



PRIDE INCLUSION PROGRAMS

Dear Members,

I am writing to inform you of some terminology changes that you will start to see filtering through our documentation, our organisational framing, our surveys and our work more generally.

ACON recently released its Strategic Plan 2019-2022. Within the strategic plan we articulated the following:

Our Purpose

We create opportunities for people in our communities to live their healthiest lives.

Our Vision

We strive to be a global leader in community health, inclusion and HIV responses for people of diverse sexualities and genders.

The new strategic plan is the result of significant consultation, not only between staff and our key stakeholders, but other community groups for which we have traditionally spoken. Part of this consultation focused on our work within and for the intersex community, and the relationships we have with Intersex Human Rights Australia (IHRA) and Intersex Peer Support Australia (IPSA), two intersex-led organisations in Australia representing and supporting the needs of people born with a variation of sex characteristics.

The key challenges faced by the Intersex community are clearly articulated within the [Darlington Statement](#), primarily referring to:

- Human rights and legal reform
- Health & Wellbeing (predominately the long-term physical and psychological implication of harmful and continuing medical practices)
- Peer support (addressing trauma and mental health concerns caused by the unnecessary medicalisation of intersex people as well as the stigmatisation of intersex characteristics)
- The need for allies focusing on acknowledgement of the distinctiveness and diversity within the intersex community; support of human rights claims, respect for human rights movement ***without tokenism “nothing about us without us”***

Within employment, the Darlington Statement calls for:

- The development of content ***with*** intersex-led organisation and the promotion of delivery ***by intersex people***.
- Accommodations and reasonable adjustments including special needs requirements, workplace adjustments, job access assistance and provision of medical leave.

- Working with ***intersex-led organisations*** to improve understanding of intersex people and human rights issues.

The changing role of ACON and the Pride Inclusion Programs

In consultation with IHRA and IPSA, the focus of our work going forward will be to ***work alongside IHRA, IPSA and other intersex organisation***, rather than playing a key role in intersex inclusion and carrying out roles that intersex organisations will focus on. For us this means we will not take the lead in advocating or in resource development.

Our commitment to the intersex community is one of allyship, and we will, moving forward, defer to IHRA and IPSA as experts in the lived experience of intersex people.

The change in terminology

This intention is clearly reflected in the language of ACON's new strategic plan and as we move forward, our Pride Inclusion Programs will start to change.

Does this mean that we are no longer doing any work re: intersex inclusion?

The Darlington Statement clearly advocates for working with *intersex-led organisations* for work pertaining to the intersex community; ie. the utilisation of intersex-led organisations, *development of materials in conjunction with intersex organisations* and *nothing about us without us*. So in this regard, we ourselves will stand as strong allies for the intersex community referring work in regard to intersex populations to IHRA, IPSA or other intersex-led organisations.

Does this mean members should stop using LGBTI or LGBTIQ acronym?

As allies for the intersex community, we will strongly advocate for member organisations to also focus on becoming intersex allies. It would be important therefore that work in the area of intersex Inclusion be informed by intersex-led organisations and/or the Darlington Statement. In terms of genuine intersex allyship and working alongside intersex-led organisations, we see no reason for removing the 'I' within your diversity and inclusion work. However, as we now refer to IHRA and IPSA, they may be consulted in this area for more information.

Our relationship with IHRA and IPSA going forward

We have a long-standing relationship with IHRA and will continue to work alongside them as strong allies. While our branding will change to reflect LGBTQ or people of diverse sexuality and genders; our commitment to the intersex community and intersex-led organisations remains.

For your information:

[Intersex Human Rights Australia](#) is an independent support, education and policy development organisation, by and for people with intersex variations or traits. Their work focuses on human rights, bodily autonomy and self-determination, and on evidence-based, patient-directed healthcare.

[Intersex Peer Support Australia](#) is an intersex peer support, information and advocacy group for people born with variations in sex characteristics and their families.

For ease of reference and clarity, I have attached on the following pages a summary of changes you will see; and included as a separate attachment within this email; a copy of the Darlington Statement. Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact your relationship manager, or myself directly.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn Hough". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Dawn Hough
Director
ACON's Pride Inclusion Programs

PRIDE IN DIVERSITY & INTERSEX INCLUSION

As communicated on 11 November 2019, ACON has been working with representatives from Intersex Organisations across Australia to determine how we might best support their concerns and key areas of focus going forward. These have focused on the Darlington Statement; supporting intersex-led organisations to speak on behalf of intersex people and to be the forefront of communication and work for the communities they represent.

This has resulted in a change to the way that we will work with intersex-led organisations going forward, the language we use and our strategic positioning. Please ensure you are familiar with this document and communicate it to relevant people within your organisation.

The key areas relevant to our Pride Inclusion programs in regard to the Darlington Statement are as follows:

Allies

47. Intersex is distinct from other issues. We call on allies to actively acknowledge our distinctiveness and the diversity within our community, to support our human rights claims and respect the intersex human rights movement, without tokenism, or instrumentalising, or co-opting intersex issues as a means for other ends. **“Nothing about us without us.”**
48. **We encourage all organisations and bodies that support the intersex movement to recognise this Darlington statement.**
49. We call for intersex people, and the intersex human rights movement, to be allies to the LGBTQ, disability, Indigenous, anti-racist, and women’s movements.
50. We call on intersex people to recognise our own diversity and call for intra-community dialogue and mutual support.

