# WA LGBTIQA+ INCLUSION STRATEGY CONSULTATION REPORT

2025









LIVING PROUD®

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Living Proud acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia, their diversity, histories and knowledge and their continuing connections to land and community.

We pay our respects to all Australian Indigenous Peoples and their cultures, and to Elders of past and present.

We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and that this always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.



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# LIVING PROUD

Living Proud has a long and proud history of supporting the LGBTIQA+SB community in Western Australia, with roots tracing back to the early days of the local movement.

The journey began in 1971 with the formation of CAMP (Campaign Against Moral Persecution) Western Australia — a pioneering group that laid the groundwork for many of Perth's LGBTIQA+SB organisations. In 1974, a subcommittee of CAMP established the Homosexual Counselling Information Service (HCIS), which would later evolve into Living Proud. As a growing awareness of inclusivity and specific needs, the named changed to the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service of WA (Inc) (GLCS) in 1990 and again in 1999 to the Gay and Lesbian Community Services of WA (Inc). to better reflect its broader community role.

The term "Living Proud" first emerged as the title of a suicide prevention initiative run by GLCS from 2011 to 2013. The organisation adopted the name, signalling a commitment to greater inclusivity and a broader representation of the community.

Today, Living Proud works to enhance the health and wellbeing of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual, Sistergirl, and Brotherboy people (LGBTIQA+SB). The "+" symbol acknowledges the many diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions that also form part of our vibrant community.

With over 50 years of history, Living Proud continues to be a vital source of support, advocacy, and connection and remains committed to supporting community across WA.

# THANK YOU

It has been an honour and privilege to meet and listen to LGBTIQA+SB community members throughout Western Australia as part of the Inclusion Strategy consultation process. We would like to thank everyone who took part in this process, shared their stories, their ideas, their struggles and their hopes for a better future.

This information has been incorporated into the following report. We have taken this responsibility seriously, knowing that it rests on our shoulders to communicate and advocate for the change the LGBTIQA+SB want, needs and deserve.

Thank you also to Rainbow Futures WA who co-facilitated many of the sessions as well as Rabble Books and Games, regional pride networks and Pride in Swan who supported and hosted and invited us to take part in consultations.

# LANGUAGE

## LGBTIQA+SB

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual, Sistergirl and Brotherboy. The plus sign represents other sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions not specifically covered by the other letters.

The terms **Sistergirl and Brotherboy** are used by some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to describe trans people. Brotherboy typically refers to masculine spirit people who may be assigned female at birth, Sistergirl typically refers to feminine spirit people who may be assigned male at birth.

Each letter in the acronym represents a distinct community that has its own unique culture and experiences. The acronym aims to be inclusive of a wide range of identities within the community, acknowledging the diversity and complexity of human experiences related to gender and sexuality.

## LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex)

At times throughout the report, the acronym LGBTI is used to refer to older people in our community. This is done to recognise and respect that the term 'queer' has historically been used as a slur and can cause offence and distress.

We recognise it does not capture the full diversity of sexualities, bodies and identities and it is not intended to ostracise members of the broader community. Rather it is intended to respect the lived experience and struggles of those members of community who lived through the criminalisation of identities and extreme stigma, decriminalisation and abuse.

More information on language associated with gender, sexuality and the LGBTIQA+SB community can be found at - **Language Guide**

# FROM THE CEO

Living Proud's role in developing the WA Inclusion Strategy has been an honour, a joy, and often, a sobering reminder of the challenges and distress still faced by LGBTIQA+SB people across Western Australia.

We have deeply valued the opportunity to contribute to this important work, fully aware of the immense responsibility it carries — to represent the voices, experiences, and hopes of our communities with honesty, clarity, and respect. It has been a privilege to meet with people across the state, to listen to their stories, and to share in their vision for a more inclusive and equitable Western Australia. We thank every person who gave their time, trusted us with their insights, and spoke with such openness and generosity.

We now call on government to take this opportunity with the seriousness it deserves. The community has spoken openly and in good faith, trusting that their voices would be heard. It is now up to government to listen and act. The issues are clear, and so are the solutions — what is needed now is commitment and action.

Living Proud, together with the broader LGBTIQA+SB community, stands ready to work in partnership with government to address the factors that continue to drive inequity, poorer health and wellbeing outcomes, and disadvantage. We ask government to join us in genuine partnership to create lasting change and urge them to fully commit to this Strategy through a whole-of-government approach.

It is our dream that through this strategy, WA sets a gold standard for inclusion and that Western Australia becomes the place to live, not the place to leave, for LGBTIQA+SB people today and for generations to come.



**Meaghan Holden**
**CEO**





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY









# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LGBTIQA+SB people in Western Australia continue to face significant inequality — in health, safety, and access to services. These inequities are not about who people are, but about the stigma, discrimination, and exclusion they continue to experience. Despite important progress in recent years, the message from communities across the state is clear: systemic change is still urgently needed.

This report brings together the voices of LGBTIQA+SB people who participated in consultations to inform the development of the WA LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Strategy. The consultations were led by community groups and organisations, supported by the LGBTIQA+SB peak body, Rainbow Futures WA (RFWA), the Department of Communities, and guided by the LGBTIQA+ Reference Group.

Living Proud facilitated nine consultation sessions, most in partnership with RFWA, across metro and regional areas between March and June 2025. The process generated powerful insights, grounded in lived experience and deep community knowledge.

