



# LET'S TALK GENDER

A CLOSER LOOK AT GENDER DIVERSITY WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

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### **About this Publication**

This publication has been developed for LGBTI inclusive workplaces seeking to better understand the complexities of gender. It has been designed to challenge us on our definition of gender diversity and pose questions that will make us question the way we design our forms, our processes and our diversity practice. This publication will be particularly useful for HR Managers, Diversity Leaders and LGBTI employee networks.

### **Obtaining copies of this Publication**

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Hard copies of the publication can also be purchased via our online SHOP also accessed via the Pride in Diversity website. All proceeds from the publication help fund the work of Pride in Diversity.

### **A note on Pride in Diversity and our Terminology**

Pride in Diversity, Australia's national not-for-profit employer support program for all aspects of LGBTI workplace inclusion is a social inclusion initiative of ACON. ACON is Australia's largest LGBTI health organisation. Pride in Diversity was established by ACON to assist in the reduction of stigma, social isolation, homophobia and discrimination in the workplace thereby improving the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTI employees. Community for community.

This publication utilises the acronym LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex). We acknowledge the limitations of this acronym and that not all people will identify with the labels within. We understand that terminology can be contentious but we also understand the importance of a consistent language for employers. We use the acronym LGBTI as a representative term for our community. We acknowledge that there is a diversity of identities within our community and that no one term or acronym is capable of encompassing them all.

We do not in practice, education, service delivery or intention exclude any one identity or person from within our community.

### **Acknowledgements**

This publication was written by Dawn Hough for Pride in Diversity. In the development of this publication we acknowledge the ongoing contribution and support of Liz Ceissman from the Gender Centre in Sydney along with the many gender diverse individuals who have participated in various forums over the years and of course, those who have contributed to this publication through the sharing of your personal stories: Ali, Roxanne/Bobby J, Jasmine, Spence, Caitlin, Jessica and Ted. We cannot thank you enough.

We also acknowledge and thank IBM the sponsor of our annual publication for the last five years, without whose support this publication would not be possible.

We thank Danny Adams and Steph Mellor for their tireless editing and design along with the Pride in Diversity team for their ongoing input and passion: Lin Surch, Ross Wetherbee and Ishwar Singh.

Pride in Diversity also acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia, their diversity, histories, knowledge and continuing connection to land and community. We pay our respects to all Australian Indigenous peoples and their cultures, and to elders of past, present and future generations.

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KERRY PURCELL

MANAGING DIRECTOR, IBM AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND



The theme for this year's Pride in Diversity publication 'Let's Talk Gender' is an important one. As society grows in all forms of diversity, a broader discussion between employers and employees about key gender diversity issues such as transitioning in the workplace and looking across and beyond the heteronormative binary are increasingly important.



IBM has always respected difference and has welcomed anyone with talent, regardless of their gender, race, sexual orientation, age or creed. Diversity means feeling comfortable, valued and included: making it safe for people to be themselves at work. We know that all employees, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) employees, will only reach their potential and make their fullest contribution to our clients' success if they are comfortable to be who they are. We are proud to have LGBTI inclusive policies as a cornerstone of our business strategy throughout our long history and for the years to come.

It is only when we start to talk about these issues publically that we achieve a more comprehensive understanding of gender diversity, encouraging Australian workplaces to think beyond the binary model of male and female. By empowering ourselves through education and knowledge, we can all contribute to ensure our workplaces allow employees to feel valued and safe to be themselves.

Our commitment to workplace equality and inclusion has fostered a vibrant and growing LGBTI community, whose creativity, intelligence and diversity of thought are an integral part of our DNA and continues to help drive our success.

Kerry Purcell  
Managing Director  
IBM Australia & New Zealand  
Executive Sponsor of the A/NZ Diversity Council

## DAWN HOUGH DIRECTOR, PRIDE IN DIVERSITY



We hear the term Gender Diversity often. Typically this refers to equal opportunity for women and our endeavours to increase female talent within the higher ranks of an organisation. But times are changing and now, many people when you say Gender Diversity will be thinking along very different lines.

It may well now be time to update our vocabulary within diversity circles, or the very least, our definitions.

The purpose of this years publication is to encourage our members to think differently about the word Gender and to embrace those who do not fall neatly within our binary constructs. While the initiatives that organisations are currently working on to increase female talent are critical, we also need to be mindful of the impact that assuming our workforce is only male or female (regardless of their gender history) has; not only on our reputation as organisations that highly value diversity, but also on the individuals we employ.

