



Brimbank City Council's Draft LGBTQIA+ Action Plan

2023 - 2027

Acknowledgment of Country

Brimbank City Council respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri and Bunurong People as the Traditional Custodians of this land and pay respect to their Elders, past, present and future. Council recognises the longstanding care Aboriginal people have provided to the land and waters on which the Brimbank municipality sits.

Vision

Brimbank City Council is committed to creating a safe and inclusive community that values ALL people and the diversity they bring through their sexualities, genders, ages, ethnicities, cultures and abilities.

Recognition of our LGBTQIA+ community

Brimbank City Council acknowledges those amongst the lesbian, gay, bisexual+, trans, questioning, intersex and ace+ identifying communities (LGBTQIA+) who have worked to support the improved health and wellbeing of their peers, children, families, friends, and country.

We recognise the communities of which we are a part and we celebrate the extraordinary diversity of people's bodies, ages, genders, sexualities, and relationships that they represent.

Understanding LGBTQIA+

As communities become more comfortable identifying their sexuality, gender identity and sex characteristics, the language and terms used to describe themselves has also shifted.

Language Statement

Brimbank City Council understands certain terms, words and acronyms have changed over time due to the sensitive nature this may have for some cultures and communities as well as the inclusion of other diverse sexual identities.

Council has found the most inclusive, respectful and progressive way to refer to community members who identify as being part of the sexual and gender diverse community, is to use the LGBTQIA+ acronym. This stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex and Ace. The plus sign is an inclusive symbol that refers to a number of other identities that people may use to describe their gender and/or sexuality. (*See glossary in the Additional Resources section of this document*)

Use of Pronouns

Traditionally the most common term to refer to a person's gender has been to use the pronouns He/Him or She/Her. Over time, more gender inclusive terms such as They/Them and Xe/Xer have been welcomed to better describe how people would prefer to be recognised. This encourages respect and allows individuals to affirm their gender identity. (*See pronoun explainer in the Additional Resources section of this document*)

Intersectionality

There are many social identities that a person can use to describe themselves, such as, but not limited to, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, faith, age, disability, socioeconomic and/or residency status. Intersectionality describes how multiple social identities can overlap to create diverse experiences of discrimination and inequity.

The development of the Brimbank LGBTQIA+ Action Plan 2023-2027 supports Council's vision: *A transformed Brimbank that is beautiful, thriving, healthy and connected.* The plan will demonstrate Council's commitments to its Social Justice Charter principles of access, equity, participation and human rights and strive to achieve the aspirations of the LGBTQIA+ community in the municipality

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Executive Summary

Brimbank City Council is a diverse and thriving local government area that prides itself on its commitment to social justice and human rights. Council believes the diversity of people's sexualities, genders, ages, ethnicities, cultures and abilities is a strength in its own right.

Our commitment

Council recognises the long and difficult history faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual+, Transgender, Queer and Questioning, Intersex, Ace+ and other gender and sexual identifying communities (LGBTQIA+) and the continued experience of actual and perceived discrimination and marginalisation. This experience can be associated with economic disadvantage, poorer mental and physical health outcomes, and reduced community engagement and social connection.

Council is committed to creating a safe and inclusive community that values and celebrates diversity in sexuality, gender, age, ethnicity, faith, culture and/or disability. Individuals, like communities have unique nuances and characteristics that through an intersectional lens, Council aims to address systemic injustice and social inequality.

Our approach

Many organisations work to support, connect and uplift members of Brimbank's LGBTQIA+ identifying community, it is therefore important that the role Council plays is well defined and realistic. Based on our initial engagement, we acknowledge four distinctive roles that Council can play.

Advocate – on behalf of the community as an ally, supporter and driver for change

Deliver – take a collaborative approach in delivering programs, services, activities and events with and for the community and ensuring our facilities are safe and welcoming

Partner – find opportunities to work alongside specific and non-specific LGBTQIA+ service providers and our community

Plan – ensuring Council infrastructure, events and activities are responsive and meet the needs of the whole community.

Our plan

This is Brimbank City Council's first LGBTQIA+ Action Plan. It was developed through a series of community consultations, network group discussions and an online survey with staff, allies, LGBTQIA+ family members and service providers.

The collation of this information has identified four key focus areas:

1. Health and Wellbeing
2. Safety and Safe Spaces
3. Inclusion and Empowerment
4. Organisational Leadership and Advocacy

All actions have been developed to align with the four priority areas of the *Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2022-2032* and support the state's vision and plan to *drive equality and inclusion for Victoria's diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual, Trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) communities within all aspects of government work over the next decade.*

The Plan details the role Council can play in this space - Advocate, Facilitate, Plan and Partner. Council can benefit from its extensive networks, meaningful connections to the community and local service providers as well as the ability to foster strong collaborations and relationships. These roles will support all actions listed.

Hello and the kindest of welcomes to anyone happening to be reading this.

My name is Spencer Atlas Morgan and I am a trans identifying man under the use of He/Him pronouns. Not only am I gender diverse but I am also queer, and more specifically I am pansexual, which means my heart holds no preference for gender, but rather falls in love for the sake of falling in love.

The term queer throughout time has meant many different things, and will continue to adapt and blanket immersing terms, as does the LGBTQIA+ community.

The term Queer is never ending, nor is confiding or permanent, and to me it is home. Queer is the expression and the umbrella. It is a safe house and a warm hug and it is simply just what it is; queer. I feel like there is a lot of pressure to know exactly who and what you are, whether you're cisgender and heterosexual, or gay and trans, if you like girls, or guys, or girls who dress like guys, or nonbinary folk, there are millions of terms to express and define yourself, and there's a lot of pressure to find the correct term. Not only is it a lot of pressure, but it seems as soon as you decide you can't change your mind. Before I came out as trans I was a lesbian. Now my entire gender and sexuality expression has changed, and I couldn't be happier. But during that identifying period, trying to figure out who I was, what I was, who I could be, the term Queer suited me best, as it does now. As lovely as it is having a million terms, it's quite lovely knowing you don't need to find such a defined label.