Across all consultations, participants described the same core issues:



**Recognition & Respect:** Systems and services still fail to recognise and respect LGBTIQA+ people.



**Accountability:** A lack of understanding and accountability within public institutions.



**Resourcing & Responsibility:** Underfunded community and peer services that carry too much of the load with too few resources.



**Discrimination and Violence:** Persistent experiences of discrimination, violence, and social exclusion.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)

At the same time, there was strong recognition of the resilience, care, and leadership within LGBTIQA+ communities — and a shared belief that genuine partnership between government and community can lead to lasting change.

The following 'priority areas' capture the findings from the consultations:

## PRIORITY AREAS

### 1. Inclusive Practice

Participants emphasised the importance of respect — starting with correct names, pronouns, and gender markers. These small acts build trust; their absence causes harm.

Government systems remain inconsistent and often exclude diverse genders, bodies, and relationships. Inclusion must be built into processes, not left to individual goodwill.

Services need to be trauma-informed, culturally safe, and shaped by intersectional leadership — including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

### 2. Knowledge

A lack of understanding among professionals remains a major barrier. Too often, LGBTIQA+SB people must educate their own service providers.

Training must be universal and ongoing — a core competency built into qualifications and delivered with WA peer-led community organisations.

A public education campaign to counter misinformation and affirm that discrimination has no place in Western Australia was thought to be a positive initiative.

### 3. Services & Supports

Access to safe, affirming healthcare — especially gender-affirming care — remains a critical issue, with long waitlists, high costs, and limited informed providers. Investment in peer health services is essential.

Peer organisations such as Living Proud, TransFolk of WA, and GRAI are trusted and effective but under-resourced. Sustained funding is vital; they are central, not supplementary, to community wellbeing. Participants also stressed the importance of inclusive housing, employment, and social connection. Community spaces and peer networks reduce isolation and build resilience.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)

## 4. Safety & Inclusion

Many LGBTIQA+SB people continue to face violence, harassment, and exclusion, particularly in regional and remote areas.

Visibility and leadership are protective — representation in government, workplaces, and public life builds trust and belonging. Visibility must be genuine, not tokenistic.

Participants called for stronger laws, accountability, and action — with transparent reporting and consistent implementation.




## Moving Forward

The community is hopeful but cautious. People want real outcomes, not another consultation without change.

The WA LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Strategy is an opportunity to reset the relationship between government and and community — through partnership, transparency, and shared accountability.

The message is clear:

- Inclusion must be more than words — it must be seen in policy, practice, and leadership.
- Building a Western Australia where everyone can live with dignity, safety, and pride requires collective effort across government and community.



# INTRODUCTION








# INTRODUCTION

Across Australia, LGBTIQA+SB people continue to experience poorer health outcomes, higher rates of discrimination, and greater risk of violence than the general population. These inequalities are not the result of who people are, but of the stigma, prejudice, and exclusion they continue to face. The effects are clear — higher rates of mental health distress, suicidal thoughts, and self-harm — and they are felt deeply across our communities.




While progress has been made in recent years, many challenges remain. Barriers to inclusive healthcare, ongoing discrimination, and social exclusion continue to shape the lives of LGBTIQA+ people.

## Health and Wellbeing

The mental health impacts of discrimination are significant. LGBTIQA+SB people are far more likely to experience psychological distress and thoughts of suicide. Among these groups, non-binary, bisexual, trans and people with variation report the highest rates of suicidal ideation, attempts and self-harm compared to their cisgender and heterosexual peers. (2, 3)

There are also differences in physical health outcomes. For example, some LGBTIQA+ people — particularly those who have not had sex with men — are less likely to take part in cervical screening or other preventative care. (4)

These gaps often reflect fear of discrimination or past negative experiences with health providers.

## Safety and Inclusion

Violence and abuse continue to affect too many in the community. LGBTIQA+SB people are at greater risk of family, domestic, and sexual violence. Research shows that bi+ and trans women, in particular, experience higher rates of intimate partner and sexual violence than heterosexual women.

Many people also face verbal abuse, social exclusion, and harassment — both in public and online. Digital spaces, while offering visibility and connection, can also expose LGBTIQA+SB people to serious online abuse and targeted harm. (5)

# INTRODUCTION

## Systemic Challenges

Accessing safe and affirming healthcare remains one of the community's biggest challenges. Many mainstream services lack understanding of LGBTIQA+SB identities and needs, which can discourage people from seeking care or lead to poorer health outcomes. (6)

Discrimination also persists in other areas of life — including housing, workplaces, and education. These experiences compound over time, affecting health, wellbeing, and connection to community.

There is also an ongoing need for better data. Without accurate, respectful data on sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status, it is difficult to design and deliver services that truly meet community needs.

## Progress

Despite these challenges, there has been meaningful progress. Marriage equality represented an important milestone for recognition and rights. The Australian Government's 10-year LGBTIQA+ Health and Wellbeing Action Plan has also set a clear direction — to strengthen research, improve access to inclusive care, and create cultural change across systems.

Community-led organisations continue to lead the way, advocating for inclusion and delivering peer-based services that meet people where they are. These services are built on trust, understanding, and lived experience — and they remain vital to the wellbeing of LGBTIQA+SB people across the state.



# INTRODUCTION

## WA LGBTIQA+ INCLUSION STRATEGY

In 2023, a meeting between Premier Roger Cook, Rainbow Futures WA (RFWA), and other LGBTIQA+SB community organisations marked a turning point for LGBTIQA+SB inclusion in Western Australia. The group proposed the creation of a dedicated LGBTIQA+SB portfolio within government and sustainable funding for peer-led service providers, including Living Proud, TransFolk of WA, and GRAI.