This publication has not been written as a comprehensive guide on workplace gender transition or a treatise on gender studies but rather as a thought piece to give a voice to those who do not identify as male or female, or both. This publication also provides HR & Diversity professionals and people managers with a practical way to assist an employee who wishes to change their gender expression in order to affirm their true gender identity at work and beyond.

Gender is a complex topic, particularly complex if we try to define it, label it or force people into predetermined boxes that they simply do not fit into. At Pride in Diversity we believe wholeheartedly in accepting people for who they are and in allowing people to bring their true authentic selves to work. It's good for the person, it's good for business and it's good for each and every one of us. We do not profess to be academics or experts in the area of gender studies, but we do work daily with organisations and many gender diverse employees in an effort to make our workplaces safe and inclusive.

If all this publication does is:

- make us question our definition of gender
- make us more mindful of our binary assumptions
- provide greater awareness of the diversity of gender, and
- make us mindful of how we can be more inclusive

then we have achieved our aim.

We would like to thank all who have assisted with this publication. To the many gender diverse people we have spoken to, we have worked with and who have provided their insights and testimonials for this publication, thank you!

I would also like to personally thank Liz Ceissman, Case Manager at the Gender Centre for friendship, advice and support over the six years along with Jasmine Neuenhaus, Ted Cook, Roxanne/ Bobby J Thomson and JoAnna Ferrari for their ongoing powerful advocacy, positivity and leadership. I count it amongst my greatest privilege and joy to know you all.

Times are changing quickly, our language is a testament to that, we have no doubt that this publication in several years time will be different yet again, but it's a starting point.

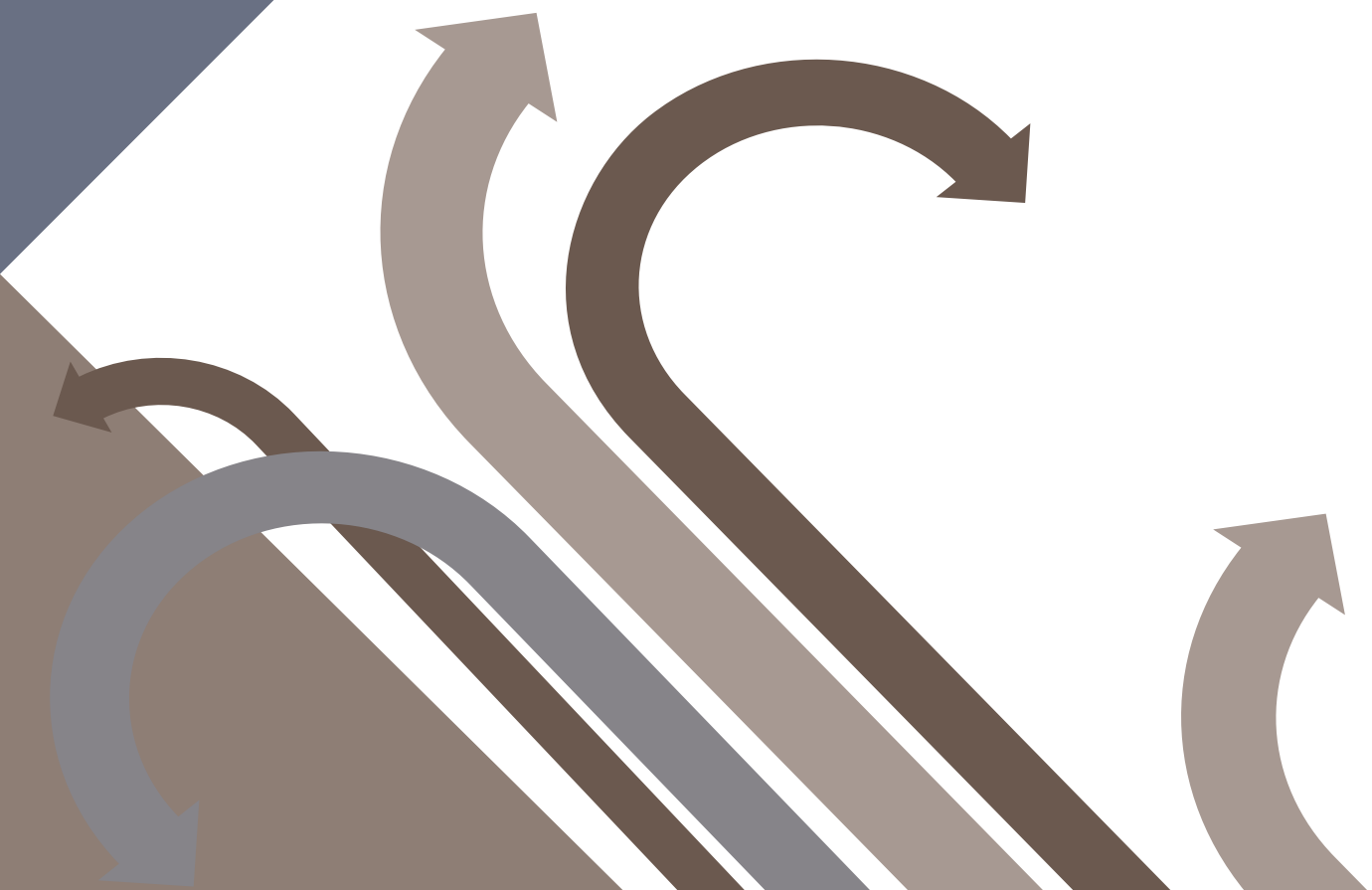
We hope you enjoy the journey.