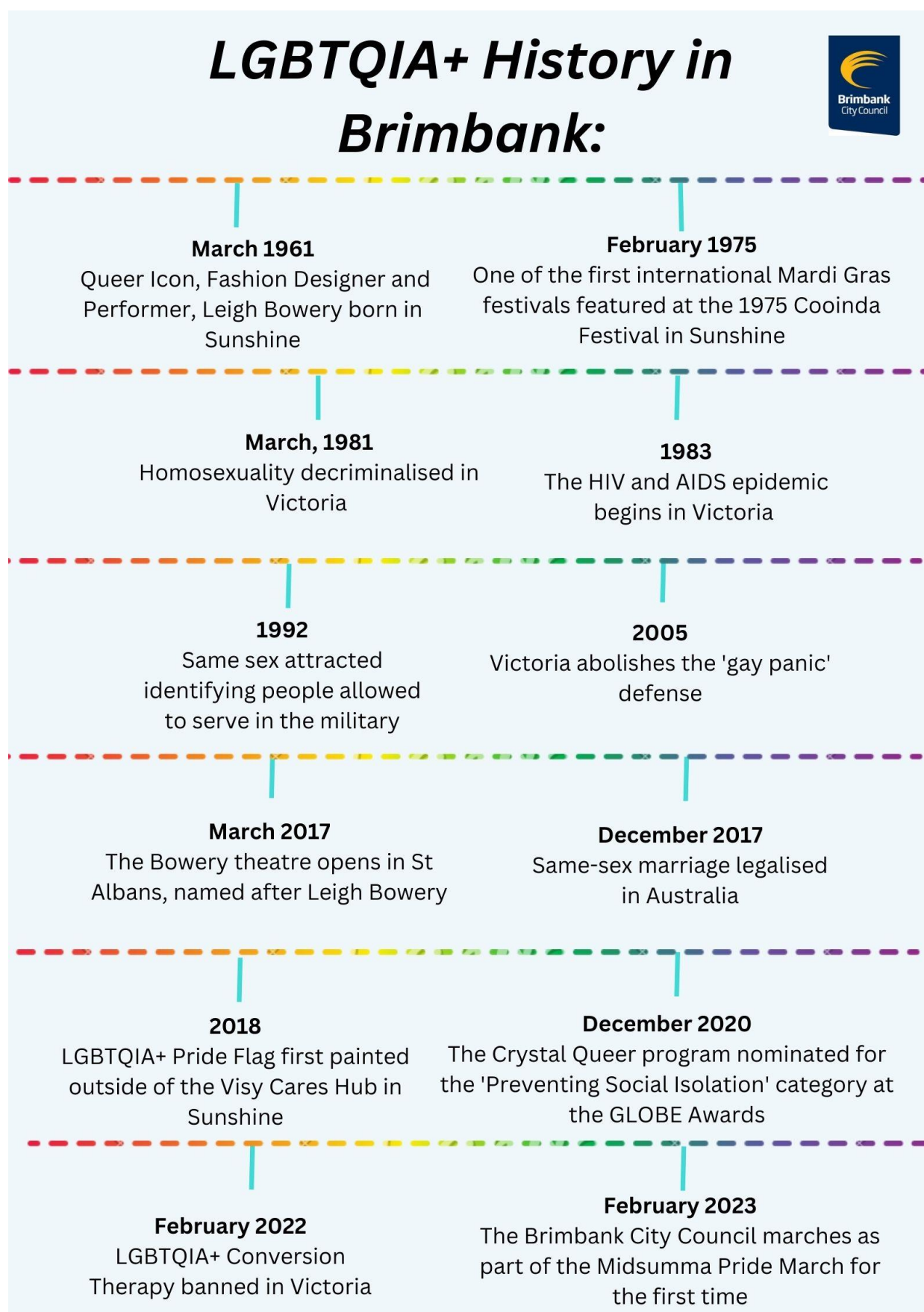
Queer is my identity, and the Queer community is who I stand with and defend and will fight for, because we're all family here, in the Queer community, and we have each other's backs. But with this action plan, I hope that it isn't just us backing each other up and fighting. This action plan is the next steps into finding a safer community, it is the first step in allowing the youth a safer childhood, and it is the opening and understanding that the past is wrong and difficult, was hard and horrible, but our future doesn't need to be. It is the brick thrown during stonewall, and it is the first flag raised in 1978.

This plan to me, is safety.

Safety of expression and pride, safety of children in schools, adults in old age, it is rising our flag high and with pride for the first time but not the last. It is raising awareness that wasn't there before, drawing out the extremes that people overlook, the graphs alone points out statistics of domestic violence and the impact of mental health on those who grow up queer. It's not easy and for the longest time we were fighting alone, but through initiatives like this action plan, these kinds of documents, the olive branch, is going to change the future, for the better of children teens adults and elderly everywhere. It means we're no longer alone, nor are we fighting alone, we have a chance to change the future. And I am so incredibly amazed to not only see it grow, but to have been given the chance to write this quote, as years ago we weren't even allowed to get married.