This proposal led to a historic outcome: a $900,000 investment in the sector, the establishment of Western Australia's first LGBTIQA+SB peak body, and a commitment to developing the WA LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Strategy.

The Inclusion Strategy has been developed in partnership with the LGBTIQA+SB community sector and groups. The Hon. Hannah Beazley MLA serves as the Minister responsible for the Strategy, with the Department of Communities leading its development and implementation.




A LGBTIQA+ Reference Group was established to guide engagement and ensure community input. A Government Steering Group — made up of representatives from key State Government agencies was also established to provide oversight and strategic direction. In November 2024, RFWA was appointed as the inaugural LGBTIQA+SB peak body, with responsibility for co-chairing the Reference Group, coordinating consultations and supporting the Strategy's development and implementation.



# INTRODUCTION

## Consultation Process

Community consultation was undertaken primarily by Reference Group members, with funding provided by the Department of Communities and distributed through RFWA.

The consultation process included:

- In-person consultations
- Online consultations
- Metropolitan and regional engagement
- Surveys
- Desktop review and analysis

## Limitations

While the consultation process generated valuable insights, several challenges were identified.

- **Consultation fatigue:** The Inclusion Strategy consultations coincided with several other government consultation processes over the same 6-9-month period. This overlap led to community fatigue and some reluctance to participate., highlighting the need for a more coordinated, whole-of-government approach. Many participants expressed frustration about repeated consultations without any real visible results.
- **Accessibility barriers:** Despite efforts to be inclusive, not all sessions were fully accessible. Many sessions lacked Auslan interpretation, accessible venues, or neurodivergent-friendly formats. Limited language access also excluded some multicultural communities. Future consultations must include dedicated planning and funding to ensure everyone can participate meaningfully.
- **Representation and continuity:** While the LGBTIQA+ Reference Group played an important role, achieving full representation took time. Intersex people, people with disability, First Nations people, and people of colour joined later, limiting early input.
- **Delayed peak body appointment:** The appointment of Rainbow Futures WA as the LGBTIQA+ peak body occurred five months after the Reference Group began meeting. This delay reduced opportunities for co-design, informed and timely community engagement, and coordination and planning. It also impacted the establishment, connection and flow of the Reference Group.

# INTRODUCTION

**Resource constraints:** The consultations were under-resourced, relying heavily on unpaid or underpaid community labour. This model is not sustainable for future engagement and risks burnout among those contributing their time and expertise.

**Overlap and communication gaps**

Multiple organisations conducting consultations simultaneously caused confusion in the community. Some people reported being unaware they were contributing to the same Strategy. Limited coordination between organisations also led to duplication of effort, with regional and community groups contacted multiple times by different organisations.

**Inconsistent data collection**

Data was not collected consistently across all sessions, limiting analysis of trends and differences across identities, regions, or experiences.

**Regional and remote engagement**

While regional voices were included, time and funding constraints limited deeper engagement across all areas. Remote communities were particularly underrepresented. Future consultations should prioritise place-based, culturally safe engagement that reflects the realities of life outside metropolitan areas.

Despite these challenges, the consultation process produced clear and consistent messages from across the community. The community's hope is that this work marks the beginning of a transparent, coordinated, and accountable partnership between government and the LGBTIQA+SB community — one that leads to genuine, lasting change.





# CONSULTATIONS








# CONSULTATIONS

Living Proud supported 9 consultations between March and June. A summary of these include:

- 6 in-person
- 3 online
- 5 aimed at the general LGBTIQA+SB community
- 1 facilitated for the Bi+ community
- 3 held in regional areas
- Partners:
  - Rainbow Futures WA
  - Rabble Books & Games
  - Out MidWest
  - WAAC
  - Pride in Swan
  - Pride in Peel
  - Out Southwest
  - Vic Park Pride

Each consultation differed and it was important to be adaptable and responsive to the participants needs, comfort levels and identities. Sessions took place around log fires, in hotels, online, in community venues and organisation premises.

Attendance varied and was impossible to predict. One consultation had no attendees, some only a handful, while others had over 20 people. The numbers, however, did not impact the richness of conversations.

Participant demographics were not recorded formally, however, observations and conversations confirmed participant ages ranged from 18 – 70 years, with a broad representation of genders, sexualities, and a range of nationalities, abilities, education and employment statuses and occupations.

> *"You have all this information already, you know about our outcomes, you know what we need, but you don't do anything about it, we're just tired."*

# CONSULTATIONS

## Table: Summary of Consultations

| No. | Date | Type | Location | Format | Partners |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mar | General | Joondalup | In person | RFWA |
| 2 | Apr | Bi+ | Online | Online | RFWA |
| 3 | May | General | Maylands | In person | RFWA, Rabble |
| 4 | May | Regional | Geraldton | In person | Out MidWest, RFWA, WAAC |
| 5 | May | General | Ellenbrook | In-person | Pride in Swan |
| 6 | May | Regional | Mandurah | In-person | RFWA, Pride in Peel |
| 7 | June | Regional | Bunbury | In-person | RFWA, Out Southwest |
| 8 | June | General | Online | Online | RFWA |
| 9 | June | General | Online | Online | RFWA, Vic Park Pride |






# FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS







# FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Consultations provided very clear themes that reflected the systemic, social and economic challenges faced on a daily basis by the LGBTIQA+SB community. While these are outlined as current barriers, it is important to note that they are also historical conditions that have existed over decades and contribute to the poorer outcomes across life domains when compared to the general population.