Dawn Hough  
Director  
Pride in Diversity

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# UNSTICKING THE BINARY THOUGHT PROCESS



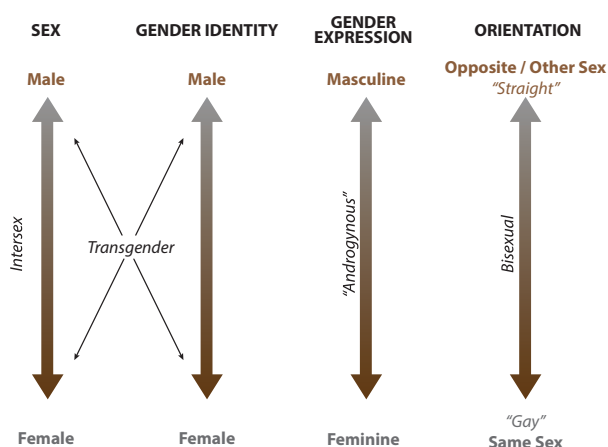
Male or Female, Masculine or Feminine, Gay or Straight.

Black and white is easy for us, shades of grey are always more complex; and binaries when it comes to most aspects of our diversity are just so much easier to understand ... or are they? While seeing life through the lens of A or B may seem straight forward, how do we then explain the many shades of grey in-between?

In our years of conducting workplace training in sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and intersex status we have had many conversations around the naivety of binaries and of course, the assumptions, conclusions and exclusions that we all make as a result of binary thinking. We have as a society been mostly unaware of the impact that this has had on individuals who do not fit into our binary model let alone the impact on our society, our workplaces, our interactions and our families.

The construct from which we start these training conversations at Pride in Diversity is somewhat simplified but it does serve to form the foundation from which we base a series of discussions around binary assumptions and non-binary reality.

We start with a somewhat simplified portrayal of sex, gender identity, gender expression and orientation:



and from this basis build in and give further explanation to terms such as Queer, Asexual, Pansexual, BiGender, AGender, Gender Fluid, Gender Diverse, Gender Queer amongst others (pending time and prior knowledge of our audience). Of course we acknowledge the confining limitation of labels along with the changing nature of acceptable and non-acceptable terminology. We also know that it is far from ideal to utilise language that appears to "box" people in or label complex identities and it is never our intention to assume that we all fit neatly into any of these explanatory constructs.

However there is still a need to communicate a movement away from binary thinking and that is difficult to do without the words to describe the binaries that we utilise. And while the language that we currently utilise to describe a myriad of identities and status' outside of the binaries will no doubt continue to change, they provide a well-intended means of challenging people to think outside of these binary constructs.

What has become apparent to us over the years is that people generally understand what is meant by Intersex status (simplified), the word transgender (simplified), gender expression (simplified) and sexual orientation (simplified). The non-binary aspects of each

are understood. But when it comes to gender identity, we continue tend to get stuck on binary explanations of male and female.

For example:

We understand that someone assigned male at birth may change their expression to female to align with their true gender identity and likewise someone assigned female at birth may change their expression to male to align with their true gender identity. These gender identities still fall within our binary construct; so we don't generally experience any difficulty grasping this (although sadly we find that accepting this does prove somewhat more challenging for some people).

