



AWEI FOUNDATION SUBMISSION

Form_Year

2026

EMPLOYER / ORGANISATION DETAILS

Organisation Name *

Department of Social Services

Please enter name as you would like it to appear on certificates or any awards if applicable. Please check this carefully, as Pride in Diversity will not take any responsibility for organisation names if different to the above. In all circumstances, we will revert to the name entered here for any publications, announcements, trophies.

Contact Person for the Index

Please provide full contact details.

- This is the person we should contact if we have any questions.
- Results will be emailed to this person.

Contact Person for the Index - Name *

Sam Ursich

Contact Person for the Index - Position Title *

Branch Manager, People Services

Contact Person for the Index - Postal Address *

GPO Box 9820, Canberra ACT 2601

Including postal code

Contact Person for the Index - Phone Number *

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Contact Person for the Index - Email Address *

Sam.Ursich@dss.gov.au

DISCLOSURE RECOGNITION

Please select the tier recognition point (at a minimum) at which you are happy to be publicly identified regarding participation and achievement within the AWEI. *

- ☒ We are happy to be identified at Bronze Tier (based on Foundation Submission score) if we do not reach a higher tier
- ☐ Only identify us if we reach Silver Tier or higher
- ☐ Only identify us if we reach Gold Tier or higher
- ☐ We are participating anonymously and do not want to be identified.

We list employers annually that reach each of the employer recognition tiers within the AWEI, unless you choose to be anonymous. Some employers choose only to be identified should they reach a certain recognition tier.

PERMISSION FOR USE OF CONTENT

We often like to profile images and video of people/events over the assessed year within the opening video of our awards event. Please advise if you give permission for us to use relevant visual images provided within your submission for this purpose. *

- ☐ Yes, you may use anything
- ☐ Yes, you may use anything – but please advise us first
- ☐ Yes, but please ask us for permission first
- ☒ No, please do not use any of our visuals

NEGATIVE PRESS / COMPLAINTS DISCLOSURE

Check any of the fields below if it is applicable to your organisation

- ☐ We have received negative press that could impact our reputation as an LGBTQ+ inclusive employer within the assessed year.
- ☐ Formal complaints have been lodged against us for LGBTQ+ discrimination, bullying or harassment (Fair Work Ombudsman, Human Rights Commission, Sex Discrimination Act) within the assessed year.
- ☐ A complaint has won an LGBTQ+ related case against us within the assessed year.
- ☒ We understand that up to 25 points may be deducted from our score if we have received a significant amount of negative press regarding an anti-LGBTQ+ incident where our organisation was responsible and insufficient action was taken to rectify this; or we were found at fault for a lodged complaint regarding LGBTQ+ individuals and this was not acted on. *

ACCURACY STATEMENT

- ☒ We confirm that at the time of submission, details provided for all questions identified within the submission are true and accurate. We understand that should any claims be found to be false; points and rankings will be adjusted accordingly. *
- ☒ We understand that for questions where evidence is not required, there may be random audits or requests for information. If required, we are willing to supply these to validate our responses. *

Name of person signing off accuracy *

Sam Ursich

Position within organisation *

Branch Manager, People Services

Contact Email *

Sam.ursich@dss.gov.au

Contact Phone *

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diversity

SUBMISSION DETAILS

The AWEI Foundation Submission is for Bronze Tier Status 2023 – 2029.

This application can be completed and submitted between Monday, 11 January 2027 – Monday, 22 February 2027.

To achieve Bronze Tier Status within the AWEI Foundation Submission, participating organisations must obtain 80% of allocated points. For Standard Employers (501 or more employees), this is 64 points out of 80 points.

Pride in Diversity **only accepts submissions through this online portal**. You can use the 'Save and Complete Later' function, but once you have submitted your final application online, **no changes can be made**. If you experience issues using this portal, please contact awei@acon.org.au as early as possible.



PROVIDING EVIDENCE

Please read each question carefully and provide only the evidence requested.

- If evidence is contained within a broader document or policy, please highlight only the detail requested.
- If inadequate or incomplete answers are provided for any question, full points will not be obtained.

Tick-box Selections:

- Please ensure you select the appropriate tick-box when tick-boxes are presented within the question.
- Pride in Diversity will not assess responses if tick boxes have not been selected (these are critical to how your responses will be assessed).
- Pride in Diversity will not be responsible for non-assessment of questions where there is conflict between evidence provided and tick-box selected.

Text Responses:

- Where evidence is by way of written responses, please use the text box provided. To expand the text box, click and drag the corner of the selection to increase the height of the textbox.
- Most questions will require a written response, even if an evidence attachment is also requested. Please ensure you use the text boxes provided to clearly address the criteria and explain how your evidence supports your response. A strong written explanation helps provide context and clarity for reviewers, ensuring your submission is assessed accurately and fairly.

Evidence Attachments:

- Limit one piece of evidence per evidence box. Please note: If multiple files are uploaded to a single evidence field, they will not register as separate files and some files may be lost. Where multiple files are required, separate evidence fields have been provided. Pride in Diversity cannot take responsibility for evidence uploaded incorrectly, so please ensure that text and evidence fields are used as directed throughout the form.
- The maximum amount of evidence required for each question is determined by the number of evidence boxes provided.
- If an evidence box is not provided within the question, an attachment is not required for the question.
- Please note: Some questions include multiple criteria, which may require different forms of support to fully address the question. For example, a single question might ask for written 'details' for one item and 'evidence' for another. Please read each question carefully to ensure you are meeting all requirements. Where possible, Pride in Diversity has structured questions to minimise unnecessary attachments and streamline your submission process.
- Please note: You are not required to use all evidence upload boxes provided within a single question. These additional boxes are included to allow flexibility for organisations that may need to upload multiple files to meet the evidence requirements. However, if your organisation can address multiple criteria points within a single document, you are welcome to upload just one attachment. The key is ensuring that all required elements are clearly identifiable within the evidence you provide.

HOW TO COMPLETE YOUR SUBMISSION

'Save and Complete Later' Function:

- **IMPORTANT:** Use the 'Save and Complete Later' function as you complete your Submission. This function can be utilised throughout the year, as you prepare, review and complete.
- This function allows you to return to your work without losing any work previously updated.
- If you do not use this function, any changes or updates made may not be saved and work may be lost. Pride in Diversity will not be responsible for any work lost.
- Upon clicking 'Save and Complete Later,' you will be sent a link to utilise to return and continue work on your Submission.

'Submit' Function:

- Once you have completed and reviewed all work and are ready to submit, you must click the 'Submit' button upon completion.
- If you do not click 'Submit' upon completion, your Submission will not be accepted.
- Do not click the 'Submit' function unless you are ready to formally complete and submit your Submission.

Placeholder Link Function:

- Each time you click 'Save and Complete Later,' you will be sent an updated link to continue your work on your submission. Any work done on an 'outdated' link will result in work being lost.
- Any link provided to you and your organisation can only be utilised by those within your organisation.
- If multiple people are working on a submission for their organisation, they must share this correct link or all work will not be saved properly. Each placeholder link email will be sent to the person who is working on the submission at time of saving.

REGARDING INTERNATIONAL POLICIES AND WORK

It is important to realise that the AWEI measures policy and practice here within Australia. Globally, policies, law and terminology can differ. International activity will not have the same impact on inclusion locally that local activity will have. It is therefore important to understand the following:

International Policies – need to have relevance within Australia

International policies can only count for the Australian Index if they are relevant locally. Laws, terminology, protected attributes, and entitlements may differ, so points will not be awarded for simply referencing an international policy unless it has been formally adopted in Australia.

Policies must include statements or addendums explaining how they apply in Australia, covering areas such as family leave, staff entitlements, discrimination statements, protected attributes, and health or leave benefits for employees affirming their gender.

Work completed internationally – but not here

Points cannot be awarded for work completed in international offices unless your local team was involved in its development. You may gain points in the "additional work" section for LGBTQ+ inclusion initiatives you contributed to overseas, or for work that has been actively implemented, or adapted in Australia. Simply referencing overseas work without local adaptation or activity will not attract points.



HR POLICIES & DIVERSITY PRACTICE

1. Updated Terminology

We confirm that we have updated our language and terminology across relevant policy documentation, intranet pages and external web pages to align with inclusive best practice standards.

Please select all that apply:

- ☒ all instances of the words 'sexual preference' or 'lifestyle choice' have now been changed to 'sexual orientation' or 'diverse sexuality'
- ☒ all instances of the words 'gender transition' or 'transition' have now been changed to 'gender affirmation' or 'affirmation'
- ☐ we have not updated our language and terminology regarding 'sexual orientation' or 'diverse sexuality'
- ☐ we have not updated our language and terminology regarding 'gender transition' or 'transition'

Why this question? While much work has been done on the inclusion of LGBTQ+ employees within policies, there is still a significant legacy of websites, intranet pages and diversity references that use what can be considered outdated or negative language.

This can send a message that the organisation is not up to date with correct terminology. Further, it can generate negative reactions within the very demographic we are seeking to be inclusive of.

1 point if all instances of the words 'sexual preference' or 'lifestyle choice' have now been changed to 'sexual orientation' or 'diverse sexuality'

1 point if all instances of the words 'gender transition' or 'transition' have now been changed to 'gender affirmation' or 'affirmation'

HR POLICIES & DIVERSITY PRACTICE

2. LGBTQ+ Inclusivity within Policies and Benefits

On our policy intranet pages or upfront within our policy documentation, we have made it explicitly clear that all policies are inclusive of LGBTQ+ employees and their families (where families are included within policies/benefits).

Please provide the statement that makes it explicitly clear that all policies are inclusive of LGBTQ+ employees and their families.

Why this question? We know that people can read themselves out of policies.

In previous indices, we asked for evidence of inclusivity statements within every policy. Australian law changes now make it illegal to discriminate against LGBTQ+ employees (apart from some religious exemptions). The need to clearly articulate the LGBTQ+ inclusivity of your policies here in Australia is still necessary for the following reasons:

- Employees may be unsure of how religious freedoms interact with discrimination law in workplace settings
- Not all employees will be up to speed with discrimination law when it comes to family benefits and workplace policies so may not know if all policies apply

Some policies are written internationally and implemented globally where laws are different. A localisation of benefits or clarification of these will be necessary

2 points if the statement provided is explicitly inclusive

There are no partial points for this question.

Answer

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is committed to ensuring its workplace policies are inclusive for all staff. Our workplace policies are written for and apply to all staff regardless of gender, disability, cultural diversity (including First Nations people), age or religion and inclusive of all DSS employees. This statement is explicitly clear on our corporate policies intranet page and supporting materials that all policies developed must be inclusive of LGBTQIA+ employees and their families. This information can be found on our intranet and corporate policy checklist and template guidance.

HR POLICIES & DIVERSITY PRACTICE

3. New Parent Leave Inclusive of LGBTQ+ Families

We clearly communicate that our New Parent Leave (or equivalent) is inclusive for employees who bring children into their family via surrogacy, adoption and foster/guardianship.

Please provide a copy of the exact wording of your policy regarding these areas.

Why this question? There are many ways that children come into LGBTQ+ families; for some this may be limited to surrogacy, adoption or foster/guardianship arrangements. In each of these scenarios, there will be leave required during the initial stages of caring for a new member of the family.

1 point if surrogacy is included

1 point if adoption is included

1 point if foster/guardianship is included

Answer

The DSS Leave Policy is inclusive of employees who bring children into their family through surrogacy, adoption or foster care (outlined on pages 1, 24- 27, 28 and 49). This information is accessible to all staff on the DSS intranet. It is important to note that our policy applies to all staff regardless of gender, disability, cultural diversity (including First Nations people), age, religion and is inclusive of all LGBTQIA+ staff, their partners and/or family members consistent with the provisions of relevant legislation.

We have a simple statement on page 1 that notes this, although does not go into explicit demographic or diversity groups. We have included details of our parental leave options which clarify the variety of leave types available. The policy also includes an escalation process for staff if they feel the policy has been misinterpreted by their managers.

File as evidence for this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q3 - Evidence New Parent Leave inclusive of LGBTQIA+ Families.docx

File as evidence for this question

 [Browse](#)

Only one attachment per field.

File as evidence for this question

 [Browse](#)

Only one attachment per field.

HR POLICIES & DIVERSITY PRACTICE

4. International Travel Advice for Employees

We have international travel advice available to our LGBTQ+ employees or employees with LGBTQ+ dependents should they be required to travel for work (e.g., cultural context, safety, LGBTQ+ matters in other jurisdictions).

Please provide a copy of travel advice available.

Why this question? For organisations requiring international travel, it is essential to provide travel guidance for LGBTQ+ employees, particularly in countries with hostile laws towards diverse sexualities and/or genders. Employees may face personal risk in certain locations, so HR or relocation teams should ensure this information is readily available to all staff.

3 points for international travel advice available to our LGBTQ+ employees

Note: Points will not be allocated for a brief mention of LGBTQ+ inclusivity without any meaningful information that would inform an employee as to their safety or acceptance within a given location.

Answer

The department has international travel advice readily available to LGBTIQ+ employees should they be required to travel for work. This advice includes a clear principle that staff are not required to travel if there is a high risk of discrimination or harassment (page 5 of the International Travel Policy). A clause has also been included to link staff to resources such as the Smart traveller website for LGBTIQ+ travellers.

Our intranet site includes a checklist to ensure prospective travellers have read the international travel policy. Both the policy and checklist can be found on the international travel intranet page which is accessible to all staff. In addition, a range of FAQs listed on the DSS Pride page includes a range of FAQs that provide additional information around travelling.

File as evidence for this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q4 - Evidence for International Travel Advice for Employees.docx

File as evidence for this question

Browse

Only one attachment per field.

HR POLICIES & DIVERSITY PRACTICE

5. LGBTQ+ Inclusive Domestic & Family Violence Policy

Our Domestic and Family Violence Policy or resources clearly:

- a) acknowledges and identifies unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ people in domestic and family violence situations; AND**
- b) identifies specialist LGBTQ+ avenues of support to assist HR Managers and employees impacted by LGBTQ+ domestic and family violence**

For full points, please provide evidence for BOTH a) and b).

Why this question? Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) is a significant problem within Australia, and laws are now being introduced for DFV to be addressed within workplace policy and practice.

A significant number of DFV policies make a passing reference to the inclusion of LGBTQ+ people but do not mention the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ people in these situations. The fact that support avenues for LGBTQ+ people are incredibly limited is also significant. This part of the index seeks to close that gap

2 points if (a) the DFV Policy acknowledges and identifies unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ people in domestic and family violence situations

2 points if (b) the DFV Policy or relevant intranet pages identifies specialist LGBTQ+ avenues of support to assist HR Managers and employees dealing with LGBTQ+ domestic and family violence

Answer

The department's Family and Domestic Violence Policy acknowledges that LGBTIQ+ employees can be uniquely impacted by family and domestic violence (page 4). Our policies are written for all staff and diversity groups and so don't tend to go into specific details for each cohort as these are supposed to be high level documents. Additional content is being drafted as an appendix to explain these scenarios in more details for each diversity group.

The department's Family and Domestic Violence Policy (page 11 and 12) and the Family and Domestic Violence Guidance for Employees and Managers resource (page 10) clearly identifies specialist LGBTIQ+ avenues of support to assist HR Managers, managers and employees impacted by LGBTIQ+ domestic and family violence.

Staff can also access support from appropriately qualified and experienced Employee Assistant Program consultants who specialise in LGBTIQ+ issues who have an in-depth understanding of sensitivities and required approaches. The policy and resources can be easily found by all staff on the intranet.

File as evidence to this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q5 - Evidence for LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Domestic & Family Violence Policy.docx

File as evidence to this question

Browse

Only one attachment per field.



LGBTQ+ BULLYING, HARASSMENT & SUPPORT

6. Resources on LGBTQ+ Inclusive and Negative Language

We actively promote the availability of resource(s) to all staff that provide clear guidelines on both inclusive language and on language that is negative, offensive, or harmful to LGBTQ+ populations.

Please provide:

a) a copy of the resource provided to staff; and

b) details of how staff learn about the existence of this resource

Why this question? Language in this area can be quite complex and public commentary, articles, ads, brochures, blogs, etc. can inadvertently be negative, harmful, offensive, inappropriate and/or discriminatory.

A targeted communications guide is designed to assist anyone within your organisation who might be referencing LGBTQ+ populations. It will enable them to understand which words are offensive, harmful or negatively perceived, while equipping them with inclusive alternatives.

2 points if the resource provides clear guidelines on inclusive language

2 points if the resource provides clear guidelines on negative language

2 points for a means by which staff can easily learn about the existence this resource

Answer

The department actively promotes multiple resources to all staff that provide clear guidelines on both inclusive language and negatively perceived language relating to LGBTIQ+ people. These are linked in a range of locations on the intranet that are available to all staff.

File as evidence to this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q6 - Resources on LGBTIQ+ Inclusive and Negative Language.docx

LGBTQ+ BULLYING, HARASSMENT & SUPPORT

7. LGBTQ+ related Grievance Officers

Our organisation has a trained grievance officer (or someone equivalent, trained in addressing and/or processing organisational grievances) who is:

- **clearly communicated as a contact for LGBTQ+-related grievances; AND who is**
- **clearly identified as someone who has been trained in LGBTQ+ inclusion and awareness**

For full points, please provide evidence for BOTH a) and b).

Why this question? This question does NOT refer to LGBTQ+ Network leads (unless they are also HR people with grievance process responsibilities). This question refers to the people or person that formal bullying/harassment complaints are referred to.

Having an authorised grievance officer (or equivalent) who is fully trained in LGBTQ+ inclusion and an ally, provides a level of safety in reporting harmful behaviour.

2 points if (a) the grievance officer is clearly communicated as a contact for LGBTQ+ related grievances

2 points if (b) the grievance officer is clearly identified as someone who has been trained in LGBTQ+ inclusion and awareness

Note: Points will not be allocated for generic statements that all Grievance Officers are trained/inclusive.

Answer

The department has trained Harassment Contact Officers (HCOs) available to provide advice and support to employees in relation to harassment, bullying or discrimination. A current HCO is clearly identified as being trained in LGBTIQ+ inclusion and awareness. Another HCO is clearly identified as LGBTIQ+ and as a specific contact person amongst the HCO's for LGBTIQ+ matters.

This information is accessible to all staff on the HCO intranet page. Details have been redacted to protect privacy.

File as evidence for this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q7 - LGBTIQ+-related Harassment Contact and Grievance Officers.docx

File as evidence for this question

Browse

Only one attachment per field.

LGBTQ+ BULLYING, HARASSMENT & SUPPORT

8. Behavioural Examples of What Constitutes Bullying / Harassment

Our organisation has documentation that is easily located within our bullying and harassment policy/guidelines that provide clear behavioural examples of what constitutes LGBTQ+-related bullying/harassment.

For full points, please provide behavioural examples given within your bullying/harassment documentation that identifies:

- a) behaviour that constitutes bullying/harassment regarding employees of diverse sexual orientation; and*
- b) behaviour that constitutes bullying/harassment regarding employees of diverse gender*

Why this question? Having very specific behavioural examples of what constitutes bullying/harassment of LGBTQ+ people:

- allows employers to utilise this to show how such behaviour contravenes your code of conduct
- allows managers to point to such behaviour when counter claims such as "it was only meant as a joke" or "that was just a bit of fun" are given
- gives LGBTQ+ employees and their allies 'permission' to call out that behaviour

This is particularly relevant regarding the constant innuendo, jokes, unwelcome commentary that LGBTQ+ people frequently face, and have clearly identified as a cause of workplace stress and harassment within the AWEI Employee Surveys.

2 points for (a) clear behavioural examples that constitutes bullying/harassment regarding employees of diverse sexual orientation

2 points for (b) clear behavioural examples that constitutes bullying/harassment regarding employees of diverse gender

Answer

The department's "understanding bullying and harassment" intranet page, the Sexual Harassment and Sex Based Harassment Policy and the Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy provide clear examples of what constitutes bullying/harassment regarding employees of diverse sexual orientation and diverse gender. In addition, information with explicit behavioural examples are available on our intranet. The policies and general information is accessible to all staff.

File as evidence to this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q8 - Behavioural Examples of What Constitutes Bullying and Harassment.docx

File as evidence to this question

Browse

Only one attachment per field.

INCLUSION OF TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE EMPLOYEES

9. Gender Affirmation Policy and Process Documentation

We have a documented gender affirmation policy/process to support:

- a) employee(s) wishing to affirm their gender in the workplace
- b) manager(s) and/or HR contact(s) supporting those who wish to affirm their gender
- c) peers/colleagues of those who wish to affirm their gender

For full points, please provide evidence for each of the areas above.

Why this question? We are currently seeing an unprecedented number of people affirm their gender in the workplace. Having a clearly articulated policy and process to support the employee, their manager and team during this time is critical.

2 points for (a) a documented gender affirmation policy/process to support the employee(s) wishing to affirm their gender in the workplace

1 additional point for (b) documentation or processes to support manager(s) and/or HR contact(s) supporting those who wish to affirm their gender

1 point for (c) documentation or processes to support peers/colleagues of those who wish to affirm their gender

Note: You will not lose points for referring to a 'Transitioning Policy,' however we do ask that you endeavour to change wording to 'Gender Affirmation Policy' going forward, to reflect best practice.

Answer

The department's Gender Affirmation Policy and Gender Affirmation Guidelines support all employees wishing to affirm their gender in the workplace. The advice to managers, Inclusion Officers (HR contacts) and peers/colleagues supporting those who wish to affirm their gender is outlined on page 4 and 5 within the Policy and pages 4, 5 and 9 within the Guidelines. The Policy and Guidelines can be found on the intranet which is accessible to all staff.

File as evidence for this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q9 - Gender Affirmation Policy and Process Documentation.docx

File as evidence for this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q9 - Gender Affirmation Policy.pdf

File as evidence for this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q9 - Gender Affirmation guidelines.pdf

File as evidence for this question

Browse

Only one attachment per field.

INCLUSION OF TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE EMPLOYEES

10. Dress Codes

Our employees can easily locate an explicit statement that supports trans and gender diverse people dressing according to their affirmed gender at work, alongside a contact point for employees who have specific questions regarding this.

Note: For full points, this statement must be outside of gender affirmation documentation.

Please provide:

a) the explicit statement supporting trans and gender diverse employees to dress according to their gender at work, located outside of gender affirmation documentation; and

b) an easily locatable contact point should employees have any questions specific to this

Why this question? Gendered language within dress code documentation or “dress for the day” style communications can be fraught with problems for those affirming their gender, those who are trans, gender diverse, or non-binary, and those whose gender expressions don’t conform to societal ‘norms.’

The 2021 [AWEI Employee Survey](#) showed that 44% of all trans and gender diverse employees found dress codes to be one of the top 3 barriers in employment.

It is important even for those organisations without formal dress codes, that there be an overt statement to support employees dressing according to their affirmed gender.

1 point for (a) if the statement is only located within gender affirmation policy documentation and is explicitly supporting trans and gender diverse employees

1 additional point for (b) an easily locatable contact point

OR

3 points for (a) if the statement is accessible by all employees, outside of gender affirmation documentation, and is explicitly supporting trans and gender diverse employees

1 additional point for (b) an easily locatable contact point

Note: Points will be based on the inclusivity of the statement and how easily it can be located by all employees, not just those wishing to affirm their gender at work.

Answer

DSS does not have a specific dress code policy, however staff can easily locate an explicit statement that supports trans and gender diverse people dressing according to their affirmed gender at work on the Pride Committee intranet page and the Join the department intranet page.

Our Gender Affirmation Guidelines and LGBTIQ+ intranet page also includes guidance around dress and appearance.

The Pride Committee are promoted to staff as a primary point of contact for anyone with concerns or questions about dress and LGBTIQ+ employees.

When staff search 'dress code' on our intranet, all 3 pages where supportive dress is mentioned are the first pages returned.

INCLUSION OF TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE EMPLOYEES

11. Non-Binary Gender Options for Employees

We currently include non-binary options when collecting employee gender information within internal forms and/or IT systems.

For full points, please provide one example of gender inclusive options used on forms and/or within IT systems.

Why this question? This question is on par with international practice and refers to how we collect information about the sex or gender of our employees on internal forms/documentation or systems. Where your organisation collects gender information from employees, non-binary options should be included for trans and gender diverse employees.

Full points may be obtained in either option:

OPTION 1: Re: Non-Binary Gender Options:

- **2 points** for the inclusion of options other than male/female on forms
- **Additional 2 points** where gender information collected is inclusive of non-binary people and free of any language that may be negatively perceived

OPTION 2: Removal of gendered information:

- **4 points** if you have removed gendered information on the majority of forms and can provide an example of this

Note: Intersex relates to sex characteristics, not gender. Terms such as 'Indeterminate,' 'Undisclosed,' 'Unspecified' are commonly used for intersex characteristics and non-binary gender options. As this question speaks to gender, these terms will not obtain points.

Answer

DSS has very few forms in paper format and majority of information is captured online without the need for gender information. When the department does need to collect gender or diversity data, the form includes options other than male/female. This form is available to all staff registered on our SAP system. The gender information collected in the internal form and reported in the department's Annual Report and annual APS Census report is inclusive of non-binary people and free of any language that may be negatively perceived.

File as evidence for this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q11 - Non-Binary Gender Options for Employees.docx

File as evidence for this question

Browse

Only one attachment per field.



STRATEGIC FOCUS & ACCOUNTABILITY

12. External LGBTQ+ Expertise

We have access to external LGBTQ+ inclusion support/expertise that we have called upon throughout the assessed year.

☐ As Pride in Diversity members, we have access to external LGBTQ+ inclusion support, resources and expertise.

Why this question? While internal resources and subject matter expertise groups are valuable; they are sometimes limited by the scope and extent of work within the current organisation or previous roles.

This question looks at the utilisation of LGBTQ+ inclusion expertise/support across the year outside of your employee base.

3 points for Pride in Diversity membership

STRATEGIC FOCUS & ACCOUNTABILITY

13. LGBTQ+ Inclusion Strategy

We have an organisational strategy or Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) action plan to progress LGBTQ+ inclusion within our organisation.

Please provide a copy of the LGBTQ+ component of this strategy.

Why this question? An LGBTQ+ inclusion strategy or action plan ensures that there are endorsed accountabilities in this area of inclusion and allows employees and executives to track progress.

3 points if there is an LGBTQ+ component of this strategy or an action plan

There are no partial points to this question.

Answer

The department has a Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and a Pride Action Plan to progress LGBTIQ+ inclusion within the department.

Together the plans set out how we will work to build and strengthen our departmental culture, and are active steps towards DSS becoming an employer of choice for all people, including LGBTIQ+ people and their allies. The plan has been developed to align with the Australian Workplace Equality Index. This is Australia's national benchmarking instrument for LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion. The plans are endorsed by our DSS Executive team, who are committed to supporting its implementation.

For evidence, please refer to the full copy of the Diversity and Inclusion Action plan and Pride Action Plan files.

File as evidence for this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q13 - DSS Pride Action Plan and Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.pdf

STRATEGIC FOCUS & ACCOUNTABILITY

14. External LGBTQ+ Workplace Inclusion Promotion

We have detailed information on our Australian LGBTQ+ inclusion focus or work on our external facing website.

Please provide the URL of an external webpage that specifically promotes your LGBTQ+ inclusion work.

Why this question? When considering a role, potential employees often review an organisation's website. For LGBTQ+ candidates, information on diversity and inclusion can influence their decision to apply and set expectations about workplace inclusivity. Including Australia-based content reassures candidates that the local culture is welcoming and inclusive.

