

Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022-32

Annual update 2024-25
summary



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Acknowledgement

The Victorian Government acknowledges Victorian Traditional Owners of Country and pays respect to their cultures and Elders past and present.

We recognise that LGBTIQ+ people are living on lands that LGBTIQ+ Aboriginal people have lived on for millennia. First Peoples knowledge has the potential to enrich efforts towards LGBTIQ+ equality.

We acknowledge that the impact of colonisation still exists today, and we are seeking ways to correct past wrongs, including through Treaty. We are working together to create a better future for all Victorians to enable true self-determination for Aboriginal people.

The State of Victoria and the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria have signed a Statewide Treaty. Through Treaty, the Victorian Government will continue to build understanding and respect of the intersection between First Peoples and queer cultures to benefit all Victorians.

We acknowledge the diversity of First Nation Victorians, their communities and cultures, and the intrinsic connection of Traditional Owners to Country.

Language statement

We recognise the diversity of Aboriginal people living throughout Victoria. While the terms 'Koorie' or 'Koori' are used to describe Aboriginal people of southeast Australia, we have used the term 'Aboriginal' to include all people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent who are living in Victoria.

The term 'LGBTIQ+' refers to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer or asexual. We use variations of the term throughout this strategy depending on the language originally used. We use other terms like 'TGD' (trans and gender diverse) or 'LGBT' depending on specific communities referenced. We also note that some Aboriginal communities use the terms 'sistergirls' and 'brotherboys.'

Queer is often used as an umbrella term for diverse genders or sexualities. Some people use queer to describe their own gender or sexuality, as an identity that does not correspond to heterosexual norms. For some people, especially older people, 'queer' has negative connotations, because in the past it was used as a discriminatory term.

The words 'our' and 'we' in this document refer to the Victorian Government.



The strategy

Victoria's first whole-of-government LGBTIQ+ strategy *Pride in our future* was launched in February 2022. The strategy sets out how we will advance equality and inclusion for Victoria's diverse LGBTIQ+ communities across all Victorian Government work over the next decade.

In the third year of the strategy, we have made significant progress on implementing early actions, delivering key policy commitments in 2024-25 and aligning the delivery of priority actions with outcomes in the *Pride in our future: outcomes framework*.

Next, we will focus on completing early actions and progressing medium and long-term actions including to ensure all LGBTIQ+ Victorians are visible, safe and celebrated.

Pride in our future is the roadmap to becoming a state where all Victorians feel safe, are healthy, have equal human rights and can live wholly and freely.

The third year of the strategy marked a major milestone. Victoria passed strong anti-vilification laws, becoming the first state in Australia to explicitly protect LGBTIQ+ people from hate speech and incitement to hatred or violence. These reforms show the commitment to preventing harm to LGBTIQ+ Victorians by strengthening legal protections against hate and violence.

While meaningful progress has been made, many LGBTIQ+ Victorians still face discrimination and exclusion in their everyday lives. These experiences affect people's safety, wellbeing and ability to take part fully in work, education and community life. We remain committed to removing these barriers and supporting LGBTIQ+ Victorians to live openly and with dignity.

The outcomes delivered in the third year reflect a shared effort. Government, communities, families, allies and LGBTIQ+ Victorians all play a role in making Victoria a safe and welcoming place. Together, this collective work continues to advance equality and bring the strategy's vision to life.

The heart of effective policy design and implementation are the lived experience voices of our communities.

The lived experience of our LGBTIQ+ communities is central to how the Victorian Government implements the strategy.

Our work is guided by:

- the Ministerial LGBTIQ+ Taskforce
- LGBTIQ+ Justice Working Group
- LGBTIQ+ Health and Wellbeing Working Group
- LGBTIQ+ Disability Inclusion Expert Advisory Group
- LGBTIQ+ Education Reference Group
- all LGBTIQ+ Victorians.

In partnership with LGBTIQ+ communities, we are progressing our 4 priority areas:

- equal rights and freedoms
- equitable, inclusive and accessible services
- visibility to inform decision-making
- safe, strong and sustainable communities.



Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities highlights

The Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities ensures the insights and experiences of LGBTIQ+ people guide government policy, programs and decisions.

On 20 August 2024, Joe Ball (he/him) was appointed Commissioner and commenced on 28 September 2024 as the third person to hold this unique office. This report covers only the Commissioner's activities from late September to December 2024 — the first 3 months of his tenure.

In his first 100 days, the Commissioner set clear priorities. These were:

- progressing legislative reform and community safety
- strengthening mental health and suicide prevention
- engaging with diverse and intersectional communities, improving inclusion across women's safety and gender-based violence reforms
- partnering with the Commonwealth on national reforms including the *National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People 2025–2035* and Census inclusion.

From late September to December 2024, the Commissioner met with community groups and service organisations across Melbourne and regional Victoria. His first regional visit was to a Pride Fair in Rutherglen. These meetings shaped his early advice and allowed him to hear directly from some of the communities most affected by inequality.

You can hear more about the Commissioner's work including events hosted by his office at: <https://confirmsubscription.com/h/y/9859AEFC2D15C390>



Current actions under the priority areas



Priority area 1: Equal rights and freedoms

We have delivered actions that support Victorians to have equal rights and live wholly and freely. We strengthened legal protections, improved access to justice and advanced equal rights.

To improve equal rights and freedoms, we:

- Strengthened protections against hate and violence through the *Justice Legislation Amendment (Anti-vilification and Social Cohesion) Act 2025*, which became law in April 2025 following extensive consultation.
- Continued delivering the Civil Response Scheme to support survivors of conversion practices through education, outreach and professional resources. Victoria Police continued to investigate criminal offences under the *Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021*.
- Set a clear direction for reform through the Department of Justice and Community Safety's (DJCS) *LGBTIQA+ Action Plan 2025–2028*, to support a justice and community safety system and workplace culture that is inclusive, equitable and values LGBTIQA+ communities.
- Strengthened LGBTIQA+ inclusion within Victoria Police's family violence response through new training.
- Continued to support LGBTIQA+ people to assert their rights through continuing the Q+Law specialist LGBTIQA+ legal service.