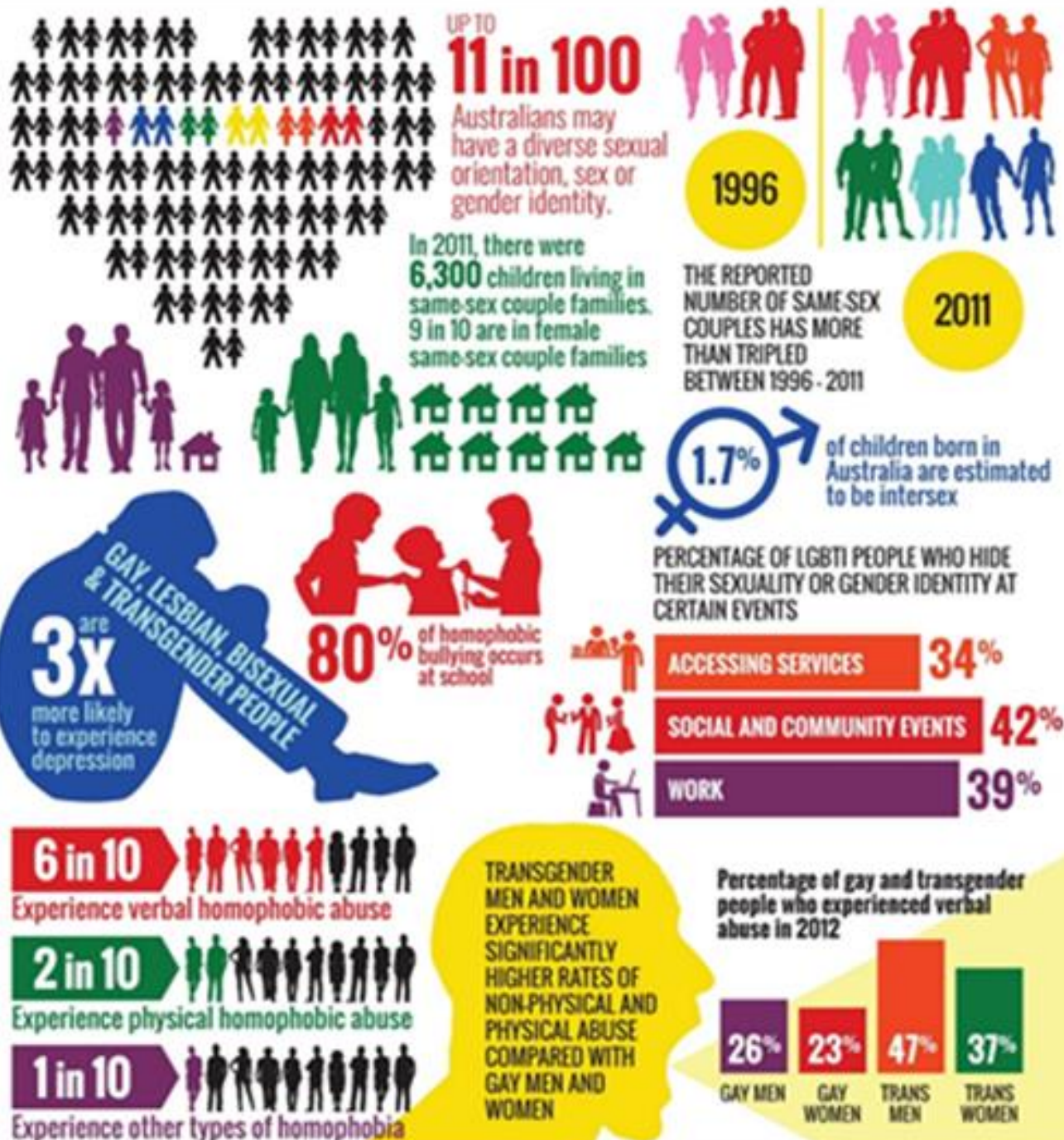
I hope that this quote changes the future, as I know it will, and I cannot wait to see the next pride march, for the only butterflies we should feel should be from love and not fear.

Spencer, He/Him, Brimbank Community Member

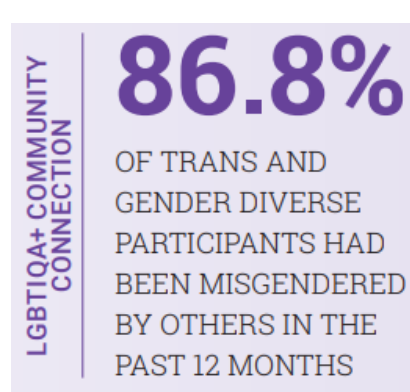
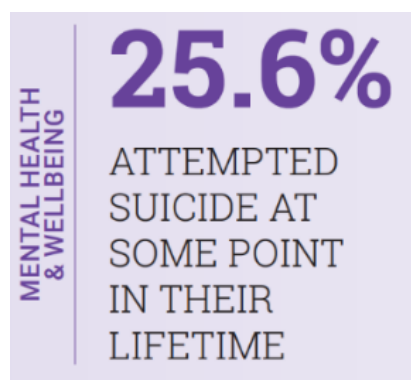


LGBTQIA+ Snapshot:

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex People



These following stats are from the Writing Themselves in Report (2021) that was conducted by Latrobe University and the Rainbow Network¹.



¹ Approval to use infographics has been received from the Rainbow Network.

Impact of COVID-19

Young people most impacted

A negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was reported in higher proportions in particular groups of young people, notably:



Gender diverse
young people



Those that experienced
longer lockdowns and
lockdowns at the time
of survey completion
(Victoria and NSW); and



Students

Gender diverse



Experienced **more negative impacts** across almost all domains.

x2

Were **twice as likely** as males to report a **negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their mental health.**

Location



Young people living in Victoria and NSW reported **high numbers of multiple impacts across a broad range of life domains (70% of young people in Victoria and 57% of young people in NSW reported multiple and diverse negative impacts).**



Both groups were experiencing lockdowns during the time survey responses were being collected.

Students



More young people currently studying **reported negative impacts, and across multiple domains,** than those not studying.



Students reported **greater negative impact on mental health** when **education** was negatively impacted by COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a challenging and difficult time for the entire Victorian community.

Studies undertaken by LGBTQIA+ health services on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic found:

- During the lockdowns, individuals who were not able to express or affirm themselves in their identity positively in a safe environment due to fears of discrimination, harassment and/or abuse were at an increased risk of poor mental health and family violence²
- A spike in drug and alcohol use
- Increased risk of economic disadvantage and homelessness
- A lack of access to gender related medications and/or medications for those living with HIV³
- Older LGBTQIA+ Australians struggled with social isolation due to low digital literacy; limited social services being offered for their age range and a lack of physical intimacy and social connectedness.

These factors along with fears around economic situations, lack of work availability and housing situations were identified as the main causes of increased poor mental health in LGBTQIA+ Australians over the age of 50 years.⁴

Despite this, the United Nation's General Assembly Report on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Human Rights of LGBT Persons recognised a strong focus around empowerment with many LGBTQIA+ identifying people volunteering their time to give back to those in need and LGBTQIA+ performers hosting free live performances and events online.

The Role Council Plays

Many organisations work to support, connect and uplift members of Brimbank's LGBTQIA+ identifying community, it is therefore important that the role Council plays is well defined and realistic. Based on our initial engagement, we acknowledge four distinctive roles that Council can play.

Advocate – Our role is as an ally, supporter and driver for change

Deliver – The capacity to deliver programs, services, activities and events using a collaborative approach. Ensuring our Council facilities are safe and welcoming and staff are trained in inclusivity awareness, with a focus on the LGBTQIA+ identifying community

² Rainbow Health Australia

³ Thorne Harbour Australia

⁴ Silver Rainbow Australia

Partner – Work alongside LGBTQIA+ service providers to ensure services are safe, accessible and inclusive and that they meet the needs of the LGBTQIA+ identifying community

Plan – Events and programs planned are safe, accessible and inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ identifying community. This includes those who are part of the community being involved in the planning, development and implementation of programs. Council infrastructure planning is responsive and provides facilities that meet the needs of the whole community.