3 points if the URL to the external webpage specifically promotes your Australian LGBTQ+ inclusion work

There are no partial points for this question.

Points will not be allocated if we are unable to access the information from the direct URL provided.

Answer

The department has detailed information on our approach to supporting Australian LGBTIQ+ communities and staff on our website. Examples are available at:

<https://www.dss.gov.au/careers-and-employment/our-diverse-and-inclusive-workforce/supporting-our-lgbtiqa-staff>

<https://www.dss.gov.au/news/first-national-survey-strengthen-sexual-violence-prevention-and-support-lgbtiqa-communities>

STRATEGIC FOCUS & ACCOUNTABILITY

15. Professional Accountabilities

The following people within our organisation have documented accountabilities for LGBTQ+ inclusion:

- ☒ an HR/Diversity professional
 - ☒ an Executive Sponsor
 - ☐ a Network Leader (or equivalent)
 - ☒ an internally communicated LGBTQ+ Advisory service that provides subject expertise to the organisation
- Please select all that apply

Note: These accountabilities are over and above general diversity statements and must show at least one clearly articulated accountability in relation to the role or group.

Please provide evidence of at least one of the LGBTQ+-related accountabilities for each of the roles selected above.

Why this question? There are many instances when a focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion shifts with a change of staff. Formally building KPI's into roles that contribute to LGBTQ+ inclusion ensures a commitment to making the work accountable and in focus.

Accountabilities may be documented within a job description, an objectives statement, or plan of work.

For roles with documented accountabilities for LGBTQ+ inclusion:

2 points for an HR/Diversity professional

2 points for an Executive Sponsor

2 points for a Network Leader (or equivalent)

2 points for an internally communicated LGBTQ+ Advisory service (formal or informal) with a mandate to support the organisation

Answer

The department have documented accountabilities for LGBTIQA+ inclusion in their Performance Development Agreement which is part of the department's Performance Development Scheme.

The Director of the People, Safety and Inclusion team in our People Services Branch (HR area) has explicit responsibilities and accountabilities for diversity and inclusion, including LGBTIQA+ support within the department. This is recorded in their performance agreement which is reviewed regularly and for which they are held accountable.

The Champion (Executive Sponsor) and Advisor (Network Leader) roles and responsibilities are outlined in the Pride Committee governance documents and the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

The department's Pride Committee and network provide subject expertise to the department and is consulted on any LGBTIQA+ policies and programs. All governance materials, roles of the committee and senior leaders including contact details are available on the intranet for all staff to access.

File as evidence for HR/Diversity professional

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q15 - evidence of HR and Diversity Professional Accountabilities.docx

File as evidence for Executive Sponsor

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q15 - evidence for Executive Sponsor.docx

File as evidence for internally communicated LGBTQ+ Advisory service that provides subject expertise to the organisation

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q15 - evidence for LGBTIQA advisory services.docx

Note: We recognise that not all participating organisations may have a dedicated LGBTQ+ Network (or alternative) / Employee Resource Group (ERG). Alternatives may include a dedicated committee responsible for driving the organisational DEI strategy, a dedicated Advisory Group comprised of people with LGBTQ+ lived experience, or other types of structures that serve to advocate and inform LGBTQ+ inclusion practice(s) within the organisation.

If you do not have a traditional network, please provide the details on what structure and work you have in place to produce the outcomes in this section.

LGBTQ+ EMPLOYEE NETWORK (OR ALTERNATIVE)

16. LGBTQ+ Employee Network (or Alternative)

Our organisation has either:

- ☒ an established LGBTQ+ employee network with a clearly documented charter/purpose or remit
- ☐ made progress towards the launch or establishment of an LGBTQ+ employee network

Please select one option above and provide evidence to support your response.

Why this question? These groups contribute significantly to a sense of inclusion, offering a safe space for LGBTQ+ people and allies to connect; and contribute to the work of the organisation in driving LGBTQ+ inclusion.

4 points for an established LGBTQ+ employee network with a clearly documented charter/purpose or remit

OR

2 points for those who are in the process of establishing a network and have documented evidence to support this

Answer

The department has an established LGBTIQ+ employee network with a clearly documented terms of reference and purpose. The Pride Committee Governance documents and Pride Action plan set out how we will work to build and strengthen the network to ensure a sense of inclusion, offer a safe place and allow our LGBTIQ+ staff to connect and contribute. The Pride Network was established 10 years ago and its current membership represents approximately 7% of the department, with 170 members. The Pride Network falls under framework of the Pride Committee and its overarching governance documents.

The Pride Network intranet page includes information on the Pride Network and is accessible to all staff. For more evidence, please see Q16 - LGBTIQ+ Employee Network.

File as evidence for this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q16 - Pride Action Plan - Redacted.pdf

File as evidence for this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q16 - Pride Governance Document.pdf

LGBTQ+ EMPLOYEE NETWORK (OR ALTERNATIVE)

17. Orientation / On-boarding

Our network (or alternative) has a process to actively introduce itself to new employees.

Please outline this process.

Why this question? When a new employee first joins the organisation, they are engaged and looking for what the organisation has to offer. This is a critical time to introduce your new employees to the culture and any employee groups that you have.

Involvement of the network (or alternative) in the onboarding process, whether it be by means of distributing welcome/network cards with an invitation to connect, speaking at new employee orientation on the network (or alternative) or establishing a welcome event periodically for interested new employees, allows people to opportunity to:

- find out about the network (or alternative)
- experience a sense of inclusion from the start
- experience a proactive welcome and/or invitation to be a part of a network

This approach is equally valuable for allies, families, friends, and colleagues of LGBTQ+ employees.

Note: If your organisation does not have a dedicated LGBTQ+ network (or alternative), the orientation/on-boarding process should still include representation from the function responsible for LGBTQ+ inclusion within your organisation.

1 point if the network (or alternative) is introduced by others as an overall part of the diversity component within the induction process

2 additional points if the network (or alternative) itself is actively involved in introducing itself to new employees

Answer

The department's Pride Committee has various avenues to actively introduce itself to new employees.

When new employees join the department, they receive a welcome email from our capability and development area which includes a link to the diversity committee intranet page for further information on our diversity committees, this is accessible to all staff.

Another way we also introduce diversity committees to new starters is via our new starter program which also includes information on the DSS Diversity Committees and prompts new starters to learn more and join a network of interest. This information is also linked to our "join the department" intranet page which is accessible to all.

Additionally, the DSS Pride Committee takes part in Orientation Day for our new cohorts from the DSS Graduate Program. A Pride Committee chair is invited to speak to the new graduates to inform them of Pride Committee functions and why participation in diversity network events is an important part of engagement with the workplace. Sign-up sheets are available for new graduates to register interest.

Other ways the Pride Committee actively engages with new starters are through advertising expression of interest processes to join the committee (when there are available positions) and encouraging staff to join the events and communication channels.

The Committee facilitates all staff events to celebrate and acknowledge Wear it Purple Day and IDAHOBIT where new staff are encouraged to join in. Sign-up sheets are available for any staff to register interest.

Larger events typically include a hybrid component to include people working from home or remotely, and events are occasionally organised in decentralised offices to include more staff.

Lastly, the DSS Pride Committee introduce themselves to new starters with a regular online presence via intranet articles and messages from the Pride Champion. These include people profiles to highlight our LGBTIQ+ staff members, the importance of their work and aspects of their personal and professional lives they feel comfortable sharing.

These messages and activities all encourage our staff to feel included, be inclusive and join the committee to pursue greater inclusion.

LGBTQ+ EMPLOYEE NETWORK (OR ALTERNATIVE)

18. Ally / Champion Reference Guides

Our employees can easily locate Ally/Champion Reference Guides that detail how to be an effective ally and/or active champion for LGBTQ+ inclusion within the workplace.

Please provide:

- any Ally/Champion Guides outlining how to be an Active Ally/Champion for LGBTQ+ inclusion; and
- details of how employees find out about the existence of these guides

Why this question? In the 2022 [AWEI Employee Survey](#), only 31% of the 37,408 respondents considered themselves to be active allies.

When the 67% of respondents who were 'passive supporters' were asked what would influence them to become an active ally, 43% responded "more information on how to be an active ally", and 25% responded "more information on WHY active allies are so important."

2 points for (a) any Ally / Champion Reference Guides available

1 additional point if employees can easily find out about the existence of this guide

Answer

Departmental staff can access Ally Reference Guides detailing how to be an effective ally for LGBTIQ+ inclusion within the workplace.

The LGBTIQ+ intranet page, accessible by all staff, provides resources and useful tips on how to be an effective LGBTIQ+ Ally. This information page and associated materials provide guidance for staff and managers on the importance of Allies. There are also direct links to external Ally Reference Guides.

File as evidence to this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q18 - Ally and Champion Reference Guides.docx

File as evidence to this question

Browse

Only one attachment per field.

File as evidence to this question

Browse

Only one attachment per field.

LGBTQ+ EMPLOYEE NETWORK (OR ALTERNATIVE)

19. Confidential Contacts

Our organisation clearly identifies LGBTQ+ people or allies who can be contacted for a CONFIDENTIAL and informal (non-HR), LGBTQ+-related discussion.

Please provide a screenshot of where employees are identified as go-to people for LGBTQ+ non-HR related discussions, clearly indicating that CONFIDENTIALITY is assured.

Note: This must not be a generic mailbox as it does not evoke the same level of confidentiality; and there may be employee concerns as to who has visibility of this. By identifying individuals, employees know exactly to whom they are speaking.

Why this question? There are times when a person may want to have a confidential conversation with an LGBTQ+ person or experienced ally about the possibility of coming out within their team, or to ask a question regarding the network (or alternative). They may want to discuss something about their work experience. The ability to call someone confidentially outside of HR allows those conversations to take place. As this is not about formal reporting, the designated contact points here do need to understand where the boundaries are and when they need to refer on.

3 points for clearly identified LGBTQ+ people or allies who can be contacted for a confidential and informal discussion regarding being an LGBTQ+ employee within the organisation (non-HR related)

There are no partial points to this question.

Note: This is over and above any HR or grievance contacts and confidentiality must be assured. If the contact is not clearly communicated as CONFIDENTIAL, or generic mailboxes are used, full points will not be awarded.

Answer

The department clearly identifies LGBTIQ+ staff on the DSS Pride Committee intranet page for people to contact for support. There are 2 identified members who are distinctly identified as contacts for confidential and informal discussions with LGBTIQ+ staff who require assistance. The intranet page is accessible to all DSS employees.

File as evidence to this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q19 - Confidential Contacts.docx

File as evidence to this question

Browse

Only one attachment per field.

LGBTQ+ EMPLOYEE NETWORK (OR ALTERNATIVE)

20. Internal LGBTQ+ Social Platform

Our organisation provides a platform for LGBTQ+ employees and their allies to engage and interact.

Please provide evidence of your dedicated internal-facing LGBTQ+ platform.

Why this question? Internal LGBTQ+ platforms, dedicated social media streams, spaces or forums provide a valuable mechanism for the sharing LGBTQ+ relevant information. In addition, it provides a dedicated and safe place for LGBTQ+ people and allies to interact while providing an active and engaged audience for the promotion of your LGBTQ+ inclusion work.

All of the above send visible messages of inclusion to your LGBTQ+ population and beyond.

2 points for a dedicated internal-facing LGBTQ+ platform

There are no partial points for this question.

Note: Points will not be given for public facing platforms, as this is about internal employee reach.

Answer

The department has a dedicated internal facing LGBTIQ+ social media stream to engage employees with our LGBTIQ+ inclusion work and provide a safe place for LGBTIQ+ employees and allies to interact. The Pride Network maintains a MS Teams group chat which all network members can join.

It is a safe space and is used for day-to-day network interactions, connecting staff within the Network. It currently has 112 members.

File as evidence for this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q20 - Internal LGBTIQ+ Social Media Stream.docx

File as evidence for this question

Browse

Only one attachment per field.

TRAINING, AWARENESS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

21. LGBTQ+ Inclusion Training Availability

We have made LGBTQ+ Awareness/Inclusion/Ally training available to all employees.

Please provide the following:

a) evidence of the training sessions available, including the LGBTQ+ related content that covers awareness regarding the workplace and/or professional barriers that LGBTQ+ employees face and how to create an inclusive environment

b) evidence of communications promoting the training as available to all employees

c) details of any actions taken, or plans written to increase the uptake of training for all employees (beyond the promotion of staff emails)

Note: Such training may include online training (pre-recorded modules, eLearning, etc.) or facilitated sessions (interactive with a facilitator, including Zoom/Webex/Teams, etc.)

Why this question? LGBTQ+ inclusion is such a critical measure of an organisation's inclusive culture; and training is one of the key areas that can really impact, not only an understanding of *why* inclusion is important, but in understanding some of the challenges faced by our diverse employees.

The difficulty with most diversity training is that it usually only gets attended by the people who are interested – and quite often, they are not the people you are targeting. By having LGBTQ+ inclusion or ally training available and actively promoting and seeking to increase participation in the training, we are ensuring that we obtain maximum participation outside of mandating attendance.

3 points for (a) availability of inclusion training for ALL employees that covers awareness regarding the workplace and/or professional barriers that LGBTQ+ employees face and how to create an inclusive environment

Note: If the training was facilitated by ACON's Pride Inclusion Programs, please confirm this. Evidence will not be required in this instance, as the content is developed and delivered by our team. You will still need to provide evidence of the training sessions made available.

3 points for (b) communications promoting the training to ALL employees

2 points for (c) a plan or actions taken to increase uptake of training for ALL employees

Answer

The department offers multiple LGBTIQ+ Awareness/Inclusion/Ally training to all staff. Training sessions are available through the department's internal Learning Management System include Pride In Diversity – Foundation of LGBTIQ inclusion training and LGBTIQ+ Awareness courses. There is also mandatory training on diversity and inclusion which covers LGBTIQ+ content.

The department promotes the training sessions on the LGBTIQ+ intranet page, and internal corporate communications in line with Day of Significant events or when external training sessions become available. DSS also promote this training via the Pride Network teams chat to promote uptake of training.

File as evidence to this question

Only one attachment per field.

Other attached files: Q21 - LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Training Availability.docx

File as evidence to this question

 [Browse](#)

Only one attachment per field.

File as evidence to this question

 [Browse](#)

Only one attachment per field.

File as evidence to this question

 [Browse](#)

Only one attachment per field.



End of Form

You are now about to submit the form. Please confirm that all questions are properly answered.

On behalf of Pride in Diversity, we would like to thank you for your commitment to Australian LGBTQ+ inclusion, equality and equity; and for participating in the AWEI Submissions and this important benchmarking Index.





AWEI Evidence for Question 3 New Parent Leave inclusive of LGBTIQ+ Families.

DSS are to provide clear, unambiguous evidence for any of the below leave options have:

- Surrogacy leave available
- Adoption leave available
- Foster/guardianship leave available

Please note DSS have also provided evidence of process where employees can apply to have a decision reviewed should they be dissatisfied with outcome to support this evidence.

Evidence Part 1

Please see below screen shots specific to pages (1, 24 – 27, 28 and 49) of the DSS Leave Policy to support evidence.

Inclusivity of policy:

Leave Policy	
Policy information	Details
Purpose:	This is the Department of Social Services (the department's) policy on leave entitlements.
Category:	Corporate
Applicable to:	This policy applies to all departmental employees.
Relevant Authority:	Carer Recognition Act 2010

Surrogacy evidence (page 28):

6.10. Surrogacy arrangements

The Maternity Leave Act covers all pregnant employees, regardless of whether they are in a lawful surrogacy arrangement, therefore a pregnant employee has entitlements to maternity leave in accordance with that Act.

Employees who are the primary or secondary caregiver of a child/children as a result of a lawful surrogacy arrangement may have entitlements to parental leave in accordance with the FW Act and the EA in accordance with the adoption and long-term foster care entitlements.

The department supports employees in lawful surrogacy arrangements and may grant paid or unpaid miscellaneous leave commensurate to other parental leave entitlements.

Parental leave options for adoption and foster leave evidence (pages 24-27):

6. Parental Leave

6.1. Parental leave

An employee who is a primary or secondary caregiver is entitled to parental leave up until 24 months from the date of the child's birth or placement. This 24-month period is known as the 'parental leave period'.

The parental leave period includes all leave types taken during that period.

The parental leave period does not extend a non-ongoing engagement where the employment period remaining is less than 24 months. That is, a non-ongoing engagement ends according to the terms of the engagement, regardless of whether an employee is on parental leave.

An employee is only eligible for parental leave with pay as either a primary caregiver or a secondary caregiver for the particular parental leave period and cannot switch roles for the purpose of accessing additional paid leave. This means if an employee takes parental leave as a secondary caregiver, they cannot then apply for parental leave as a primary caregiver.

6.2. Primary caregiver leave (including adoption, long-term foster care and others)

A primary caregiver is a pregnant employee with an entitlement under the Maternity Leave Act, or an employee other than a casual employee who has primary care responsibility for a child who is born to them or who is adopted or placed in long-term foster care. There will be circumstances where the child is not biologically related to caregiver, but they should still be granted the appropriate leave (for example, LGBTIQ+ families, in some cases of IVF where genetic material has been donated etc).

Primary caregiver leave provides for 18 weeks' paid leave to count as service or 36 weeks' leave at half pay to count as service. Deductions do not occur to caregiver leave credits over public holidays and Closedown periods. Unused primary caregiver leave remaining at the end of the employee's parental leave period will be surrendered/lost, there is no entitlement to payment in lieu of unused primary caregiver leave.

Primary caregiver leave can be taken as a single block of leave, or flexibly, including substituting for part time hours. For example, a full-time employee who returns to work in the full-time capacity, could access remaining caregiver leave to substitute a part time arrangement, while remaining a full-time employee.

In the event an employee who is accessing their primary caregiver leave flexibly changes their working hours (for example, goes part time) their remaining primary caregiver leave will be adjusted (pro rata) accordingly. For example, a full-time employee who has 100 hours of caregiver leave remaining, returns to work and goes part time working 80%, those remaining 100 hours will be

adjusted to reflect the part time hours, in this example the remaining hours would reduce from 100 to 80.

A primary care giver with an entitlement under the Maternity Leave Act cannot break the first 12 weeks of their paid primary caregiver leave with other leave types. However, after the first 12 weeks, employees can break their leave period with other leave, or return to work, or return to work and supplement their working arrangements with paid primary caregiver leave (for example, work full time and take 2 days paid primary caregiver leave each week).

6.3. Secondary caregiver leave (including adoption, long-term foster care and others)

A secondary caregiver is an employee, other than a pregnant employee or a casual employee, who has secondary care responsibility for a child who is born to them, or for a child who is adopted or placed in long-term foster care. There will be circumstances where the child is not biologically related to the caregiver, but they should still be granted the appropriate leave (for example, LGBTIQ+ families, in some cases of IVF where genetic material has been donated etc).

Secondary caregiver leave currently provides for 11 weeks' paid leave to count as service or 22 weeks paid leave at half pay to count as service (this entitlement increases periodically under the life of the Enterprise Agreement, see table below). Deductions do not occur to caregiver leave credits over public holidays and Closedown periods. Unused secondary caregiver leave remaining at the end of the employee's parental leave period will be surrendered/lost, there is no entitlement to payment in lieu of unused primary caregiver leave.

Secondary caregiver leave can be taken as a block of leave, or flexibly, including substituting for part time hours. In the event an employee who is accessing their secondary caregiver leave flexibly changes their working hours (for example, goes part time) their remaining secondary caregiver leave will be adjusted (pro rata) accordingly. For example, a full-time employee who has 100 hours of caregiver leave remaining, returns to work and goes part time working 80%, those remaining 100 hours will be adjusted to reflect the part time hours, in this example the remaining hours would reduce from 100 to 80.

Employees can break their leave period to return to work or to return to work and supplement their working arrangements with paid secondary caregiver leave (for example, work full time and take 2 days paid secondary caregiver leave each week).

Secondary caregiver leave entitlement will increase over the life of the Enterprise Agreement. For example, if an employee's partner gave birth to a child on 1 June 2024, they are initially eligible for 8 weeks leave, then from 1 March 2025 an additional 3 weeks leave, then from 1 March 2026 another 3 weeks, (noting that all leave must still be used within 24-month period (by 31 May 2026).

Secondary caregiver leave over the life of the Enterprise Agreement

Period which coincides with the parental leave period for the secondary caregiver	Parental leave with pay under the Enterprise Agreement
Date of commencement of the Enterprise Agreement to 28 February 2025	8 weeks, or top up to 8 weeks where a lesser period of parental leave has already been provided
1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026	11 weeks, or top up to 11 weeks where a lesser period of parental leave has already been provided
1 March 2026 to 27 February 2027	14 weeks, or top up to 14 weeks where a lesser period of parental leave has already been provided
On and from 28 February 2027	18 weeks, or top up to 18 weeks where a lesser period of parental leave has already been provided

6.4. Eligibility and evidence

To be eligible to receive primary or secondary caregiver leave an employee must be a departmental employee with new caregiving responsibilities (as set out above).

There is no qualifying period for an employee to access parental leave. An employee who does not have 12 months qualifying service or is not otherwise eligible for leave under the Maternity Leave Act, may still be eligible for paid parental leave under the Enterprise Agreement (which does not require a minimum period of service). This means eligible employees can commence caregiver leave on their first day of employment with the department.

Employees newly engaged in the department or who have moved to the department from another APS agency are eligible for the paid parental leave where such paid leave had not already been provided by another APS agency or Commonwealth employer in the 24 months since the child's date of birth or placement. If the paid leave used by the employee with the previous Commonwealth employer or APS agency is less than the limits specified in the Enterprise Agreement, the balance is available to the employee.

The delegate may require an employee to provide information or evidence in support of an application for caregiver leave, including where required under the Maternity Leave Act. This may be in the form of a medical certificate, birth certificate or another form such as a statutory declaration that would satisfy a reasonable person of the relevant matters.

6.5. Adoption and foster care

An employee who is a primary caregiver or secondary caregiver as a result of an adoption or long-term foster care is entitled to parental leave provided for in the Enterprise Agreement, provided that the child:

- has not lived continuously with the employee for a period of 6 months or more as at the day (or expected day) of placement, and

25 - Leave Policy

- is not (otherwise than because of the adoption) a child of the employee or the employee's spouse or de facto partner unless that child had not been in the custody and care of the employee or the employee's partner for a 3-month period prior to the commencement of the adopted/foster/permanent care arrangement.

Documentary evidence of approval for adoption or enduring parental responsibilities under formal fostering arrangements must be submitted when applying for caregiver leave for adoption or long-term foster carer purposes.

Employees are eligible for up to 2 days of unpaid pre-adoption leave to attend any interviews or examinations required for the adoption of a child. An employee may also access their annual or purchased leave for this purpose.

Additional evidence to show clear escalation process if not satisfied with the outcome (page 49):

21. Review of employment actions

Where an employee is dissatisfied with a decision relating to their working arrangements, they can apply to have that decision reviewed under section 33 of the *Public Service Act 1999*. More information is in the [Review of Employment Actions Policy](#).

Employees may also have rights in relation to the decision under the dispute resolution provisions of the Enterprise Agreement.



AWEI Evidence for Question 4 International Travel Advice for Employees

DSS are to provide evidence of international travel advice available to our LGBTQ+ employees. This resource must be available to all employees.

Evidence Part 1

This is a submission of the DSS International Travel Policy Leave Policy (Q4 – Attachment A).

To support LGBTIQ+ employees, page 5 of the International Travel Policy includes principles that explicitly supports staff to decline travel if they feel unsafe.

11. Travel will not be required of employees, where the traveller and/or delegate determine that travel would impose a high risk of discrimination or harassment due to any aspect of the employee's identity (such as LGBTIQ+ employees).

In addition, health and safety information is available on page 6 of the DSS International Travel Policy to support evidence.

6. Health and safety

Where necessary, travellers should seek personal medical advice before undertaking international travel. Further advice on health, safety and cultural protocols, including country specific advice, is available from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) at their website: [Smartraveller](#). Advice and resources specific to LGBTIQ+ travellers is also available on the [Smartraveller](#) website at [Advice for LGBTIQ+ travellers](#). Prior to leaving Australia, officials should subscribe to updates at [Smartraveller](#).

A travel risk assessment must be completed and approved prior to travelling internationally. Refer to the [Travel Procedures](#) for further information.

The travel intranet page directs staff who are planning their trip to follow a check list to help ensure staff read the policy.

Planning the trip

On this page

- [Pre-travel check list](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [International Travel Policy](#)
- [Contacts](#)
- [Obtaining Estimates and Quotes](#)
- [Related pages](#)

Pre-travel check list

Use the following check list before you start the process.

1. Allow yourself enough time. The average time taken to arrange a International trip is 6-8 weeks
2. Do you have a valid Official Passport?
3. Will you need a Visa?
4. Have you read the International Travel Policy?
5. Have you started your Delegate approval process?
6. Have you contacted the Travel Team to obtain cost estimate or quotes?

Screenshot of information located on the DSS Pride page (Frequently asked questions subsection). Which also has link to DFAT Smart Traveller website for further advice at [Advice for LGBTQIA+ travellers | Smartraveller](#)

Is there travel advice for LGBTQIA+ employees with dependants should they be required to travel for work?

Our travel policy includes LGBTQIA+ employees and their partner/spouse and families.

The department is committed to ensuring travel advice and support is available to our LGBTQIA+ employees or employees with LGBTQIA+ dependents should they be required to travel for work.

When requesting approval for travel LGBTQIA+, travellers and managers should familiarise themselves with advice and support from the [DFAT Smart Traveller website – Advice for Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex travellers](#) .



