

# LGBTIQ+

## 101 FACTSHEET

### Overview

This resource sheet provides some key information and terminology that relate to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) communities.

This information provides you with an introduction only. Language is constantly evolving and its use to describe the human experience of sex, sexuality and gender. Keep in mind:

- People have different opinions on correct terminology. What some people find acceptable, will not be for others.
- Sexual orientation, sex and gender identity are all separate concepts. Read on to see how they differ.

### Sexual Orientation

Describes someone's romantic and/or sexual attraction.

Terms commonly used:

- **Lesbian** - a woman who is attracted to other women
- **Gay** - someone attracted to the same gender as themselves, usually used by men, but some women also use this term
- **Bisexual** - someone attracted to the same gender as themselves and other genders.
- **Pansexual** - someone who is attracted to all genders, including but not limited to male, female, non-binary, trans and gender diverse, gender fluid, gender queer
- **Asexual** - someone who experiences little or no sexual attraction.

### Sex

Refers to a person's biological characteristics. Some people are born with both male and female characteristics, or neither male nor female characteristics.

Terms commonly used:

- **Intersex** people born with physical, hormonal or genetic features that are not exclusively male or female. Intersex describes biological diversity, but may or may not describe someone's gender identity. People with intersex variations have a range of bodies, gender identities and sexual orientations.

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### Gender

Gender refers to the way a person understands, identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics. Gender is generally understood as a social and cultural construction. Some people may identify as a different gender to their sex assigned at birth, while some people identify as neither male nor female.

Terms commonly used:

- Androgynous – someone whose gender expression appears neither male nor female
- Brotherboys and sistergirls – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may use these words for trans people
- Cisgender – people whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth
- Gender identity – internal and individual sense of gender
- Gender expression – how a person externally expresses their gender
- Gender diverse – refers to someone who does not identify as the binary male or female options.
- Gender fluid – someone who does not identify as having a fixed gender
- Non-binary – a term used for someone who does not identify as exclusively male or female
- Trans – Sometimes known as transgender. Refers to someone whose gender identity, expression or behaviour does not align with their sex assigned at birth. A person who was assigned female at birth may use the label trans, transman, or man. A person assigned male at birth may use the label trans, transwoman or woman. People may also use other terminology not listed here.
- Transsexual – a term used by some people who is making, intends to make or has made the transition to the gender with which they identify, which is different to the one they were assigned at birth. This may or may not involve hormone therapy or surgery.
- *This is not an exhaustive list, to learn more visit the websites at the end of the document.*

### Other terminology related to the LGBTIQ+ communities

- Queer – umbrella term used to describe anyone who is gender diverse or non-heterosexual. Historically the term Queer has been used as a derogatory term but has recently been 'reclaimed' by some LGBTIQ+ people as a means of challenging homophobia. Some LGBTIQ+ people are not comfortable with the term Queer.
- Plus (+) symbol includes other identities who are not listed in the LGBTIQ acronym. It is an acknowledgement of the growing terminology.
- Pronouns – many people who identify as male or female (including intersex or trans people) use the binary pronouns he or she. Some people prefer to be described using their name, or a non-binary pronoun, such as they. Avoid assuming a person's pronoun based on your perceptions of how they look, their voice, what they are wearing, or their name. Listen to people and what gender labels they use. If you are not sure what pronoun to use, ask respectfully!

The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth) includes protections against unlawful discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status.

For more information, contact: Complaints Information Service on 1300 656 419, 02 9284 9888, 1800 620 241 (TTY toll free) or [humanrights.gov.au](http://humanrights.gov.au)

### Where can I find more information?

- Inclusive Language Guide: [vic.gov.au/inclusive-language-guide](http://vic.gov.au/inclusive-language-guide)
- What non-binary means: [minus18.org.au](http://minus18.org.au)
- What is intersex? [ihra.org.au](http://ihra.org.au)
- What are my rights? [humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au](http://humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au)

# Inclusive Business Checklist

Before you pop the rainbow sticker up at your business, please go over the checklist below. It will help you think through a couple of simple things to consider, which will assist your business to be more LGBTIQ+ welcoming. There are four focus areas each with tips and actions to check off.

## Staff awareness

It is important that staff know your business is LGBTIQ+ welcoming. Communicate to your staff that you have put the rainbow sticker up. At a minimum you should use this checklist as an educational tool to ensure they also have read and considered the tips offered. If your staff are interested in learning more, they can read the LGBTIQ+ 101 sheet which includes some useful information and handy websites

### Actions

- ☐ Let all staff know that you have put up a rainbow sticker, and why.
- ☐ Educate your staff using the resources in this pack.
- ☐ Include something about this in your staff induction or training procedures.

## Customer service

Good customer service is the cornerstone of any business and LGBTIQ+ people just want to be treated with respect by staff when they enter a business. It is estimated that up to 11% of the population identify as part of LGBTIQ+ communities. By putting up the rainbow sticker, you are showing a substantial portion of the population they are welcome at your business.

It is likely that staff will not always be aware that a customer or client is LGBTIQ+, so it is important not to make assumptions about people. For example, a customer enters a clothes shop who presents as female, and is looking through the men's section.

Instead of asking: **"Are you shopping for your boyfriend?"**  
or assuming they are looking for ladies' clothes...  
it's better to ask: **"Can I help you at all today?"**

If a customer or client refers to their partner, use the same language that they have used. Don't assume to know the gender of their partner.

### Actions

- ☐ Provide the same level of customer service to everyone.
- ☐ Avoid making assumptions about what goods or services someone wants, particularly goods or services that are traditionally gendered as 'male' or 'female'.
- ☐ Be aware of what language you are using when serving a customer or client. Avoid making assumptions about gender or their relationships.

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## Facilities

For trans and gender diverse people, simple tasks such as using a public toilet or change rooms can be extremely difficult. Other people sometimes challenge which facility they are using and may disrupt the individual or make a complaint.

Trans and gender diverse people have the right to go about their business without being policed by other people. Ensure your staff understand that trans and gender diverse people are supported to use the facility that they are comfortable using and affirms their identity.

If you have the capacity, the best practice is to provide a gender-neutral option for facilities such as toilets or change rooms.

### Actions

- ☐ Support trans and gender diverse people to use toilets and change rooms they are comfortable with.
- ☐ Where possible, look at providing gender-neutral options.

## Records

Some businesses may collect personal information about their customers. If you do, it is important to be aware that not all people identify as the binary options of male or female. Review whether it is even necessary for your business to ask for people's gender identity and prefix/title (such as Miss, Mr etc). If not, consider taking that question off your forms.

If it is relevant, update your forms to include more options. For example, when asking for someone's gender, you could add more options such as 'non-binary' or allow space for people to self-identify. For a prefix/title options, Mx is a popular non-binary option. Avoid using 'other' as one of your options for gender or prefix/title.

### Actions

- ☐ Review what recorded information you keep about your clients. Consider removing questions that relate to gender if it is not relevant to your business or services.
- ☐ Provide additional options on forms for both gender and prefixes/title.

**Thanks for reading! You are now ready to put your sticker up.**  
**Any questions? Feel free to contact Banyule Council for more information.**  
**[banyule.vic.gov.au](http://banyule.vic.gov.au)**