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles have been developed in accordance with the Brimbank Social Justice Charter. They aim to uphold the work of Council when addressing the aspirations and needs of LGBTQIA+ community members in Brimbank.

Access, Fairness and Equity

Speak up against discrimination and hate. Recognise that a safe, inclusive and accessible environment can influence attitudes and help to ensure equal opportunities for everyone.

Valuing and Respecting Diversity

Providing welcoming environments that embrace and promote diversity. This includes diversity of language, religion, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, geographic location, sexuality, ability and age.

Social Wellbeing and Connectedness

Creating opportunities for people to build greater skills, community connections and learning pathways that promote physical, mental and social wellbeing.

Intersectionality

Acknowledging the impact that intersecting identities of people based on gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, language and religion plays in creating inequality and inequity.

Continuous Improvement and Sustainability

Seeking and encouraging feedback from community members and groups about programs, activities and facilities as subject matter experts and supporting initiatives that encourage self-sustainability in the longer term.

Stakeholder Engagement

Initial consultation to inform the first draft of this action plan was held between April and December 2022 and captured a range of voices from all life stages, CALD communities, disabilities, families, carers and allies. Measures were in place to ensure LGBTQIA+ community members and allies could participate in a safe and inclusive way at each of the community consultation sessions.

Phase 1:

A series of benchmarking processes and consultations with other Victorian local governments and LGBTQIA+ specific organisations. This phase included:

- Four consultations with Victorian Local Governments
- Three consultations with LGBTQIA+ specific organisations

Phase 2:

Following the preliminary consultation process, a series of consultations were held with a total of 123 internal staff and volunteers. This phase included:

- One initial internal staff and volunteer survey
- 15 focus group sessions
- One drop in consultation session

Phase 3:

Brimbank City Council also hosted a series of community focused consultations in which measures were in place to ensure the LGBTQIA+ identifying community members and allies could participate in a safe and inclusive way. This phase of consultations included:

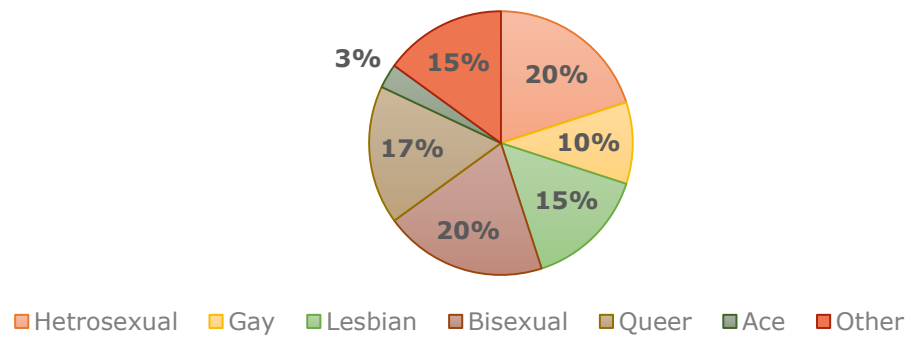
- One follow up internal staff and volunteer survey
- One external community consultation survey, and
- Eight external community consultations

More than 300 people who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community, allies, staff, school staff and industry representatives actively contributed to the process.

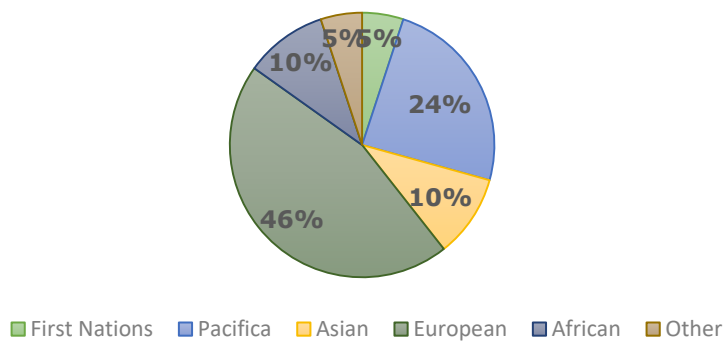
Engagement with members of the LGBTQIA+ community can vary significantly due to a range of factors. However, during the 3rd phase of consultation, the following identity areas were notably well represented:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Bisexual (20%) | • Transgender Male (23%) |
| • Pacifica decent (24%) | • African descent (10%) |

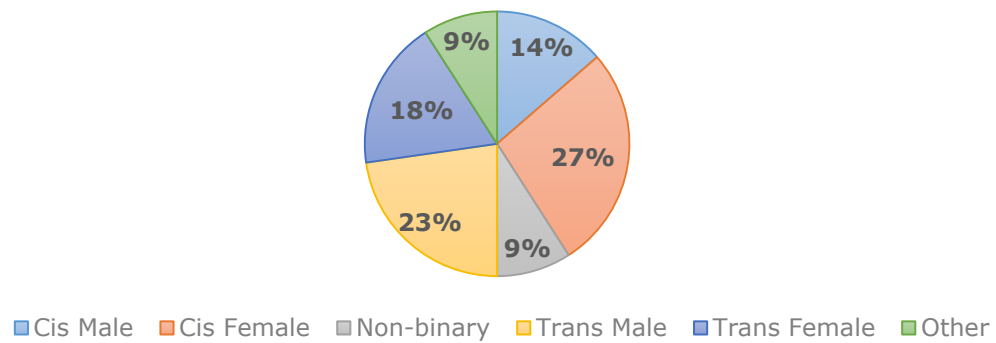
Sexual Identity



Cultural Background



Gender Identity



What We Heard from The Community

• Enable access to inclusive programs, services and opportunities • Increase participation of LGBTQIA+ people in Council programs, activities and events • Provide accessible information on services, programs and events in a range of formats • Raise the profile of community representation through positive stories and community events • Provide LGBTQIA+ safe opportunities for participation • Work with others to provide accessible, safe and inclusive public transport	• Support health and wellbeing in local schools for staff and students • Improve awareness of LGBTQIA+ health and wellbeing, with a focus on sexual and reproductive health • Explore employment, volunteering and education opportunities • Increase participation of LGBTQIA+ people in Council's community engagement processes • Create awareness of intersectionality within the LGBTQIA+ community • Provide staff training around LGBTQIA+ inclusive practices • Educate staff on the LGBTQIA+ communities, their families and allies
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When I was a young person I left home at 17 because, well, being gay and living at home, weren't exactly compatible with my Mum and Dad's religious beliefs. After a long period, Dad changed his attitudes and has a new family with a more modern outlook now. I'm 42 and my sister Pipi is 16. I won't tell how old Dad is.