Priority area 2: Equitable, inclusive and accessible services

We continued tailored health and mental health services, increased job and education opportunities, and strengthened housing and family violence support. We also invested in LGBTIQA+ community organisations and worked to make government services more inclusive.

To increase inclusivity in mainstream services and support community-controlled organisations to deliver affirming services we:

- Improved access to affordable fertility treatment for LGBTIQA+ Victorians.
- Continued to build the capacity of the LGBTIQA+ community-led sector through the LGBTIQA+ Sector Strengthening program and the LGBTIQA+ Organisational Development Grants program.
- Continued to support delivery of Switchboard's Rainbow Door's LGBTIQA+ helpline, a free helpline and specialist support service providing information, support and referrals to LGBTIQA+ Victorians, their friends and families.
- Continued to support TGD people through the Trans and Gender Diverse Peer Support Program delivered in partnership with Transgender Victoria.
- Supported Pride in Place to provide over 300 LGBTIQA+ people experiencing or at risk of homelessness with safe, inclusive and intersectional support.
- Continued to support community and mental health services to deliver inclusive and affirming care through the Rainbow Tick implementation program. The program includes developing a framework designed to strengthen the safety, inclusion, health and wellbeing of Rainbow Mob, LGBTQIASB+ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, across Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in Victoria.





Priority area 3: Visibility to inform decision-making

We continued work to improve the collection, analysis and reporting of LGBTIQ+ communities' data. We advanced initiatives to ensure that evidence guides government policies and services.

To build the evidence base to understand what LGBTIQ+ people need we:

- Published the *Pride in our future: outcomes framework* so we can measure our impact and report on our progress.
- Commenced work to improve data collection and analysis of client and staff experiences within the justice and community safety system, through the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) *LGBTIQ+ Action Plan 2025–2028*.
- Made progress with diverse LGBTIQ+ representation on Victorian Government boards including through the recruitment to the sixth term of the LGBTIQ+ Taskforce and Health and Wellbeing and Justice Working Groups. It also includes recruitment to the second term of the Disability Inclusion Expert Advisory Group.
- Co-designed with LGBTIQ+ community leaders and people with lived experience on the *Victorian Suicide Prevention and Response Strategy 2024–2034*.
- Progressed the QSOX (Queer Women's Substance Use Over Time) project in partnership with LaTrobe university, which will generate insights into substance use among lesbian, bisexual and queer women to inform harm reduction and health responses.



Priority area 4: Safe, strong and sustainable communities

We supported LGBTIQ+ events and festivals to help create inclusive communities, bolstered social inclusion in sport and provided accessible employment support.

To ensure that LGBTIQ+ people are free from harassment, feel safe and experience inclusion, we:

- Supported community groups and organisations deliver events and festivals that celebrate the diversity of LGBTIQ+ communities, across all of Victoria.
- Supported 29 LGBTIQ+ events with highlights including Transgender Victoria's Trans Book Festival and HONŌUR, a live performance celebrating First Peoples communities and Queer Elders.
- Delivered targeted employment pathways through the Rainbow Internship and Diverse Graduate programs, partnering with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Fitted for Work, the Victorian Pride Centre and Matchworks to support trans, gender diverse and non-binary jobseekers.
- Strengthened recognition of key LGBTIQ+ days of significance, through events and communications.
- Continued to provide safe spaces for young LGBTIQ+ people through QHub in Ballarat and Geelong with outreach to Surf Coast and online.
- Delivered 'The Unsaid Says A Lot' campaign to increase understanding of trans and gender diverse experiences
- Increased inclusivity and participation of LGBTIQ+ people in community sport through the Change Our Game Community Activation Grants, which increase sports participation for under-represented groups, including LGBTIQ+ people.



Case study

The Unsaid Says A Lot Campaign

Launched in June 2024, The Unsaid Says A Lot is an Australian-first campaign by the Victorian Government aimed at raising awareness about the discrimination faced by TGD people.

The campaign is an early action delivered under priority area 4 of *Pride in our future*, 'Safe, strong and sustainable communities'. The campaign's development came as TGD communities in Victoria and around the world experienced an increase in anti-trans hate and vilification. The campaign reinforces the Victorian Government's commitment to LGBTIQ+ equality in Victoria.

Research underpinning the campaign noted that more than three-quarters of TGD people have faced unfair treatment due to their gender identity, which may be a contributing factor to higher rates of poor mental health within the community when compared to the general population.

We co-designed the campaign with members of TGD communities, ensuring that their lived experiences were central to key messaging. Director Harvey Zielinski, who is a trans-man, played a significant role in bringing the campaign to life. His campaign videos draw upon real stories to depict the subtle forms of discrimination trans and gender diverse people often encounter.

Recognising that 93% of communication is non-verbal, the campaign focuses on everyday scenarios where non-verbal cues – such as body language and facial expressions – can convey exclusion or acceptance. The heartfelt and moving depictions of situations of everyday allyship are a call to action for all Victorians to show empathy and respect.

Distributed across various media platforms, the first phase of the campaign achieved significant reach without a dedicated media spend, garnering over 35 million views worldwide. The second phase of the campaign, which included a paid advertising budget, was launched in June 2025.

The Unsaid Says A Lot stands as an Australian-first effort to promote inclusivity and challenge the subtle forms of discrimination that TGD people face daily.