## Inclusive Practices

### CONSULTATION FINDINGS

**Respect and dignity as standard:**

People described how small, daily acts of recognition — being addressed by their correct name, pronouns, and gender — profoundly impact their sense of safety and belonging.




Misgendering and deadnaming remain widespread, particularly in health, education, and justice systems, creating re-traumatisation and avoidance of essential services. In some cases, misgendering and deadnaming are deliberate acts that are used to cause such harm and may reflect religious or ideological views of gender.

**Systemic inconsistency:**

Many government forms, IT systems, and processes are not designed to accommodate diverse genders, bodies, or relationships. These structural exclusions send a message that LGBTIQA+SB people are "after thoughts" in public systems. Participants noted that inclusive practice should not depend on the goodwill of individual staff — it must be built into systems, standards, staff induction and training.

# Inclusive Practices

## CONSULTATION FINDINGS

### Trauma-informed and culturally safe systems:

A consistent call was made for all public services to recognise and respond to the trauma many LGBTIQA+SB people carry from discrimination, family rejection, social rejection and historical criminalisation. At a time when media, including social media, is flooded with negativity, abuse, and hatred of the LGBTIQA+SB community, the ramifications can be literally life threatening. Public services need to be inclusive and a place of safety.

The recognition and response to trauma requires services to partner with WA peer organisations, for staff at all levels to be trained and for that training to translate into a deep understanding of the impact it can have.

### Intersectional equity:

Experiences of exclusion are compounded for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and Bi+ people, who often experience erasure even within LGBTIQA+SB spaces.




Inclusion efforts must therefore be intentionally intersectional and reflect multiple lived realities.

### Visible but meaningful inclusion:

Flags and rainbow branding were seen as important visual markers of safety but were criticised when not matched with authentic inclusion in practice. Organisations that are 'Rainbow ticked' or made claims of LGBTIQA+SB friendly services were not a guarantee of safety or informed service delivery. Participants expressed cynicism of such claims as nothing more than marketing and called for visible symbols to be backed by policies, training, and accountability mechanisms.

# Inclusive Practices

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Embed Respect and Dignity as the Standard Across All Services

- Mandate correct use of names, pronouns, and gender markers across all government and funded service settings — including health, education, justice, and community services.
- Introduce clear accountability mechanisms for instances of deliberate misgendering, deadnaming, or other forms of disrespectful conduct, treating these as breaches of professional and ethical standards.
- Ensure that policies on respect and inclusion are visible and enforced within every government department, school, and health service.



### 2. Design Systems that Reflect and Include All People

- Review and reform all government forms, IT systems, and data processes to ensure they reflect diverse genders, bodies, and relationships.
- Standardise inclusive system design principles across government and funded services — for example, allowing for non-binary gender options, chosen names, and recognition of diverse families.
- incorporate LGBTIQA+SB inclusion into service standards, contracts, and performance frameworks to ensure consistency and sustainability across agencies.
- Develop implementation guidelines and tools so that inclusion does not rely on individual goodwill but is embedded in the structure of systems and institutions.

# Inclusive Practices

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 3. Build Trauma-Informed and Culturally Safe Systems

- Require all government and funded services to adopt trauma-informed practice that acknowledges the impact of discrimination, stigma, family and social rejection, and historical criminalisation on LGBTIQA+SB people.
- Partner with WA peer-led LGBTIQA+SB organisations to design and deliver trauma-informed education and practice frameworks.
- Ensure all staff — from frontline workers to executives — receive training that promotes understanding of trauma and its impacts, and how to create safer, affirming environments.
- Embed trauma-informed principles in policies, procedures, and service environments, ensuring that public systems are places of safety and recovery rather than re-traumatisation.
- Recognise the role of social and media hostility as contemporary trauma, and resource services to support community resilience in the face of ongoing hate and misinformation.



### 4. Commit to Intersectional Equity and Representation

- Co-design initiatives with communities most affected by overlapping forms of discrimination including Aboriginal and Torres Strait slander people, people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, trans and gender diverse people and Bi+ people, ensuring their leadership and perspectives shape solutions. Invest in intersectional data collection and research to identify service gaps and track equity outcomes across diverse groups.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5. Make Visible Inclusion Authentic and Accountable

- Link visible symbols of inclusion — such as Pride flags, rainbow lanyards, and accreditation schemes — to tangible organisational action. Visibility must be underpinned by inclusive policies, procedures, and culture.
- Review the effectiveness and credibility of existing accreditation schemes, such as the Rainbow Tick, and co-design reforms with LGBTIQA+SB communities to ensure they reflect real safety and competence.
- Encourage organisations to demonstrate inclusion through outcomes, such as community trust, staff diversity, and positive feedback, rather than through symbolic marketing.
- Celebrate visibility done well — where symbolism is matched by consistent, authentic, and measurable inclusion in practice.

### 6. Lead by Example: Government as a Model of Inclusion

- Position the WA Government as a role model employer and service provider, embedding inclusion in all internal systems, policies, and communications.
- Publicly affirm that discrimination, disrespect, or ideological harm toward LGBTIQA+SB people will not be tolerated in government services or partnerships.
- Require departments and agencies to report annually on progress toward the Inclusion Strategy's action plan targets, including actions taken to improve respect, safety, and systemic accessibility.
- Champion inclusion visibly and vocally setting a tone that Western Australia is a place where all people — regardless of sexuality, gender, or body — are treated with dignity and respect.

