

LGBTIQA+ Action Plan 2025–2030

A plan for LGBTIQA+ inclusion at DEECA



We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it.

We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

DEECA is committed to genuinely partnering with Victorian Traditional Owners and Victoria's Aboriginal community to progress their aspirations.



© The State of Victoria Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action August 2025

Creative Commons

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence, visit the Creative Commons website (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

You are free to re-use the work under that licence, on the condition that you credit the State of Victoria as author. The licence does not apply to any images, photographs or branding, including the Victorian Coat of Arms, and the Victorian Government and Department logos.

ISBN 978-1-76176-579-7 (print)

ISBN 978-1-76176-484-4 (pdf/online/MS word)

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Accessibility

To receive this document in an alternative format, phone the Customer Contact Centre on 136 186, email customer.service@deeca.vic.gov.au, or contact National Relay Service (www.accesshub.gov.au/) on 133 677. Available at DEECA website (www.deeca.vic.gov.au).

Contents

Message from the Place of Pride Network	2
Message from the Secretary	3
Acknowledgement	4
Mission	4
Why this matters	5
How did we get here	6
Achieving our mission	6
Focus areas	7
Action Plan	9
Focus Area 1 – Fostering an Inclusive, Safe & Respectful Workplace Culture	9
Focus Area 2: Promoting Awareness and Education	10
Focus Area 3: Building Connections and Partnerships	11
Focus Area 4: LGBTIQA+ Inclusive and Safe Workplaces	12
Focus Area 5: Empowering Inclusion Through Resources and Support	13
Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation	14
Glossary	15

Message from the Place of Pride Network

We are proud to present the LGBTIQ+ Action Plan, an important milestone in our journey toward a workplace that is inclusive, equitable and empowering for all LGBTIQ+ people.

This Plan exists because of the tireless work of our staff network and the many individuals, past and present, who have advocated for change, often in the face of resistance and exclusion. Their courage, persistence, and leadership have helped lay the foundation for the progress we are now building on.

We acknowledge the deep and lasting impact of past and ongoing discrimination on the lives, careers and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people. Too many have had to navigate workplaces where they were not safe to be themselves. That history drives our determination to ensure a better future.

This Plan represents our commitment to doing better, all of us across the department, together. It sets out practical, meaningful actions to help ensure that all LGBTIQ+ staff feel valued, respected, and able to thrive.

We know that true inclusion is an ongoing journey. This is not just a document, it's a call to action. Lasting change will require the commitment of everyone, and especially the visible leadership and accountability of leaders across the organisation.

Together with our allies, we look forward to turning these commitments into meaningful, sustainable progress.

With pride and solidarity,

DEECA LGBTIQ+ Staff Network



Message from the Secretary

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) is committed to a workplace where all staff – regardless of sexuality, gender identity, or expression – can feel seen, supported, and safe to thrive.

Our inaugural LGBTIQ+ Action Plan 2025–2030 sets out how we will work together to strengthen diversity and equity. With a focus on the experiences of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender-diverse, intersex, queer, and asexual staff, the Plan highlights where focused improvements will improve the experience of our staff.

The Plan sits alongside DEECA's Gender Equality Action Plan and aligns with the Victorian Government's *Pride in Our Future: LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2022–2032*.

The Plan's development has been led and shaped by our LGBTIQ+ staff and networks across DEECA. It builds upon our Place of Pride staff-led network action plan to embed inclusion across all levels of the department – from policy to practice; and from the office to the field.

Importantly, the Plan aligns with the kind of organisation we want to be – one with respect at its core. An organisation where diversity is celebrated and staff feel safe to bring their whole selves to work.

The Plan's key actions include empowering staff to be active allies for LGBTIQ+ individuals and for leaders to acknowledge intersectionality, model respect, and amplify visibility to foster a culture of psychological safety.

Inclusion is fundamental to our workplace culture and expectations at DEECA. It makes us a stronger organisation, better positioned to meet the needs of Victorian communities.