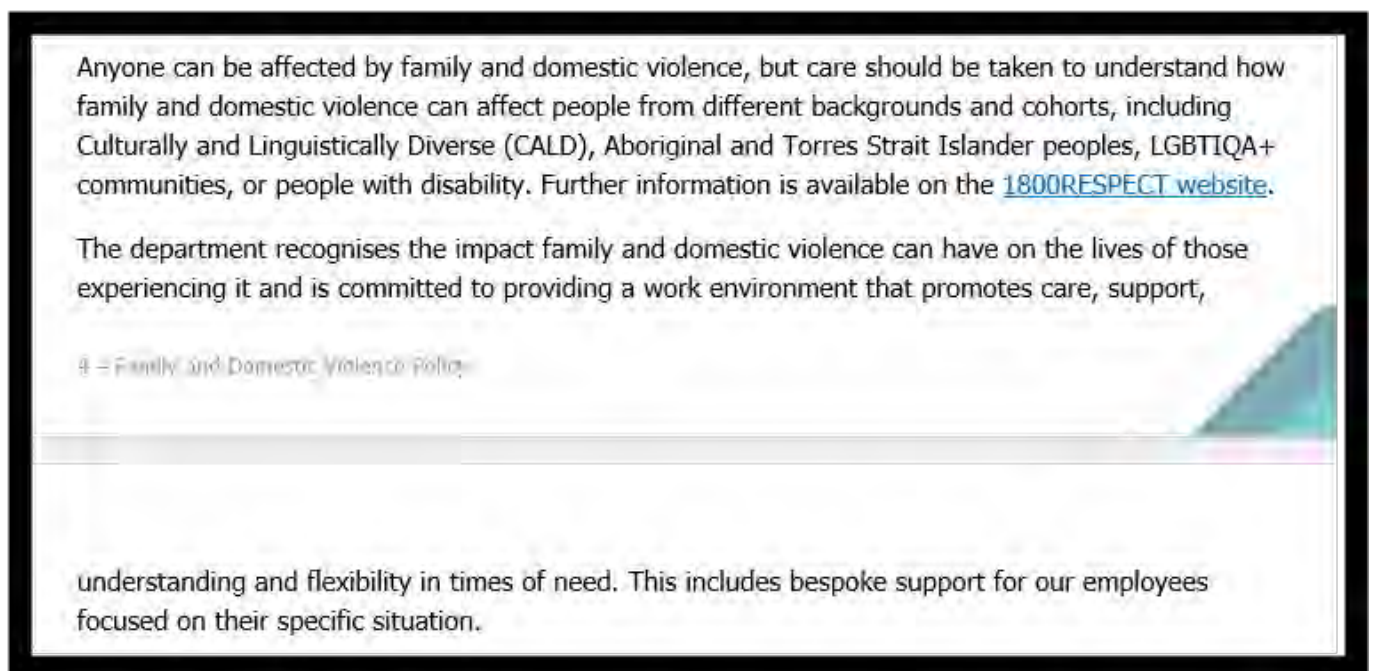
AWEI Evidence for Question 5 - LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Policy

DSS are to provide evidence that:

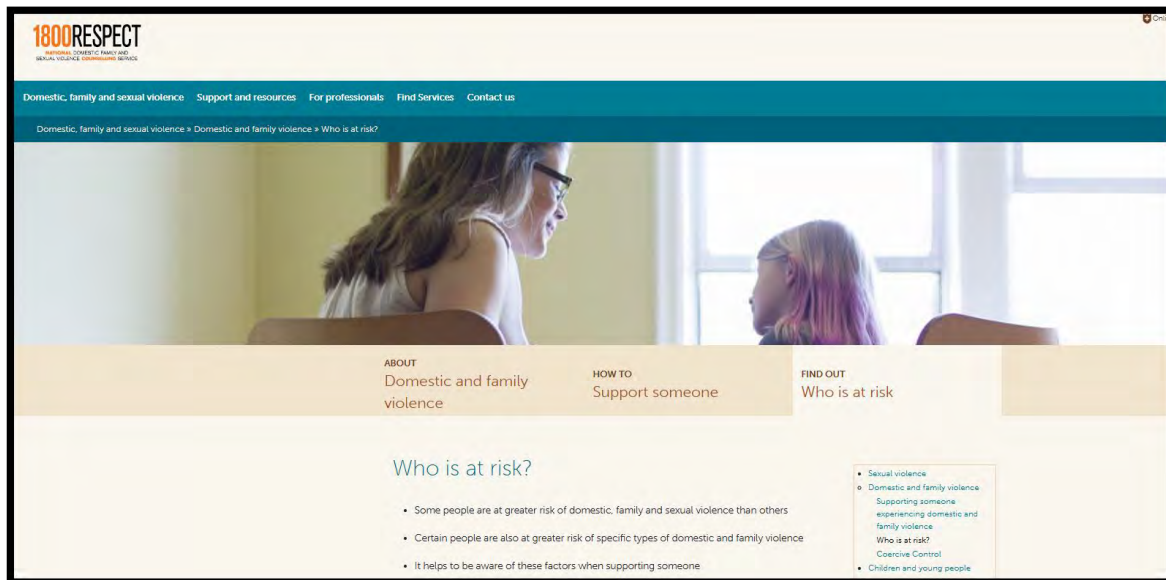
- The DFV Policy acknowledges and identifies unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ people in domestic and family violence situation.
- The DFV Policy or relevant intranet pages identifies specialist LGBTQ+ avenues of support to assist HR Managers and employees dealing with LGBTQ+ domestic and family violence.

Evidence Part 1

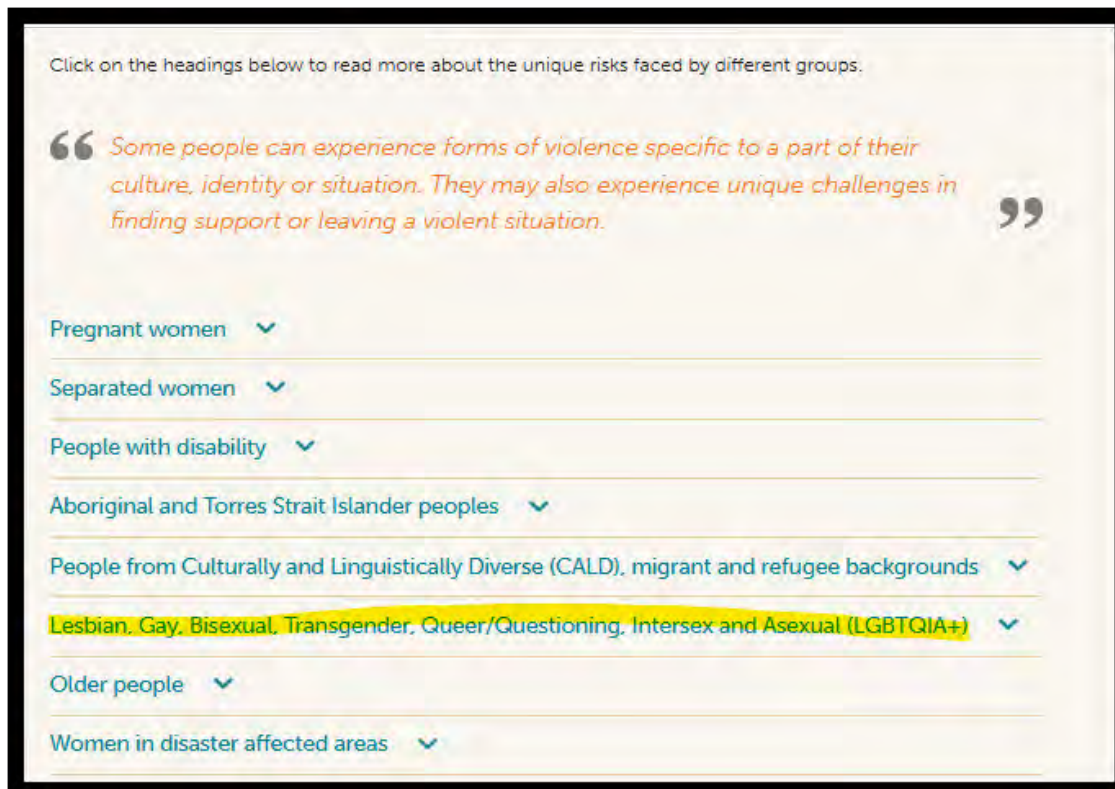
This is a submission of the DSS Domestic & Family Violence (DFV) Policy (Q5 – Attachment A). Please see below screen shots specific to page 4 of the DSS Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Policy to support evidence.



The link in the policy goes to the [1800Respect.gov.au website](https://www.1800Respect.gov.au) to a page that provides greater guidance around diversity groups who are at higher risk of domestic, family and sexual violence. Here are some screenshots of that page:



On this page, there are a list of information for specific diversity groups:



The LGBTQIA content provides more explicit examples and points to support and resources.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex and Asexual (LGBTQIA+) ^

If you identify as LGBTQIA+, you are as likely as non-LGBTQIA+ people to experience domestic and family violence. Current data, while limited, suggests that people who identify as transgender or intersex experience much higher rates of violence.

The risk may be increased for anyone identifying as LGBTQIA+ due to fears or obstacles in sharing or reporting their experience and seeking help. Violence in LGBTQIA+ relationships can also involve tactics that are unique to the relationship or a person's LGBTQIA+ identity.

A person using violence may use many different things to gain power and control over someone who is LGBTQIA+, including:

- Gender or sexuality
- HIV status
- Homophobic, transphobic and heterosexist attitudes
- Privilege, including whether they are 'out' or not or whether they 'pass' or not

Domestic and family violence for people in LGBTQIA+ relationships can create unique and valid worries, including fears of:

- Being 'outed'
- Your community finding out, or of being isolated from LGBTQIA+ communities
- Being given fewer visitation rights or having your children taken from you due to different legal rights for non-biological parents
- Discrimination or minimisation by police, legal systems and service provider
- Financial problems due to LGBTQIA+ relationships not being recognised in the same way as heterosexual relationships
- Having nowhere to go that is safe
- Having fewer informal supports: many LGBTQIA+ people have lost the support of family due to their gender identity or sexuality

If you are a person who identifies as LGBTQIA+ and are worried about domestic, family and sexual violence, you can call 1800RESPECT on [1800 737 732](tel:1800737732), text [0458 737 732](tel:0458737732) or visit [our website](#) for online chat and video call services.

To find a specialist LGBTQIA+ support service in your local area you can search our [Service directory](#).

For more information on domestic and family violence in LGBTI relationships, visit [Say It Out Loud](#).

If you are a professional wanting to know more about supporting LGBTQIA+ clients, you can visit our [LGBTI professional's page](#).

This screen shot below illustrates evidence of an external resource ([Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence - LGBTIQ+ Health Australia](#)) located on the DFV Intranet page (resources section) which identifies unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ people in domestic and family violence situations.

Resources

- [Family and Domestic Violence Policy](#) [DOCX]
- [Family and Domestic Violence Contact Officers](#) [DOCX]
- [Family and domestic violence - guidance for employees and managers](#) [DOCX]
- [Family and Domestic Violence Resource - LGBTIQ+ Health Australia](#) [↗](#)

Evidence Part 2

Screenshots of information that identifies specialist LGBTQ+ avenues of support to assist HR Managers and employees dealing with LGBTQ+ domestic and family violence. This information is listed in the DSS Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Policy (**pages 11 and 12**) and the Family and Domestic Violence Guidance for Employees and Managers (**page 10**).

8. More information

For further information, contact a Family and Domestic Violence Contact Officer, in People Services Branch on S 22 or email S 22

Another Closet 1800 224 636 • 24 hours a day, 7 days a week http://www.anothercloset.com.au/	violence. Information and support for LGBTIQ+ people experiencing domestic & family violence.
QLIFE 1800 184 527 https://www qlife.org.au/	Nationally oriented counselling and referral service for LGBTIQ+.

ACON https://www.acon.org.au/ For more information or to undertake a brief intake assessment, complete the Online Intake Form or contact the nearest ACON office .	ACON provides specialist Care Coordination & Counselling support, information and referral services to LGBTIQ+ people who have experienced sexual, domestic and family violence including health, social, financial and legal support services.
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Additional EAP support options for LGBTIQ+ are also specifically listed for all staff to access on the intranet:

Specialist Helplines

Specialist helplines are also available:

- [First Nations:](#) s 22
- [LGBTQIA+:](#) s 22
- [Domestic and Family Violence:](#) s 22
- [Aged Care:](#) s 22
- [Disability and Carers:](#) s 22
- [Spiritual and Pastoral:](#) s 22
- [Young People and Young Adults:](#) s 22



AWEI Evidence for Question 6 - Resources on LGBTIQ+ Inclusive and Negative Language

DSS are to provide evidence of targeted communications (guide) on negative and inclusive language to assist employees and managers understand which words are offensive or negatively perceived, while equipping them with inclusive alternatives.

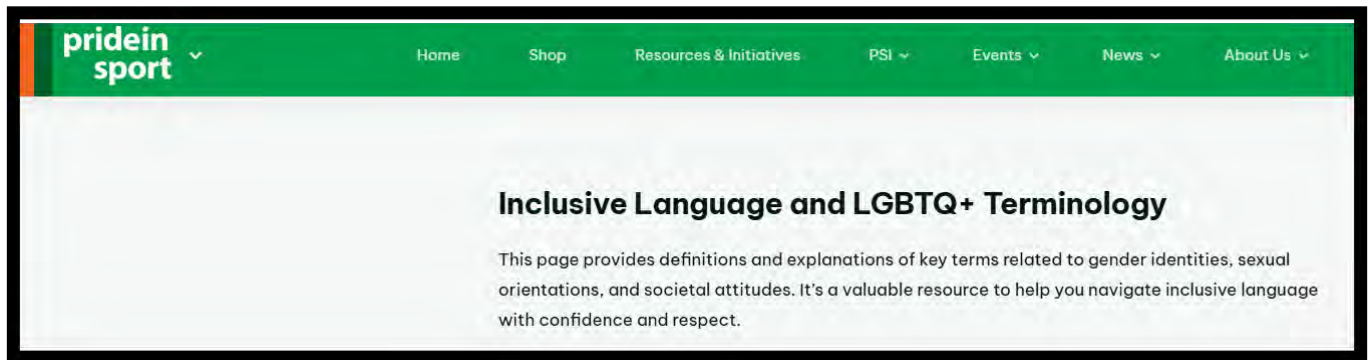
This evidence is worth 6 points and resources can be external (4 points for evidence of inclusive and negative language resources and 2 points for it being easily accessible to employees.

Evidence Part 1

This is a submission of evidence of inclusive language resources available to all staff as follows:

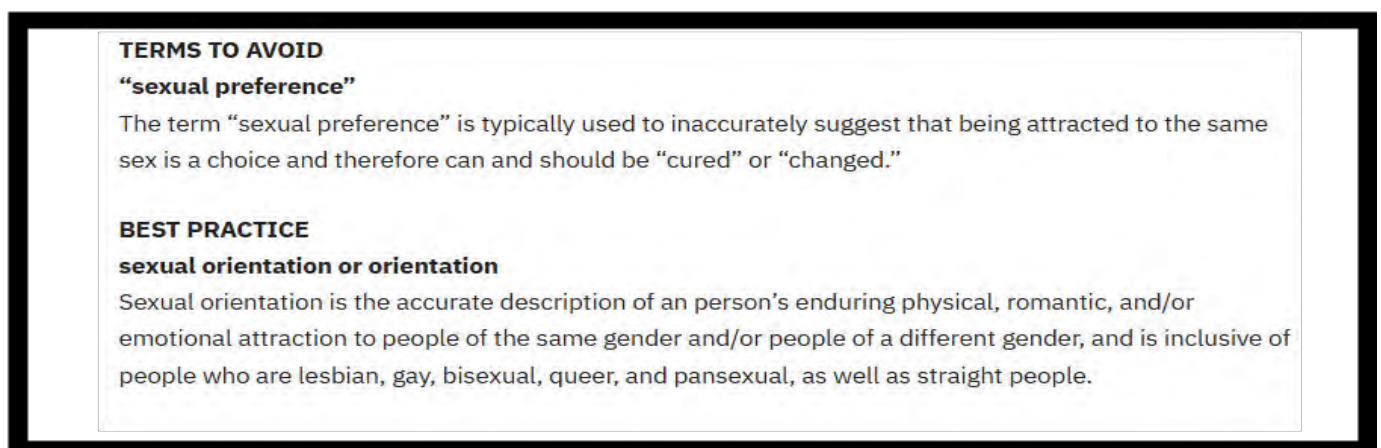
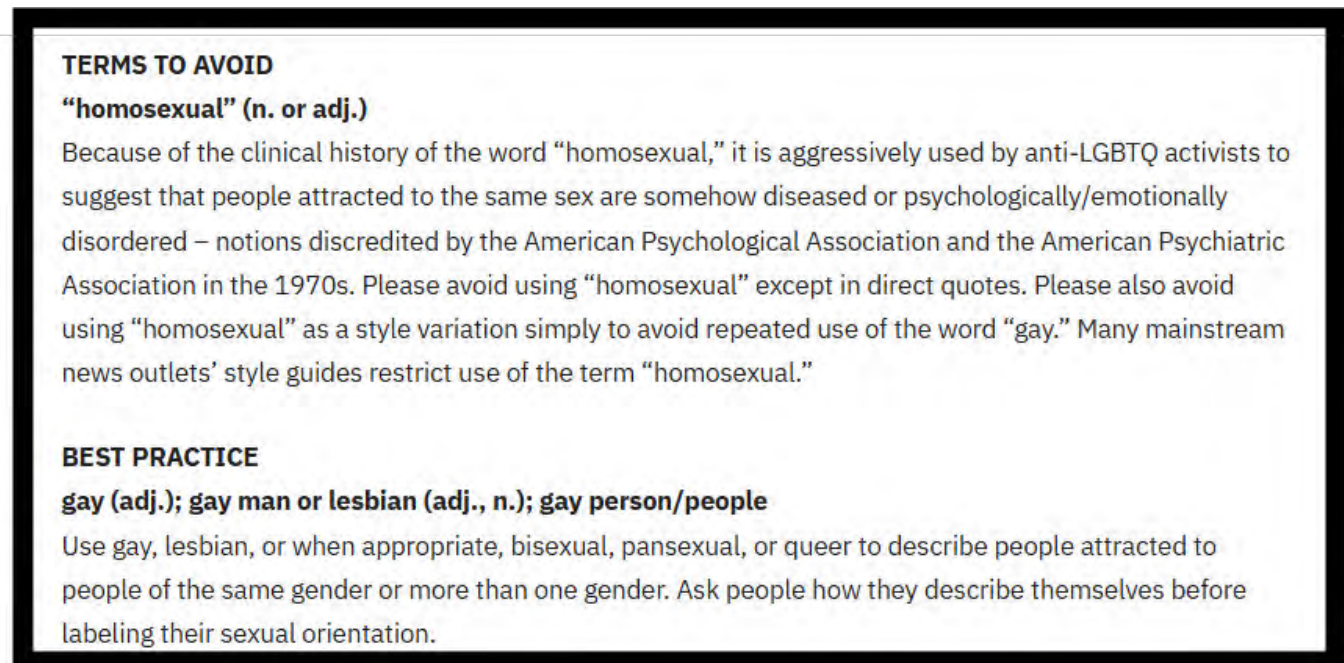
a) inclusive language section from the Australian Public Service style writing guide [Inclusive language | Style Manual](#)

The screenshot displays the 'Australian Government Style Manual' website. The header includes the Australian Government logo, the title 'Style Manual', and a search bar. A navigation menu lists: Home, About, Style Manual resources, Accessibility, Writing content, Grammar, punctuation and conventions, and Content types. Below the menu, there are links for 'Structuring content' and 'Referencing and attribution'. The main content area is titled 'Inclusive language' and includes the text: 'Use language that is culturally appropriate and respectful of the diversity of Australia's peoples.' Below this, there are five cards: 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples', 'Age diversity', 'Cultural and linguistic diversity', 'Gender and sexual diversity', and 'Disability and neurodiversity'. The 'Gender and sexual diversity' card is highlighted with a red box. The left sidebar contains a table of contents with links to 'About the Style Manual', 'Style Manual resources', 'Accessible and inclusive content', and 'Inclusive language'.

b) [Inclusive Language and LGBTQ+ Terminology - Pride in Sport](#)

Evidence Part 2

This is a submission of evidence for negative language resources as follows:

a) [Glossary of Terms: LGBTQ | GLAAD](#)

b) [Australian Institute of Family Studies - Glossary of common terms](#)

Societal attitudes/issues

Homophobia: refers to negative beliefs, prejudices, stereotypes and fears that exist towards same-sex attracted people. It can range from the use of offensive language to bullying, abuse and physical violence; and can include systemic barriers, such as being denied housing or being fired due to a person's sexual orientation.

Misgendering: an occurrence where a person is described or addressed using language that does not match their gender identity (Rainbow Health Australia, 2016). This can include the incorrect use of pronouns (she/he/they), familial titles (dad, sister, uncle, niece) and, at times, other words that traditionally have gendered applications (pretty, handsome, etc.).

Evidence Part 3

The resources for inclusive and negative language are showcased on both our LGBTIQ+ page and writing accessible content pages of our intranet which are easily accessible to all employees.

Writing guidance:

The screenshot shows a SharePoint intranet page titled "Writing accessible content". On the left is a navigation menu with categories like "Audit and fraud", "Communication and media", "Finance", "Information and records management", "Information Technology", and "Legal". The main content area has a heading "Writing accessible content" and a section "On this page" containing a list of links: "Standards for content", "Australian Government Style Manual", "Readability and plain English", "Inclusive language" (highlighted with a black box), "Writing website content", "Using document templates", "Third party content creation", "Resources", "Contact", and "Related pages".

Inclusive language

It is important to ensure your language is respectful and appropriate for your audience. The following resources may assist:

- [Inclusive language – Style Manual](#)
- [Trauma informed writing](#)
- [People with Disability Australia - Language Guide](#)
- [LGBTIQ+ language and terminology](#)
- [LGBTIQ+ Glossary of Common Terms – AIFS](#) [PDF]

Depending on your audience and message, it may appropriate to include a sensitivity or trauma warning. See [Writing trauma warnings](#) for guidance.

LGBTIQA+ resources and support page:

STAFFnet

STAFFnet > People > LGBTIQA+

LGBTIQA+

On this page

- [Pride Action Plan](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ allies](#)
- [Pride in Diversity](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ learning and development opportunities](#)

- [Resources](#)
- [Contacts](#)
- [Related pages](#)

STAFFnet

- Home
- + About DSS
- + Corporate services
- [People](#)
 - Committees, networks and forums
 - Diversity and inclusion

Central diversity and inclusion hub:

Diversity and inclusion

[Diversity in our department](#)

Learn how we work to understand, support and encourage diversity and inclusion in our department.

[Diversity Champions](#)

Learn about our Diversity Champions and their role in the department.

[Gender, sexuality and equality](#)

Read information about Gender and equality, LGBTIQA+, Pride, resources for women and the Gender Equality Committee and Network.

[CALD Network](#)

The Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Network supports staff from many cultures, religions and ethnicities.

[Neurodiversity](#)

Learn about neurodiversity, and resources to support Autistic and neurodivergent staff in our department.

[Disability](#)

Read about disability, the Disability and Carers Committee, the Disability Champions and more.

[Indigenous Australians](#)

Reconciliation, cultural awareness, Welcome to Country, reconciliation events, policies, and the National Indigenous Committee and Network.

[Inclusive language](#)

Read the Style Manual to learn how to write inclusively for websites, documents and other communication products.

[Overview of the Footprints Program](#)

Learn about the department's continuous cultural learning and development framework.

Resources

- [Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) [DOCX]
- [Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) [DOCX]
- [Sexual Orientation, Gender and Intersex Discrimination](#) [↗](#) (Australian Human Rights Commission)
- [Diversity Council Australia](#) [↗](#)
- [APS Values and Code of Conduct in practice \(APSC\)](#) [↗](#)
- [The LGBTIQ Domestic Violence Interagency](#) [↗](#) (Another Closet)
- [Inclusive language - Style Manual](#) [↗](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ language and terminology - Pride in Sport](#) [↗](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ Glossary of Common Terms - AIFS](#) [↗](#) [PDF]
- [LGBTIQA+ Glossary of Terms - GLAAD](#) [↗](#)

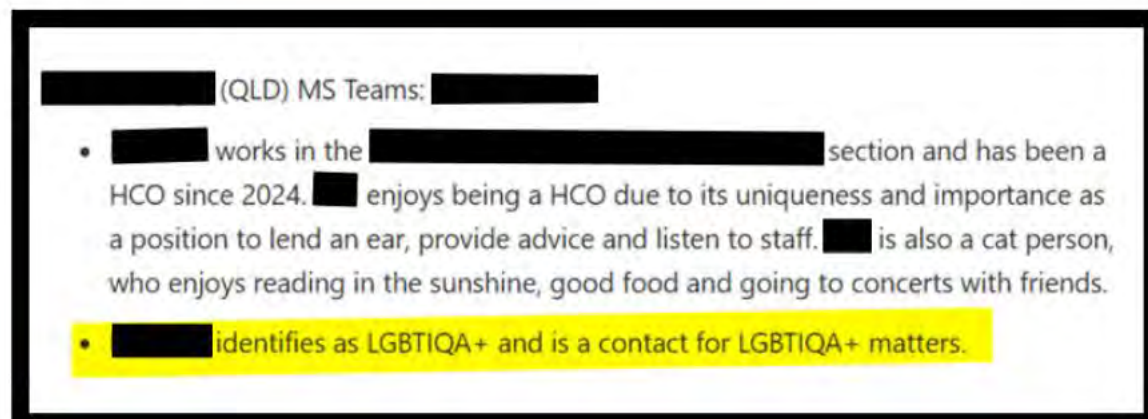
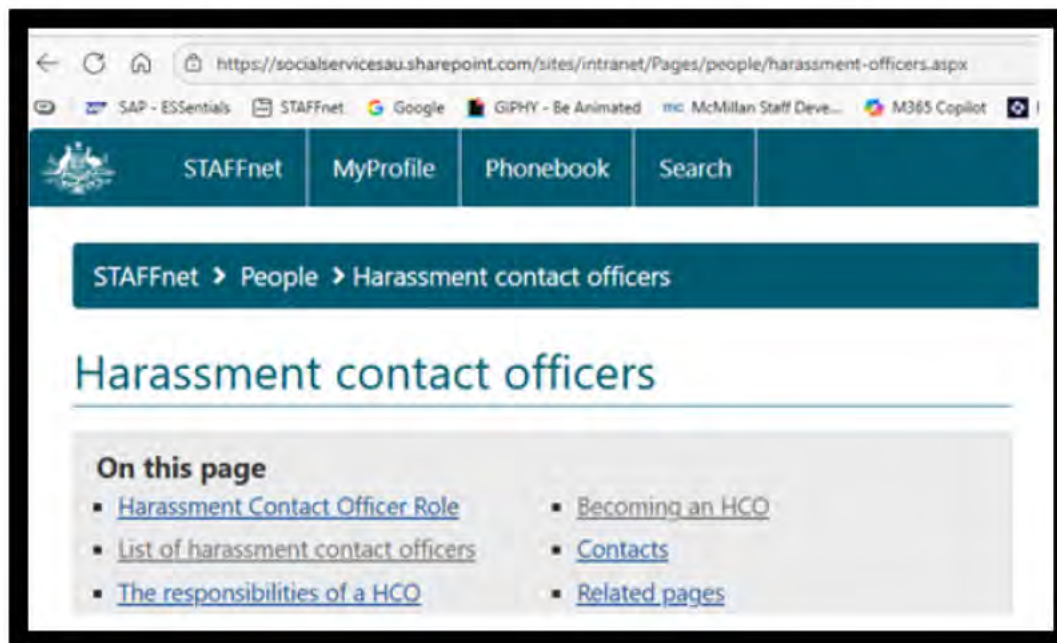


AWEI Evidence for Question 7 - LGBTIQ+ related Harassment Contact and Grievance Officers - DSS are to provide evidence of:

- (a) the grievance officer is clearly communicated as a contact for LGBTQ+-related grievances (2 Points)
- b) the grievance officer is clearly identified as someone who has been trained in LGBTQ+ inclusion and awareness (2 Points)

Part 1 Evidence

One of the HCOs identifies as LGBTIQ+ and is a Harassment Contact Officer (HCO) for LGBTQ+ related grievances. These details are placed on the DSS HCO intranet page.



Part 2

Evidence

a) Another HCO has completed LGBTQA+ Awareness Training. These details are placed on HCO intranet page.

██████████ (VIC) MS Teams: ██████████

- ██████████ works as a ██████████ in the ██████████ and has been a HCO for almost five years. ██████████ enjoys being a HCO as ██████████ is passionate about the wellbeing and safety of staff. ██████████ is an avid car enthusiast, personal trainer, photographer, published author, and is a proud dog owner of thirteen year old Bella.
- ██████████ has completed LGBTQA+ Awareness Training.

b) Our Employee Assistance Program also offers a specific LGBTQA+ number and trained staff who specialise for counselling for this group. This resource is located on our Employee

Assistance Program EAP Intranet page - [LGBTQIA+ - Converge](#).