When Dad heard I was marching with Brimbank at the Midsumma Pride March, he was fully committed to marching - to show his pride and acceptance. He has been waiting forever to march with me and we've even been on JOY radio talking about our journey to personal reconciliation and rebuilding our relationship.

It was wonderful to be there together at the Pride March and talk to young people from Brimbank who I suspect might be in a similar situation right now to what we were 20+ years ago. I remember being in that position and remembering how powerful it was to know there was community – and workplaces – where there was LGBTI safety.

I was very proud to march under the Brimbank banner and to be in such great company of community, great colleagues and family.

Daniel, He/Him, Brimbank City Council staff member

Four Key Focus Areas

Following a robust community consultation process, four key priority areas have been identified to ensure the Brimbank LGBTQIA+ community is included, empowered, safe and supported. This is the first Action Plan of its kind for Brimbank City Council.

Health and Wellbeing

- Strengthening social cohesion and connectedness
- Enabling greater understanding and awareness of the LGBTQIA+ identifying community

Safety and Safe Places

- Improving the quality of standards and practices
- Building strong systems and partnerships

Inclusion and Empowerment

- Encouraging leadership and participation opportunities
- Celebrating and recognising contributions made to the community

Organisational Leadership and Advocacy

- Understanding the value of data collection
- Fostering a diverse, respectful and inclusive organisational culture

Action Plan

The list of actions below is in addition to those actions endorsed through Council's existing plans and strategies.

Timeframes:

- (I) Immediate, Year 1
- (S) Short, Years 2-3 years
- (O) Ongoing

The draft LGBTQIA+ Action Plan maintains the four core roles that Council can play: **Advocate, Deliver, Partner and Plan**. These roles allow Council to adapt different approaches in response to identified priorities and emerging trends to support the four key focus areas and 33 actions listed below.

Resourcing: Within existing resources – action may be implemented using existing resources committed by Council
Additional resources required – additional resources may be required to implement the action (through Council's future budget processes and/or external funding opportunities)

Focus Area One: Health and Wellbeing

What we aim to achieve: We will work to strengthen social cohesion and connectedness and enable greater understanding and awareness of the LGBTQIA+ identifying community

Goal One	Strengthening social cohesion and connectedness			
Strategic Actions		Council Role	Timeframe	Resourcing
1.1.1	Provide a safe and welcoming first point of contact through inclusive signage and LGBTQIA+ inclusivity trained staff at front facing Council services.	Deliver	I,O	Within existing resources
1.1.2	Ensure information, images and the language used in our promotional materials, websites and resources are LGBTQIA+ inclusive and respectful.	Deliver	I,O	Within existing resources

1.1.3	Include LGBTQIA+ communities in the development and implementation of culturally safe and inclusive programs and activities across all life-stages and intersectionalities including: - Rainbow families and families of LGBTQIA+ identifying people - First nations, CALD, refugees, asylum seekers, people with disability Children, young people and seniors	Deliver	S,O	Within existing resources
1.1.4	Use council communication channels to speak up and advocate against discrimination and hate towards our LGBTQIA+ identifying community	Deliver	I,O	Within existing resources
Goal Two	Enabling greater understanding and awareness of the LGBTQIA+ identifying community			
1.2.1	Promote accessible and inclusive LGBTQIA+ specific information and resources at front facing Council services regarding: - specific health resources - employment and further education - support services and businesses - community events and activities - Key messaging relevant to dedicated dates	Deliver, Partner	S,O	Within existing resources
1.2.2	Create a dedicated section within the Brimbank City Council website to raise community awareness and education on LGBTQIA+ challenges and encourage community members to become allies.	Partner, Deliver	S,O	Within existing resources
1.2.3	Develop a LGBTQIA+ engagement toolkit that integrates an intersectional approach to the safe, inclusive and accessible planning and delivery of Council events and consultations.	Plan, Partner	S,O	Within existing resources

Focus Area Two: Safety and Safe Spaces

What we aim to achieve: We will work to ensure that Brimbank is safe for all communities. Our Community infrastructure, programs and planning will be responsive to the needs of the LGBTQIA+ identifying community and we will build strong systems and partnerships to ensure ongoing safety.

Goal One	Improving the quality of standards and practices			
Action		Council Role	Timeframe	Resourcing
2.1.1	Commence the Rainbow Tick accreditation process with front facing Council services to demonstrate Council's commitment and ability to delivery LGBTQIA+ inclusive services.	Deliver	I,O	Within existing resources
2.1.2	Raise awareness and understanding of child safe standards that ensure the safety of all children and young people identifying as being part of the LGBTQIA+ community.	Deliver	I,O	Within existing resources
2.1.3	Support and facilitate community infrastructure and planning to be responsive to LGBTQIA+ community needs by creating inclusive, safe and affirming spaces in Council facilities.	Deliver	S,O	Within existing resources
Goal Two	Building strong systems and partnerships			
2.2.1	Strengthen relationships with the Victoria Police and their LGBTQIA+ Liaison Officers to promote and create a more inclusive and safe Brimbank community for LGBTQIA+ people and allies.	Advocate, Partner	S,O	Within existing resources
2.2.2	Review relevant Council policies, processes and referral systems to ensure they are responsive to LGBTQIA+ people at risk of or experiencing homelessness and family violence.	Advocate, Deliver	S,O	Within existing resources

2.2.3	Advocate for the provision of culturally safe, accessible and inclusive LGBTQIA+ health and support services in Brimbank thereby reducing barriers to participation.	Advocate, Partner	S,O	Within existing resources
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Focus Area Three: Inclusive and Empowered

What we aim to achieve: We will ensure inclusion and empowerment of our LGBTQIA+ identifying community, by encouraging leadership and partnership opportunities in our council, workplace and community and recognising and celebrating the contributions that LGBTQIA+ identifying people make to Brimbank.