Don't underestimate your ability to shape a kinder, more inclusive working environment for your colleagues. Even when we don't think anyone is noticing, our individual actions are incredibly powerful.

How we show support for inclusion through our behaviour, our language and meaningful engagement with staff with lived experiences sends a strong message that inclusion matters.

These visible actions build trust and create an environment where all staff can feel safe and valued. This not only helps shape the experiences of our people, it informs the way we serve Victorian communities.

Thank you to everyone who shaped this Plan. DEECA's Board is proud to endorse it and look forward to working alongside all staff to bring it to life, creating a safer, stronger, and more inclusive workplace for everyone.



John Bradley (He/Him)

DEECA Secretary

Acknowledgement

We proudly recognise Victoria's First Nations peoples and their enduring strength in maintaining the world's oldest living culture.

We honour the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters where we live and work, and extend our respect to their Elders, past and present. We also acknowledge the unique perspectives, cultures, and expressions of identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of diverse genders and sexualities. We commit to supporting and celebrating these aspects through collaboration with the DEECA Aboriginal staff network, creating opportunities for truth-telling and cultural celebration.

Mission

We are committed to making DEECA a place where equality is a fundamental value, LGBTIQ+ staff are treated with fairness and trusted leadership fosters an inclusive culture.

Where LGBTIQ+ staff are treated with fairness and feel comfortable being their authentic selves. Where we celebrate diversity and build inclusive communities for LGBTIQ+ individuals. This policy is vital for DEECA to achieve its mission of equality, fairness, and inclusivity for LGBTIQ+ staff. It supports the organisations alignment with broader whole of government '*Pride in our future*':

Victoria's LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022–32' initiatives and internal standards, enhancing both the culture and DEECA's overall effectiveness as a diverse and inclusive workplace. This aspirational commitment demonstrates our desire and ongoing dedication to continuous improvement in creating an inclusive workspace for everyone.



Why this matters

In Australia, only 32% of organisations have active LGBTQIA+ inclusion strategies, and over a third of LGBTQIA+ employees still feel unable to be themselves at work (The Hatchery, 2025).

The 2025 People Matter Survey provided crucial insights into the experiences of DEECA's LGBTQIA+ colleagues, highlighting areas where focused improvements are necessary:

83% of DEECA employees reported feeling they can be themselves at work, leaving room to ensure full authenticity is universally felt.

73% felt a sense of belonging within DEECA, indicating opportunities to strengthen inclusion across our workplaces.

Notably, the survey identified significant barriers related to discrimination, bullying, and exclusion based on gender identity and sexual orientation, highlighting the ongoing need for proactive measures and supportive frameworks.



How did we get here

The development of our mission and LGBTIQ+ Action Plan involved extensive consultations throughout 2024, engaging DEECA's Place of Pride Network members, broader staff networks and senior leadership.

Key feedback from these engagements emphasised:

- The importance of visible leadership commitment and active allyship to drive cultural change across both metropolitan and regional worksites.
- The ongoing need for targeted educational initiatives addressing unconscious bias, inclusion and respectful workplace practices.
- Clear calls for enhancing psychological safety and promoting inclusive practices, particularly benefiting trans and gender diverse employees.

Achieving our mission

Our mission is further informed by both VPS and DEECA's broader frameworks and strategies.

These strategies recognise the compounded barriers faced by individuals experiencing intersectional identities, such as LGBTIQ+ individuals who also navigate barriers related to disability, ethnicity, gender and cultural background. By linking our LGBTIQ+ Action Plan with these existing frameworks, we demonstrate a holistic commitment to intersectionality and acknowledge heightened barriers faced by those with intersecting identities.

Our goal is to equitably build an inclusive, culturally informed workforce that reflects a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. This diversity enriches creativity, problem-solving and innovation. An inclusive workplace is one where everyone feels they can be their full self and are safe to do so.