> *"Government need to make sure they are inclusive - get their own house in order. You want to jump into the party but not have the hard conversation with the employee who did something shitty."*

# Knowledge

## CONSULTATION FINDINGS

### Training as a foundation:

A lack of understanding and misinformation among professionals remains the biggest barrier to safety and trust.

Participants reported that service providers, educators, and even policymakers often lack basic understanding of LGBTIQA+SB identities, rights, and experiences. This ignorance manifests as harmful questioning, misgendering, and exclusion from essential services. Community members emphasised that misinformation is not a matter of opinion — it causes direct harm.

Many LGBTIQA+SB people, especially trans and gender diverse people, described being forced to educate their doctors, teachers, or case workers just to receive appropriate care. This emotional labour leaves individuals feeling exhausted and devalued, while systems remain unchanged.

It is not the responsibility of the patient, student or service user to educate. Professionals must take responsibility for the quality of their service provision and take initiative to meet their patient, student or client.

### Education gaps:

LGBTIQA+SB identities are largely absent from curricula and professional qualifications, including in health, education, policing, and community services. In some areas, the education that is provided amounts to tokenism, such as a 2-hour guest speaker, and does not provide the depth required to effect real cultural and systemic change required.

> *"Knowledge to understand lived experience is an option. In government, I've brought people into train, staff have refused. I've given options for people to attend, staff have refused."*

Diversity is a reality and may take the form of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, ability and religion. Education on diversity can only improve service delivery, understanding and empathy and should be a minimum inclusion.

# Knowledge

## CONSULTATION FINDINGS

### Community as experts:

Participants were adamant that training cannot be optional or tokenistic. Inclusion must be seen as a professional competency. Training should be regular, quality-assured, and developed in partnership with WA peer-led community organisations that have the understanding and local connections and context to best support development.

### Intersectionality matters:

Understanding how sexuality, gender, race, disability, and culture intersect is essential for cultural safety. Culturally responsive education that recognises the diversity of LGBTIQA+SB experiences — including Aboriginal cultural frameworks and disability inclusion — was seen as essential to create truly safe and respectful services. This education needs to also incorporate the direct connection to minority stress in order to provide responsive care and support.

### Education and visibility as prevention:

Widespread misinformation, sensational media coverage, and political attacks on sexual and gender diversity were seen as major barriers to community safety. This is a very 'live issue' in the current political and social environment but is also an issue that has existed historically across generations. Participants called for proactive public education that affirms LGBTIQA+SB lives and highlights positive contributions.

A public campaign affirming the LGBTIQA+SB community and public support of community is needed to set the tone for the state – that WA is a place for all and bigotry, discrimination, abuse and violence have no place in WA.

### Data to inform:

Data relating to LGBTIQA+SB people needs to be incorporated across government and funded services as part of standard data collection requirements. In addition, WA should advocate for this to take place nationally. Analysis of such data would assist in informing service needs, track outcomes and provide information on geographical populations.

# Knowledge

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Make LGBTIQA+SB Inclusion Training a Core Professional Competency

- Mandate ongoing, evidence-based training on LGBTIQA+SB inclusion for all professionals in government, education, health, community services, and justice sectors — recognising inclusion as a core competency, not an optional add-on.
- Integrate comprehensive LGBTIQA+SB content into all relevant tertiary and vocational qualifications, including medicine, nursing, psychology, social work, education, policing, and community services.
- Require induction and refresher training for all government employees and funded service providers to ensure up-to-date understanding of rights, respectful language, and best-practice inclusion.
- Hold leaders and managers accountable for creating and maintaining inclusive workplaces through performance measures, audits, and reporting.



### 2. Partner with Community to Design and Deliver Training

- Fund and contract WA peer-led LGBTIQA+SB organisations to co-design, deliver, and evaluate training across sectors — ensuring authenticity, lived experience, and local cultural context.
- Develop sector-specific modules (e.g., for health, justice, education, aged care) to ensure relevance and practical application to each workforce.
- Value lived experience expertise through fair payment and recognition for community members contributing to professional training or curriculum development.

# Knowledge

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 3. Address Education Gaps and Embed Diversity in Learning Systems

- Embed LGBTIQA+SB inclusion and rights education in primary, secondary, and tertiary curricula to foster understanding and respect from an early age.
- Move beyond tokenism by ensuring training and education are in-depth, evidence-based, and ongoing rather than one-off sessions or symbolic gestures.
- Integrate intersectional approaches into all education and training — recognising the compounding effects of race, culture, disability, age, faith, and socio-economic status on LGBTIQA+SB experiences.
- Include Aboriginal-led and disability-led perspectives in education design to build genuine cultural safety for people with multiple and intersecting identities.

### 4. Promote Public Education and Visibility as Prevention

- Fund a sustained, state-wide public education campaign that affirms LGBTIQA+SB lives, celebrates diversity, and promotes respect and inclusion across WA communities.
- Respond proactively to misinformation and harmful narratives in media and politics through clear, evidence-based public messaging.
- Promote LGBTIQA+SB visibility as a protective factor — highlighting stories of resilience, leadership, and contribution across all regions and communities.
- Ensure government leaders and agencies model inclusion publicly, affirming that discrimination, abuse, and bigotry have no place in Western Australia.



# Knowledge

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5. Collect and Use Inclusive Data to Drive Improvement

- Standardise data collection on sexuality, gender, and intersex status across all government agencies, service providers, and research initiatives.



