



Australia Awards

Australia Awards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) People in Australia

This is about the rights of and some of the lived experiences of LGBTI people and provides helpful contacts and information resources about LGBTI people in the Australian context.

Key terms

We all have a sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics. In some cases, these aspects of our identity align with social expectations of what it means to be male/masculine or female/feminine. In other cases, people do not identify in this binary way.

The Genderbread Person v4 *by its pronounced METROsexual*

⊖ means a lack of what's on the right side

Gender Identity	Gender Expression	Anatomical Sex
→ Woman-ness	→ Femininity	→ Female-ness
→ Man-ness	→ Masculinity	→ Male-ness

Identity ≠ Expression ≠ Sex
Gender ≠ Sexual Orientation

Sex Assigned At Birth
 Female Intersex Male

Sexually Attracted to... and/or (a/o)	Romantically Attracted to...
→ Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People	→ Women a/o Feminine a/o Female People
→ Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People	→ Men a/o Masculine a/o Male People

Genderbread Person Version 4 created and uncopyrighted 2017 by Sam Killermann [For a bigger bite, read more at www.genderbread.org](http://www.genderbread.org)

Source: genderbread.org





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Sexual orientation refers to emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people.

Gender identity is one's innermost concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from the sex assigned at birth.

Gender expression is the external appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behaviour, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviours and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

What does LGBTI mean?¹

LGBTIQ are people who have identified themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or questioning².

A lesbian is a person who self-identifies as a woman and who is emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to people who self-describe as women.

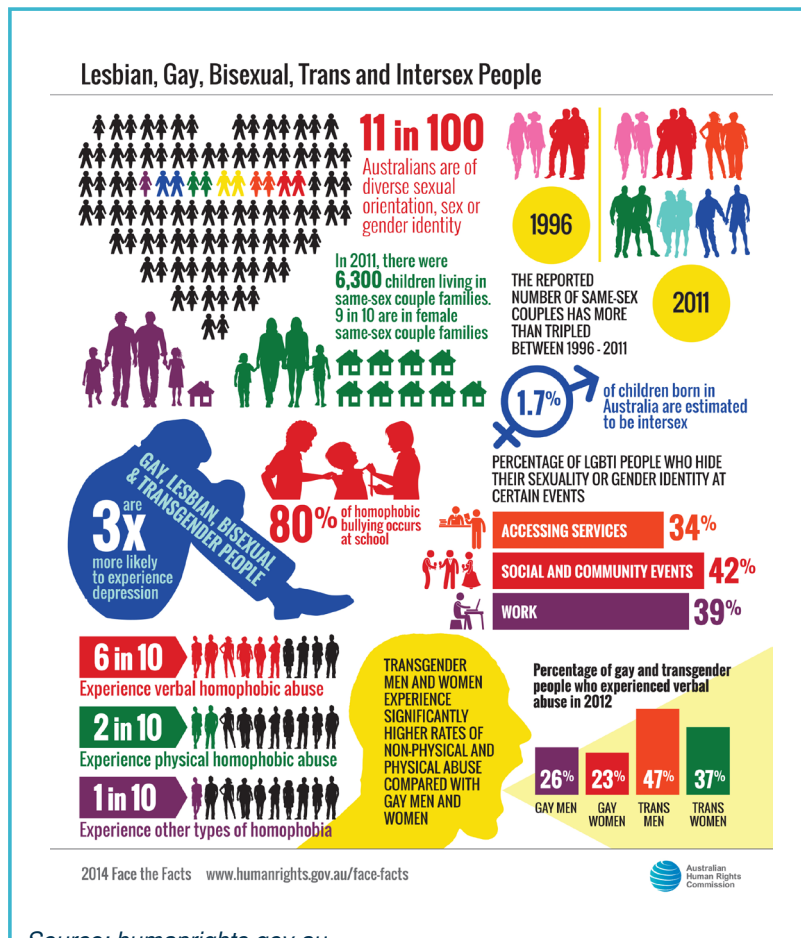
A person who is gay self-identifies as a man and who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to people who self-describe as men.

Bisexual/bi is a person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of the same gender and people of another gender.

Transgender/Trans: umbrella terms used to refer to people whose assigned sex at birth does not match their gender identity. Trans people may choose to live their lives with or without modifying their body, dress or legal status, and with or without medical treatment and surgery. Trans people may use a variety of terms to describe themselves including but not limited to: man, woman, trans woman, trans man, non-binary, agender, genderqueer, genderfluid, trans guy, trans masculine/masc, trans feminine/femme.

Intersex is an umbrella term that refers to individuals who have physical and biological characteristics that differ from medical and conventional understandings of male and female bodies. Most people with intersex characteristics may describe their gender as simply women or men.

LGBTI people in Australia



Source: humanrights.gov.au

¹ <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/lgbtiq-glossary>

² <https://lgbtihealth.org.au/communities>





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Contrary to popular belief there is no such thing as a single “LGBTI community” or “LGBTI lifestyle”.³ How LGBTI people identify themselves is influenced by many factors, including their age, ethnicity, socioeconomic position and their lived experiences and relationships with others.