Focus areas

The Place of Pride Network Action Plan (reviewed annually by the Place of Pride Network) is the department's dedicated LGBTIQ+ staff and ally network action plan.

It specifically outlines targeted actions and strategies to empower DEECA as an organisation where LGBTIQ+ employees feel comfortable and proud to be their whole selves at work. The plan is inspired by the three core strategic priorities, each designed to promote an inclusive workplace culture, enhance awareness of LGBTIQ+ issues and foster meaningful connections within DEECA and the broader community.

Inclusion (Work Together)

We connect with others and work together to create an inclusive culture, no matter where you are located.

Connections (Do What Matters)

We prioritise thriving communities by connecting our people.

Awareness (Make a Difference)

We make a difference by speaking up on LGBTIQ+ issues and advocating for change.





Action Plan

To achieve our mission, we will concentrate on the following Focus Areas and Actions, inspired and established by Place of Pride's focus areas:

Focus Area 1 – Fostering an Inclusive, Safe & Respectful Workplace Culture

Create a supportive and inclusive environment across all DEECA locations, including metropolitan, regional, office, field staff and emergency deployments, with all levels of DEECA proactively preventing and responding to instances of homophobia, transphobia and biphobia.

Outcome	Key Actions	Timeline	Accountability
1.1 DEECA proactively prevents and responds to discrimination and harassment	1.1.1 Revise and update workplace behaviour policies to explicitly include homophobia, transphobia, biphobia and to align with best practice policies and tools such as the <u>LGBTIQA+ Inclusive Workplaces Guideline</u> by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission'.	Q2 2025 – Q2 2027	Corporate Services Group, Diversity & Inclusion
1.2 Create visibly inclusive environments across all work locations	1.2.1 Make the workplace more inclusive by adding welcome signs, providing accessible all-gender bathrooms, and ensuring events, equipment, travel, and accommodation are inclusive of all gender identities.	Q2 2025 – Q3 2028	Corporate Services Group, Diversity & Inclusion



Focus Area 2: Promoting Awareness and Education

Raise awareness and provide educational opportunities related to LGBTIQ+ issues.

Outcome	Key Actions	Timeline	Accountability
2.1 All staff improve their understanding of LGBTIQ+ challenges	2.1.1 Deliver facilitated allyship and inclusion via Safe & Respectful Workplaces Program	Q1 2025 – Q4 2027	Corporate Services Group, Diversity & Inclusion
	2.1.2 Regularly update and deliver LGBTIQ+ Awareness eLearn training while integrating current allyship and trans inclusion awareness content	Q2 2025 – Q4 2027	Corporate Services Group, Organisational Development
	2.1.3 Enable effective delivery of authentic, sustainable, and cost-effective LGBTIQ+ Awareness training delivered by our internal staff across work centres.	Q2 2025 – Q3 2027	Diversity & Inclusion, Organisational Development, Place of Pride Network
2.2 Encourage leadership visibility and commitment	2.2.1 Senior leaders, inclusion champions and people managers actively participate in LGBTIQ+ inclusion training and awareness sessions, ensuring they stay informed about best practices.	Q1 2025 – Q4 2029	All DEECA people leaders
	2.2.2 Business areas will mark days of significance with activities that highlight senior leader sponsorship and visibility (e.g. leader-hosted panel discussions, storytelling sessions and visible Secretary messages). Activities will be developed in partnership with the Place of Pride Network and/or People and Culture to ensure they are meaningful, inclusive and extend beyond traditional formats.	Q1 2025 – Q4 2029	Senior Executive Leadership team Corporate Services Group, Corporate Communications and Diversity and Inclusion
2.3 Inclusive communication is embedded in DEECA culture	2.3.1 Promote the use of inclusive language in internal and external communication guidelines	Q3 2025 – Q4 2027	Corporate Services Group, Corporate Communications and Diversity & Inclusion



Focus Area 3: Building Connections and Partnerships

Strengthen internal and external connections to support and celebrate diversity.