STAFFnet > People > Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

On this page

- [Accessing EAP](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [EAP Feedback](#)
- [Services](#)
- [Specialist Helplines](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Contacts](#)
- [Related pages](#)

Specialist Helplines

Specialist helplines are also available:

- [First Nations:](#) s 22
- [LGBTQIA+:](#) s 22
- [Domestic and Family Violence:](#) s 22
- [Aged Care:](#) s 22
- [Disability and Carers:](#) s 22
- [Spiritual and Pastoral:](#) s 22
- [Young People and Young Adults:](#) s 22

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by the Department of Social Services

Converge Health & Wellbeing Packages Case Studies Resources About Contact

[Get Quote](#) [Book Counselling](#)

Home / LGBTQIA+

Supporting LGBTQIA+ Communities across Australia

Providing specialised care to members of the LGBTQIA+ community



AWEI Evidence for Question 8 - Behavioural Examples of What Constitutes Bullying/Harassment

DSS are to provide evidence of:

(a) clear behavioural examples that constitutes bullying/harassment regarding employees of diverse sexual orientation (2 Points)

b) clear behavioural examples that constitutes bullying/harassment regarding employees of diverse gender

Part 1 Evidence

Submission of DSS Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy page 2 and 3.

3. What is Bullying and Harassment

3.1. Harassment

Harassment can be a wide range of behaviours that are offensive to the person/s receiving them. It includes unwelcome contact, which can be physical, verbal or electronic communications that annoy, humiliate, offend or intimidate a person or group of people.

Generally, harassment is repeated, offensive behaviour that persists over time, however serious one-time incidents may be considered harassment.

Harassment can include (but is not limited to):

- sexual harassment
- sex-based harassment
- bullying
- direct discrimination
- stalking
- intimidation
- verbal abuse or comments that degrade or stereotype a person or group of persons
- electronic communications (e.g. emails, instant messaging or text messages) that degrade or stereotype a person or group of persons
- telling insulting or offensive jokes
- offensive gestures
- ignoring or isolating a person or group of persons
- the display or circulation of racist, pornographic or other material that may be offensive to others.

Part 2 Evidence

Submission of DSS Sexual Harassment and Sex Based Harassment Policy - Attachment B
(Page 5).

Sexual harassment can be overt, covert or subtle and may include:

- unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing
- inappropriate staring or leering
- sexual gestures, indecent exposure or inappropriate display of the body
- showing offensive material, sexually explicit pictures, electronic images, posters or giving unwanted gifts that make a person uncomfortable
- repeated or inappropriate invitations to go out on dates
- commenting on, or asking intrusive questions of a sexual nature about, a person's private life (including with respect to gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual relationships or sexual practices)
- unwelcome and/or intrusive comments of a sexual nature about a person's physical appearance
- sexually explicit comments made in emails, MS Teams, text messages or on social media
- inappropriate physical contact (e.g. touching, hugging, kissing or deliberately brushing up against a person)
- repeated or inappropriate advances on email, MS Teams, text messages, social networking sites or chat rooms
- stalking, following, watching, or loitering nearby to someone
- repeated, unwelcome contact with someone following the end of a consensual relationship
- sexually suggestive comments or jokes
- sharing or threatening to share intimate images or film of someone without their consent
- indecent phone calls, including someone leaving a sexually explicit message on voicemail or an answering machine
- requests or pressure for sex or other sexual acts
- actual or attempted rape or sexual assault
- any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature occurring via some form of technology.

Sexual harassment may be a single incident or multiple incidents, and it can happen to anyone regardless of gender or sexuality.

The following content is available to all staff on our intranet regarding bullying and harassment. Scenario 1 and 2 offer explicit gender and sexual orientation behavioural examples. The page also offers a range of support options for staff.

Understanding bullying and harassment

On this page

- Understanding bullying
- Understanding harassment
- Recognising bullying
- What you can do
- Contact
- Related pages

WARNING: this page contains reference and examples of multicultural, CALD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTQIA+ and disability bullying and harassment matters that can be difficult to hear, read, or think about.

If you are feeling concerned or have been affected by the information presented, seek support from Converse on [s 22](#) using code [s 22](#)

Bullying and harassment in the workplace is unacceptable and not tolerated in the department. We are committed to fostering a work environment where everyone is treated with respect and courtesy, and to taking all reasonable steps to prevent, address, and eliminate bullying and harassment. These behaviours can have a significant impact on individuals, particularly those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, or identities, and undermine a safe and inclusive workplace for all.

Understanding harassment

Harassment involves a range of unwelcome behaviours that are offensive to the person or people receiving them and may annoy, humiliate, offend or intimidate. It can be:

- offensive jokes or comments
- unwanted touching
- rude or offensive messages or emails.

Generally, harassment is repeated, offensive behaviour that persists over time. A serious one-time incident may also be considered harassment.

Understanding bullying

Bullying is repeated unreasonable and/or inappropriate behaviour directed at a person, or group of people, that creates a risk to their health and safety. It can include:

- making fun of someone through sarcasm, ridicule, innuendo, or insults
- ignoring or excluding them
- spreading rumours or gossip

- physical or verbal threatening or intimidating behaviour
- making offensive gestures
- showing contempt or being disrespectful.

Recognising bullying

Anyone can become the target of bullying, and it's never the individual's fault.

Although being bullied can happen to anyone, there are some diversity groups who may be at greater risk. These diversity groups could include people who identify as:

- Multicultural and culturally and linguistically diverse
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- LGBTIQ+
- having a disability.

Impact on diversity groups

People from minority or diverse groups often face extra challenges. When bullying or harassment happens, it can:

- make them feel they don't belong
- stop them from speaking up
- affect their work, mental health, and confidence.

Examples

Scenario 1:

Alex is openly gay and works in a team where most colleagues know about his sexual orientation. During a team meeting, one colleague, Jordan, repeatedly makes remarks that draw unnecessary attention to Alex's sexuality and makes assumptions about his interests based on well-known stereotypes.

Jordan laughs after each comment and dismisses them as 'jokes', even though Alex appears uncomfortable and has previously requested Jordan to stop.

Why this is harassment:

- The remarks single out Alex based on his sexual orientation, creating an uncomfortable environment.
- Although framed as jokes, the behaviour continues after Alex has expressed discomfort, showing a disregard for boundaries.
- The repeated comments contribute to creating a hostile workplace and meets the definition of harassment.

Scenario 2:

Taylor identifies as non-binary and uses they/them pronouns. During a project discussion, a

colleague, Shanice, repeatedly dismisses Taylor's pronouns because she considers Taylor to be female and insists on referring to them using she/her. Shanice's remarks question the validity of Taylor's identity and suggest that their pronouns are unnecessary or overly complicated. Even after Taylor politely explains their pronouns and asks Shanice to respect them, Shanice continues to use incorrect pronouns and makes similar comments in front of others.

Why this is harassment:

- The comments target Taylor's gender identity and expression.
- They invalidate and disrespect Taylor's identity, creating a hostile environment.
- The behaviour persists after Taylor requested it stop, showing disregard for boundaries.

Scenario 3:

Sam is an Indigenous employee who uses a wheelchair due to a physical disability. During team meetings, a colleague named Rakesh repeatedly makes comments that draw attention to Sam's wheelchair and attempts to make light-hearted jokes about his mobility. Rakesh also makes remarks that stereotype and trivialise Sam's cultural background.

Although Rakesh considers Sam a friend and his comments are framed as humour, they make Sam uncomfortable. Sam does not want to express this directly to Rakesh.

Why this is harassment:

- Sam feels that the comments are unwelcome, and they have made him uncomfortable.
- The remarks relate to both Sam's disability and Indigenous identity, which are protected under anti-discrimination laws.
- The repeated jokes and cultural stereotypes undermine Sam's dignity, making the workplace intimidating and humiliating. This affects Sam's confidence in being able to candidly express his feelings to Rakesh about the comments.

Scenario 4:

Aisha is an employee from a CALD background who speaks English as a second language. During team meetings, a colleague named James repeatedly makes comments that draw attention to Aisha's accent and publicly questions her understanding of technical terms. James also tends to overlook Aisha's suggestions unless they are repeated by another colleague, and he occasionally re-explains concepts to her that she has clearly demonstrated she understands. He sometimes speaks on her behalf in meetings or summarises her contributions in a way that minimises their value.

Over time, these behaviours make Aisha feel dismissed and singled out in the workplace.

Why this is harassment:

- The comments focus on Aisha's personal characteristics (accent and cultural background) rather than her professional contributions.

- The behaviour is repeated and creates a hostile environment.
- Such remarks can isolate Aisha from the team, impacting her sense of belonging and psychological safety at work.
- Under workplace policies and anti-discrimination laws, targeting someone based on cultural or linguistic traits is considered unlawful and inappropriate.

What you can do

We do not tolerate bullying and harassment behaviours. If you experience this yourself or see this kind of activity in the workplace, you can:

- raise with your local management team
- contact a [Harassment Contact Officer](#) for advice or support
- submit a [formal complaint form](#)
- review the [Raising a workplace concern or complaint](#) page for further information.

You do not need to raise issues with a person engaging in this conduct directly if you do not feel safe or comfortable in doing so.

We have the following policies that explain our approach to bullying and harassment:

- [Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)
- [Sexual Harassment and Sex Based Harassment Policy](#)

Contact

Email: S 22 or call S 22 option 3.

Related pages

Please visit these additional resources pages for more information.

- [Home - Pride in Diversity](#)
- [Mental health and wellbeing - STAFFnet](#)
- [Psychosocial safety - STAFFnet](#)
- [Health, safety and wellbeing - STAFFnet](#)
- [Performance, behaviour, culture and recognition - STAFFnet](#)
- [Harassment contact officers - STAFFnet](#)



AWEI Evidence for Question 9 – Gender Affirmation Policy and Process Documentation

DSS are to provide evidence of documented gender affirmation policy/process to :

- a)** support the employee(s) wishing to affirm their gender in the workplace (2 points)
- b)** support manager(s) and/or HR contact(s) supporting those who wish to affirm their gender (1 Point)
- c)** support peers/colleagues of those who wish to affirm their gender (1 Point)

Part 1 Evidence

Full copies of the gender affirmation policy and guidelines are provided at file name: Q9 – DSS Gender Affirmation Policy and Gender Affirmation Policy in full.

- a) Page 4 of the DSS Gender Affirmation Policy outlines support for staff wishing to affirm their gender in the workplace.

3.2. Support

Every gender affirmation journey is different. Employees affirming their gender may need different kinds of support at different stages. The department is committed to creating a workplace that is safe and supportive.

Employees may need support to communicate their needs in relation to affirming their gender, particularly in speaking with their manager. In circumstances where speaking directly to a manager is not possible, [health and safety representatives](#) (HSRs), People Services Branch staff or [DSS Pride Committee](#) members can help facilitate discussions or establish a workplace plan to help meet your needs. The department may also contact our external workplace LGBTIQ+ inclusion partner, [Pride in Diversity](#), to help facilitate team discussions.

Transgender staff may be particularly vulnerable to bullying, harassment and discrimination. Behaviours including bullying, victimisation, exclusion, deliberate misuse of pronouns or names, or innuendo either directly or indirectly will not be tolerated. This is accordance with the department's bullying and harassment policies and the APS Code of Conduct (the Code).

Employees who are considering affirming their gender may also consider establishing their own network of support people. These people may include:

- your manager
- a HSR representative
- a member of the [DSS Pride Committee](#)
- a union delegate
- a support person
- trusted colleague.

Learn more about [the role of a support person](#).

Employees and their immediate families or household members may access to support through the [Employee Assistance Program](#) on **s 22** for confidential professional guidance and counselling support services. Specialised support for LGBTIQ+ is available on request.

There are also a range of [wellbeing and mental health resources available on STAFFnet](#).

Also see evidence below Part 2 - Q9 - DSS Gender Affirmation Guidelines – Attachment B (Page 8)

Support for employees affirming their gender

Every gender affirmation journey is different. Expectations and responsibilities of staff will be unique and dependent on honest and open communication. Affirming one's gender in the department should not be attached to a fear of consequences.

A staff member seeking to affirm their gender has a responsibility to work with their line manager, People Services Branch, and/or representatives to outline their expectations to ensure a positive experience.

Initial discussions

The department is committed to creating a workplace that is safe and supportive.

It is important that you feel safe speaking with your line manager in relation to any plans to affirm your gender. In circumstances where speaking directly to your manager is not possible, you can contact any of the following people to help facilitate discussions or establish a workplace plan to help meet your needs:

- [health and safety representatives](#) (HSRs)
- People Services Branch staff
- [DSS Pride Committee](#) members.

Establishing a support team

An important first step will be to establish a support team. This team might include:

- your direct supervisor
- [health and safety representatives](#) (HSRs)
- a member of the [DSS Pride Committee](#)
- a union delegate
- a support person
- trusted colleague.

Part b evidence

Explicit examples of support for team leaders or managers provided from the DSS Gender Affirmation Guidelines (Page 4).

Support for team leaders and managers

When a person approaches you about the intention to affirm their gender, your support as a leader and manager is critical.

Below are some of the key areas your assistance is required in this process.

Involvement in the development of a workplace plan

It is imperative that managers treat any employee who is affirming their gender with respect. Managers are encouraged to ask questions sensitively, listen and understand specific needs and concerns. All employees deserve to be treated with respect and sensitivity when related to their personal lives. Support is essential and expected, and discriminatory attitudes will not be tolerated.

When you become aware of a person who has the intention to affirm their gender, you can encourage the [creation of a workplace plan](#). It is important to discuss the aims and expectations of the plan which includes your role in helping to manage the workplace change. Make sure to consider stakeholders, colleagues, policies and procedures which may be affected.

For guidance contact a [DSS Pride Committee](#) member or a [health and safety representative](#). Additionally, the department's external employer support partner [Pride in Diversity](#) is available for support.

Addressing concerns of colleagues

A lack of knowledge and awareness can lead to misunderstandings, concerns and tension in the workplace. Be aware of any tensions arising and check in to find out the experience of the person affirming their gender. Addressing expectations, goals and related matters are critical for everyone involved, in order to achieve a positive outcome. Encourage communication and be available to answer questions and be aware of differentiating between personal beliefs and appropriate behaviour.

[Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) providers are also available to provide support and guidance in workplace related matters.

Part c evidence

Explicit examples from the DSS Gender Affirmation Guidelines (Page 9) outlining how staff can support their colleagues.

Supporting your colleagues

If a colleague approaches you about the intention to affirm their gender, your support may be requested. Below are some of the ways you can support the person affirming their gender.

Be a trans ally

You can show your support by being an ally of the LGBTIQIA+ community. An ally is associated with others for a shared cause or purpose. It is important to understand that being an ally is not a one-off gesture or statement, it is a continual journey.

There are many ways to show support and act:

- Explore and develop an understanding of issues affecting different parts of the community and how their experiences may differ from your own, through listening to and reading about the experiences of people in the community.
- Speak up when you hear inappropriate language or remarks directed at the community or staff member(s).
- Call out bad behaviour. No-one should feel disrespected and sometimes it can be your voice that changes attitudes.
- Encourage others to use correct pronouns. It is ok to make a mistake, correct it and move on. Be mindful not to make a big deal out of it.
- Add your pronouns to your email signature or any name tags or ID you wear at work.
- Show your support by displaying flags or Teams backgrounds or wearing pins.
- Never assume a person's identity based on how they appear.
- Remember that someone who is beginning to affirm their gender may experiment with different ways to present as they find what works for them. Be patient, kind and respectful.
- Offer your company. Facilities are there to be used, but sometimes uncomfortable to navigate alone. If you can be there as a buddy, feel free to accompany someone, with their permission.
- Listen respectfully. Everyone is the expert on their own lives and one of the most important roles of an ally is to hear that experience and offer support. Talking and expressing their feelings, which may be all a person needs. Ensure to respect their privacy and be aware of your limitations.
- Complete training on supporting LGBTIQIA+ colleagues.
- Make time to celebrate or observe days of significance.



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Gender affirmation guidelines

Guidance and support for employees affirming their gender, managers and colleagues.

Document release under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)
by the Department of Social Services

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Purpose of guidelines

This document may be used as a resource to inform a workplace plan that details the responsibilities of a person affirming their gender as well as their line manager. The guide also outlines key terminology and points of contact.

Transgender people are not obliged to let their colleagues, or any other work-related party, know that they have or intend to affirm their gender in the workplace. It is not mandatory.

Understanding gender affirmation

Trans and gender diverse people identify their gender(s) as different to the one that was presumed for them at birth. Trans and gender diverse people may position 'being trans' as a history or experience, rather than an identity and consider their gender identity as fundamentally the same as the gender(s) of cisgender people. Some strongly connect with their trans experience.

Gender affirmation refers to the process of a person who may take steps to live as their defined gender(s), based on what is right for them. Some steps they may take may include:

- social steps such as publicly changing their name, pronouns and appearance
- medical steps such as hormones or surgery
- legal steps such as changing their legal gender marker and name in official documents.

People in the trans and gender diverse community may describe themselves using one (or more) of a wide variety of terms. Always use the term preferred by the person. A helpful glossary of terms can be found at [TransHub](#) or [LGBTIQA+ glossary of common terms from Australian Institute of Family Studies](#).

The decision to transition is a very personal one and every transgender person's experience will be different and unique. There's no right way to be trans or gender diverse, and it's okay for a person to take the time to figure out what is best for them. Gender affirmation is an ongoing process with no defined end point.

More information about gender transition is available from the [Gender Centre](#) and [A Gender Agenda](#).

Legal, privacy and confidentiality requirements

Transgender and gender diverse people are protected from discrimination and harassment in the workplace by the [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#). In addition, the department has [corporate policies](#), including bullying and harassment policies, which outline further expectations of staff.

APS staff are also bound by the [APS Code of Conduct](#), which requires that staff treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment when interacting with others in connection with their APS employment. The Code of Conduct is set out in section 13 of the [Public Service Act 1999](#).

The [Privacy Act 1988](#) outlines the handling of personal information. Information regarding the gender affirmation of a staff member should only be disclosed to those who need to know, are involved in

the process, or have the consent of the person who is affirming their gender. It should also be noted that employees are not required to disclose medical information to the department.

Education and awareness

A lack of knowledge and awareness can sometimes create discomfort, tension and nervousness amongst employees. Clear, open and honest communication from managers, employees and the person affirming their gender is essential. Communication can help alleviate any potential difficulties or issues, but it is important to remember that all staff are expected to behave in accordance with the APS Code of Conduct and departmental policies. If manager requires assistance on how to support a transgender employee, please contact Workplace Relations at

s 22

Addressing negativity

While there are arrangements in place to assist employees and their colleagues to support a respectful and positive experience for someone affirming their gender, there may be people who struggle with the change. As per our bullying and harassment policies, the department will not tolerate negative behaviour, destructive gossip and deliberate or non-deliberate attempts to isolate or make a person uncomfortable.

Information and training sessions

It may be useful to host information sessions and forums to address concerns and educate employees. Courses are available to learn more about gender on [LinkedIn Learning](#). Gender awareness training sessions can be organised by the DSS Pride Committee. The department also has an external workplace LGBTIQ+ inclusion partner, [Pride in Diversity](#), who can facilitate team discussions.

The most knowledgeable person about a gender affirmation is the employee undertaking it. They are central to the decision making and planning of their own affirmation process. It is recommended that if a team member is affirming their gender, they are included in local information and training sessions. The level of involvement will differ in each instance.

Leave entitlements

Transgender and gender diverse staff may use leave provisions available to them under the [DSS Enterprise Agreement](#), the [Leave Policy](#) and relevant laws. Employees are entitled to use their personal and carer's leave for preventative health appointments, provided they have available credits.

Providing reasonable flexibility and the ability for the person affirming their gender to access leave in accordance with existing leave policies is essential. Long service leave, annual leave and other leave entitlements such as miscellaneous leave may be available for use with existing processes. Eligible employees do not need to exhaust other forms of leave before seeking miscellaneous leave for gender affirmation purposes.

Refer to the [Leave Policy](#) to learn more about the range of available leave options.

Facilities

The department provides segregated male and female and separate gender neutral, accessible toilet facilities. Staff are able to use the toilet facilities commensurate with their affirmed gender identity.

Note, all staff should feel safe in the workplace at all times, including when using the facilities. The [Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy](#), the [Corporate Plan](#), the [APS Values](#), [Employment Principles](#) and [Code of Conduct](#) provide guidance on expected and appropriate conduct in the workplace. The [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) is also available to provide support and guidance.

The DSS Pride Committee has posters/signage that can be provided if required.

Supporting your colleagues

If a colleague approaches you about the intention to affirm their gender, your support may be requested. Below are some of the ways you can support the person affirming their gender.

Be a trans ally

You can show your support by being an ally of the LGBTIQ+ community. An ally is associated with others for a shared cause or purpose. It is important to understand that being an ally is not a one-off gesture or statement, it is a continual journey.

There are many ways to show support and act:

- Explore and develop an understanding of issues affecting different parts of the community and how their experiences may differ from your own, through listening to and reading about the experiences of people in the community.
- Speak up when you hear inappropriate language or remarks directed at the community or staff member(s).
- Call out bad behaviour. No-one should feel disrespected and sometimes it can be your voice that changes attitudes.
- Encourage others to use correct pronouns. It is ok to make a mistake, correct it and move on. Be mindful not to make a big deal out of it.
- Add your pronouns to your email signature or any name tags or ID you wear at work.
- Show your support by displaying flags or Teams backgrounds or wearing pins.
- Never assume a person's identity based on how they appear.
- Remember that someone who is beginning to affirm their gender may experiment with different ways to present as they find what works for them. Be patient, kind and respectful.
- Offer your company. Facilities are there to be used, but sometimes uncomfortable to navigate alone. If you can be there as a buddy, feel free to accompany someone, with their permission.
- Listen respectfully. Everyone is the expert on their own lives and one of the most important roles of an ally is to hear that experience and offer support. Talking and expressing their feelings, which may be all a person needs. Ensure to respect their privacy and be aware of your limitations.
- Complete training on supporting LGBTQIA+ colleagues.
- Make time to celebrate or observe days of significance.

[IDAHOBIT \(International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia\)](#) has guides on developing your understanding of the issues confronting LGBTIQ+ people and taking meaningful actions of allyship.

Use inclusive language

Language is a powerful tool for building inclusion at work. Guidance on using inclusive language is available in the [Australian Government Style Manual](#) and the Pride in Diversity [Glossary of LGBTIQ+ terminology](#).

Generally, a person who identifies with a gender other than the one they were assigned at birth may be referred to as a transgender person. Once a transgender person chooses to publicly express their gender it is important that they are referred to using their affirmed name and pronouns such as he, she, they. If you are unsure about which terms to use you can ask the person what pronouns they use or ask your manager for advice.

If someone is attempting to contact a colleague who is affirming their gender and using their former name, it is important to note that you may not share personal information without consent. If you do, it is considered unacceptable behaviour and a form of bullying and harassment. The best course of action would be to check with the person who is affirming their gender and ask how they would prefer this type of situation to be managed. A general response could be, 'Let me put you through to (affirmed name) - (affirmed pronoun) will be able to help you with that.'

Where to find additional support

Staff contact officers, including [DSS Pride Committee](#) members and [health and safety representatives](#) (HSRs), can provide advice and support regarding gender affirmation.

Employees and their immediate families or household members may access to support through the [Employee Assistance Program](#) on [§ 22](#) for confidential professional guidance and counselling support services. Specialised support for LGBTIQ+ is available on request.

Anonymous and free LGBTIQ+ peer support can be accessed by calling [QLife](#) on 1800 184 527. Support is also available through [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14.

Gender affirmation can take a lot of courage and be a lonely and isolating experience for some people. There are a range of [wellbeing and mental health resources available on STAFFnet](#). This includes:

- guidance around [psychosocial safety and hazards](#) that can cause psychological harm or stress to employees
- [conversation guides](#) to having discussions about mental health and wellbeing
- [suicide prevention guidance](#) is also provided to help aid discussions and seek appropriate help.

If you're not sure what to do with the information your colleague tells you, you can contact the department's confidential mental health information line by calling or texting [§ 22](#).

Developing a workplace plan

An important step during the gender affirmation process in the workplace is the development of a workplace plan, should the person affirming their gender choose to make one. The workplace plan helps outline expectations, timeframes and key milestones. It may include information such as, but not limited to:

- creation of a support team (if/as required)
- proposed timeframe in which the person will present in the workplace as their affirmed gender, in order to inform the timing of communications, training and leave.
- proposed leave plans (if/as required)
- how the change will be communicated to relevant employees
- recommended training and who this will be delivered to
- details of an event for the person to meet the team in their affirmed gender
- expectations and proposed timeframes for IT system changes (such as gender/name).

This does not need to be developed by any one person. The process may involve consultation from various areas, support services, and the person's counsellor or manager.

An example of a workplace plan is at Attachment A.

Communicating changes

Respectful communications that are created with involvement from all parties is essential. It is natural for colleagues to be curious, and the person's privacy will need to be balanced with the need for colleagues to understand the change and any expectations of their behaviour.

Ideally, communication should start as social gender affirmation commences. Planning can assist in reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings and rumours. When communicating with colleagues about these matters it is important to first ensure that the person affirming their gender is comfortable with the proposed timing and language used. An example communication via email can be found at Attachment B.

Think about how and when communications about a gender affirmation should be provided to key stakeholders. This may include colleagues, clients and managers. Who will be part of these conversations? Consider all the people that have an ongoing relationship with the person affirming their gender, as well as factors such as email contact information or access to third party premises.

Education and training

It is possible that colleagues and other stakeholders may have little to no awareness of trans and gender diverse matters. Everyone needs to be aware of the role they need to play to create an inclusive workplace. It is important that education is provided.

Hosting information and awareness sessions for team members and other stakeholders should be considered when developing the workplace plan.

Updating personal details

All staff have the right to be addressed by their chosen name and pronouns. As part of the workplace plan, consider how any changes to the person's name, gender or title will need to be updated on IT systems, physical signage and security pass.

Employees are able to edit their 'known as' name, and their gender, in Essentials at any time. A staff member's legal name may still appear on some documentation and systems.

Some official records and systems may require a legal name change document to be presented, for example personnel (Essentials) data. The table below outlines the various considerations when making changes to personal details and systems.

Personal details	Process details	Evidence required	Contact
Title	Changes can be made to an alternative title.	No	s 22
Preferred 'known as' name	This can be updated prior to legally updating a name.	No	Essentials system: My Details; Name
Name	This is a legal name. Amendments can be actioned once evidence is supplied demonstrating that this has been amended on the relevant register.	Yes	s 22
Gender	The gender marker can be amended. The options are: • male • female • indeterminate/intersex/unspecified • choose not to give this information.	No	Essentials system: My Details; Diversity

Email

Email addresses will automatically be updated once the 'known as' name amendment has been actioned.

Security pass

Once a legal name is changed, there is a requirement that the department update security passes.

Security clearance

Changes to legal name or gender, will need to be advised by submitting a change of circumstances form through the MyClearance portal at www.agsva.gov.au/about/myclearance.

This requires evidence demonstrating that either has been changed on the relevant register and has SES Band 1 approval.

Other accounts

Other accounts such as the QBT portal (booking flights) and the AOT online booking portal (accommodation) will also need to be updated.

Name details may also need to be updated in leave spreadsheets, on call registers and team contact lists.

If bank account details change, this must also be updated in Essentials.

Name badge, desk plates and business cards

Branch Executive Assistant or team can order new desk plates, badges or business cards with SES Band 1 approval.

Support to make the changes

The Pay and Conditions team (S 22 [redacted]) can help to update the staff member's official record to reflect a change of legal name.

Alternatively, if the situation requires more anonymity, the staff member or their supervisor may email S 22 [redacted] and the team will arrange the changes on behalf of the staff member.