Goal One	Encouraging leadership and partnership opportunities			
Action		Council Role	Timeframe	Resourcing
3.1.1	Build the capacity of local organisations to develop inclusive and safe pathways and opportunities for LGBTQIA+ people to volunteer in Brimbank.	Deliver, Partner	S,O	Within existing resources
3.1.2	Promote inclusive, accessible and diverse best practice models to local businesses that includes: - The benefits of a LGBTQIA+ friendly workplace - Recruitment and retention tips - Good news stories - Safe and inclusive premises - Supporting LGBTQIA+ specific events and activities	Advocate, Partner	S,O	Within existing resources

3.1.3	Increase LGBTQIA+ community representation on Council committees and working groups to ensure their voices are amplified to accurately reflect the changing demographic and needs.	Deliver, Partner	O	Within existing resources
Goal Two	Celebrating and recognising contributions made to the community			
3.2.1	Provide opportunities to celebrate, engage with and reflect on the LGBTQIA+ identifying community through events including, but not limited to: • Midsumma Festival • International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) • Wear It Purple Day • Pride Month • Transgender Awareness Week • A potential LGBTQIA+ category within the We Are Brimbank Awards to recognise achievements of those who are a part of the LGBTQIA+ identifying community.	Deliver, Partner, Plan	O	Within existing resources
3.2.2	Create opportunities for LGBTQIA+ businesses, artists, authors and performers to actively participate in community events and activities by creating and promoting a community database.	Deliver, Partner	S,O	Within existing resources

3.2.3	Investigate and explore opportunities to display the LGBTQIA+ Intersex Progress Pride flag on council flagpoles, in council facilities and publications, as a demonstration of Council's commitment to the LGBTQIA+ community.	Deliver	I,O	Within existing resources
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Focus Area Four: Organisational Leadership and Advocacy

What we aim to achieve: We will embed strong organisational leadership and advocacy, making sure we have sound data to back up our actions, initiatives and decisions and fostering a diverse, respectful and inclusive organisational culture.

Goal One	Understanding the value of data collection			
Action	Council Role	Timeframe	Resourcing	
4.1.1	Undertake Privacy Impact Assessments where relevant within Council, to ensure organisational information management practices are inclusive, respectful and compliant.	Deliver	S, O	Within existing resources
4.1.2	Explore ethical and inclusive LGBTQIA+ data collection methods that align with the Australian Bureau of Statistics standards for sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation variables. This can provide a comprehensive understanding of the Brimbank LGBTQIA+ identifying community to assist in policy development and in the planning of inclusive program and service delivery.	Deliver	O	Within existing resources
4.1.3	Implement relevant LGBTQIA+ inclusive questions into the data collection standards, policies and procedures to ensure the effective delivery of programs and services for LGBTQIA+ identifying communities.	Deliver	I,O	Within existing resources
Goal Two	Fostering a diverse, respectful and inclusive organisational culture			
4.2.1	Undertake a review of staff and volunteer strategies, policies and procedures, including recruitment and staff entitlements to ensure they are LGBTQIA+ and ally inclusive.	Deliver	S,O	Within existing resources

4.2.2	Build the knowledge and awareness of Councillors, staff and volunteers through the delivery and promotion of LGBTQIA+ inclusion awareness training and professional development opportunities.	Deliver	O	Within existing resources
4.2.3	Establish a LGBTQIA+ internal working group to provide support to LGBTQIA+ identifying staff and allies and progress the gender equality and inclusion workplace agenda.	Deliver	O	Within existing resources

Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

Implementation

An implementation plan will sit alongside the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan to ensure the outcomes and actions of the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan are being delivered. The following guidelines will be applied when developing and revising the implementation plan:

- Work across Council to develop, revise and update the implementation plan annually. Identify departments that will hold responsibility for the delivery of each action in the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan and establish clear reporting frameworks and timelines.
- Identify and action opportunities to integrate and align the goals and objectives agreed to in the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan with those in current Council-owned plans and strategies, addressing any gaps that might be evident.
- Ensure that all new Council plans and strategies include an LGBTQIA+ lens and align with the goals and actions of the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan.

Budget

- The LGBTQIA+ Action Plan will be funded through existing resources and budget, unless specified.
- Any extra budget requirements will be identified through Council's annual budget process, or through application for external funding.

Monitoring, review and reporting

Ongoing monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan will be important in achieving Council's commitment to create a safe and inclusive Brimbank for all.

This plan that will be implemented across Council, in association with community and partner organisations, and it will be important to keep track of how the plan achieves its stated aims and take advantage of opportunities that may arise over its lifetime.

In addition to Council Plan reporting, an LGBTQIA+ Implementation Plan will be developed to detail a whole of Council approach to progressing LGBTQIA+ issues and supports over the next four years. Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted against criteria contained in the Implementation Plan and measured against the outcomes detailed in the Plan.

Support

If you are in need of additional support please contact the following support services below:

- **QLife** – 1800 184 527 and web chat (LGBTQIA+ specific support - 3pm-midnight, everyday)
- **Lifeline Australia** - 13 11 14 (24/7)
- **Kids Helpline** – 1800 55 1800 (24/7)
- **Suicide Call Back Service** – 1300 659 467 (24/7)
- **Charlee** – www.charlee.org.au an online LGBTQIA+ specific suicide mental health hub

References

What Have We Learnt About COVID-19 and LGBTIQ Communities?

<https://rainbowhealthaustralia.org.au/media/pages/research-resources/research-matters-covid-19-and-lgbtq-communities/3033295656-1655786504/research-matters-covid-lgbtq.pdf>

Clusters of COVID-19 Impact: Identifying the Impact of COVID-19 on Young Australians in 2021

<https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey/2574-clusters-of-covid-19-impact-identifying-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-young-australians-in-2021/file>

Me, us and the World: The Impact of COVID-19 on Older LGBTI Australians

https://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au/impact_of_covid_19_on_older_lgbt_i_australians

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/report-impact-covid-19-pandemic-human-rights-lgbt-persons-0>

Additional Resources:

Legislation and Policy Context

The development of the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan is guided and informed by current international, federal and state legislation and policy in respect of gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness.