- Develop and promote evidence-based, sensitive data collection guidelines, co-designed with community experts to ensure privacy, consent, and cultural safety.
- Analyse and publish data regularly to track progress, identify inequities, and inform targeted policy and service improvements.
- Advocate for national data reform, including inclusion of appropriate LGBTIQA+SB identifiers in the Australian Census and major population health studies.

### 6. Build Accountability and Systemic Change

- Embed inclusion commitments into government policy, procurement, and funding frameworks, making LGBTIQA+SB training and data reporting a contractual requirement.
- Establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure the impact of training, education, and public awareness initiatives.
- Regularly report to community and the Minister on progress toward inclusion goals, ensuring transparency and sustained accountability.
- Ensure intersectionality and lived experience remain central to all policy, education, and reform work — recognising community as partners, not subjects, of change.

# Services & Supports

## CONSULTATION FINDINGS

**Barriers to healthcare and essential services:**

Across the consultations, access to affirming healthcare — especially gender-affirming treatment — emerged as a top concern.

Long waitlists, lack of trained providers, cost barriers, and the absence of clear public hospital pathways were identified as critical issues. Trans and gender diverse participants described systemic neglect that leaves many without essential care with some providers unwilling to provide care or to make referrals due to their personal views.

Healthcare is a basic human right and the shortfall in this area is chronic. Participants described scenarios that can only be categorised as abusive by professionals.

Participants spoke of not seeking treatment and support due to feeling unsafe, particularly in regional areas, and travelling to Perth for treatment. This has been the situation for many years and directly contributes to poorer health outcomes and higher rates of suicide.




Community rely heavily on 'word of mouth' for heath and mental health practitioner recommendations because there are no clear affirming general health services available to LGBTIQA+SB people in WA.

> *"Have to become an expert in our own health and teach them!"*

# Services & Supports

## CONSULTATION FINDINGS

**Inconsistent service access:**

Even within the same agency, people's experiences can differ greatly depending on staff attitudes, knowledge, and training. For those in regional and remote areas, additional barriers such as travel costs, concerns about confidentiality, and the lack of local LGBTIQA+ specialists further limit access to safe and inclusive support.

These findings again underscore the importance of embedding consistent training, clear protocols, contractual requirements, safe feedback mechanisms, and strong accountability measures across government departments and all government-funded services.



**Under-resourced peer-led services:**

Peer-led organisations provide trusted, safe, and culturally appropriate support that is grounded in lived experience. However, these services continue to operate with limited and insecure, short-term funding. It was not until 2024 that key peer service providers received any form of significant investment. While this funding was still time-limited, it has had a profound impact — enabling these organisations to strengthen their operations, advocate more effectively, respond to emerging community needs, and build stronger partnerships with government.

Participants were clear that peer support is not an optional or supplementary service — it is essential to the wellbeing of LGBTIQA+SB people and their engagement with broader systems of care. While mainstream service providers play an important role, many are still not equipped to provide genuinely safe or inclusive services. This reality often contrasts with how organisations view themselves.

# Services & Supports

## CONSULTATION FINDINGS

Community members also expressed scepticism about accreditation schemes such as the Rainbow Tick, noting that such recognition does not necessarily guarantee safety, cultural competence, or genuine inclusion. Mainstream providers have a role, but they cannot replace the unique value and trust offered by peer-led organisations.

**Housing, employment, and economic participation:**

LGBTIQA+SB people, particularly trans and gender diverse individuals, face disproportionate rates of homelessness, underemployment, and economic insecurity due to discrimination and systemic exclusion. These factors intersect with mental health and suicide risk, reinforcing the need for a whole-of-government response.

**Community connection as a form of support:**

Connection through events, peer groups, and affirming spaces was identified as protective against isolation and distress. For regional and remote communities, online networks and digital hubs are vital lifelines.

> *"Coming out is hard here. It's still 'Don't ask, don't tell'" (Geraldton)"*

Many LGBTIQA+SB people seek community as a method of self-discovery, self-care, connection and safety. Peer groups and activities have a positive impact of mental health by reducing loneliness and isolation. These activities are often run by volunteers, are severely under-resourced and often burnout volunteers who try to carry such activities. In addition, many volunteers carry an informal 'counsellor' hat, providing support to others in community who are isolated and experiencing mental health issues.

# Services & Supports

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Strengthen Access to Safe, Affirming Healthcare

- Develop a state-wide LGBTIQA+SB Health and Wellbeing Framework, co-designed with community, outlining minimum standards for inclusive, affirming, and culturally safe care across all health and mental health services.
- Expand publicly funded gender-affirming healthcare pathways within the WA health system, including surgery, hormone therapy, and post-care support — accessible in both metropolitan and regional areas.
- Expand workforce training and credentialing for health and mental health professionals to ensure baseline competence in LGBTIQA+SB inclusion, trans and gender diverse healthcare, and intersex variations.



- Fund dedicated LGBTIQA+SB health liaison roles in hospitals, primary care networks, and regional health services to facilitate access, referrals, and advocacy.
- Implement accountability mechanisms for discriminatory behaviour by health professionals, including clear reporting and complaints processes with transparent outcomes.

### 2. Ensure Consistent, Inclusive Service Standards

- Embed mandatory inclusion training and protocols across all government departments and funded services, tailored to specific service contexts (e.g. justice, housing, aged care).
- Include LGBTIQA+SB inclusion requirements in all funding contracts, with clear accountability and evaluation measures.
- Establish safe, accessible feedback and complaints systems that allow community members to report unsafe experiences without fear of reprisal.
- Regularly audit and publicly report on service performance and progress toward inclusive practice benchmarks.