Key information⁴

Australia has a large and active group of people who openly identify as LGBTI

- The Department of Health (2019) estimates that 11 per cent of the Australian population self-identify as LGBTI.
- Many LGBTI people in Australia still experience discrimination, harassment, and hostility in their everyday life - in public, at work, in schools and universities, accessing health and other services and securing proper recognition of their sex in official documents
- The reported number of same-sex couples has more than tripled between 1996 and 2011. Same-sex couples make up about one per cent of all couples in Australia. In 2011, there were around 33,700 same-sex couples in Australia, including 17,600 male same-sex couples and 16,100 female same-sex couples.
- In 2011, there were around 6,300 children living in same-sex couple families, up from 3,400 in 2001; most of these children (89 per cent) are in female same-sex couple families
- There are no firm figures for Australia’s intersex population - estimates range from one in 2,000 births to four per cent of the population however the Organisation Intersex International Australia (OII Australia) recommends a mid-range figure of 1.7 per cent of all births

Legal rights

In Australia, equality and freedom from discrimination are fundamental human rights experiencing verbal homophobic abuse (61 per cent), and some have experienced physical homophobic abuse (18 per cent), and other forms of exclusion (nine per cent), including cyberbullying, graffiti, social exclusion, and humiliation.

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are three times more likely to experience depression compared to the broader population.⁷

Transgender males and females experience significantly higher rates of non-physical and physical abuse compared with lesbians and gay men.

The 2017 Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey shows that, since 2005, attitudes toward same-sex marriage and children have become more progressive and inclusive. The recent marriage equality bill (2017) and other international debates on same-sex marriage have seemingly positively influenced people’s acceptance that same-sex couples have the same rights as heterosexual couples⁸.

Research from the Australian Human Rights Commission indicates that people in same-sex couples tend to be more highly educated, more likely to work in highly skilled occupations (53 per cent compared with 43 per cent), and more likely to have higher incomes. On measures of general health and family cohesion, children aged 5 to 17 years with same-sex attracted parents had significantly better scores when compared to Australian children from all other backgrounds and family contexts⁹.

LGBTI young people at schools where protective policies are in place are more likely to feel safe compared with those in schools without similar policies (75 per cent compared with 45 per cent). They are almost half less likely to be physically abused at school, less likely to suffer other forms of homophobic abuse, less likely to self-harm and less likely to attempt suicide.

Inclusion and non-discrimination of LGBTI people

It is essential that all awardees understand and respect the legal rights of people who are LGBTI. Discrimination, harassment, and physical or verbal abuse of people based on their sexual preference and gender identity is unlawful in Australia.

Australia Awards respects and celebrates gender diversity. Awardees are encouraged to be open to interacting and engaging with others from different cultural and identity groups and be proactive in promoting and supporting inclusion for all.

³ <https://lgbtihealth.org.au/communities/>

⁴ <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/education/face-facts/face-facts-lesbian-gay-bisexual-trans-and-intersex-people>

⁵ Sex Discrimination Act 1984

⁶ https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bld=s1099

⁷ *ibid* 3

⁸ <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/why-more-australians-are-supporting-gay-rights>

⁹ *ibid* 6





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Ways that you may choose to understand and engage more with LGBTI people in Australia:

- Don't make assumptions about people's sexual orientation be open and unsurprised if a person shares their sexual attraction and orientation;
- Think about the language you use and try and use inclusive language. For example, don't address someone who is transgender using a term that does not fit how that person identifies their gender identity, and if you are unsure ask the person how they wish to be described (she/he; they/them ze/zir);
- Read more about the experiences of people who identify as LGBTI – online information resources you can access are listed at the end of this fact sheet;
- Connect with networks or organisations that represent LGBTI people – there are many associations in Australia and most universities will also have LGBTI associations or network groups on campus.

Resources and further information

QLife provides anonymous and free LGBTI peer support and referral for people wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships. - [www.qlife.org.au](http://www qlife.org.au)

National LGBTI Health Alliance

The National LGBTI Health Alliance is the national peak health organisation in Australia for organisations and

individuals that provide health-related programs, services and research focused on LGBTI and other sexuality, gender, and bodily diverse people and communities –

www.lgbtihealth.org.au

Intersex Human Rights Australia (IHRA) is a national body by and for people born with variations of sex characteristics that promotes human rights and bodily autonomy, and provide information, education, and an online peer support group – www.ihra.org.au

ALLY Networks

Most institutions in Australia have an ALLY network that is group of staff who are allies to the LGBTI community at the university You can speak to your Student Contact Officer to see if this, or any other networks or associations are offered at your university or institution.

Pride in Diversity is the national not-for-profit employer support program for LGBTI workplace inclusion specialising in HR, organisational change and workplace diversity. - www.prideinclusionprograms.com.au

Life in Mind

Life in Mind is a knowledge exchange platform connecting suicide prevention organisations and related sectors to translated evidence, current policy, local, state, and national efforts and evidence-informed programs and services on lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender, intersex, queer and other sexuality, gender and bodily diverse people.

<https://lifeinmind.org.au/>