Outcome	Key Actions	Timeline	Accountability
3.1 Strengthen internal networks and support	3.1.1 Establish and maintain a connected, visible and inclusive network of LGBTIQ+ support across regional and metro locations by strengthening local groups, cross-network collaboration and access to trained allies.	Q1 2026 – Q4 2027	Corporate Services Group, Diversity & Inclusion and Place of Pride Network
	3.1.2 Partner with the VPS Pride Network to organise DEECA's involvement in Midsumma Carnival, Pride March, ChillOut, and various regional pride events	Q2 2026 – Q3 2027	Place of Pride Network, Diversity & Inclusion
3.2 Sustainable partnerships support long-term inclusion goals	3.2.1 Build partnerships with the Australian Workplace Equality Index to ensure feedback loop and ongoing consultation	Q1 2026 – Q2 2028	Corporate Services Group, Diversity & Inclusion
3.3 Partner with external LGBTIQ+ organisations	3.3.1 Collaborate with other government agencies such as Pride in Water, Emergency Management Pride Network Victoria, CPSU to increase regional reach and join/share inclusion events	Q3 2026 – Q2 2028	Place of Pride Network



Focus Area 4: LGBTIQ+ Inclusive and Safe Workplaces

Build inclusive and safe workplaces where diversity and inclusion flourish, and where every LGBTIQ+ individual feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their whole selves.

Irrespective of the work location and level in which staff operate, all members of the LGBTIQ+ community should feel safe to be themselves, this includes working with internal peers, external staff e.g. contractors and partner agencies, and during emergency deployments.

Outcome	Key Actions	Timeline	Accountability
4.1 Staff are empowered to become active allies for LGBTIQ+ individuals	4.1.1 Communicate and promote the use of Diversity and Inclusion PDP goals, including LGBTIQ+ inclusion PDP goals	Q2 2025 – Q4 2029	Corporate Services Group, Operations Corporate Services Group, Diversity and Inclusion
4.2 Inclusive systems and reporting	4.2.2 Develop dashboard data tracker (Microsoft Power BI) for reporting LGBTIQ+ outcomes (as part of Diversity and Inclusion reporting)	Q2 2026 – Q4 2029	Corporate Services Group, Diversity and Inclusion
4.3 Gender affirmation practices are embedded and equitable	4.3.1 Review gender affirmation leave and associated gender affirming treatment leave within the DEECA's Gender Affirmation Policy.	Q4 2025 – Q2 2029	Corporate Services Group, Diversity and Inclusion



Focus Area 5: Empowering Inclusion Through Resources and Support

Proactively remove barriers to inclusion by providing equitable funding, streamlining support from line management, and fostering local initiatives.

This ensures staff have the resources, opportunities, and confidence to champion LGBTIQA+ inclusivity, creating a workplace where everyone can thrive and contribute their full selves.

Outcome	Key Actions	Timeline	Accountability
5.1 Staff are supported and resourced to lead inclusivity	5.1.1 Develop and maintain an up-to-date and easily accessible directory of trained LGBTIQA+ allies, peer supporters, executive sponsors and Safe & Respectful Workplace Champions on the ADA intranet, and ensure that all accompanying LGBTIQA+ support information is tailored for both metropolitan and regional contexts.	Q4 2025 – Q4 2027	Corporate Services Group, Diversity and Inclusion

We will approach this with a commitment to accountability and resilience, continuously improving to create a safe and inclusive environment. The activities will be guided by strategic priorities and actions.