# Services & Supports

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 3. Invest in and Sustain Peer-Led Services

- Provide long-term, recurrent funding for LGBTIQA+SB peer organisations that deliver direct support, education, advocacy, and community connection.
- Recognise peer services as essential infrastructure, not short-term projects, within health, mental health, and community service systems.
- Support workforce development and capacity building for peer-led organisations to strengthen governance, clinical partnerships, and sustainability.
- Develop a co-commissioning model where peer-led organisations work alongside mainstream services to ensure quality, safety, and cultural competence.
- Review accreditation schemes (such as the Rainbow Tick) in partnership with community to ensure they reflect lived experience, safety, and genuine inclusion.

### 4. Improve Housing, Employment, and Economic Security

- Integrate LGBTIQA+SB inclusion into housing and homelessness strategies, including targeted supports for trans and gender diverse people at risk.

### 5. Foster Connection, Belonging, and Community-Led Support

- Provide ongoing funding for community connection initiatives, including peer support groups, Pride events, and affirming social spaces that reduce isolation and improve wellbeing.
- Establish a small grants program to support regional and grassroots initiatives led by and for LGBTIQA+SB people.
- Develop digital connection hubs and online peer spaces for regional and remote communities to access support, share resources, and stay connected.
- Recognise and resource community connection as a protective factor, integrating it into mental health and suicide prevention frameworks.

# Services & Supports

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide wellbeing and capacity-building support for volunteers to prevent burnout and sustain community-led initiatives.



### 6. Drive Accountability, Coordination, and Transparency

- Resource the LGBTIQA+SB peak body to monitor delivery of the Inclusion Strategy, provide expert guidance to government, and maintain community trust.
- Ensure all strategy actions are adequately resourced, embedded in agency core business, and evaluated through community-informed measures of success.
- Commit to long-term partnership with LGBTIQA+SB peak body and community organisations, ensuring lived experience informs every level of policy, practice, and reform.

# Safety & Inclusion

## CONSULTATION FINDINGS

### Discrimination and violence persist:

Despite progress, participants across all consultations reported ongoing experiences of exclusion, harassment, and violence in public spaces, online, in workplaces, and schools. These experiences erode trust and contribute to poor mental health outcomes. Violence and abuse is not limited to the general public, it occurs in direct and indirect ways through services and institutions leading to LGBTIQA+SB people unable to trust and not reporting matters or reaching out for support to police, hospitals, doctors, aged care supports and other community services.

### Safety varies by region and context:

While towns like Broome were seen as relatively welcoming due to visible Pride networks, many smaller or more remote communities remain unsafe or silent about LGBTIQA+SB inclusion. Other towns such as Albany were experiencing direct, public, and organised campaigns against the LGBTIQA+SB community

> *"Coming out is hard here. It's still 'Don't ask, don't tell'. (Geraldton)"*

across local government and community groups. Regional planning must involve local LGBTIQA+SB people who can inform responses based on their local knowledge, networks and personal lived experience.

### Visibility and leadership:

Representation matters — but it must be authentic and meaningful. Participants consistently spoke about the importance of seeing LGBTIQA+SB people, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and trans leaders, represented in decision-making roles, public service leadership, and community-facing positions. Authentic representation not only reflects the diversity of our communities but also builds trust and accountability between government, services, and the people they serve.

However, participants also cautioned against tokenism and "pinkwashing" — symbolic gestures that are not backed by real commitment or action. When visibility is used for appearance rather than genuine inclusion, it can deepen mistrust and reinforce feelings of exclusion. True leadership requires investment in pathways for LGBTIQA+SB people to lead, participate, and influence decisions that affect their lives.

# Safety & Inclusion

## CONSULTATION FINDINGS

### Connection and visibility as protection:

Visibility and connection were described as protective factors that foster safety, belonging, and resilience. Community events such as Pride, Kimberley Blak Pride, and other local celebrations provide vital opportunities for LGBTIQA+SB people to connect, feel seen, and take pride in who they are. These events play an important role in countering stigma, reducing isolation, and building stronger, more inclusive communities.

However, participants noted that most of these initiatives are community-driven and volunteer-run, often operating on minimal or no funding. Many are concentrated in larger towns or urban areas, leaving significant gaps in regional and remote engagement. Sustained funding and support for locally led visibility and connection initiatives were identified as essential — not only for celebration, but as an act of prevention, resilience-building, and cultural safety.



### Legal reform:

Participants called for stronger legal protections, stronger and more consistent enforcement, and visible accountability. While progress is underway in WA, protection under the law remains patchy, and religious exemptions strongly undermine safety.

Legal reform also extends to cultural reform within the police and justice systems where there is a strong culture of homophobia, transphobia, sexism and racism.

The LGBTIQA+SB community have a long negative history with police in WA and beyond that includes violence, abuse, humiliation, and not being believed. This relationship continues today. These factors stop LGBTIQA+SB reporting or reaching out for support.

# Safety & Inclusion

## CONSULTATION FINDINGS

**Accountability for action:**

While the Inclusion Strategy was broadly welcomed, many participants expressed a sense of cautious optimism — and, for some, deep scepticism. The LGBTIQA+SB community in Western Australia, as well as nationally and internationally, has a long history of slow, hard-fought progress to secure legal recognition, access to safe services, and broader social acceptance. Many described a pattern of strong words and symbolic gestures that have not always been followed by tangible change.

Participants emphasised that genuine progress requires more than a strategy — it requires visible, measurable action and transparent reporting. They called for government to demonstrate accountability by clearly outlining what will be done, who is responsible, and how outcomes will be tracked and communicated back to community.