Support for employees affirming their gender

Every gender affirmation journey is different. Expectations and responsibilities of staff will be unique and dependent on honest and open communication. Affirming one's gender in the department should not be attached to a fear of consequences.

A staff member seeking to affirm their gender has a responsibility to work with their line manager, People Services Branch, and/or representatives to outline their expectations to ensure a positive experience.

Initial discussions

The department is committed to creating a workplace that is safe and supportive.

It is important that you feel safe speaking with your line manager in relation to any plans to affirm your gender. In circumstances where speaking directly to your manager is not possible, you can contact any of the following people to help facilitate discussions or establish a workplace plan to help meet your needs:

- [health and safety representatives](#) (HSRs)
- People Services Branch staff
- [DSS Pride Committee](#) members.

Establishing a support team

An important first step will be to establish a support team. This team might include:

- your direct supervisor
- [health and safety representatives](#) (HSRs)
- a member of the [DSS Pride Committee](#)
- a union delegate
- a support person
- trusted colleague.

These people tend to be located within the workplace and may be in addition to your medical or psychological support team.

Learn more about [the role of a support person](#).

For more help and support see [additional support](#).

Appearance and dress

The department does not have a Dress Code Policy, however employees should dress in a way appropriate to their duties and meet the expectations of a professional work environment. Employees can dress in a fashion that reflects how they identify and are comfortable presenting.

Support for team leaders and managers

When a person approaches you about the intention to affirm their gender, your support as a leader and manager is critical.

Below are some of the key areas your assistance is required in this process.

Involvement in the development of a workplace plan

It is imperative that managers treat any employee who is affirming their gender with respect. Managers are encouraged to ask questions sensitively, listen and understand specific needs and concerns. All employees deserve to be treated with respect and sensitivity when related to their personal lives. Support is essential and expected, and discriminatory attitudes will not be tolerated.

When you become aware of a person who has the intention to affirm their gender, you can encourage the [creation of a workplace plan](#). It is important to discuss the aims and expectations of the plan which includes your role in helping to manage the workplace change. Make sure to consider stakeholders, colleagues, policies and procedures which may be affected.

For guidance contact a [DSS Pride Committee](#) member or a [health and safety representative](#). Additionally, the department's external employer support partner [Pride in Diversity](#) is available for support.

Addressing concerns of colleagues

A lack of knowledge and awareness can lead to misunderstandings, concerns and tension in the workplace. Be aware of any tensions arising and check in to find out the experience of the person affirming their gender. Addressing expectations, goals and related matters are critical for everyone involved, in order to achieve a positive outcome. Encourage communication and be available to answer questions and be aware of differentiating between personal beliefs and appropriate behaviour.

[Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) providers are also available to provide support and guidance in workplace related matters.

Attachment A: Example of a workplace plan

This is an example only and can be used as a guide to develop your own workplace plan. The purpose is to help to outline expectations, timeframes and key milestones.

Description	Details
Affirmed name:	
Affirmed pronouns:	
Representative (if applicable): A representative is someone you are happy to speak on your behalf.	
Support person (if applicable):	
Date planned for presenting in affirmed gender:	
Leave dates (if applicable):	
Leave to be used:	

Communications

Emails have been drafted to inform (as preferred)

Options	Details
Managers	
SES	
Colleagues	
Stakeholders/clients	

Training options

Delivery options	Details
Links provided to LinkedIn Learning	
Group discussion	Facilitated Not facilitated
Welcome event	

Support systems

Options	Details
Representative and/or support person	
Buddies	
People I can ask for help	
Other	

System changes

Personal details	Process details	Evidence required	Contact	Completed
Title	Changes can be made to an alternative title.	No	s 22	
Preferred 'known as' name	This can be updated prior to legally updating a name.	No	Essentials system: My Details; Name	
Name	This is a legal name. Amendments can be actioned once evidence is supplied demonstrating that this has been amended on the relevant register.	Yes	s 22	
Gender	The gender marker can be amended. The options are: • male • female • indeterminate/inte rsex/unspecified • choose not to give this information.	No	Essentials system: My Details; Diversity	

Personal details	Process details	Evidence required	Contact	Completed
Email	Email addresses will automatically be updated once the 'known as' name amendment has been actioned.	No		
Security pass	Once a legal name is changed, there is a requirement that the department update security passes.	No		
Security clearance	Changes to legal name or gender, will need to be advised by submitting a change of circumstances form.	Yes Evidence either has been changed on the relevant register and SES Band 1 approval.	MyClearance portal at www.agsva.gov.au/about/myclearance .	
QBT portal				
AOT online booking portal				
Leave spreadsheet				
On call registers				
Bank account details	Name details may also need to be updated in leave spreadsheets, on call registers and team contact lists.		Essentials	
Name badge, desk plates and business cards			Branch Executive Assistant or team can order new desk plates, badges or business cards with SES Band 1 approval.	

Attachment B: Example communication to broader department

Good morning/afternoon

I would like to provide you with some important information about your colleague who you have known as ##former name##.

From ##Date##, in ##enter pronoun## affirmed gender, we will be welcoming ##name## back into our team.

It is important all of us use ##enter pronoun## name, ##name## and ##enter pronoun## relevant pronouns (##enter pronouns: such as she/her, he/him, they/them, or a combination##) moving forward. This may take a little practice but ##name## has the full support of the department and I trust that you will all show ##pronoun## the same level of respect as any other colleague. I also stress that the department provides a safe and inclusive work environment for everyone.

We have arranged an information session for ##name##'s immediate colleagues and the wider team on ##Date## (which you can sign up for [here](#)).

We are a trans inclusive workplace. The EAP program, the [DSS Pride Committee](#) at s 22 and s 22 are available for anyone who might need to discuss this further.

Resources

[LGBTIQA+ - STAFFnet \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[Inclusive language | Style Manual](#)

[Glossary – LGBTQ Terminology | Pride Inclusion Programs](#)

[Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\) - STAFFnet \(sharepoint.com\)](#)



Gender Affirmation Policy

Policy information	Details
Purpose:	This policy provides guidance for supporting employees who affirm their gender in the workplace.
Category:	Corporate.
Applicable to:	All departmental employees.
Relevant authority:	Fair Work Act 2009 Public Service Act 1999 Sex Discrimination Act 1984 Work Health and Safety Act 2011
Related documents:	APS Values APS Employment Principles APS Code of Conduct Department of Social Services Enterprise Agreement 2024-2027 Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan Internal Privacy Leave Policy Support for Employee Representatives Policy Work Health and Safety Policy Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy Sexual Harassment and Sex-Based Harassment Policy
Policy statement:	The department is committed to supporting all employees who would like to affirm their gender in the workplace. This policy outlines the support available to assist employees and managers through this process.
Approved by:	Group Manager, Corporate and Government Services
Review date:	December 2028
Policy owner:	Diversity and Inclusion, People Services Branch.
First issued:	December 2025
Document change control:	New policy

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1. Context

The Department of Social Services (the department) is committed to supporting all employees who would like to affirm their gender. The department wants to create an environment and culture that encourages and supports our people.

This policy outlines the options available to assist our people through this process and provides a holistic approach to support.

2. Application

This policy applies to all departmental employees including SES officers and those covered by the Enterprise Agreement.

This policy applies in the form that it is in at the time of any relevant action/decision. If there is any inconsistency between this policy and the terms of the Enterprise Agreement or relevant legislation, the terms and conditions of the Enterprise Agreement or legislation will prevail.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, if there is significant change or the commencement of a new enterprise agreement. People Services Branch will lead reviews.

3. Policy

3.1. Gender affirmation

Gender affirmation is the process in which a person takes steps to live in alignment with their gender. For transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people their gender may differ from their sex assigned at birth. How a person affirms their gender should be based on what the person feels is right for them. These steps may include:

- social steps such as publicly changing their name, pronouns and appearance
- medical steps such as hormones, and/or surgery
- legal steps such as changing their legal gender marker and name in official documents.

It is recognised that each person's gender affirmation journey is unique. Gender affirmation is an ongoing process with no defined end point.

The department encourages all employees to maintain open, and supportive communication about gender affirmation in the workplace. This helps ensure the experience of someone affirming their gender is a respectful, positive and appropriately supportive process. However, the department respects a worker's right to privacy when this is their preferred approach.

More information about gender transition is available from the [Gender Centre](#) and [A Gender Agenda](#). A helpful glossary of terms can be found at [TransHub](#) or [LGBTIQ+ glossary of common terms from Australian Institute of Family Studies](#).

3.2. Support

Every gender affirmation journey is different. Employees affirming their gender may need different kinds of support at different stages. The department is committed to creating a workplace that is safe and supportive.

Employees may need support to communicate their needs in relation to affirming their gender, particularly in speaking with their manager. In circumstances where speaking directly to a manager is not possible, [health and safety representatives](#) (HSRs), People Services Branch staff or [DSS Pride Committee](#) members can help facilitate discussions or establish a workplace plan to help meet your needs. The department may also contact our external workplace LGBTIQA+ inclusion partner, [Pride in Diversity](#), to help facilitate team discussions.

Transgender staff may be particularly vulnerable to bullying, harassment and discrimination. Behaviours including bullying, victimisation, exclusion, deliberate misuse of pronouns or names, or innuendo either directly or indirectly will not be tolerated. This is accordance with the department's bullying and harassment policies and the APS Code of Conduct (the Code).

Employees who are considering affirming their gender may also consider establishing their own network of support people. These people may include:

- your manager
- a HSR representative
- a member of the [DSS Pride Committee](#)
- a union delegate
- a support person
- trusted colleague.

Learn more about [the role of a support person](#).

Employees and their immediate families or household members may access to support through the [Employee Assistance Program](#) on s 22 [REDACTED] for confidential professional guidance and counselling support services. Specialised support for LGBTIQA+ is available on request.

There are also a range of [wellbeing and mental health resources available on STAFFnet](#).

3.3. Workplace plans

Employees affirming their gender may choose to develop a workplace plan. A workplace plan helps to outline expectations, timeframes and key milestones to support the employee in their affirmation process.

The employee generally leads the development of a workplace plan. This process may involve consultation with a nominated support team, managers, business areas and support services as appropriate. It's important to acknowledge that an affirmation process may be long term and nonlinear and the plan can be reviewed and updated as appropriate.

More information about establishing a workplace plan is available in the [Gender Affirmation Guidelines](#).

3.4. Leave provisions

All employees have access to personal, long service or annual leave. Employees may also apply for longer periods of leave or discretionary miscellaneous leave, with or without pay. Eligible employees do not need to exhaust other forms of leave before seeking miscellaneous leave for gender affirmation purposes.

The department may make reasonable allowances, in accordance with the [DSS Enterprise Agreement](#) (and [Leave Policy](#)):

- Miscellaneous leave may be approved with or without pay at the discretion of the relevant delegate, but will generally not be in excess of 5 days paid leave per annum.
- Flexible working hours or similar arrangements may be allowed to make up time where leave cannot be used.

Refer to the [Leave Policy](#) to learn more about the range of leave options available.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. All employees

All departmental employees are expected to provide a safe and inclusive workplace.

All employees should treat all colleagues with respect by using inclusive language and correct name and pronouns when referring to a colleague.

4.2. Employees affirming their gender

Affirming one's gender in the department should not be attached to a fear of consequences. Employees are not obliged to let their colleagues, or any other work-related party know that they have, or intend to, affirm their gender in the workplace.

If an employee chooses to discuss gender affirmation with their manager, a representative or their colleagues, the department may be able to offer more comprehensive and tailored support. This includes developing a workplace plan, should the employee choose to do so.

Anyone involved in the process of a person affirming their gender must maintain privacy, confidentiality and show respect.

4.3. Managers/delegates

Managers are critical in providing support to, and in creating a supportive environment for their staff.

It is imperative that managers treat any employee who is affirming their gender with respect. Managers are required to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality and privacy in relation to all employee matters. Managers must also take reasonable steps to prevent staff from being harassed, bullied and discriminated against. This includes direct or indirect bullying to the employee affected.

Employees may seek support from their manager for development of a workplace plan. Managers can use the plan to help clarify with the employee what their aims and expectations are for their affirmation. The plan also outlines how the manager can best support their staff members to create a

positive workplace change. Further assistance can be obtained from the Workplace Relations at s 22

5. Sanctions for non-compliance

Employees and managers must adhere to their respective responsibilities in regard to the application of this policy. Failure to adhere to any aspect of this policy may constitute a breach of the APS Code of Conduct.

APS employees are bound by the APS Code of Conduct which requires that employees treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment when interacting with others in connection with their APS employment. The Code is set out in section 13 of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). In addition, the department has [corporate policies](#), including a [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) and [Sexual Harassment and Sex-based Harassment Policy](#), which outline further expectations of employees.

In particular, the [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](#) makes it unlawful to discriminate against someone because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.

Managers also have specific responsibilities under the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#), which can result in personal sanctions for non-compliance.

6. Privacy

The [Privacy Act 1988](#) sets out the requirements for the department's collection, use, disclosure and securing of personal information, including sensitive information such as about a person's health. The department must not collect personal information about a person unless it is reasonably necessary for, or directly related to, the department's functions or activities. For sensitive information, which includes health information, the department must have the person's specific consent to the collection, use and disclosure of sensitive information. Personal information and sensitive information must only be used or disclosed for the purpose for which it was collected, or with the consent of the person. Generally, personal information about an individual's gender affirmation should not be disclosed without the individual's consent. People **are not required to disclose medical information** to the department.

7. More information

For more information, please email People Services Branch at s 22

The [LGBTIQ+ - STAFFnet \(sharepoint.com\)](#) page provides an overview of actions the department takes to create an inclusive workplace to all employees.

The [Pride Committee](#) is also available for confidential conversations. You can contact the Pride Committee mailbox at s 22

In addition to this policy, [Gender Affirmation Guidelines](#) are available to support employees, colleagues, and managers. The guidelines can be used as a resource to inform a workplace plan that details the responsibilities of the employee affirming their gender, along with their colleagues and manager. The guidelines also include key terminology and points of contact for support.



AWEI Evidence for Question 11 – Non-Binary Gender Options for Employees

Where an organisation collects gender information from employees, non-binary options should be included for trans and gender diverse employees. DSS need to provide evidence of:

- the inclusion of options other than male/female on forms (2 Points)
- Where gender information collected is inclusive of non-binary people (2 Points)

Part 1 Evidence

Submission of screen shot of form to update diversity information into our Human Resources Information System (HRIS System SAP). As you can see there is a non-binary option and DSS encourages staff to update these details through regular communication that points to intranet content with instructions.

The screenshot shows the SAP HRIS system interface for updating employee diversity information. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with options like 'Welcome', 'Flexsheet', 'Executive Timesheet', 'Leave', 'Payslip / Payment Summary', 'WEAR Timesheet', 'CATS Timesheet', 'My Job', 'My Details', 'Additional Responsibilities', 'Address / Phone Details', 'Bank Details', 'Diversity / EEO Details', 'Name / DOB', 'Personal Issue Items', 'Purchased Leave', 'Prior Service', 'Recurring Allowances/De...', 'Salary History', 'Statement of Employment', 'Superannuation', and 'Work Schedule'. The main content area is titled 'Change Diversity / EEO Details' and contains the following fields and options:

- Start Date:** 31.01.2026
- Gender:** Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified/Non-binary (selected)
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander:** Chose not to give this information
- Permanency Indicator:** Male, Female, Indeterminate/Intersex/Unspecified/Non-binary (selected)
- First lang spoken:** Chose not to give this information
- Main non-English:** Chose not to give this information
- Mother's first lang:** Chose not to give this information
- Father's first lang:** Chose not to give this information
- Do you identify as a person with disability?:** Yes, No, Choose Not To Give (selected)
- Do you require reasonable (or workplace) adjustment to undertake your role?:** The Department's Reasonable Adjustment Policy provides more information of the types of adjustment Option 8, for advice or assistance.
- Country of Birth:** [Dropdown menu]
- Arrival date:** [Calendar icon]
- Special Emp. Program:** [Dropdown menu]
- Care/Responsibility:** Chose not to give this information
- Do you identify as LGBTQIA+:** [Highlighted in yellow]
- Buttons:** Save, Cancel

https://socialservicesau.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/Pages/people/diversity.aspx

SAP - ESSentials STAFFnet Google GIPHY - Be Animated mc McMilan Staff Deve... M365 Copilot Home - Serraview STAFFnet-author-us... 2024-25 AWEI Empl...

STAFFnet MyProfile Phonebook Search

STAFFnet

STAFFnet > People > Diversity in our department

Diversity in our department

On this page

- Being you at work: Our approach to diversity and inclusion
- How we support you
- Sharing your diversity information
- Additional support
- Contacts

Home

About DSS

Corporate services

People

- Committees, networks and forums

You don't have to share unless it might affect your ability to do your job or someone's safety. Any information you give us is kept private and confidential by law.

Why sharing helps

Sharing your information helps us:

- understand if our workforce reflects the diversity of Australia.
- make sure our policies and programs consider everyone's needs, based on real experiences.
- give you the right support if you need it.
- check if the support we offer is actually working well.

How to share your information

If you're comfortable sharing, you can:

1. Talk to your manager

2. Update your profile in ESSentials:

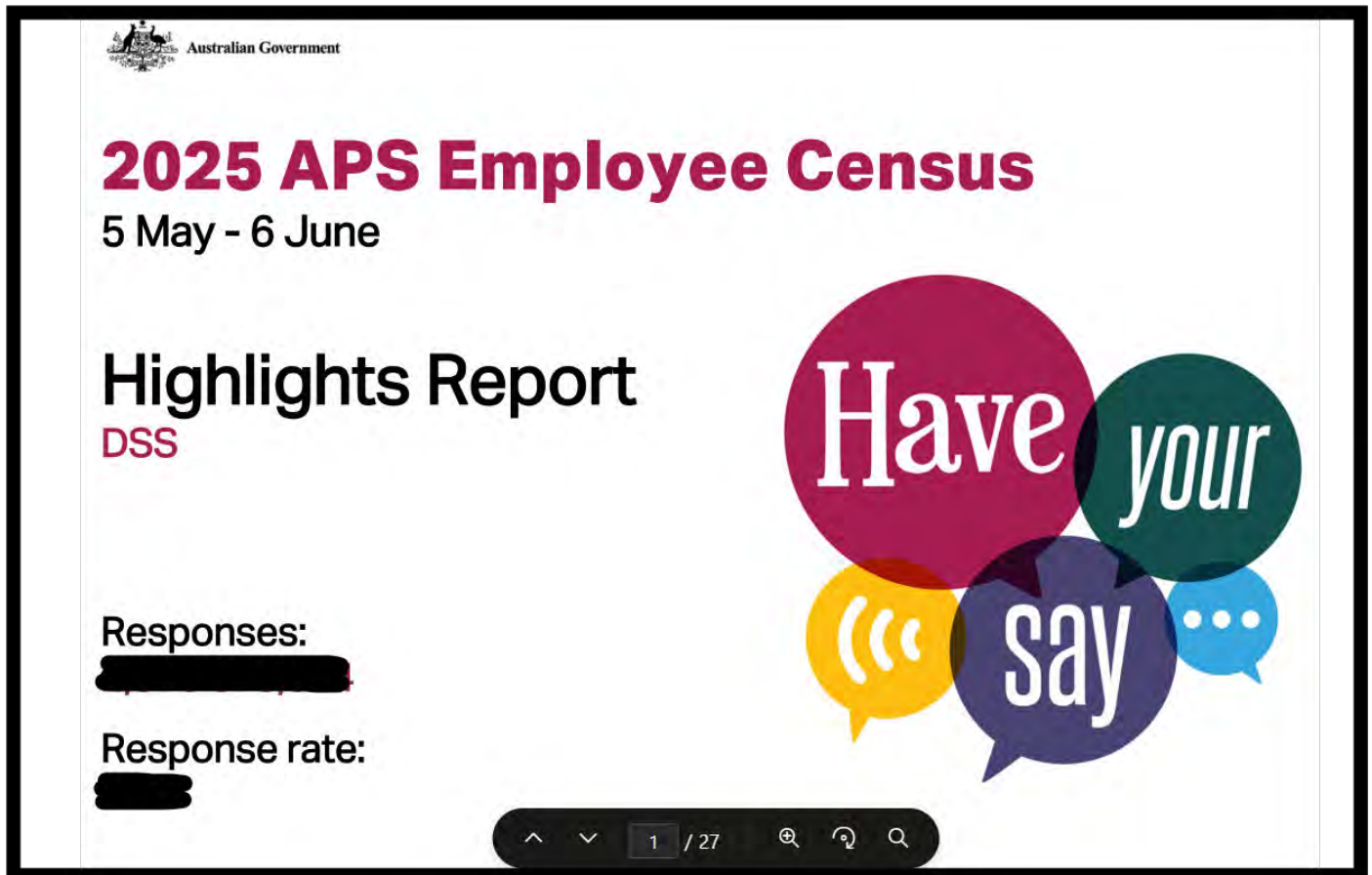
- Open ESSentials.
- Go to the 'Employee' tab.
- Click 'My Details', then 'Diversity/EEO details'.
- Click 'Change', update the fields you want, and click 'Save'.

3. Email: s 22

4. Call: s 22 - option 9

Evidence Part 2

In the APS Census Survey, DSS collect information on gender and diversity. This helps us understand our workforce and can highlight specific issues or concerns raised with these co-cohorts. It also allows our plans and strategies to be developed to specifically target the needs of our LGBTIQ+ and other diverse communities within DSS to improve our inclusiveness and diversity.



Demographics

How do you describe your gender?

Responses
Man or male
Woman or female
Non-binary
I use a different term
Prefer not to say

Do you identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person?

Responses
Yes
No

Do you have an ongoing disability?

Responses
Yes
No

Do you have carer responsibilities?

Responses
Yes
No

Do you identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or gender diverse, Intersex, Queer, Questioning and/or Asexual (LGBTIQA+)?

Responses
Yes
No

Do you identify as culturally or linguistically diverse?

Responses
Yes
No

How would you describe your cultural background? [Multiple Response]

Responses
Australian (excluding Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)
Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
New Zealander (excluding Maori)
Maori, Melanesian, Papuan, Micronesian, and Polynesian
Anglo-European
North-West European (excluding Anglo-European)
Southern and Eastern European
South-East Asian
North-East Asian
Southern and Central Asian
North American
South and Central American and Caribbean Islander
North African and Middle Eastern
Sub-Saharan African

Do you consider yourself to be neurodivergent?

Responses
Yes
No
Maybe
I am unsure what neurodivergent means

Evidence Part 3

The DSS Annual Report 2024-25 on pages 255-258 use the collected SAP data to provide de-identified data regarding the various breakdowns of our diversity details for our workforce.

Table F-5: 17AG (4)(aa) - Management of Human Resources - All ongoing employees (2024-25)

	Man/Male			Woman/Female			Non-binary			Prefers not to answer			Uses a different term			Total
	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	
NSW	85	11	96	195	42	237	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	333
Qld	39	2	41	118	32	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	191
SA	48	4	52	89	12	101	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	153
Tas	25	0	25	64	27	91	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	116
Vic	78	5	83	175	36	211	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	294
WA	15	3	18	70	15	85	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	103
ACT	603	28	631	1289	295	1,584	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,215
NT	4	0	4	29	5	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38
External Territories	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overseas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	897	53	950	2,029	464	2,493	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,443

Table F-6: 17AG (4)(aa) - 17AG (4)(aa) - Management of Human Resources - All non-ongoing employees (2024-25)

	Man/Male			Woman/Female			Non-binary			Prefers not to answer			Uses a different term			Total
	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	
NSW	3	0	3	10	3	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
Qld	2	0	2	9	2	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
SA	2	0	2	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Tas	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Vic	6	0	6	6	3	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
WA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ACT	14	3	17	39	13	52	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	69
NT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
External Territories	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overseas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	29	3	32	68	21	89	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	121

Table F-7: 17AG(4)(b)(i)-(iv) - Australian Public Sector (APS) classification and gender, Public Service Act ongoing employees (2024-25)

	Man/Male			Woman/Female			Non-binary			Prefers not to answer			Uses a different term			Total
	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	
SES 3	2	0	2	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
SES 2	10	0	10	12	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22
SES 1	17	0	17	53	2	55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	72
EL 2	116	3	119	248	41	289	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	408
EL 1	260	15	275	542	151	693	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	968
APS 6	232	16	248	559	147	706	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	954
APS 5	198	16	214	461	93	554	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	768
APS 4	41	1	42	103	29	132	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	174
APS 3	19	0	19	42	0	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	61
APS 2	2	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
APS 1	0	2	2	4	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	897	53	950	2029	464	2,493	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,443

Table F-8: 17AG(4)(b)(i)–(iv) – Australian Public Sector (APS) classification and gender, APS non-ongoing employees (2024–25)

	Man/Male			Woman/Female			Non-binary			Prefers not to answer			Uses a different term			Total
	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	Full time	Part time	Total	
SES 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SES 2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
SES 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EL 2	2	2	4	2	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
EL 1	4	0	4	12	4	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20
APS 6	2	1	3	7	6	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
APS 5	12	0	12	22	5	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39
APS 4	7	0	7	25	1	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
APS 3	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
APS 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
APS 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	29	3	32	68	21	89	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	121



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Social Services acknowledges the traditional custodians and owners of the land on which we meet and work throughout Australia. We extend our acknowledgment to their Elders past, present and emerging and we pay our respects to their continuing connection to culture, land, waters and community.

[Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country | Indigenous.gov.au](https://www.indigenous.gov.au)

Introduction

The Department of Social Services' Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (the action plan) is our roadmap to ensure our workforce reflects the Australian society we serve, while ensuring our workplace welcomes, includes and treats all employees in an equitable and inclusive way. The department will continue to foster an inclusive environment as a method of attracting, recruiting, supporting, developing and retaining people from the Australian community. A diverse and inclusive workforce culture contributes to enabling the department to effectively deliver Government priorities.

The action plan sets out organisational objectives and measurable actions, and provides opportunities for our workforce to build knowledge of diversity and inclusion, and grow capabilities in applying best practice in day to day activities. This action plan builds on work undertaken to progress our diversity and inclusion efforts, both within the department and the broader Australian Public Service (APS). The action plan was developed in consultation with departmental diversity networks and committees, senior leaders, and external advisory bodies.

Definitions

Diversity

Diversity is the unique differences in our individual lived experiences, backgrounds, and capabilities and can include disability, age, mental health condition, neurological differences, ethnicity, place of origin, culture, language, social class, religion, sexual orientation, intersex status, gender identity, caring responsibilities, education, and work experience.

Inclusion

Inclusion is valuing, respecting and celebrating each employee's unique, background, lived experiences, capabilities and perspectives. Inclusion ensures that each employee's individuality and diversity is welcomed, valued, respected, celebrated, and safe to be expressed. An inclusive culture ensures the workplace is equitable, respectful, and supportive. It enables everyone to participate effectively in the work environment, feel included and that they belong, with equitable opportunity to access resources and support.



Strategic alignment

This action plan aligns with the *APS Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25*, the *APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26*, *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24*, the department's *Workforce Strategy 2019–22*, the department's *Reconciliation Action Plan 2021–24* and the department's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Action Plan*.



Our commitment

The department is committed to cultivating a workplace that attracts, supports and retains members of all parts of the community. The department will do this by:

- Striving to be an employer of choice that represents the community we serve.
- Fostering a psychologically safe workplace.
- Offering rewarding and meaningful career pathways for all employees with consideration on equitable and inclusive practices and measures.
- Ensuring departmental practices and policies maintain accessible, safe and inclusive workplace practices.
- Foundation of strong leadership and accountability in inclusive workplace practices.

