to see representations and celebrations of LGBTIQ+ communities across all facets of life, including in the media and in public campaigns.

The LGBTIQ+ community is diverse; therefore, it is important to continue work on building a strong and inclusive community. This responsibility is placed on the Victorian Government, as well as the broader community, businesses, clubs and non-government organisations.

Examples of actions for this direction

- ▶ State-wide awareness raising and educational campaigns for the broader community to encourage inclusion and diversity.
- ▶ Anti-violence campaigns targeting street-based violence and harassment (particularly in rural and regional areas) and LGBTIQ+ family violence.
- ▶ Stronger and consistent state, local government and funded services promotion and recognition of important LGBTIQ+ community days of visibility, for example, through utilising transport services across the state to promote significant days.
- ▶ State-wide, large scale events which celebrate LGBTIQ+ communities and increase social and economic inclusion.

 **'Coming home'
not 'coming out'**

Workshop participant, Multicultural consultation

Next steps

Once feedback on this Directions Paper has been received, the LGBTIQ+ Strategy will be developed.

The strategy will feature specific commitments for the Victorian Government to action. Efforts are underway in the Government to identify key reforms it could make. All Victorian Government Ministers and departments will be asked to commit to steps they can take over the coming years to ensure we all continue to strive for LGBTIQ+ equality.

The Victorian Government's LGBTIQ+ Taskforce will be asked to provide regular feedback on both the development and implementation of the strategy. The LGBTIQ+ Taskforce is made up of LGBTIQ+ community members. It meets regularly during the year to advise the Government on LGBTIQ+ issues to support equality through legislation reform, new policies and programs.

The LGBTIQ+ Strategy is expected to be released by mid to late 2021.

Glossary

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 combination of these or neither. A person's gender and their expression of their gender can be demonstrated in different ways, such as through behaviour or physical appearance.

SEX A person's biological sex characteristics. The term 'sex' has historically been understood 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, and the person's chromosomes, hormones and secondary physical features emerging as a result of puberty.

SEXUALITY OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION A person's romantic and/or sexual attraction to others. A person's gender does not mean they have particular sex characteristics or a particular sexuality, or vice versa.

A TRANS (SHORT FOR TRANSGENDER) PERSON Someone whose gender does not exclusively align with the one they were assigned at birth

GENDER DIVERSE An umbrella term for a range of genders expressed in different ways. There are many terms used by gender diverse people to describe themselves. Language in this space 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 (i.e. physical features relating to sex including genitalia and other sexual and reproductive parts of the person's anatomy and/or 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.

INTERSECTIONALITY A methodology of studying overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination.

DIRECTIONS In the context of this paper, directions describe areas for potential change in systems, policies and services.





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