Several noted that trust is built through consistency and follow-through. Communities are tired of consultation processes that do not lead to change, or commitments that are not resourced or sustained.

For the Inclusion Strategy to be meaningful, it must result in concrete improvements to policy, practice, and lived experience — with ongoing partnership between government and the LGBTIQA+SB community to ensure it delivers on its promise.



# Safety & Inclusion

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Strengthen Safety and Address Discrimination

- Develop and implement a whole-of-government anti-discrimination framework that explicitly addresses homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and intersex discrimination in workplaces, schools, health, aged care, and community services.
- Embed LGBTIQA+SB safety and inclusion standards within all government contracts and funding agreements, ensuring services are accountable for inclusive practice.
- Create and fund a state-wide LGBTIQA+SB safety plan, including initiatives to prevent and respond to hate-based violence, harassment, and online abuse.
- Build culturally safe reporting pathways through partnerships between government, police, and community organisations to increase confidence and trust in reporting discrimination and violence.

### 2. Ensure Regional Safety and Inclusion

- Develop regional inclusion action plans co-designed with local LGBTIQA+SB people, Elders, and community organisations to reflect local realities and needs.
- Fund local LGBTIQA+SB liaison or community development roles in key regional centres to provide coordination, advocacy, and connection to services.
- Invest in outreach and engagement programs that connect remote and regional communities to resources, networks, and peer support.
- Address localised hate and misinformation campaigns through community education, local government partnerships, and visible government leadership in support of inclusion.

# Safety & Inclusion

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 3. Promote Authentic Visibility and Leadership

- Review representation mechanisms on advisory groups, boards, and committees to ensure diversity and meaningful involvement, not tokenism.
- Provide funding and professional development for LGBTIQA+SB-led organisations to build governance, leadership, and advocacy capacity.
- Set public service targets for representation and visibility of LGBTIQA+SB people in leadership roles, supported by inclusive workplace policies and training.

### 4. Support Connection and Visibility as Protective Factors

- Provide sustained, multi-year funding for LGBTIQA+SB community events and networks, including Pride festivals, Kimberley Blak Pride and other regionally led initiatives.
- Support small, local, and volunteer-run initiatives that strengthen belonging and visibility in regional and remote areas, recognising their vital role in prevention and resilience
- Invest in infrastructure and small grants programs that allow community-led groups to host inclusive, accessible, and culturally safe events.
- Recognise visibility initiatives as public health promotion, embedding them within mental health, wellbeing, and community resilience frameworks.

### 5. Advance Legal and Cultural Reform

- Amend state legislation to remove religious exemptions that allow discrimination against LGBTIQA+SB people in employment, education, and service delivery.
- Strengthen and enforce anti-discrimination and hate crime laws, including improved complaint processes and community awareness of legal rights.
- Develop a reform and education framework with WA Police to address entrenched homophobia, transphobia, sexism, and racism, co-designed with community.

# Safety & Inclusion

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish an independent monitoring mechanism to oversee police and justice responses to LGBTIQA+SB people, ensuring accountability and transparency.
- Support justice reinvestment and restorative justice approaches for LGBTIQA+SB people who have been harmed by institutions.

### 6. Commit to Accountability and Measurable Action

- Publish a detailed implementation plan for the WA Inclusion Strategy, including clear timelines, responsibilities, and measurable indicators of progress.
- Establish a public annual reporting process on progress and outcomes, co-designed and reviewed with the LGBTIQA+SB community.
- Ensure sustained investment in peer-led organisations and community partners to deliver key components of the Strategy and hold government accountable.
- Embed evaluation and feedback loops that enable community voices to continue shaping the Strategy beyond its initial implementation.

> *"You have all this information already, you know about our outcomes, you know what we need, but you don't do anything about it, we're just tired."*





# CONCLUSION





# CONCLUSION

The voices shared through this process have been powerful, generous, and deeply honest. Across Western Australia, LGBTIQA+SB people spoke about their lives — the challenges, the hopes, the pride, and the exhaustion that comes from constantly having to fight for safety, respect, and recognition. What we heard was not new, but it was clear: the need for change is urgent, and the path forward is well-known.

People told us what inclusion looks like. It's being called by the right name, walking into a service and being treated with respect, being able to hold your partner's hand in public without fear. It's seeing leaders who reflect the diversity of our community and being part of decisions that affect our lives. It's knowing that help is there when you need it.

The WA LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Strategy is an important opportunity for government to turn decades of community advocacy into meaningful action. It's a chance to move beyond promises and show real commitment through partnership, investment, and accountability. Actions speak louder than words.

This report shows that inclusion isn't just about policies or training sessions. It's about building systems, services and communities where every LGBTIQA+SB person can live safely, with dignity and pride, no matter where they are in WA.

Peer-led organisations remain central to this vision and to the solutions to the issues highlighted. They are trusted because they are us — made up of people who understand, who listen, and who walk alongside community. They must be supported not as add-ons, but as essential partners in building a safer and fairer WA.

Many who took part in these consultations expressed both hope and scepticism — hope that this time will be different, and scepticism born from years of broken promises.

The responsibility now lies with government to show that this time, things will change.

Western Australia has the chance to lead — to be a state where diversity is celebrated, not just tolerated and LGBTIQA+SB people living in WA can thrive.

Our communities have already done the hard work of surviving, organising, and supporting one another. They have been open in their communication through the process and they have once again trusted in government. What we need now is government not to just listen but to act, invest and to do so in partnership with community.

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