The department acknowledges the power of a diverse workforce and the significant impact this has on producing quality, considered, and informed outcomes for Government and the Australian community.

All employees have responsibility to ensure an inclusive and psychologically safe workplace. The provision of the action plan identifies departmental priorities to enable collaboration between key stakeholders in achieving practical outcomes.

The department has a commitment to evaluating, measuring and reporting on diversity with an emphasis on strong data collection and in line with best practice and privacy considerations.

Governance and enabling

The tables below outline the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders to ensure the success of the action plan and achievement of the objectives.

Executive Management Group Decision makers	People and Culture Committee Advisory	Diversity Champions Advisory / Enabler
The Executive Management Group for approval and progress of the action plan.	The People and Culture Committee provide guidance and advice. This is achieved primarily through their engagement with the individual diversity committees.	Diversity Champions are the primary senior officers championing diversity and are expected to demonstrate leadership in all aspects of diversity and inclusion. They are responsible for advocating for their group and advising their diversity committee and its members. They influence change and culture across the department and broader APS and provide visible leadership by promoting workplace inclusion and influencing cultural change.
Diversity Advisors Advisory / Enabler	People Services Branch Implementer / Enabler	Diversity Committees and Networks Advocates / Enabler
Diversity advisors are senior leaders appointed to each committee. They are responsible for advising and supporting committee-led initiatives including when engaging with senior committees and champions.	People Services Branch leads the implementation of the action plan. The branch manages the department's diversity and inclusion initiatives, including supporting the Diversity Champions, Senior Executive Services (SES) Advisors, and diversity committees and networks. The branch maintains memberships and relationships with relevant external organisations and peak bodies in the diversity and inclusion space.	Committees and Networks drive diversity initiatives and engagement within the department, and advocate on employees behalf to SES and executive committees. Committees develop key action plans to support the goals of the action plan. People Services Branch will support the committees in the development and implementation of their respective key action plans.
Managers and all employees Enabler		
All employees and managers are responsible for ensuring they understand and promote diversity and inclusion efforts in the workplace. This involves actively growing their cultural capability, demonstrating inclusivity, displaying respectful behaviours and actively supporting the implementation of relevant actions and initiatives.		

Our priority goals

The action plan outlines 3 inter-dependent priority goals whose success relies on a coordinated and holistic approach across the department.

The department will actively encourage cultivating an inclusive culture through:

1. Improving knowledge and embedding inclusive practices at work.
2. Building a diverse workforce through recruitment and retention strategies.
3. Strengthening leadership and accountability through commitment by our senior executive and management cohort.

The department acknowledges that to realise a holistic approach, the department must recognise that different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation and provide supports to address this intersectional impact.

The action plan provides diversity committees overarching strategic guidance to inform key committee objectives. To ensure the success of the priority focus areas and individual actions, the department's diversity committees will develop key action plans to drive initiatives and manage strategic objectives. The committees will work closely and collaborate with People Services Branch, SES Advisors, Diversity Champions, and each other to ensure a unified intersectional approach.

Cultivate an inclusive culture

Build cultural capability and knowledge to improve and embed inclusive practices and develop an inclusive workplace

Build a diverse workforce

Increase attraction, retention, and career development strategies to grow our diverse workforce

Strengthen leadership and accountability

Strengthen diversity and inclusion leadership practices and behaviours across SES, managers and supervisors

These goals align with the broader themes as identified in the *APS Disability Employment Strategy 2020–25*, the *APS Gender Equality Strategy 2021–26*, and the *Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy 2020–24*.

These 3 priorities will be embedded into the work undertaken by our senior leaders, our managers, and all staff. The success is dependent on acknowledging that creating an inclusive environment is the responsibility of everyone and affected by not just workplace policy but also by our individual day-to-day actions.

Continuing departmental initiatives

Action	Description
Provide ongoing support and drive engagement of departmental networks and committees. Promotion of networks and committee initiatives and days of significance events.	Departmental committees and networks represent diversity groups within the department, noting the intersectionality of diversity, and progress issues through the relevant Diversity Champion. • National Indigenous Committee and Network • Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Committee and Network • Disability and Carers Committee and Network • Gender Equality Committee and Network • Pride Committee and Network
Support and maintain Diversity Champion and SES Advisor roles.	SES staff appointed to lead the department's efforts to advance diversity and inclusion, advocate on cohorts behalf, progress matters and provide advice on diversity issues.
External advisory bodies - the department will continue key valuable external relationships.	• Australian Network on Disability • Diversity Council Australia • Pride in Diversity • Reconciliation Australia
The department's senior leadership will continue their participation in external committees.	• APS Disability Champions Network • Australian Network on Disability Champions • Indigenous Champions Network • Secretaries Equality and Diversity Council
Continue to provide training and capability initiatives.	Training programs: • Building Disability Confidence • Bullying and Harassment • Change Management Process • Compassionate Foundations – Suicide Prevention • Disability Confidence Managers • Disability Confidence Recruiter • Disability Confidence Workforce • Diversity and Discrimination • Empowering Allies • Family and Domestic Violence • Gender Awareness • Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training

Action	Description
	• LGBTI Inclusion: Walking in Rainbow Shoes • Respectful Workplaces • Unconscious Bias Training • Workplace sexual harassment: An overview for employers and managers. • Workplace sexual harassment: An overview for workers. Capability initiatives (events and formal education): • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff Conference • Australian National University Management Program (for Indigenous staff) • Indigenous Development and Employment Programs • Jawun APS Secondment Program • Pat Turner Scholarship Liaison officers: • Disability Liaison Officer • Indigenous Liaison Officer
Continue to engage and promote employment initiatives	• Ability Apprenticeship Program • Affirmative measures – disability recruitment • Affirmative measures – Indigenous recruitment • Disability and Indigenous Internship programs • Graduate Development Program • Indigenous Australian Government Development Program • RecruitAbility

New actions and initiatives

This action plan will provide diversity committees overarching strategic guidance to inform key committee objectives. The relevant diversity committees will develop key action plans to drive initiatives, with support provided by People Services Branch.

Priority goal	Action	Lead	Date	Success measure
Cultivate an inclusive culture	Implement the departmental Footprints Program to build staff cultural capability.	People Services Branch	Ongoing	• All staff actively participate in the program. • Staff are more culturally informed and aware.
Cultivate an inclusive culture	• Improve data capture and reporting mechanisms. • Employment, retention and career progression. • Reasonable adjustment. • Workplace relations cases.	People Services Branch	2023	• Improved reporting. • Improved data analysis. • Access to data analysis for decision-making. • Reasonable adjustment policy and reporting measures updated and implemented.
Cultivate an inclusive culture	Actively foster a safe and inclusive workplace through improved capability.	All staff	Ongoing	• All staff complete Diversity and Inclusion training. • Increase of staff participating in Unconscious Bias training. • Higher self-disclosure rates of people identifying as members of diversity groups. • Review diversity training offerings.

Priority goal	Action	Lead	Date	Success measure
Cultivate an inclusive culture	Review departmental people policies and remove barriers to inclusion.	• People Services Branch • Diversity Networks and Committees	2023	• Increased attraction and retention of staff in identified diversity groups. • Improved APS Census results in 'Inclusion' measures. • Reduction in percentage of separations of staff in diversity groups.
Cultivate an inclusive culture	Increase psychosocial supports and create a more psychologically safe workplace.	All staff	2023	• Delivery of the recommendations and actions identified from the APS Mental Health Capability Framework. • Improved wellbeing results in the APS Census.
Build a diverse workforce	Improve recruitment processes, including job requirement consideration, selection processes, and removing unconscious bias.	• SES • Managers • Supervisors	2024	• Improved action towards employment targets: • 8.5% employment rate of people with disability. • 6% employment rate of people identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. • Review recruitment policies and guidance. • Review SES information guidance on fostering inclusivity within the workplace.

Priority goal	Action	Lead	Date	Success measure
Build a diverse workforce	Increased representation of diverse employees reflective of the wider Australian community.	All staff	2024	- Increased representation of employees identifying as non-english speaking background (NESB) and LGBTIQA+ in ESSentials. - Decrease of 'prefer not to say' for LGBTIQA+, gender and NESB categories within the APS Census. - Understanding and addressing the department's gender pay gap via the Workplace Gender Equality Agency reporting and recommendations. - Increased representation of women in management.
Build a diverse workforce	Foster rewarding career pathways and offer specialised development initiatives.	All Staff	Ongoing	- Retention of staff in diversity groups. - Increased employment at Executive Level and SES levels. - Promotion and encouragement of self-identification/disclosure. - Increased availability of acting and job share opportunities.
Strengthen leadership and accountability	Strengthen commitment and roles of senior leaders	- Diversity Champions - People Services Branch - People and Culture Committee - Executive Management Group	Ongoing	- Senior leaders routinely lead conversations with employees on diversity and inclusion issues. - Increased opportunities for employees to engage with senior leaders about diversity and inclusion issues.

Priority goal	Action	Lead	Date	Success measure
Strengthen leadership and accountability	All SES staff to commit to providing all staff a safe and diverse workplace that fosters inclusivity.	All SES and senior managers in conjunction with People Services Branch	Ongoing	• All SES to include commitment to diversity outcomes in their individual performance agreements (IPDA). • SES to support their work areas in participating in and attending diversity events and training. • SES to include diversity as a standard agenda item for staff meetings. • SES to encourage diverse staff to engage in career development opportunities.
Strengthen leadership and accountability	Improved knowledge, capability, accountability and confidence from SES, managers, and staff.	All staff	Ongoing	• Increased staff confidence in discussing diversity and inclusion and holding others to account for behavior. • Increased awareness of the impact of diversity including intersectionality and how it applies in the workplace. • Staff integrating diversity and inclusion initiatives within their work areas. • Improved APS Census results in 'inclusion' measures.



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Pride Action Plan 2022-2025

DSS Pride Committee

Secretary's Foreword

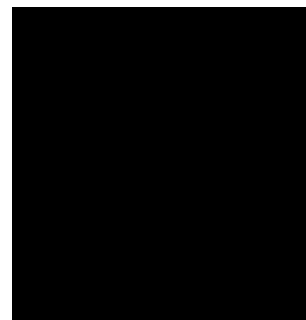
My aim is for the Department of Social Services (the Department) to be an inclusive, safe and respectful workplace that celebrates the diversity and strength of its workforce. The APS values call upon us to continually work toward these goals.

Based on responses to the [2021 APS Employee Census](#), the proportion of employees who openly identify as LGBTIQ+ has increased in recent years. The Census also found that, although the majority of LGBTIQ+ employees felt respected and supported by their agency, a larger proportion perceived discrimination, harassment or bullying in the workplace than those who do not identify as LGBTIQ+. This is a reminder for all of us at the Department that our commitment to diversity and inclusion is an ongoing and important endeavour.

The Pride Action Plan for 2022-2025 (the Action Plan) represents the hard work of the DSS Pride Committee and the Department in paving the way to achieving our commitment to an inclusive workforce. Actions 14 through 18 of the Action Plan remind us that being a visible ally, and providing physical, mental and structural support are powerful ways in which we can foster a safe workplace culture. Simple actions can go a long way to signalling to those around you that DSS is a place that celebrates and values all people.

Most importantly, as allies and as members of the community, it is the responsibility of all staff to call out discrimination, prejudice and anti-LGBTIQ+ sentiment wherever it appears.

I am proud to endorse this Pride Action Plan and invite you all to commit to strong practical ways to realise a safe, inclusive Department for all.



[Redacted Name]

Secretary, Department of Social Services

DSS Pride Champions

As Pride Champions for the Department of Social Services (the department), we are proud to present the DSS Pride Committee's Action Plan for 2022-2025.

We know from research and personal experience how important it is for people to be able to bring their whole selves to work. By promoting an inclusive workplace that celebrates diversity, staff can feel encouraged to participate in and contribute to the work and life of the department. Our workforce is strengthened by inclusion, whether one is a member of the LGBTIQA+ community, comes from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, lives with a disability or has caring responsibilities. The work we do for the Australian public is more robust when everyone can be their best selves and where their personal experiences and insights are valued and harnessed.

Sadly, LGBTIQA+ people continue to experience higher levels of stigma and discrimination than the general population, and are more likely to develop mental ill-health and self-harming behaviours as a result. One of the great privileges of working in an organisation like the Department of Social Services is that each of us can play a role in making work a safe place for people whose experiences outside the workplace may not be safe or welcoming.

The DSS Pride Committee's Action Plan for 2022-2025 demonstrates some of the tangible efforts we as an organisation are committed to undertaking to foster a safe and inclusive space in the department for LGBTIQA+ colleagues and visitors. We look forward to supporting the Committee in this valuable work.

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area, with two smaller black rectangular redaction boxes positioned below it on the left and right sides.

DSS Pride Champions

Pride Action Plan 2022-2025

Inclusion & Support	
Action 1.	Promote LGBTIQA+ days of significance and events.
Action 2.	Review HR policies to identify areas to support alignment with Australian best practice for inclusion.
Action 3.	Organise a LGBTIQA+ specific liaison person within the department and support the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider and Harassment Contact Officer provide LGBTIQA+ inclusive support.
Action 4.	Develop a mentoring program to support our LGBTIQA+ workforce.
Visibility	
Action 5.	Promote DSS as an LGBTIQA+ inclusive workplace both internally and externally.
Action 6.	Promote use of LGBTIQA+ supportive signature blocks to support visibility within the workplace.
Action 7.	Seek expressions of interest for Pride Committee members from states and territories outside of the ACT, to support the DSS Pride Network across Australia.
Action 8.	Recognise and celebrate staff that support LGBTIQA+ inclusion.
Action 9.	Actively support DSS Pride Champions to advocate for LGBTIQA+ interests.
Action 10.	Raise awareness of the ability for LGBTIQA+ staff to voluntarily self-identify in the DSS ESSentials database, allowing the department to analyse data and improve LGBTIQA+ initiatives.
Action 11.	Increase visibility of LGBTIQA+ women.
Engagement	
Action 12.	Engage with staff not in the Pride Network to promote LGBTIQA+ Awareness.
Action 13.	Collaborate with other diversity committees within the department.
Capability	
Action 14.	Promote the importance of LGBTIQA+ Allies within the department and highlight what they can do to support the LGBTIQA+ community.
Action 15.	Make digital resources available to employees focussing on LGBTIQA+ workplace inclusion.
Action 16.	Revise the DSS Pride Committee governance structure to support the efficiency and sustainability of the Committee and Network.
Action 17.	Engage with external stakeholders with expertise in LGBTIQA+ matters to provide targeted training on LGBTIQA+ inclusion and awareness and seek SES advocacy and support (top-down approach) to increase take-up of training across the department.
Action 18.	Provide advice to colleagues to support appropriate LGBTIQA+ inclusion in the development of programs and policies.



AWEI Evidence for Question 15 – HR/Diversity Professional Accountabilities

There are many instances when a focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion shifts with a change of staff. Formally building KPI's into roles that contribute to LGBTQ+ inclusion ensures a commitment to making the work accountable and in focus.

DSS need to provide evidence of documented accountabilities (either in a job description, an objectives statement, or plan of work) for the following roles

- HR/Diversity professional (2 points)
- Executive Sponsor (2 points)
- Network Leader (2 Points)
- Internally communicated LGBTQ+ Advisory service (2 points)

Evidence - Part 2 – Executive Sponsor

Screen shots of role of the intranet content identifying the Pride Committee Champions (Executive Sponsors) and includes a statement of accountabilities.

The screenshot shows the STAFFnet intranet page for 'Diversity champions and advisers'. The page has a dark blue header with navigation links: STAFFnet, MyProfile, Phonebook, and Search. Below the header, the page title 'Diversity champions and advisers' is displayed. A sidebar on the left contains a menu with links: Home, About DSS, Corporate services, and People. Under 'People', there are links for Committees, networks and forums; Diversity and inclusion; Recruiting, starting and leaving; Learning and development; and Leader resources. The main content area features a section titled 'On this page' with links to 'Champions and advisers', 'Committees and networks', 'Contacts', and 'Related pages'. Below this, a paragraph states: 'The department appoints champions and advisers to provide leadership, support, and advice on key issues impacting their appointed diversity group and to promote the values of their committees, networks and relevant staff.' Another paragraph follows: 'Diversity champions and advisers play a vital role in fostering an inclusive workplace and growing the diversity of the department, ensuring the department can better reflect and support the diverse Australian community.'

List of our champions

Champions and advisers

Let's meet our champions and advisers.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Committee

- Champion: [REDACTED] Group Manager, [REDACTED]
- Adviser: [REDACTED] Branch Manager, [REDACTED]

Disability and Carers Committee

- Champion: [REDACTED] Deputy Secretary, [REDACTED]
- Adviser: [REDACTED] Group Manager, [REDACTED]

Gender Equality Committee

- Co-Champion: [REDACTED] Group Manager, [REDACTED]
- Co-Champion: [REDACTED] Group Manager, [REDACTED]

National Indigenous Committee

- Champion: [REDACTED] Chief Operating Officer
- Adviser: [REDACTED] Branch Manager, [REDACTED]

Pride Committee

- Co-Champion: [REDACTED] Group Manager, [REDACTED]
- Co-Champion: [REDACTED] Chief Information Officer

And following on the same intranet page is the statement about the champion role:

The role of a champion is to:

- advocate on behalf of the diversity group on matters of departmental and Australian Public Service (APS) wide importance
- empower employees to raise substantive and systemic issues for consideration
- pilot and contribute to solutions to provide equitable employment opportunities and supports for employees
- promote practices that contribute to an inclusive workplace
- raise awareness of days of significance and issues impacting diverse groups
- encourage all staff to increase their knowledge and awareness of diverse groups.

Excerpt from the Pride Committee Governance Document (page 7) further clarifying the roles of the Champion:

Pride Champion

31. The DSS Pride Champion will be an SES level staff member appointed by the Secretary.
32. The DSS Pride Champion should have a sound knowledge and understanding of the workplace and workforce issues that impact upon LGBTIQ+ staff.
33. The DSS Pride Champion will:
 - a. Attend meetings of the Committee to provide strategic advice to Committee members.
 - b. Receive and action feedback from the Pride Committee on identified workplace and workforce issues as well as updates on the ongoing work of the Committee.
 - c. Lead and support other SES to implement the Department's inclusive workplace policies and other initiatives driven by the Committee.
 - d. Contribute to internal Committee affairs as outlined in these Terms of Reference.

Excerpt from Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan Role Accountabilities, page 3:

Diversity Champions Advisory / Enabler

Diversity Champions are the primary senior officers championing diversity and are expected to demonstrate leadership in all aspects of diversity and inclusion.

They are responsible for advocating for their group and advising their diversity committee and its members.

They influence change and culture across the department and broader APS and provide visible leadership by promoting workplace inclusion and influencing cultural change.



AWEI Evidence for Question 15 – HR/Diversity Professional Accountabilities

There are many instances when a focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion shifts with a change of staff. Formally building KPI's into roles that contribute to LGBTQ+ inclusion ensures a commitment to making the work accountable and in focus.

DSS need to provide evidence of documented accountabilities (either in a job description, an objectives statement, or plan of work) for the following roles

- HR/Diversity professional (2 points)
- Executive Sponsor (2 points)
- Network Leader (2 Points)
- Internally communicated LGBTQ+ Advisory service (2 points)

Evidence Part 4 – internally communicated LGBTIQ+ Advisory Service

internally communicated LGBTIQ+ Advisory service (formal or informal) with a mandate to support the organisation. See page 3 and 4 of the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan:

▲ Governance and enabling

The tables below outline the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders to ensure the success of the action plan and achievement of the objectives.

Executive Management Group Decision makers	People and Culture Committee Advisory	Diversity Champions Advisory / Enabler
The Executive Management Group for approval and progress of the action plan.	The People and Culture Committee provide guidance and advice. This is achieved primarily through their engagement with the individual diversity committees.	Diversity Champions are the primary senior officers championing diversity and are expected to demonstrate leadership in all aspects of diversity and inclusion. They are responsible for advocating for their group and advising their diversity committee and its members. They influence change and culture across the department and broader APS and provide visible leadership by promoting workplace inclusion and influencing cultural change.
Diversity Advisors Advisory / Enabler	People Services Branch Implementer / Enabler	Diversity Committees and Networks Advocates / Enabler
Diversity advisors are senior leaders appointed to each committee. They are responsible for advising and supporting committee-led initiatives including when engaging with senior committees and champions.	People Services Branch leads the implementation of the action plan. The branch manages the department's diversity and inclusion initiatives, including supporting the Diversity Champions, Senior Executive Services (SES) Advisors, and diversity committees and networks. The branch maintains memberships and relationships with relevant external organisations and peak bodies in the diversity and inclusion space.	Committees and Networks drive diversity initiatives and engagement within the department, and advocate on <u>employees</u> behalf to SES and executive committees. Committees develop key action plans to support the goals of the action plan. People Services Branch will support the committees in the development and implementation of their respective key action plans.
Managers and all employees Enabler		
All employees and managers are responsible for ensuring they understand and promote diversity and inclusion efforts in the workplace. This involves actively growing their cultural capability, demonstrating inclusivity, displaying respectful behaviours and actively supporting the implementation of relevant actions and initiatives.		

Extract from page 1 of the Pride Committee Governance Document outlining the objectives of the committee:

Objectives

7. The Committee was established to provide strategic advice on workplace and workforce issues affecting staff at the department who identify as LGBTIQ+. The role of the Committee is to represent the interests, perspectives and concerns of LGBTIQ+ staff in the department through:
 - a. Committing to, supporting and leading education and advocacy for change and prevention of discrimination in the workplace;
 - b. Identifying issues that impact on LGBTIQ+ staff;
 - c. Providing quality and timely advice on issues that impact LGBTIQ+ staff;
 - d. Effectively advocating and engaging with senior management and the Executive (when appropriate);
 - e. Supporting the department, the DSS Pride Champion and the Pride SES Advisers to raise the profile of LGBTIQ+ issues within the department;



AWEI Evidence for Question 15 – HR/Diversity Professional Accountabilities

There are many instances when a focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion shifts with a change of staff. Formally building KPI's into roles that contribute to LGBTQ+ inclusion ensures a commitment to making the work accountable and in focus.

DSS need to provide evidence of documented accountabilities (either in a job description, an objectives statement, or plan of work) for the following roles

- HR/Diversity professional (2 points)
- Executive Sponsor (2 points)
- Network Leader (2 Points)
- Internally communicated LGBTQ+ Advisory service (2 points)

Evidence Part 3 – Network leaders

Excerpt from the Pride Committee Governance Document (page 7) further clarifying the roles of the Network leader:

Pride SES Advisors

34. The two DSS Pride SES Advisors will be SES level staff appointed by the Secretary.
35. The DSS Pride SES Advisors should have, or be willing to develop, a sound knowledge and understanding of the workplace and workforce issues that impact upon LGBTIQ+ staff.
36. The DSS Pride SES Advisors will:
 - a. Attend meetings of the Committee to provide strategic advice to Committee members.
 - b. Seek out opportunities for the Committee to influence workplace culture with regard to LGBTIQ+ cultural awareness and sensitivity, including through raising the visibility of LGBTIQ+ people and related issues in the department.



AWEI Evidence for Question 15 – HR/Diversity Professional Accountabilities

There are many instances when a focus on LGBTQ+ inclusion shifts with a change of staff. Formally building KPI's into roles that contribute to LGBTQ+ inclusion ensures a commitment to making the work accountable and in focus.

DSS need to provide evidence of documented accountabilities (either in a job description, an objectives statement, or plan of work) for the following roles

- HR/Diversity professional (2 points)
- Executive Sponsor (2 points)
- Network Leader (2 Points)
- Internally communicated LGBTQ+ Advisory service (2 points)

Evidence – Part 1 – HR/Diversity Professional

Performance development agreement screen shot from the Director, People Safety and Inclusion, People Services Branch (HR Professional and Executive) who is responsible for inclusion outlining their responsibility and accountability:

DELIVERABLES 2

Include your Key Business Deliverables *

Note created on 25.11.2025 (14:01:23) by ()

Page 2 of 7

Australian Government
Department of Social Services

• Responsible for supporting inclusive HR practices to ensure inclusion for all diversity groups including LGBTQIA+, staff with disability, CALD staff and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Measures (refer to Work Level Standards (WLS)) *

Note created on 29.10.2025 (12:50:32) by ()

Implement Inclusion Strategy and drive outcomes

The performance agreement also includes a commitment to ensure training is up to date.

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT 2

Learning & Development *

Note created on 25.11.2025 (14:02:15) by ()

- Keep refreshed on any Diversity and Inclusion training opportunities in LearnHub or relevant courses through external suppliers.



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Pride Action Plan 2022-2025

DSS Pride Committee

Secretary's Foreword

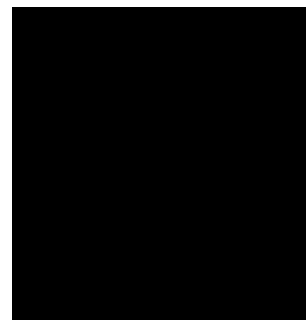
My aim is for the Department of Social Services (the Department) to be an inclusive, safe and respectful workplace that celebrates the diversity and strength of its workforce. The APS values call upon us to continually work toward these goals.

Based on responses to the [2021 APS Employee Census](#), the proportion of employees who openly identify as LGBTIQ+ has increased in recent years. The Census also found that, although the majority of LGBTIQ+ employees felt respected and supported by their agency, a larger proportion perceived discrimination, harassment or bullying in the workplace than those who do not identify as LGBTIQ+. This is a reminder for all of us at the Department that our commitment to diversity and inclusion is an ongoing and important endeavour.

The Pride Action Plan for 2022-2025 (the Action Plan) represents the hard work of the DSS Pride Committee and the Department in paving the way to achieving our commitment to an inclusive workforce. Actions 14 through 18 of the Action Plan remind us that being a visible ally, and providing physical, mental and structural support are powerful ways in which we can foster a safe workplace culture. Simple actions can go a long way to signalling to those around you that DSS is a place that celebrates and values all people.

Most importantly, as allies and as members of the community, it is the responsibility of all staff to call out discrimination, prejudice and anti-LGBTIQ+ sentiment wherever it appears.

I am proud to endorse this Pride Action Plan and invite you all to commit to strong practical ways to realise a safe, inclusive Department for all.



A black rectangular redaction box covering the name of the Secretary.

Secretary, Department of Social Services

DSS Pride Champions

As Pride Champions for the Department of Social Services (the department), we are proud to present the DSS Pride Committee's Action Plan for 2022-2025.

We know from research and personal experience how important it is for people to be able to bring their whole selves to work. By promoting an inclusive workplace that celebrates diversity, staff can feel encouraged to participate in and contribute to the work and life of the department. Our workforce is strengthened by inclusion, whether one is a member of the LGBTIQ+ community, comes from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, lives with a disability or has caring responsibilities. The work we do for the Australian public is more robust when everyone can be their best selves and where their personal experiences and insights are valued and harnessed.

Sadly, LGBTIQ+ people continue to experience higher levels of stigma and discrimination than the general population, and are more likely to develop mental ill-health and self-harming behaviours as a result. One of the great privileges of working in an organisation like the Department of Social Services is that each of us can play a role in making work a safe place for people whose experiences outside the workplace may not be safe or welcoming.

The DSS Pride Committee's Action Plan for 2022-2025 demonstrates some of the tangible efforts we as an organisation are committed to undertaking to foster a safe and inclusive space in the department for LGBTIQ+ colleagues and visitors. We look forward to supporting the Committee in this valuable work.