So when we think gender diversity within organisations, our mind still tends to gear towards male or female. Organisations active in LGBTI inclusion, may also include transgender employees under the umbrella term of gender (although to a much lesser degree) which of course can be problematic in itself as the majority of transgender employees identify as male or female; not transgender. This focus on male / female is not helped by the ongoing use of terms such as gender diversity, pertaining to the balancing of male and female employees across the organisation and equity within those roles.

But what if someone identifies as neither, both or their gender identity is more fluid than any of our labels permit?

- How does this impact our gender tracking?
- Does this show the limitations of our thinking when we use terms such as gender diversity? Particularly when we promote ourselves as leaders in diversity and inclusion.
- Do our HR systems, salutations (if still used) and forms force people into boxes that are incorrect and ostracise them in the process?
- How does this impact our language? Our use of personal pronouns?
- What of gender based uniforms? (if they apply)
- What of those roles that are open only to those of a particular gender or sex?

While we understand completely that some of these questions may be asked on behalf of our intersex employees, this publication focuses purely on gender identity and we refer you to our publication *An Employers Guide to Intersex Inclusion* for a thorough coverage of Intersex inclusion within the workplace.

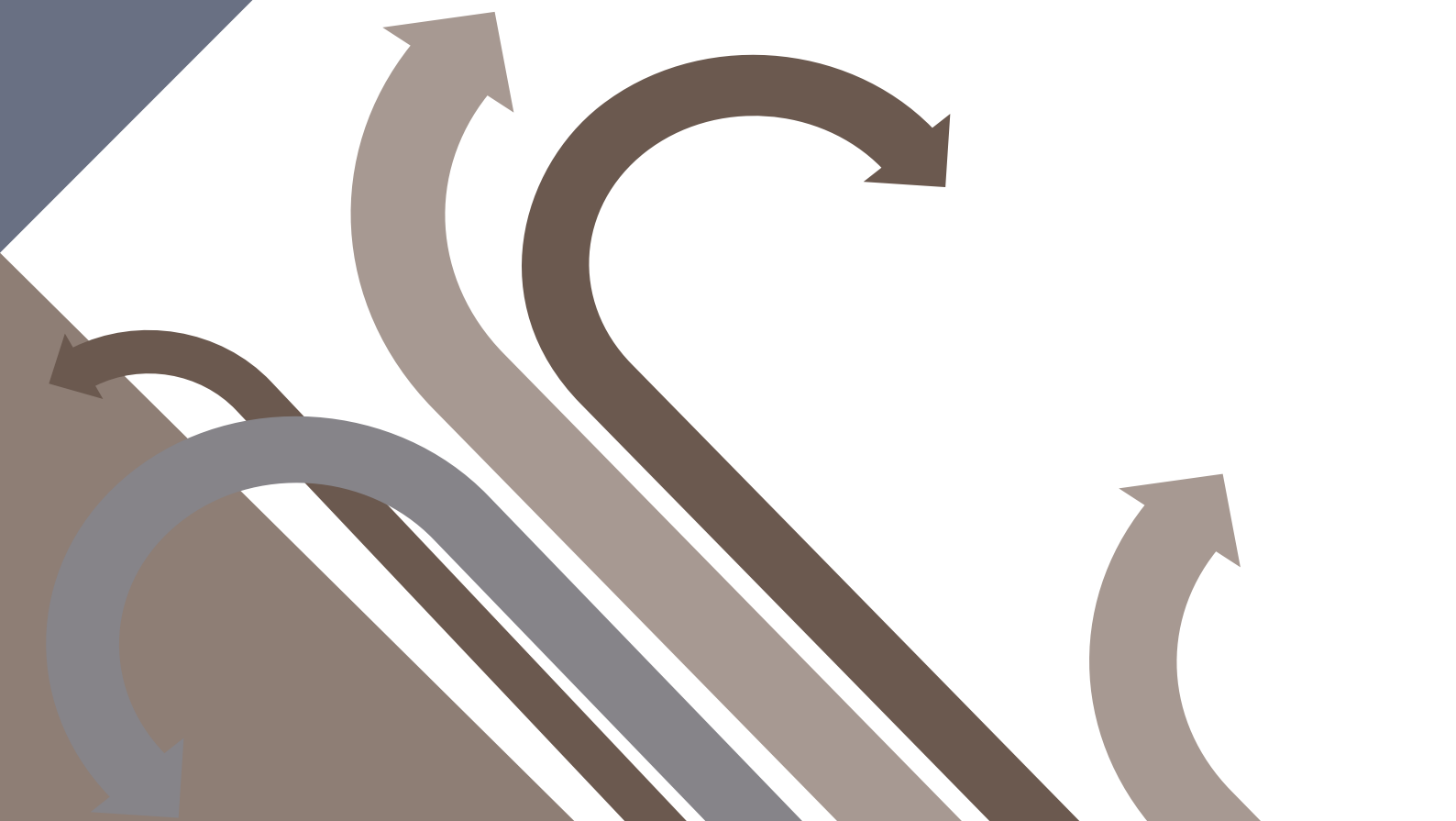
Needless to say, while many organisations are making wonderful progress in providing policy and practical support for those who do transition in the workplace, we are still largely ignorant of, or unsure as to how we respond to those who do not identify as male or female; or who identify as both (regardless of the sex that they were assigned at birth).