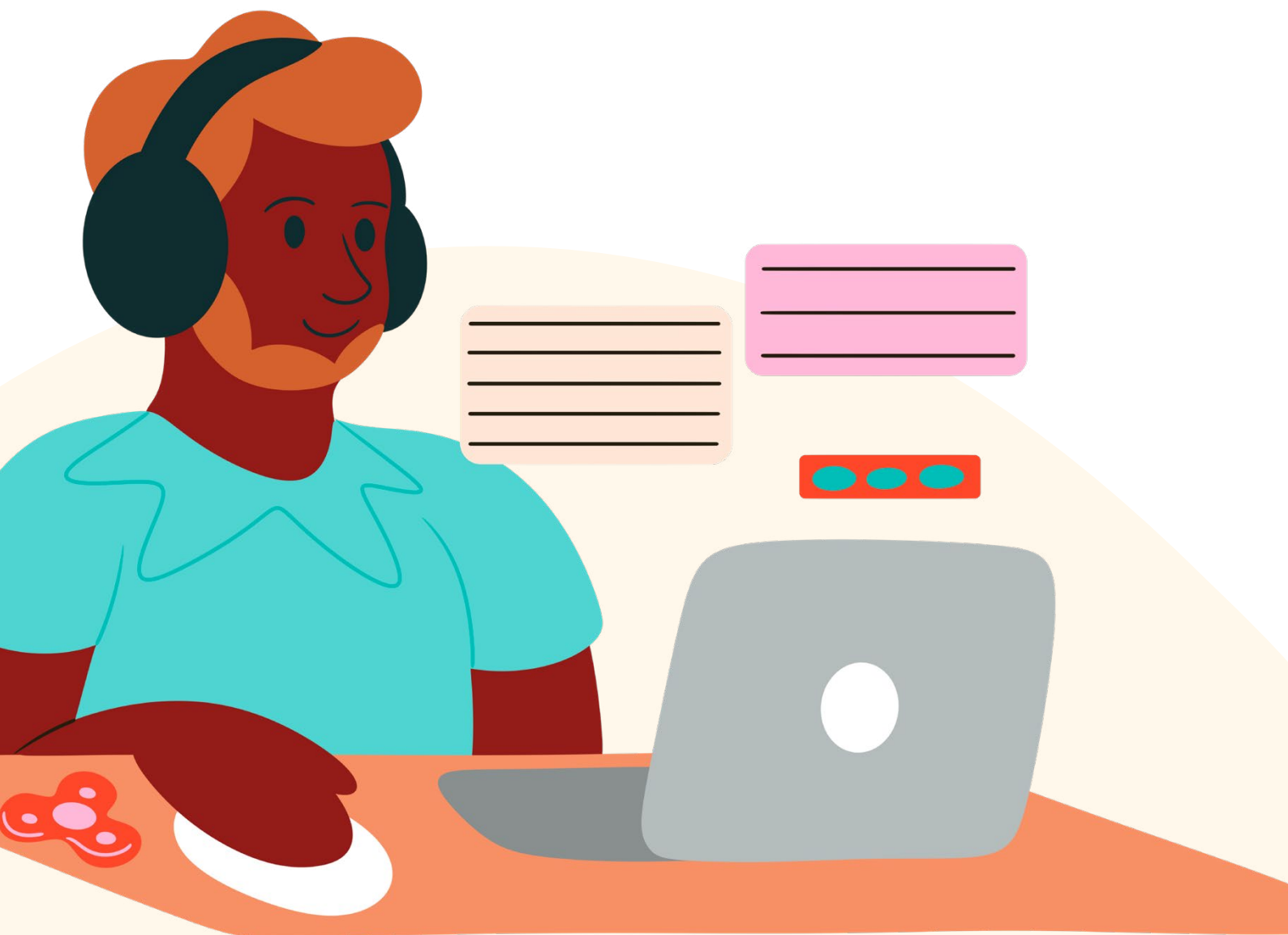
Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure accountability and track the success of initiatives outlined in this LGBTIQA+ Action Plan, DEECA will employ a comprehensive and adaptive monitoring and evaluation framework.

This framework will focus on measuring progress against strategic priorities and assessing the impact of actions, aligning with the organisation's mission of achieving equality, fairness, and inclusivity for LGBTIQA+ staff.