International

- World Health Organisation
<https://www.who.int/activities/improving-the-health-and-well-being-of-lgbtqi-people>
- United Nations
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
- Office of the High Commissioner and the Human Rights of LGBTI people
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>

Federal

- Australian Human Rights Commission
<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/lgbti>
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
<https://www.ag.gov.au/rights-and-protections/human-rights-and-anti-discrimination/australian-government-guidelines-recognition-sex-and-gender>

State

- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities
<https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/legal-and-policy/victorias-human-rights-laws/the-charter/>
- Local Government Act
<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/local-government-act-2020/017>
- Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2022-32
<https://www.vic.gov.au/pride-our-future-victorias-lgbtqi-strategy-2022-32>
- Victorian Child Safe Standards
<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards>

Creating an inclusive and accessible Brimbank

LGBTQIA+ work sits across a number of Council plans and strategies. The Together we are Brimbank, Council Plan includes a Strategic Direction titled People and Community- *"A welcoming, safe and supported community – an inclusive place for all."*

Council developed the Brimbank Community Vision 2040 with more than 1,000 members of our community. The Vision includes the statement: *"Our city will be inclusive, resilient, innovative and vibrant and our people will share equally in the City's prosperity and opportunity"*.

Many of our other Council plans and strategies are also working to build positive outcomes for LGBTQIA+ community members in Brimbank. The following diagram provides a sample of these plans and strategies.

Brimbank City Council's first LGBTQIA+ Action Plan is reflected in, and intersects with, the following policies and strategies:

• Social Justice Charter • Safe and Inclusive Brimbank • Fairness, Equality and Respect Strategy • Brimbank Youth Strategy • Disability Action Plan • Physical Activity Strategy • Age Friendly City Plan • Creating Better Parks Policy • Children's Strategy • Culture Strategy • Festivals and Events Policy and Strategy	• Reconciliation Action Plan • Brimbank City Council Community Flag Policy • Business Association Support Policy • Community Engagement Policy • Community Grants Policy • Brimbank Life Long Learning Strategy • Community Services and Infrastructure Planning Major Policy • Public Toilet Strategy • Brimbank Public Art Policy and Plan • Volunteer Strategy
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Council Achievements

Brimbank City Council supports, empowers and includes the LGBTQIA+ community in a number of ways through their current services and programs. These include but are not limited to:

Crystal Queer

The Crystal Queer program is a social support program aims at providing a safe and fun space for LGBTQIA+ identifying young people and allies between the ages of 15 – 25 years of age. It is run by Brimbank Youth Services.

The program provides opportunities for young people to connect with like-minded young people, explore their identities and themselves, learn life skills, hear from guest speakers and have a chance to help plan events for the community.

Crystal Queer has been a great for me. It has not only allowed me to feel comfortable in myself and my identity but it also has allowed me to feel safe.

It has brought be out of my comfort zone and reminded me that it is ok to be me.

Anonymous Crystal Queer program member

LGBTQIA+ Awareness Days

Brimbank City Council has a long history celebrating LGBTQIA+ Awareness Days to bring awareness and recognition towards the LGBTQIA+ community, their history and the issues they still face today.

Some examples of events include:

- Brimbank City Council *International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Interphobia and Transphobia Flag Painting*
- Brimbank City Council's *Transgender Awareness Week Short Film Gala*
- Brimbank Youth Services *Annual Wear It Purple Day Video*

Midsumma Festival

Brimbank City Council has maintained a strong relationship with the Midsumma Festival over a number of years, working with neighbouring municipalities to run the 'Midsumma Westside' campaign. Some examples of events in this campaign include:

- Sunshine Midsumma Pool Party
- Mad hatters Tea Party (*in collaboration with the Queer Youth Alliance Network*).
- Midsumma Pride March

It was an amazing opportunity to be a part of the Midsumma Pride March.

Feeling pride marching not only for Brimbank but also the broader community and the overwhelming feeling of being surrounded by people who were able to be themselves and supporting that.

Anonymous, Brimbank City Council Pride March 2023 Evaluation Survey

Empowering the Rainbow

Empowering the Rainbow is a group of services on offer for Brimbank Schools in the LGBTQIA+ space run by Brimbank Youth Services. These services aim not only to prevent social isolation for LGBTQIA+ young people but also to assist teachers and schools in supporting LGBTQIA+ young people. The services include, but are not limited to:

- Empowering the Rainbow Schools Network
- Empowering the Rainbow Schools Workshops
- LGBTQIA+ Awareness Day and General School Support
- Crystal Queer Monthly Newsletter
- LGBTQIA+ School Holidays Activities

- LGBTQIA+ Teachers Breakfast (*in collaboration with Maribyrnong Youth Services*).

Leadership

Brimbank City Council has a number of leadership initiatives to promote inclusion and support for the LGBTQIA+ community. These include:

- Delivering the Community Grants Program aimed at supporting the community to implement innovative local solutions needed to respond to ongoing and emerging challenges and strengthen community resilience.
- Implementing programs, services and initiatives that are tailored to the needs of our local LGBTQIA+ communities.
- Encouraging staff to use and display their pronouns in their electronic signatures and on video calls.
- Promoting an inclusive Council by using the LGBTQIA+ Progress Pride flag on various marketing materials and displays.
- Appointing a dedicated LGBTQIA+ Project Officer to develop the LGBTQIA+ Action Plan as well as offer advice and guidance on LGBTQIA+ matters.
- Bringing staff and community together to participate in the Midsumma Pride March, under the Brimbank Council banner.

Glossary

Ally – a person who considers themselves an active supporter and is inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ community. This term can be used for people who identify as part of the community or those who are non-LGBTQIA+ identifying.

Ace+ – a person who identifies as having a lack of, or, little to no sexual, emotional or romantic attraction to other people.

Bisexual+ – a person who is physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to 2 or more genders, or to a person of the same gender or of another gender.

Brotherboys - Aboriginal communities use this terms to describe male identifying transgender people and their relationships as a way of validating and strengthening their gender identities and relationships.

Cisgender – a person whose gender identity and expression matches the biological sex they were assigned by the doctor or nurse at birth.

Disability – a person with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Gay – a person, typically identifying as a man, who is physically, romantically, and/or emotionally attracted to people of the same gender.

Gender – how a person understands who they are and how they interact with other people. Gender can be expressed in different ways, such as through behaviour or physical appearance.

Gender Diverse –describes gender identities that may not fit within the male and female binary.

Intersectionality –a social framework to understanding the various identities that intersect within someone's life (i.e. gender, LGBTQIA+, culturally and linguistically diverse, disability etc.)

Intersex –a person born with both male and female sex markers. These markers can include genitalia, chromosomes, and reproductive organs.

Lesbian –a person identifying as a woman who is physically, romantically and/or emotionally attracted to other women (some lesbians may instead prefer to identify as gay, or as gay women).

Man –a male identifying person.

Non-Binary –an umbrella term used to describe someone who does not identify as part of the gender binary.