DSS Pride Champions

Pride Action Plan 2022-2025

Inclusion & Support	
Action 1.	Promote LGBTIQA+ days of significance and events.
Action 2.	Review HR policies to identify areas to support alignment with Australian best practice for inclusion.
Action 3.	Organise a LGBTIQA+ specific liaison person within the department and support the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider and Harassment Contact Officer provide LGBTIQA+ inclusive support.
Action 4.	Develop a mentoring program to support our LGBTIQA+ workforce.
Visibility	
Action 5.	Promote DSS as an LGBTIQA+ inclusive workplace both internally and externally.
Action 6.	Promote use of LGBTIQA+ supportive signature blocks to support visibility within the workplace.
Action 7.	Seek expressions of interest for Pride Committee members from states and territories outside of the ACT, to support the DSS Pride Network across Australia.
Action 8.	Recognise and celebrate staff that support LGBTIQA+ inclusion.
Action 9.	Actively support DSS Pride Champions to advocate for LGBTIQA+ interests.
Action 10.	Raise awareness of the ability for LGBTIQA+ staff to voluntarily self-identify in the DSS ESSentials database, allowing the department to analyse data and improve LGBTIQA+ initiatives.
Action 11.	Increase visibility of LGBTIQA+ women.
Engagement	
Action 12.	Engage with staff not in the Pride Network to promote LGBTIQA+ Awareness.
Action 13.	Collaborate with other diversity committees within the department.
Capability	
Action 14.	Promote the importance of LGBTIQA+ Allies within the department and highlight what they can do to support the LGBTIQA+ community.
Action 15.	Make digital resources available to employees focussing on LGBTIQA+ workplace inclusion.
Action 16.	Revise the DSS Pride Committee governance structure to support the efficiency and sustainability of the Committee and Network.
Action 17.	Engage with external stakeholders with expertise in LGBTIQA+ matters to provide targeted training on LGBTIQA+ inclusion and awareness and seek SES advocacy and support (top-down approach) to increase take-up of training across the department.
Action 18.	Provide advice to colleagues to support appropriate LGBTIQA+ inclusion in the development of programs and policies.



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

DSS Pride Committee Governance Documents

Terms of Reference and Governance Procedures

Abstract

Governance is the system by which an organisation operates, including inbuilt accountability and ethics, risk management, compliance and administration guides. Even for an organisation with minimal legal and compliance risks, it is vital, because good governance facilitates transparency and accountability to members and stakeholders; efficiency in internal operations; solidified organisational culture; and mechanisms for change and future development.

Updated: February 2024



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Terms of Reference

Name

1. Department of Social Services Pride Committee, known as DSS Pride or 'the Committee.'

Interpretation and Amendments to the Terms of Reference

2. This document constitutes the Terms of Reference and Operating Procedures for the Committee.
3. The Terms of Reference will take effect through:
 - a. Agreement of the Committee;
 - b. Endorsement from the Pride Champion;
 - c. Approval from the People & Culture Committee.
4. The Terms of Reference must be available to view on the DSS Pride STAFFnet Page.

Mission Statements & Objectives

Mission Statement

5. Our mission is for all Department of Social Services (the department) employees to be valued for their differences, for all policy and programs created by the department to be inclusive of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and Asexual (LGBTIQA+) people in Australia, and for the department to lead the APS in LGBTIQA+ social policy.
6. While departmental documentation may refer specifically to "LGBTIQA+" staff, the Committee notes all people of diverse genders and sexualities who are not specifically identified in the LGBTIQA+ acronym.

Objectives

7. The Committee was established to provide strategic advice on workplace and workforce issues affecting staff at the department who identify as LGBTIQA+. The role of the Committee is to represent the interests, perspectives and concerns of LGBTIQA+ staff in the department through:
 - a. Committing to, supporting and leading education and advocacy for change and prevention of discrimination in the workplace;
 - b. Identifying issues that impact on LGBTIQA+ staff;
 - c. Providing quality and timely advice on issues that impact LGBTIQA+ staff;
 - d. Effectively advocating and engaging with senior management and the Executive (when appropriate);
 - e. Supporting the department, the DSS Pride Champion and the Pride SES Advisers to raise the profile of LGBTIQA+ issues within the department;

- f. Reducing the stigma and addressing the myths and stereotypes relating to LGBTIQ+ staff;
- g. Collaborating with other diversity committees and People Services Branch to ensure the department becomes and remains an inclusive and safe workplace for all;
- h. Providing referrals to external experts to assist with policy advice, particularly for policies affecting clients of the department, as appropriate; and
- i. Supporting staff in the workplace appropriately, where possible, relating to LGBTIQ+ issues.

Darlington Statement

- 8. The Committee affirms the 2017 Darlington Statement (the Darlington Statement), which acknowledges the unique challenges of people who are intersex. The Committee supports the intersex human rights movement and will ensure that any Committee advice on matters concerning the intersex community accurately reflects the Darlington Statement and other positions advanced by organisations led by intersex people. Where a position on a matter is not clear from the Darlington Statement or other such documents, the Committee commits to consulting with intersex community groups (on the principle of “nothing about us, without us”).

Association with the Department of Social Services

- 9. The Department is committed to creating a diverse and socially inclusive work environment that reflects the broader Australian community, and highlights the LGBTIQ+ or ‘Rainbow’ community as being a key area of focus.
- 10. The Committee supports the implementation of the Department’s diversity and inclusion agenda.
- 11. The Department will support the Committee by:
 - a. Allowing members reasonable time away from their normal duties to prepare for and participate in meetings;
 - b. Reflecting Committee-related work in members’ individual performance management agreements;
 - c. Providing authority to the Committee to deliver on their action plans;
 - d. Promoting the staff Network via intranet and email communications;
 - e. Allowing reasonable time for consultation where advice has been sought;
 - f. Providing resources for meetings and Committee business;
 - g. Funding official travel, including travel allowance, to attend Committee face-to-face meetings;
 - h. Supporting the Committee to be involved in and to host events that promote LGBTIQ+ inclusion;

- i. Providing adequate support for the Committee (including resourcing and financial arrangements) to deliver their action plans and hold events such as Wear it Purple Day and other events annually;
- j. Creating an environment of diversity and inclusion best practice through providing ongoing and accessible opportunities for staff to undertake cultural capability training focussed on the LGBTIQ+ community; and
- k. Enabling other departmental areas to be responsive to Pride Committee requests and input.

Governance Procedures

Interpretation and Amendments to the Governance Procedures

1. This document constitutes the Governance Procedures for the Committee.
2. The Governance Procedures will take effect through:
 - a. Agreement of the Committee;
 - b. Endorsement from the Pride Champion;
 - c. Approval from the People & Culture Committee.
3. The Governance Procedures may be updated as required by the Committee but will only take effect as written in item 2 above.
4. The Governance Procedures should be reviewed and affirmed by the Committee on an annual basis led by the Co-Chairs.
5. The Governance Procedures are to be read with the Terms of Reference. If the Terms of Reference contradict the Governance Procedures, the Terms of Reference prevail.
6. The Governance Procedures must be available to view on the DSS Pride STAFFnet Page.

Pride Network Membership

7. The Pride Network is an informal body made up of Departmental employees who wish to engage with the Committee on matters affecting the LGBTIQA+ community.
8. Departmental employees may request to join via emailing s 22 [REDACTED] or the Diversity & Inclusion team at s 22 [REDACTED]
9. There is no limit on the number of Departmental employees that may join the Pride Network.
10. Members of the Pride Network must align with the values outlined in the Committee's Mission Statement and Objectives in the Terms of Reference.
11. The Committee, including ex officio members, must:
 - a. Deliver regular updates to the Network on the activities of the Committee;
 - b. Pass on information about events and activities which might be of interest to the Network; and
 - c. Appropriately consult the Network when engaging in activities that affect the Network.
12. The Committee may consult the Network for guidance on internal Committee matters, but this will be at the discretion of the Co-Chairs.

Committee

Functions and powers of the Committee

13. The Committee reports to People & Culture Committee in an advisory capacity.
14. The Committee does not have specific powers within the department outside of providing advice where appropriate or liaising with experts such as Pride in Diversity.

Membership, eligibility and duties of the Committee

15. Committee membership will comprise of no more than twenty formal members.
16. If there are limited spots available, State and Territory recruits will take preference over National Office staff where there is not already a representative in that State/Territory.
17. People who identify as LGBTIQ+ will be encouraged to join but it is not a prerequisite of membership. Allies are valued equally to members of the LGBTIQ+ community.
18. General duties of all Committee members are as follows:
 - a. All Committee members must either attend, or send written apologies for all official meetings;
 - b. Committee members agree to commit up to 10 hours per month to Committee work, where endorsed by the members' supervisors;
 - c. Committee members must volunteer to work on a project or priority area of the Committee.

Terms of office

19. Committee members' terms of office are at the discretion of the Co-Chairs and agreement of the Committee member.

Appointment of the Committee

20. The Co-Chairs are responsible for appointing Committee members, in consultation with the DSS Pride Champion or SES Advisors.
21. Vacant positions must be advertised through an expression of interest (EOI) process to all departmental staff at least once a year.
22. Departmental staff may express interest in joining the Committee outside of a formal EOI process.

Committee Positions

Composition of the Committee

23. The Committee will comprise of:
 - a. Co-Chairs x2;
 - b. Policy & Programs Portfolio Lead x1;

- c. Communications & Events Portfolio Lead x1; and
 - d. General Committee Members numbering up to sixteen (x16).
24. Ex Officio Members of the Committee will include:
- a. Pride Champion x1
 - b. Pride SES Advisors x2
 - c. Diversity & Inclusion Representative x1

Co-Chairs

Roles and Responsibilities

25. The Committee will include two Co-Chairs. Where possible, the Co-chairs should be of differing gender identities.
26. The duties of the Co-Chairs are as follows;
- a. Managing the conduct of meetings;
 - b. Maintaining the Committee's Decision Register.
 - c. Ensuring that all Committee members are given the opportunity to contribute to, and comment on, significant issues;
 - d. Ensuring the Committee is working within the Terms of Reference and Governance Procedures;
 - e. Leading an annual review of the Governance Procedures;
 - f. Maintaining the DSS Pride page on STAFFnet;
 - g. Acting as spokespersons for the Committee both internally and to external stakeholders;
 - h. Representing the DSS Pride Committee on the Workplace Consultative Forum; and
 - i. Co-Chairs will provide updates and identify issues to the Branch Manager of People Services Branch as required.

Appointment, Removal and Term of Office

27. The Pride Champion is responsible for conducting the nomination process as follows:
- a. Nominations for vacant Co-Chair positions will be sought from within the Committee;
 - b. Nominations must be endorsed by the Pride Champion;
 - c. Where the number of nominations exceed the number of vacant positions, the Pride Champion may conduct an election process.
 - i. The election may take place at a Committee Meeting with quorum;
 - ii. Nominees may choose to speak for no longer than two minutes to support their nomination at the meeting;
 - iii. The Pride Champion may choose to conduct the vote by preferential ballot or upfront by raising of hands at the meeting;
 - iv. Nominees are permitted to vote and submit preferences.

28. The Co-Chairs will be appointed by the DSS Pride Champion for a period of two years, unless the position is resigned or the Co-Chair is otherwise removed from the Committee.
29. Co-Chairs may be re-appointed at the end of their two-year term with the endorsement of the Pride Champion.
30. Where a Co-Chair is on leave for a period of more than three weeks, the DSS Pride Champion may appoint another Committee member to act as Co-Chair for the duration of the leave.
 - a. Committee members leading on projects or priorities within the Committee should be considered preferentially for the position of Acting Co-Chair;
 - b. If those Committee members refuse the role, the Acting Co-Chair may be appointed from amongst the general Committee members.

Pride Champion

31. The DSS Pride Champion will be an SES level staff member appointed by the Secretary.
32. The DSS Pride Champion should have a sound knowledge and understanding of the workplace and workforce issues that impact upon LGBTIQ+ staff.
33. The DSS Pride Champion will:
 - a. Attend meetings of the Committee to provide strategic advice to Committee members.
 - b. Receive and action feedback from the Pride Committee on identified workplace and workforce issues as well as updates on the ongoing work of the Committee.
 - c. Lead and support other SES to implement the Department's inclusive workplace policies and other initiatives driven by the Committee.
 - d. Contribute to internal Committee affairs as outlined in these Terms of Reference.

Pride SES Advisors

34. The two DSS Pride SES Advisors will be SES level staff appointed by the Secretary.
35. The DSS Pride SES Advisors should have, or be willing to develop, a sound knowledge and understanding of the workplace and workforce issues that impact upon LGBTIQ+ staff.
36. The DSS Pride SES Advisors will:
 - a. Attend meetings of the Committee to provide strategic advice to Committee members.
 - b. Seek out opportunities for the Committee to influence workplace culture with regard to LGBTIQ+ cultural awareness and sensitivity, including through raising the visibility of LGBTIQ+ people and related issues in the department.

- c. Challenge unacceptable behaviours, and escalate issues where appropriate to the Champion and appropriate SES.
- d. Perform any duties devolved from the Pride Champion as determined by through discussion with the Champion, Co-Chairs and other SES Advisor, such as endorsement of new Committee members.

Committee Portfolios

Portfolio Structure

37. The Committee contains two portfolios with tasks as outlined below:

- a. Policy and Strategy
 - i. Writing the Australian Workplace Equality Index Submission;
 - ii. Annual refresh of the policy paper;
 - iii. Reviewing the DSS Pride Action Plan.
- b. Events and Communications
 - i. Handling logistics for annual events held in conjunction with the Department;
 - ii. Creating material for events organised by the Committee;
 - iii. Creating and distributing the quarterly DSS Pride Newsletter;
 - iv. Responding to additional requests around STAFFnet Articles and the STAFFnet Page to support the Committee's Action Plan;
 - v. Arranging education and training options for the department, including training such as 'Ally Training' for Senior Executive Staff, at the direction of the Committee.

38. General Committee Members will be allocated to portfolios by nomination by the member themselves.

- a. All Committee Members must belong to at least one portfolio.
- b. Committee Members may belong to both portfolios, at the discretion of the individual and Co-Chairs.

Project Leads

39. Project and priority leads will be selected by nomination. An election will be conducted where more than one Committee member nominates for a single position.

- a. The Co-Chairs are responsible for conducting the election process, which may be either by raising of hands during a meeting, or by anonymous preferential ballot.

40. Project and priority leads will be responsible for:

- a. Actions agreed to by the Committee through the Action Plan and through regular Committee meetings;
- b. Managing and completing the work assigned to the portfolio by the Action Plan and Committee;
- c. Engaging with relevant stakeholders internally and externally to meet deliverables; and

- d. Acting as leads for bodies of work undertaken by the Committee.
- 41. Project and priority leads will remain in their positions for a default of twelve months, but this may be extended at the discretionary agreement between the project and priority leads and Co-Chairs.

Leaves of Absence, Removal and Resignation

Leave of Absence

- 42. Committee Members may be granted a temporary leave of absence from the Committee for a period up to three months, subject to the following:
 - a. A request for a leave of absence must be made in writing to the Co-Chairs;
 - b. The Co-Chairs must approve the leave of absence, and may consult the rest of the Committee and the Pride Champion;
- 43. A Leave of Absence does not render a position on the Committee vacant unless the leave of absence period exceeds three months.
- 44. If the member requesting the leave of absence holds the position of Co-Chair, or is a project or priority lead, then an existing Committee member may temporarily fill the position by appointment by the Pride Champion.

Resignation

- 45. Committee members may resign in writing to the Co-Chairs at any time or for any reason, including:
 - a. Personal;
 - b. Change in work-related capacity;
 - c. Planned resignation from the Department.
- 46. The Co-Chairs must notify the DSS Pride Champion, SES Advisors and the rest of the Committee of the resignation.
- 47. Resignation is effective from the date stated on the written resignation:
 - a. If no date is specified, Co-Chairs may interpret the resignation as being the date in which the resignation was received from the Committee Member
 - b. The Co-Chairs may reach out to the Committee Member to confirm an effective date.

Removal of Committee Members

- 48. Committee Members may be removed from the Committee in the following scenarios:
 - a. If they fail to attend two or more formal Committee meetings in a row, without apologies;
 - b. If they fail to uphold the values outlined in the Terms of Reference;
 - c. If they resign from the department; or
 - d. Otherwise fail to perform their duties as outlined in item 18.

49. Actual removal is at the discretion of the Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs may decide to approach the Committee Member for discussion prior to removal.

Committee meetings

Meetings and Quorum

50. Meetings will be called by the Co-Chairs and held approximately every quarter or as required;
51. Secretariat for Committee Meetings is provided by the Diversity and Inclusion team;
52. Quorum for Committee Meetings can be reached by attendance of:
- a. One-third of the existing Committee members (as at the time of the meeting) and at least one DSS Pride Champion or SES Advisor; or
 - b. Half of the existing Committee members (as at the time of the meeting).

Decisions of the Committee

53. Decisions of the Committee will be reached by vote either:
- a. During meetings, or
 - b. Circular Motion out of session;
54. Any Committee Member can move that a decision be put to vote;
55. All motions must be seconded by a Committee Member;
56. Committee Members may abstain from voting;
57. Motions will be considered 'passed' by simple majority:
- a. For votes during meetings, this will be counted from those in attendance;
 - b. For votes during meetings where the Pride Champion or an SES Advisor is not present (per item 52 above), decisions must be subsequently endorsed by the Pride Champion;
 - c. For circular motions, this will be counted from the total number of Committee Members.
58. The Co-Chairs are responsible for administering and counting the votes.
59. The Co-Chairs will record all decisions in a Decision Register.
60. The Decision Register must be accessible to all Committee Members for a minimum period of two years.

Financial and Secretariat

Budget

61. Funding for the Committee's activities is provided by the department through the People Services Branch in the Corporate Group.
62. The Committee's proposed budget is decided annually by the Co-Chairs in conjunction with the Pride Champion, SES Advisors and Committee at the Committee's Planning Day.

63. The proposed budget is provided to the Diversity and Inclusion team (within People Services Branch) for endorsement.

64. Actual spending is approved by Diversity and Inclusion on an ad-hoc basis.

Secretariat

65. Within People Services Branch, the Diversity and Inclusion section is responsible for providing secretariat support to the Committee, including:

- a. Booking meeting rooms;
- b. Securing video and teleconference call numbers;
- c. Ensuring all reasonable adjustment requirements are met;
- d. Maintaining email distribution lists;
- e. Disseminating records of meetings to all staff in the Department via the intranet;
- f. Arranging meetings and associated papers;
- g. Circulating agenda and papers in advance of meetings; and
- h. Other Secretariat support as required.



AWEI Evidence for Question 18 – Ally/Champion Reference Guides

In the 2022 AWEI employee survey, only 31% of the 37,408 respondents considered themselves to be active allies.

When the 67% of respondents who were 'passive supporters' were asked what would influence them to become an active ally, 43% responded "more information on how to be an active ally", and 25% responded "more information on WHY active allies are so important"

DSS need to provide evidence of:

- any ally / Champion Reference Guides available (2 points)
- Employees being able to easily find out about the existence of this guide (1 point)

Evidence – Part 1

These resources are easily locatable on our DSS Pride Committee and LGBTIQA+ intranet pages (screen shots provided). Staff can type in "LGBTIQA+ Ally" to get to these resources.

The screenshot shows the STAFFnet intranet page for the Pride Committee and Pride Network. The page has a dark blue header with the STAFFnet logo and navigation links: STAFFnet, MyProfile, Phonebook, and Search. Below the header, there is a breadcrumb trail: STAFFnet > People > Pride Committee and Pride Network. The main content area is titled 'Pride Committee and Pride Network'. Under the heading 'On this page', there is a list of links: Membership Expression of Interest (EOI), Pride Committee members, Pride Champion, Pride Network, Pride events, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) support, Frequently asked questions, Resources (highlighted with a black box), Contact, and Related pages. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with links: Home, About DSS, Corporate services, and People (expanded). Under 'People', there are links: Committees, networks and forums, Diversity and inclusion, and Recruiting, starting and leaving.

Resources

- [Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) [DOCX]
- [DSS Pride Action Plan](#) [DOCX]
- [Sexual orientation, gender and intersex discrimination](#)  (AHRC)
- [Volunteering in an LGBTIQ organisation](#) [DOCX]
- [Intersex for Allies](#) [PDF]
- [Transgender people and concerns - Factsheet](#) [DOCX]
- [Allyship - Factsheet](#) [DOCX]
- [Pride in Diversity - LGBTIQ Definitions](#) [PDF]
- [Spectrums of gender and sexuality](#) [PDF]
- [The Basics - Sex, Gender and Sexuality](#) [PDF]
- [How to be a Good Ally - Infographic](#) [PDF]
- [Responding to Questions or Opposition](#) [PDF]
- [Pride in Diversity - Lets Talk About Gender](#) [PDF]
- [Pride in Diversity - Managers Guide to LGBTI Workplace Inclusion](#) [PDF]
- [Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender- Attorney-General's Department](#) 

A) Screenshot – Allyship factsheet developed by DSS for staff

Allyship to the LGBTIQA+ community Factsheet

What is allyship?

An 'ally' in the LGBTIQA+ context is a term used to describe someone who is supportive of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and Asexual (LGBTIQA+) people.

An effective ally is not just someone who supports LGBTIQA+ individuals in principle but someone who understands the realities they face—in mental health, healthcare, legal systems, and social interactions.

A core tenet of the Australian way of life and value system is that everyone, regardless of their identity, should have 'a fair go' and be treated with respect. By being an ally, and supporting people at work to live as they are, the Department of Social Services can help achieve its active goals to improve the lives of vulnerable people.

Workforce diversity supported by inclusive practices creates positive outcomes for the people, organisations, and stakeholders we engage with every day. As a community that values equal opportunity for everyone, it is important to actively work towards supporting our families, friends, colleagues, and community members who are LGBTIQA+.

How to be an authentic ally

- **Avoid being a fair-weather friend:** To ally yourself is a verb. Allyship requires conviction, and consistent, informed actions that support LGBTIQA+ individuals and communities.
- **Centre and uplift LGBTIQA+ voices:** Prioritise listening to and amplifying the perspectives of LGBTIQA+ people. Let their lived experiences guide your actions and advocacy efforts.
- **Stay informed:** Regularly consult reputable news sources, reports from government and other credible institutions and even peer-reviewed studies to understand current challenges and progress in LGBTIQA+ rights.

B) - How to be a good Ally infographic



C) What-is-an-Ally factsheet developed by the Pride Committee.

DSS Pride

Staff Network

What is an Ally?

An "ally" is a term used to describe someone who is supportive of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) people. It encompasses non-LGBTQI allies as well as those within the LGBTQI community who support each other e.g. a lesbian who is an ally to the bisexual community.

How to be an Ally

Be honest and informed

It's important to be honest with yourself — acknowledging your feelings and coming to terms with them. And it means being honest with the person who may have come out in your life — acknowledging you aren't an expert, asking them what's important to them, seeking resources to better understand the realities of being an LGBT individual so that you can be truly informed and supportive.

Let your support inform your decisions

It's about working to develop a true understanding of what it means to be LGBT and trying to do your part to help break down the walls of prejudice and discrimination that still exist — for example, speaking up when someone tells a joke that demeans LGBT people.

Don't assume heterosexuality

We tend to assume that everyone we meet is heterosexual even though we know this is not true. Often people hide that they are LGBT until they know it is safe to "come out" in a given situation. Use neutral language when first working with students/clients/customers until you know for certain what the person prefers (for example, the gender of their significant other).

Remember that you are human

Allow yourself to not know everything, to make mistakes, and to occasionally be insensitive.



AWEI Evidence for Question 19 – Confidential Contacts

There are times when a person may want to have a confidential conversation with an LGBTQ+ person or experienced ally

DSS need to provide evidence of clearly identified LGBTQ+ people or allies who can be contacted for a confidential and informal discussion regarding being an LGBTQ+ employee within the organisation (non-HR related) (3 points)

Evidence – Part 1

This evidence is located on our Pride Committee and Network Page in the Frequently asked questions section that is accessible by all staff on our intranet.

The screenshot shows the STAFFnet intranet page for the Pride Committee and Pride Network. The URL in the browser is <https://socialservicesau.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/Pages/people/dss-pride.aspx#a7>. The page has a dark blue header with the STAFFnet logo and a breadcrumb trail: STAFFnet > People > Pride Committee and Pride Network. The main heading is 'Pride Committee and Pride Network'. Below this, there is a section 'On this page' with a list of links. The link 'Frequently asked questions' is highlighted with a black box. Other links in the list include 'Membership Expression of Interest (EOI)', 'Pride Committee members', 'Pride Champion', 'Pride Network', 'Pride events', 'Employee Assistance Program (EAP) support', 'Contact', and 'Related pages'. The sidebar on the left contains a 'People' section with links to 'Committees, networks and forums', 'Diversity and inclusion', and 'Recruiting, starting and leaving'.

What kind of supports/grievance contact points are available for LGBTIQ+ employees?

The department is committed to providing a workplace where everyone is treated with respect and courtesy and all reasonable steps are taken to prevent or eliminate bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment in the workplace is unacceptable and is not tolerated in this department or the Australian Public Service.

The department has a [workplace bullying and harassment policy](#) [DOCX] , which is explicitly applicable regarding diversity and protected personal characteristics, like sexual orientation, intersex status or gender identity. The policy also details the formal and informal complaint process and provides an overview of roles and responsibilities in the event of bullying and harassment.

If you have experienced or witnessed workplace harassment and/or bullying, you can contact a harassment contact officer (HCO). HCOs are departmental employees trained to provide information to other employees in relation to instances of perceived bullying or harassment. See the list of available HCOs.

A list of Pride Committee members including Allies is available on the [DSS Pride page](#). DSS Pride Committee Members can be contacted and are available for confidential conversations.

The [Employees Assistance Program](#) (EAP) is also available for DSS employees and seeks to provide employees and their immediate family members access confidential counselling.

Document release under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)
by the Department of Social Services

Pride Committee members

- [REDACTED] - Co-Chair (she/her) (ACT) [contact for CONFIDENTIAL and informal \(non-HR\), LGBTIQ+ matters.](#)
- [REDACTED] - Co-Chair (she/her) (ACT)
- [REDACTED] - Representative Officer (she/they) (ACT) [contact for CONFIDENTIAL and informal \(non-HR\), LGBTIQ+ matters.](#)



AWEI Evidence for Question 20 – Internal LGBTIQ+ Social Media Stream

Internal LGBTQ+ social media streams or forums provide a valuable mechanism for the sharing LGBTQ+ relevant information.

DSS need to provide evidence of a dedicated internal-facing LGBTQ+ social media stream (3 points)

Evidence – Part 1

This evidence is located on our Pride Committee and Network intranet page advertising the network that is accessible to all staff.

The screenshot shows the STAFFnet intranet page. The breadcrumb trail is: STAFFnet > People > Pride Committee and Pride Network. The page title is 'Pride Committee and Pride Network'. Under the heading 'On this page', there is a list of links: Membership Expression of Interest (EOI), Pride Committee members, Pride Champion, **Pride Network** (highlighted with a red box), Pride events, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) support, Frequently asked questions, Resources, Contact, and Related pages. The left-hand navigation menu includes: Home, About DSS, Corporate services, People (expanded), Committees, networks and forums, Diversity and inclusion, and Recruiting, starting and leaving.