The Diversity and Inclusion team will lead the coordination of this plan, with DEECA's Diversity and Inclusion manager overseeing its implementation in partnership with responsible leads.

Any reviews and adjustments to the plan will be assessed by the Executive Board, with a final evaluation of the plan completed at the end of year five. An annual progress report will be shared with all staff.



Glossary

Language and terms for LGBTIQ+ communities and identities - as well as understanding those terms - evolve over time. The following glossary of key terms is not an exhaustive list and has been drawn from the Victorian Government's LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Language Guide.

Asexual

Not being sexually attracted to anyone or having low or absent interest in sexual activity.

Intersex

People who have genetic, hormonal or physical characteristics that are not exclusively 'male' or 'female'. A person who is intersex may identify as male, female, intersex or as being of indeterminate sex.

Bisexual

Describes a person who is sexually and emotionally attracted to more than one gender.

Intersectionality

An approach to understanding how different aspects of a person's identity that can expose [that person/ or group] to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. This creates different layers and types of discrimination or disadvantage for either an individual or group.

Categories include:

- gender
- sexual orientation
- sex characteristics
- race
- ethnicity, language and faith
- class and socioeconomic status
- ability
- age

Biphobia

The fear, hatred and misunderstanding of bisexual people and their sexual desires and practices.

Lesbian

A woman whose primary emotional and sexual attraction is towards other women.

Cisgender (or cis) (pronounced 'sis')

Where a person's experiences of their own gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

LGBTIQ+

An internationally recognised initialism used to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer and questioning and asexual people collectively.

Cisnormativity

Denoting or relating to an attitude that promotes the assumption that a person's gender identity matches their biological sex.

Non-binary

People who do not fall within the traditional binary notions of sex and gender, such as man and woman.

This may include people:

- who identify as a gender different
- from their birth sex
- who identify as neither man nor
- woman
- whose cultures may have their own terms for gender identities outside male and female.

Gay

A person whose primary emotional and sexual attraction is towards people of the same sex. The term is most commonly applied to men, although some women use this term.

Non-heterosexual

People whose sexual orientation and/or identity is not heterosexual including homosexual, bisexual, pansexual and asexual people.

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 show up in different ways, such as through behaviour or physical appearance.

Pansexual

A person who is sexually and emotionally attracted to people of any sex or gender identity.

Gender diverse

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

A 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.

Gender expression

The way in which a person externally expresses their gender or how others perceive them.

Queer

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

Gender identity

A person's deeply held internal and individual sense of gender.

Sex assigned at birth

Sex recorded at birth Data collection often refers to sex recorded at birth. This is based upon a person's sex characteristics and reproductive organs observed at, or soon after, birth.

Heteronormativity

Denoting or relating to an attitude that promotes heterosexuality as the normal or preferred sexual orientation.

Sexuality or sexual orientation

A person's emotional or sexual attraction to another person including, among others, the following identities: heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual or same-sex attracted.

Heterosexual

A person whose sexual orientation is primarily or exclusively towards people of the opposite sex.

Transgender

A person whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth. A trans person may take steps to live permanently in their nominated sex with or without medical treatment.

Homophobia

The fear, hatred and misunderstanding of lesbians and gay men and their sexual desires and practices.

Transphobia

The fear, hatred and misunderstanding felt or expressed towards people who do not conform to society's gender expectations.

Homosexual

A person whose sexual orientation is primarily or exclusively towards people of the same sex.

Variation of sex / sex characteristics

Some people are born with a variation to physical or biological sex characteristics including chromosomes, hormones or anatomy. These are often called intersex variations. There are many different intersex variations that can be identified prenatally, at birth, puberty or adulthood. People with intersex variations use a range of different terminology to name their bodies and experiences. Some use the term 'intersex', others do not connect to the term 'intersex' or with the acronym LGBTIQ+.

Intersex people can have any gender identity or sexuality.





deeca.vic.gov.au