Questioning –a term used to refer to someone who is questioning their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. When using this term the individual could refer to themselves as a part of the LGBTQIA+ community, from another community or not identify with a community at all.

Safety - a safe and affirming environment that is a welcoming and nonjudgmental space in which LGBTQIA+ community members can be certain that they will not face discrimination based on their Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and/or Gender Expression
(Definition created by the Office of Children and Families - New York State)

Sex –a person's biological sex characteristics (i.e. the penis and vagina).

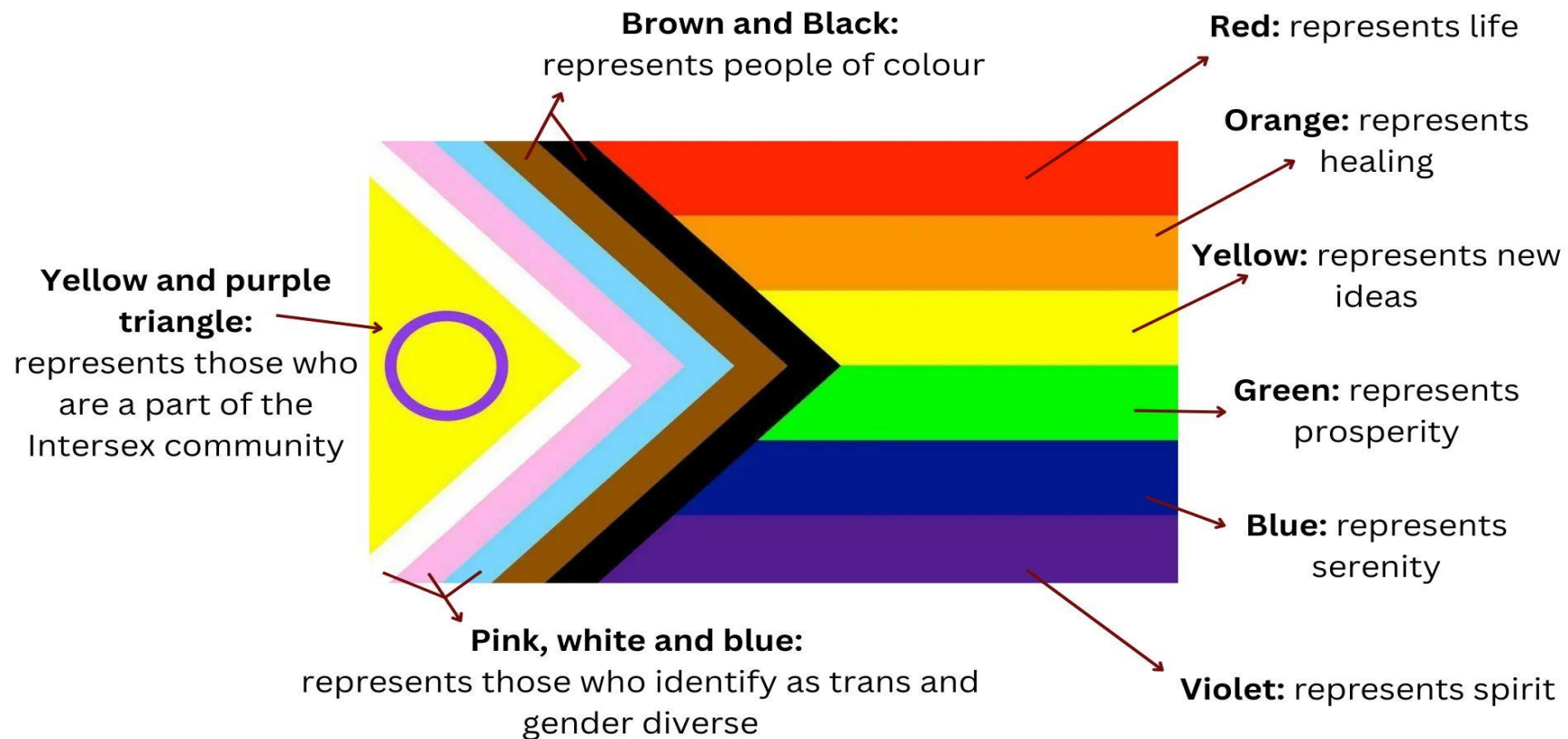
Sistergirls - Aboriginal communities use this terms to describe female identifying transgender people and their relationships as a way of validating and strengthening their gender identities and relationships.

Transgender - a person whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth.

Woman –a female identifying person.

The LGBTQIA+ Progress Pride Flag

The new Progress Pride Flag was created in 2018 by Daniel Quasar and based on the iconic rainbow flag from 1978. The new design is renowned for celebrating the diversity of the LGBTQIA+ community and calls for a more inclusive society.



GENDER-SPECIFIC & GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS

GENDER-SPECIFIC PRONOUNS

are the ways we refer to each other in the third person. People who are transitioning in some way **might choose to change their pronouns.**

SHE

HIS

HE

HERS

GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS

THEY
THEM
THEIR



I saw Lauren come to work today and **they** seemed really happy. I wonder if it has anything to do with **their** weekend. I hope I see **them** soon to hear all about it!

ZE [ZEE]
SIE [SEE]
ZIE [ZEE]
HIR [HEAR]



I saw Lauren come to work today and **ze** seemed really happy. I wonder if it has anything to do with **hir** weekend. I hope I see **hir** soon to hear all about it!

ASK



You cannot tell someone's name or pronoun just by looking at them.

RESPECT



If someone takes the time to let you know their name and pronoun, use and respect it. It's not up to you to decide someone else's identity.

PRACTICE



If you have difficulty using someone's pronoun and name, practice. Ask co-workers, peers, and friends to point out when you've made a mistake.

Hi everyone, my name is Lauren. My pronouns are she and her.

Start meetings with everyone introducing themselves and stating their pronoun.

ASK! If you find yourself unsure of someone's pronoun, be attentive to how others refer to this person. If you are still unclear or concerned that people might be using the incorrect pronoun, politely and **privately ask that person what pronoun they use.**

All name tags and name plates can also have a spot to show someone's pronouns.

HELLO
my name is

LAUREN

PRONOUNS: She & Her

#TRANSINCLUSION

INFOGRAPHIC DESIGN BY:
LIGHTUPTHESKY.CA

HEAR STOP
it! it!
#NOBYSTANDERS
inspired by @pinkmilk

THE 519
SPACE FOR CHANGE

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