Pride Network

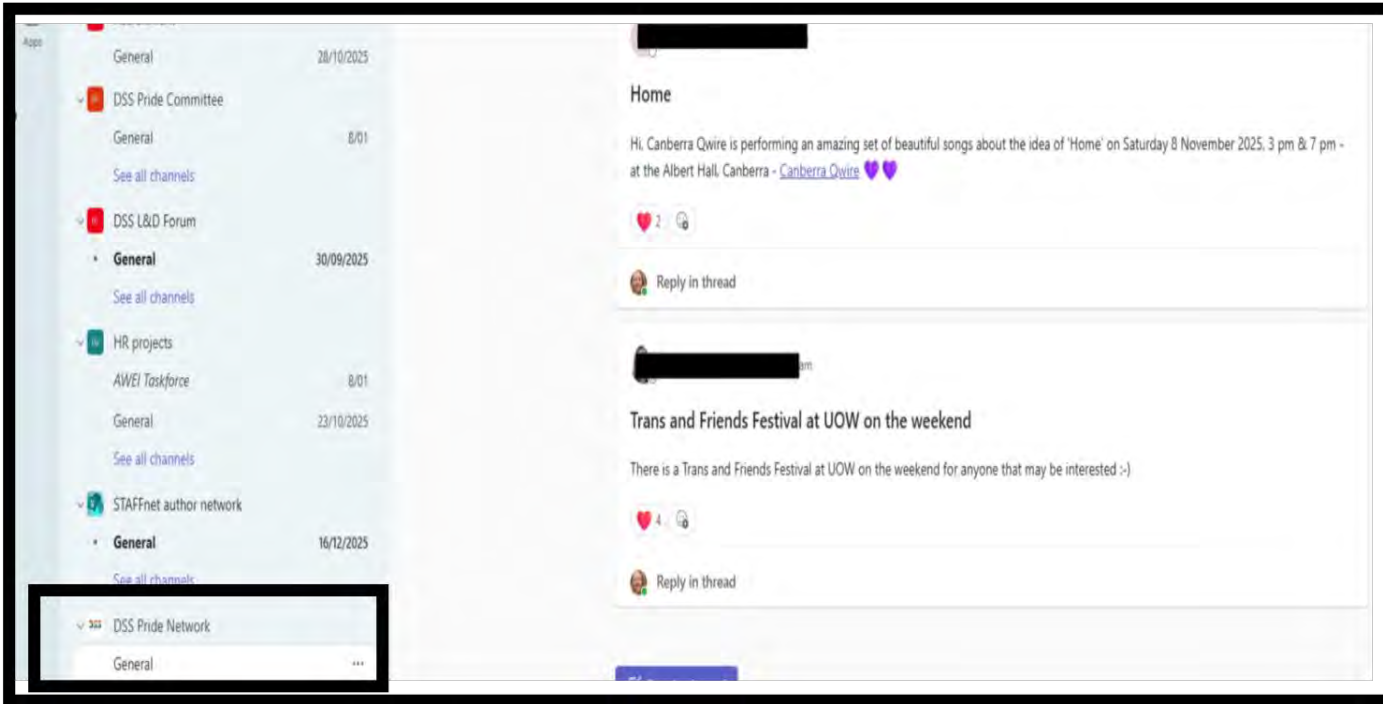
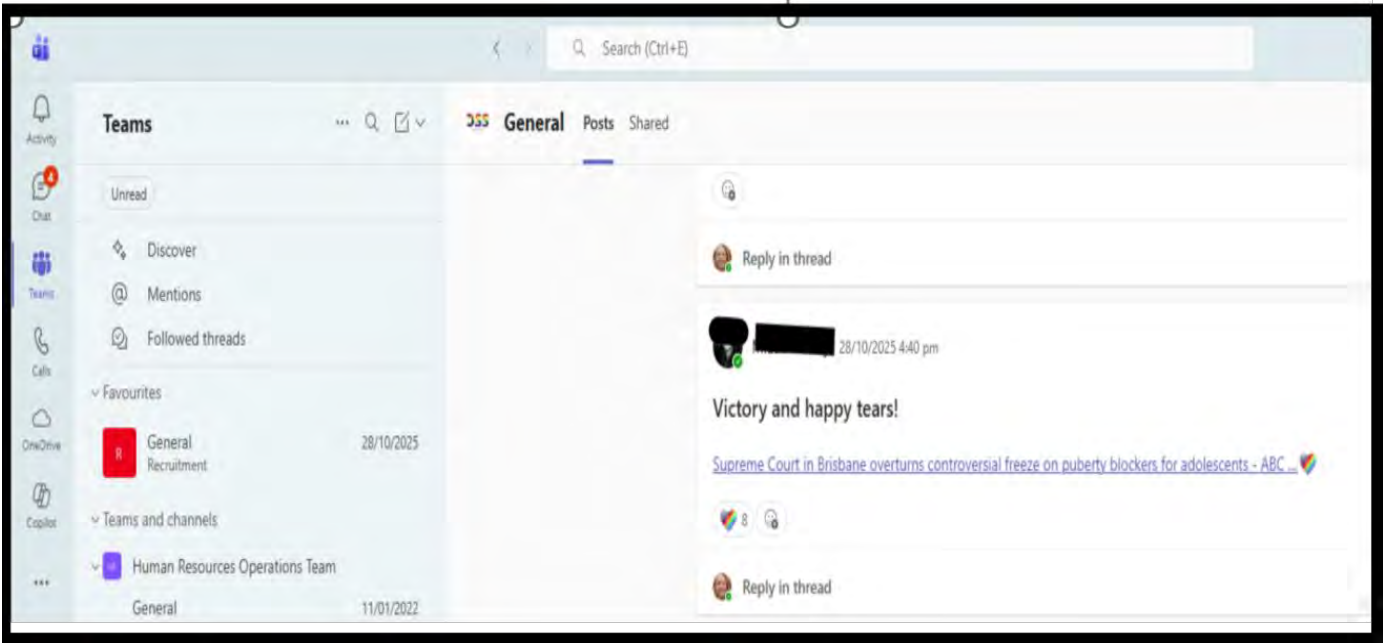
The Pride Network is open to all staff, including allies of LGBTIQ+ staff. Network members receive regular information about issues relevant to gender and sexual orientation.

Membership of the network is confidential.

Email **s 22** to join the network.

Evidence Part 2

Screenshots of our MS Teams Pride Network Channel with de-identified chat history.



Document release under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)
by the Department of Social Services



AWEI Evidence for Question 21

LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Training Availability

LGBTIQA+ inclusion is such a critical measure of an organisation's inclusive culture; training is one of the key areas that can really impact, not only an understanding of why inclusion is important.

DSS need to provide evidence of:

- for outlining training sessions available (3 points)
- communications promoting the training as available to all employees (3 points)
- any actions to increase uptake of training for all employees (2points)

Evidence

a) Screen shots outlining LGBTIQA+ training available. The diversity and inclusion course link takes you to our Learnhub, the DSS learning management system which provides a hub of available inclusion and diversity training modules for all staff to access.

The screenshot shows the STAFFnet website at the URL <https://socialservicesau.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet/Pages/people/LGBTIQ.aspx>. The page features a teal navigation bar with links to STAFFnet, MyProfile, Phonebook, and Search. The main content area is titled 'LGBTIQA+' and includes a section 'On this page' with the following links:

- [Pride Action Plan](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ allies](#)
- [Pride in Diversity](#)
- [LGBTIQA+ learning and development opportunities](#) (highlighted with a black box)
- [Resources](#)
- [Contacts](#)
- [Related pages](#)

A sidebar on the left contains the following links:

- Home
- About DSS
- Corporate services
- People
 - Committees, networks and forums
 - Diversity and inclusion

LGBTIQA+ learning and development opportunities

We provide LGBTIQA+ learning and development opportunities for all staff.

- [Diversity and Inclusion Course](#)

https://learnhub.gov.au/view_program/872

SAP - Essentials STAFFnet Google GPHV - Be Animated m: McMillan Staff Deve... M365 Copilot Home - Senaview STAFFnet-author-us... 2024-25 AWEI Enpl... AWEI Chat | M365 Copilot PDMS Convo Chat | M365 Co

Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Home ▶ Catalogue ▶ Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion

Program: Diversity and Inclusion

Disclaimer

Some content within this program has been developed by LinkedIn Learning. Please note, these courses are an external resource and only intended as guidance. The courses may include content and terminology that is not applicable to the department or staff with disability. Please contact **s 22** to seek formalised disability liaison support if needed.

Overview

This program covers diversity and inclusion content that has been developed or is delivered by various providers.

Learning outcomes

Please refer to individual modules of the program for specific learning outcomes.

Further resources

- The [Diversity and Inclusion STAFFnet page](#) has information on diversity in the department, including Diversity Committees and Diversity Champions.
- The [ExpoPoints Program STAFFnet page](#) has information on the department's cross-cultural learning and professional development framework.

Target audience

All employees.

Cost

Free of charge.

Assistance

- If you require **reasonable adjustments**, please contact **s ??**
- If you require assistance, please contact **s 22**

Developed by: Capability Development team, People Services Branch
Last updated: 1 September 2025 (formatting landing page only)
Published on Learnhub: 7 January 2025

Cultural Capability Hub

pride in diversity IN PROGRESS
Foundations of LGBTQ Inclusion

DSS COMPLETED
Pride Network
LGBTQ+ Awareness: Pride in Diversity

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging for Leaders and Managers

Tips for More Inclusive Language

The department also has mandatory training for all staff, refreshed regularly for diversity and inclusion which offers staff information about the Pride Committee and it's role:

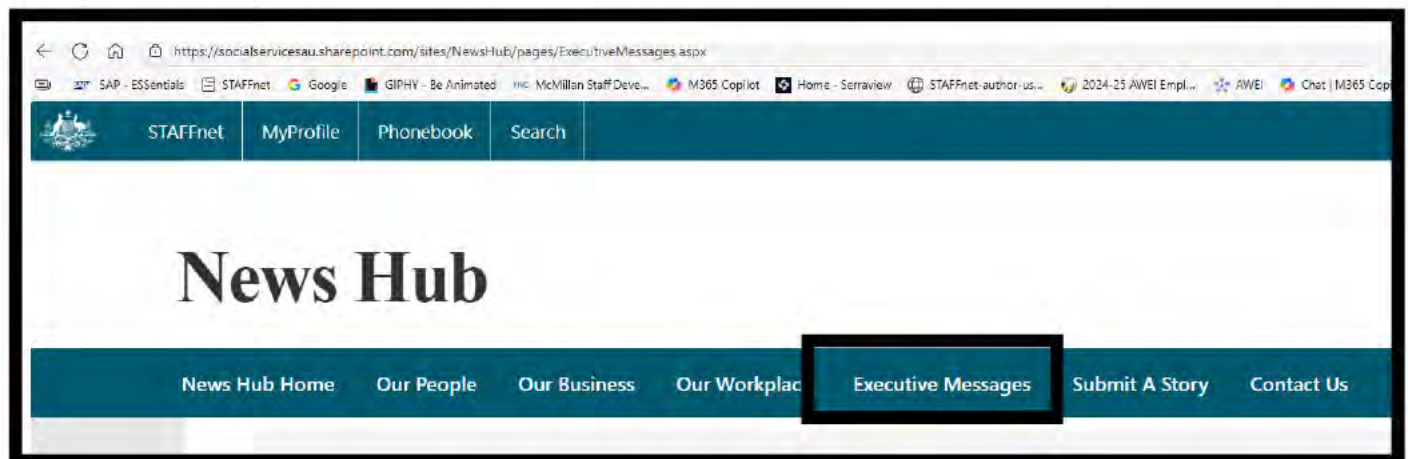
Pride Committee

The role of the [Pride Committee and Network](#) is to represent the perspectives and concerns of employees in the department through:

- working to ensure that the department is safe, inclusive and respectful of all employees regardless of gender or sexual orientation
- effectively advocating and engaging with senior management and the Executive
- advice about recruitment, retention and career development of LGBTIQA+ staff
- guidance and support to LGBTIQA+ staff
- advocacy for the views and perspectives of LGBTIQA+ staff
- supporting the department and Pride Champions to raise the profile of LGBTIQA+ issues within the department.

Evidence

b) Screenshot of an executive message update promoting training (this is sent directly to all DSS employees by email and is searchable on the intranet)



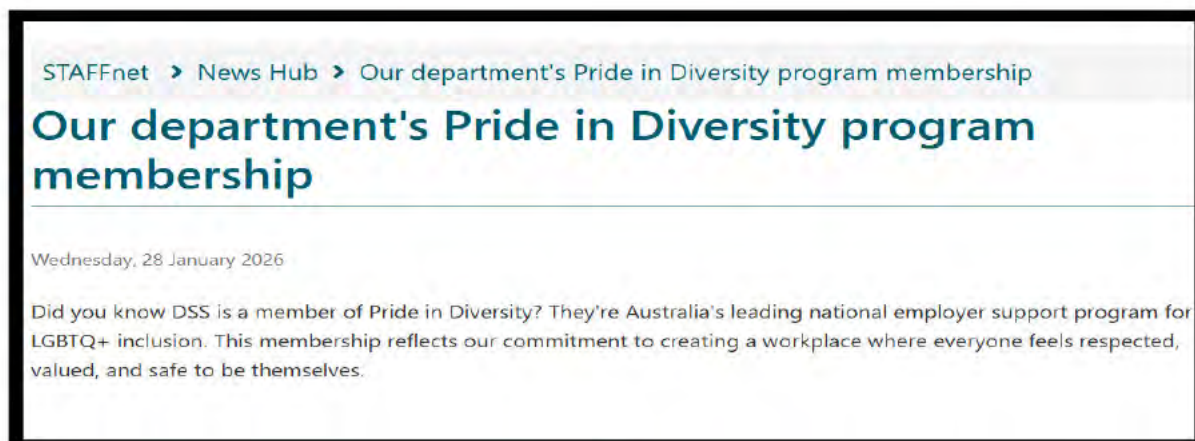
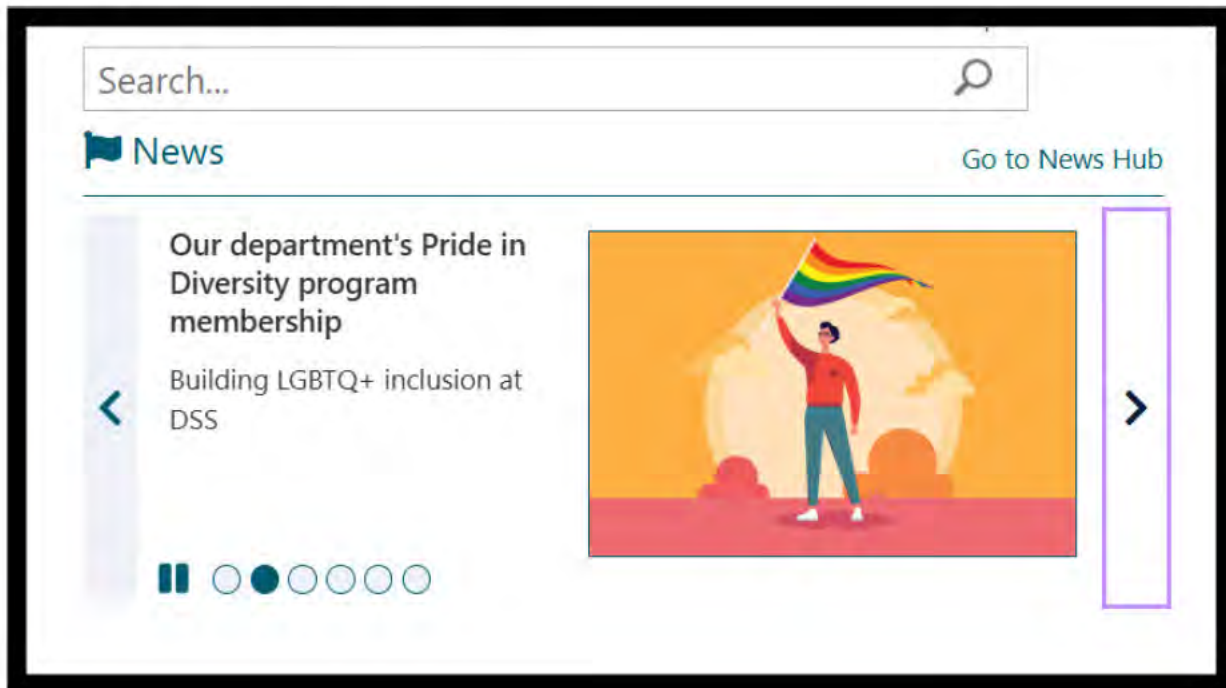
Learning and development opportunities

Diversity and inclusion training

There are a range of diversity and inclusion training opportunities available on [Learnhub](#). You can learn more about how to help build an inclusive and supportive work environment. The [Foundations of LGBTQ Inclusion](#) will help you to become an active ally and understand how to help drive LGBTQ inclusion in the workplace.

Please contact [s 22](#) if you have any questions.

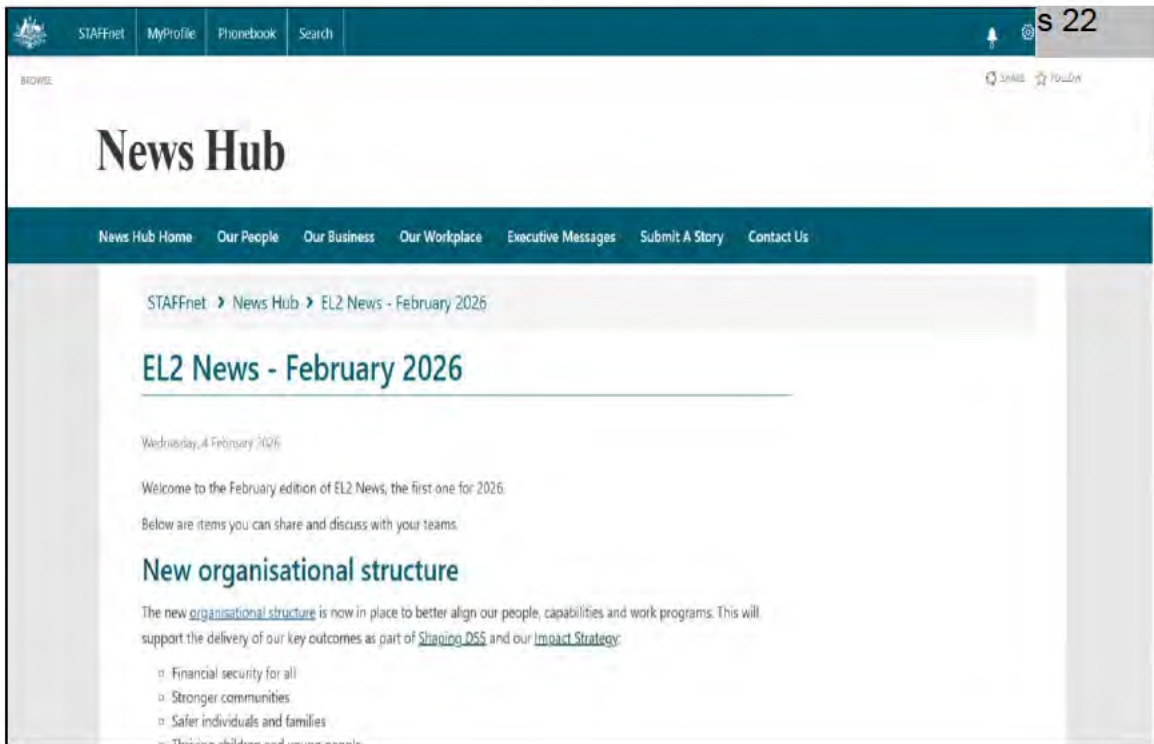
c) Promotion of Pride in Diversity Training on front page (Carousel) of our STAFFnet intranet site (this is visible to all employees)



d) Email from Pride Champion – May 2025 - LGBTIQA+ training communication specifically targeted at EL's and SES.



e) EL2 Newsletter promoting LGBTIQ Training directly to our manager cohort. This is also published to our intranet and is therefore accessible for all staff too.



Learning resources

Our DSS Library colleagues manage the [Leadership & Management iSpace site](#). It has invaluable resources for you and your team covering change management, teamwork, leadership and more.

Evidence Part 3

Any actions to increase uptake of training for all employees.

F) message from the pride champion Nov 2025 regarding Transgender Awareness Week & International Transgender Day of Remembrance 2025. In it he also promotes the Foundations of LGBTQ Inclusion course available on Learnhub. This was emailed to all staff and published on our intranet for all DSS employees to view and access.

STAFFnet > News Hub > A message from the Pride Champion: Transgender Awareness Week & International Transgender Day of Remembrance

A message from the Pride Champion: Transgender Awareness Week & International Transgender Day of Remembrance

Thursday, 13 November 2025

Hi Everyone,

Today is the start of Transgender Awareness Week from 13-19 November leading up to the International Transgender Day of Remembrance on Thursday, 20 November.

The week provides the opportunity for individuals and institutions to increase awareness of trans and gender-diverse communities, the issues they face, and guide us in our allyship to build a safe and supportive world for all. The Transgender Day of Remembrance is a day dedicated to honouring the memory of trans and gender-diverse individuals who lost their lives to transphobic acts of violence and to celebrate the strength of these communities in facing adversity in the pursuit of a future free from transphobia. Trans and gender-diverse people continue to experience violence, discrimination and hurtful commentary that cause harm and contribute to a culture of exclusion. Australia's [National Survey of LGBTIQ+ SB Experiences of Sexual Violence](#) found that 76.3% of trans women had experienced sexual violence in their lifetime.

This week serves as a reminder that our work as public servants can impact the lives of trans and gender-diverse individuals and communities. Our decisions should seek to include all those who need support. And our actions can also help to build a more supportive, safe, and inclusive workplace for our trans and gender-diverse colleagues.

I encourage you to consider wearing the transgender flag colours on 20 November as a symbol of your allyship and to take a moment to consider any knowledge gaps you may have on these issues. To learn more, the Pride Committee have put together the following resource list for you:

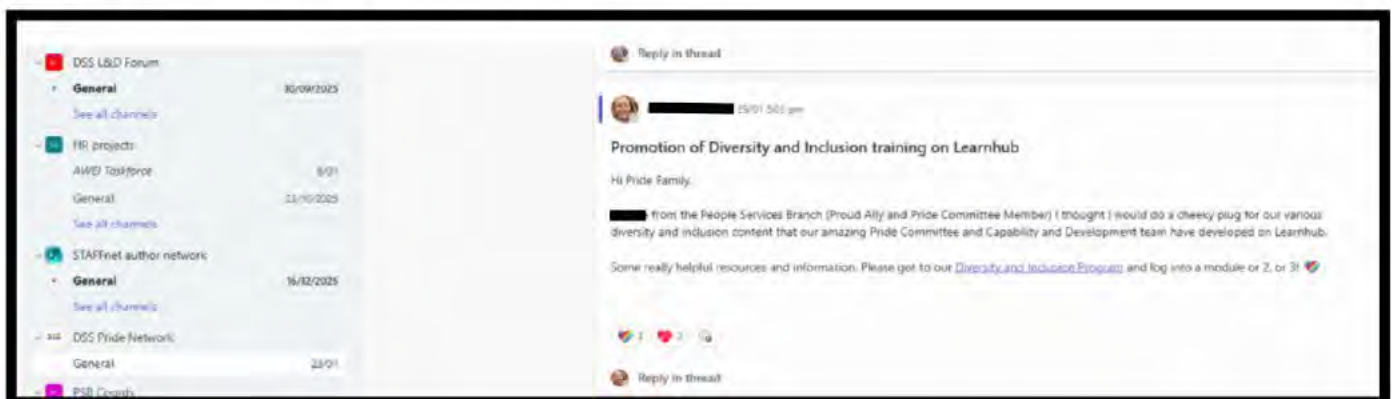
- [Trans Awareness Week](#) – For more information on Transgender Awareness Week, a step-by-step guide to allyship, and link to Trans Gender Victoria's amazing resource library.
- [For Allies | TransHub](#) – TransHub's ally resources for understanding and supporting trans and gender-diverse colleagues, friends, families, children.
- [Foundations of LGBTQ Inclusion](#) – The DSS eLearning module for more generalised training.

You can also learn more by visiting the [Pride Committee](#) and [Pride Network](#) page on STAFFnet, becoming part of our Pride Network, and by reaching out to the Pride Committee at **s 22**

Also, remember you have access to support through the DSS [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) with additional supports for your [mental health and wellbeing](#). And if you know someone outside the department that needs support, they can reach out to [QLife](#).

Regards,

G) Screenshot of chat message from Pride Committee member to Pride network reminding employees of our LGBTQA+ training available.



		Department of Social Services	
AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACE EQUALITY INDEX			
AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACE EQUALITY INDEX - FOUNDATION SUBMISSION (2023-2025)			
HR Policies & Diversity Practice		Score	Index
1	Updated Terminology	2	2
2	LGBTQ+ Inclusivity within Policies and Benefits	2	2
3	New Parent Leave Inclusive of LGBTQ+ Families	3	3
4	International Travel Advice for Employees	3	3
5	LGBTQ+ Inclusive Domestic & Family Violence Policy	4	4
		14	14
LGBTQ+ Bullying, Harassment & Support		Score	Index
6	Resources on LGBTQ+ Inclusive and Negative Language	6	6
7	LGBTQ+-related Grievance Officers	4	4
8	Behavioural Examples of What Constitutes Bullying / Harassment	4	4
		14	14
Inclusion of Trans and Gender Diverse Employees		Score	Index
9	Gender Affirmation Policy and Process Documentation	4	4
10	Dress Codes	2	4
11	Non-Binary Gender Options for Employees	2	4
		8	12
Strategic Focus & Accountability		Score	Index
12	External LGBTQ+ Expertise	3	3
13	LGBTQ+ Inclusion Strategy	3	3
14	External LGBTQ+ Workplace Inclusion Promotion	3	3
15	HR / Diversity Professional Accountabilities	8	8
		17	17
LGBTQ+ Employee Network		Score	Index
16	LGBTQ+ Employee Network	4	4
17	Orientation / On-boarding	3	3
18	Ally / Champion Reference Guides	3	3
19	Confidential Contacts	3	3
20	Internal LGBTQ+ Social Media Stream	2	2
		15	15
Training, Awareness & Professional Development		Score	Index
21	LGBTQ+ Training Availability	8	8
		8	8
Total AWEI Foundation Submission Score		76	80
GENERAL SUBMISSION COMMENTS			
Overall, well done for a very well solid submission, minor suggested areas of improvement - speak with S22 for further support if required.			



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 ACON Health Limited
 414 Elizabeth St.
 Surry Hills Sydney, NSW 2010
 Phone 02 9206 2000

TAX INVOICE

BILL TO:
 Department of Social Services
 71 Athllon Drive
 Greenway, ACT 2900
 ATTN : s 22

INVOICE NO : PID001698
Invoice Date : 30/10/2025
Customer Code : 430002675
P.O. number :

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Pride in Diversity Essential membership Renewal from 10/10/25 to 9/10/26	\$7,158.00

Subtotal	\$7,158.00
GST	\$715.80
Total	\$7,873.80

Remittance Advice

EFT Payment Details

Account Name s 22
 Bank
 BSB
 Account No

Debtor Details

Debtor No 430002675
 Invoice No PID001698
 Invoice Total \$7,873.80

Credit Card: We accept Visa/Mastercard/AMEX. Terms of Payment: 14 days

To make online payment, please visit: <https://prideinclusionprograms.com.au/invoice-payment/>

Please send a copy of remittance advice to ar@acon.org.au

Please refer to our T & C - [Microsoft Word - APIP_TermsConditions 26 August 2020 \(prideinclusionprograms.com.au\)](#)