Education, awareness and employment

51. We acknowledge that stigma is often the result of misconceptions about intersex which is compounded by a lack of education and awareness.
52. We recognise that the stigmatisation and pathologisation of people born with variations of sex characteristics hinders self-acceptance, access to community, help-seeking, and accessing of services including healthcare.
53. We acknowledge the impacts of stigma, trauma and unwanted medical interventions on access to education and on employment, and consequences that include high rates of early school leaving, poverty, self-harm and suicidality.
54. We call for the inclusion of accurate and affirmative material on bodily diversity, including intersex variations, in school curricula, including in health and sex education.
55. **We call on education and awareness providers to develop content with intersex-led organisations, and promote delivery by intersex people.**
56. **We call on employer groups, governments, institutions and trade unions to develop affirmative policies and practices to support employees with intersex variations.**
57. **We call for policies in educational institutions and employment to recognise that some people born with intersex variations may benefit from accommodations and reasonable adjustments, including special needs requirements, workplace adjustments, job access assistance, and provisions for medical leave.**
58. We acknowledge the vital importance of positive stories and role models and the existence of some positive media coverage of intersex people. We acknowledge that much media work unfortunately perpetuates the stigmatisation of intersex people and bodies. **We call on the media to work with intersex-led organisations to improve their understanding of intersex people and our human rights issues.**

PRIDE IN DIVERSITY SUPPORTING INTERSEX-LED ORGANISATIONS VIA THE DARLINGTON STATEMENT

Area of change	Change	Darlington Statement
Strategic Positioning	<p>We will move from Employer Support Program for all aspects of LGBTIQ inclusion to:</p> <p>Employer support program for the inclusion of diverse sexualities and genders</p> <p>(or variations as set out in the row below)</p>	<p>We call on education and awareness providers to develop content with intersex-led organisations, and promote delivery by intersex people.</p> <p>“Nothing about us without us.”</p>
Language & Acronyms	<p>Dependent on context, language and terminology will change from LGBTIQ employees or inclusion to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexuality and gender diverse employees • Diverse sexualities and genders • People of diverse sexuality and/or gender • Sexuality and gender diversity <p>Increasingly, globally, peer organisations are moving away from the acronym LGBTIQ because of its limitations and perceptions of exclusion by those of different identities; if the acronym is used; we will move to LGBTQ</p>	
Our Awareness and Ally Training	<p>Our Awareness and Ally Training has been updated and now reflects some minor changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersex definitions (promoted by IHRA) will still be used within slides that speak of sex characteristics, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. • Commentary will be added to promote our adherence to the Darlington Statement, recommending that employers read the Darlington Statement and become allies of the intersex community • All intersex references outside of the above will be removed to allow intersex-led organisations to speak on their own behalf. 	

Area of change	Change	Darlington Statement
Our Intersex Inclusion in the Workplace Publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will remain available to all members in hardcopy and softcopy as it was developed in conjunction with an intersex-led organisation. • In the next reprint, an additional section will be added on the Darlington Statement along with any updates led by, and in consultation with intersex-led organisation/s. 	We call on education and awareness providers to develop content with intersex-led organisations , and promote delivery by intersex people .
AWEI Intersex Questions <i>Next Version</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the 2021 AWEI, a question will be asked in terms of an employer’s commitment to the Darlington Statement and the promotion of allyship • Employers will be encouraged to engage with intersex people and intersex-led organisations for any assistance how best to promote allyship within the organisation. 	“Nothing about us without us.”
AWEI Employee Survey <i>Released Jan 2020</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will still ask people if they are intersex • The number of intersex respondents within our survey continues to be minimal and therefore statistically insignificant. We will therefore remove survey questions that specifically asks re: the employee experience of intersex inclusion. However, intersex respondents will be able to answer to all other cultural questions not pertaining to LGBTQ employees. • Should the number of intersex respondents increase, we will then consult with intersex-led organisations to determine if they would like us to continue with the survey, jointly prepare questions and share overall, high level survey findings for that demographic only. • Intersex AWEI data will be removed from future data reports. 	
Intersex Awareness days / merchandise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are no longer leading on intersex awareness days and/or comms and merchandise to allow intersex-led organisations to drive activity on these dates. • Where agreed with intersex-led organisations, we will repost their activity on these dates. 	
When will these changes take effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will start to implement these changes immediately; however due to the sheer volume of our work and web pages, this will take a little time. Please be patient with us while we make these changes. 	

DO OUR MEMBERS NEED TO CHANGE LANGUAGE/ACRONYM?

To support intersex-led organisations and the Darlington statement, ACON and all Pride Inclusion Programs defer our work in this area to intersex-led organisation. Exceptions would be any work that we do jointly in conjunction with intersex-led organisations.

While we are changing our strategic positioning and language to reflect that support, there would be no need for employers to move away from the LGBTIQ or LGBTI acronym should their work in this area be meaningfully informed by intersex-led organisations (i.e. not tokenistic).

- 47.** Intersex is distinct from other issues. We call on allies to actively acknowledge our distinctiveness and the diversity within our community, to support our human rights claims and **respect the intersex human rights movement, without tokenism, or instrumentalising, or co-opting intersex issues as a means for other ends. “Nothing about us without us.”**
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