So for this year's publication, we have set three objectives:

1. One, to get you thinking beyond the binary
2. To provide you with some high level guidance on how to support an employee who wishes to affirm their gender within the workplace.
3. To provide a discourse on non-binary and fluid gender identities; along with an opportunity to hear from those who have kindly agreed to share their stories.



# ASSISTING AN EMPLOYEE TRANSITION



A significant area of our work over the last couple of years has been in assisting an increasing number of employees transition within the workplace. We have worked closely with transgender support organisations, member organisations and the employees themselves to ensure that the transition is as seamless as possible providing the support required for the employee and the teams within which the employee works.

It is critical that an organisation openly communicates their support for those who wish to transition and that when someone does approach their manager or HR or more commonly the diversity team in regard to their transition, that the organisation knows what to do and who to engage.

We also have worked with countless organisations over the past years assisting and providing advice on the development of support policies and documentation. Each will tell you that we have been cautious not to be too prescriptive in the documentation; emphasising that every employee's transition will be different pending the person's level of comfort, openness and how far into the transition process they are.

So for this publication, we will be equally non-prescriptive, but rather provide general guidelines.

We do recommend that you bring in external expertise to assist and to provide a level of training. Pride in Diversity can assist both member and non-member organisations nationally. We have also worked with several state based transgender support organisations that we are more than happy to put you in touch with.

## Terminology: Transitioning or Affirming?

Common language for someone affirming their gender at work includes transition, gender transition, male to female (MtF or M2F) or female to male (FtM or F2M). We discuss gender transition as if someone is changing their gender as opposed to their external gender expression.

This language is in itself problematic as it implies that someone is changing from one gender to another, when in actual fact, they are simply wishing to present in the only gender that they have ever identified with (assuming we are talking binaries).

For this reason, some people will speak of affirming their gender as opposed to a gender transition. It is critical to ensure that the language you use for the employee you are assisting is respectful and inclusive and it is recommended that you include the words transitioning/affirming in your vocabulary checklist.

## Guideline 1: Ensure that your organisation openly communicates support for employees who wish to transition.

Employers that have, or are in the process of implementing LGBTI inclusive policies need to ensure that their support for employees who wish to transition is clearly communicated. Ideally transitioning support would be documented within:

- General HR policies
- Diversity policies
- Staff leave policies
- On your LGBTI employee networks intranet and diversity pages (if you have them).

Communicated support may take the form of a short paragraph on an appropriate web page or within relevant policy documentation. It may also be communicated within a diversity policy. Regardless of where you communicate your support, it will need to include contact points, where to go next and emphasise the confidentiality of discussions.

It is critical to think about the ease with which an employee or manager can source this information. Does someone have to go searching through complex online documents or dive deep into layers of intranet pages to find this or is it communicated in several logical locations?

Keep in mind also, who may be searching for this information: an employee wishing to transition, a manager who has just spoken to a team member wishing to transition or a prospective employee wanting to ensure that their future employer is inclusive. Could this information be easily located for all of these individuals? What would be the most logical place for them to look for this information?

## Guideline 2: Have a transitioning policy and process in place

Once you have communicated your support for any employees transitioning, you will then need to ensure that anybody notified of an employee's intent to transition, knows what to do next.

While we would assume that most employees would go to their Manager to inform them of their intention to transition, sometimes employees will go straight to HR, some to the organisation's diversity leaders, some to the LGBTI employee network; or in some cases to an external support organisations such as Pride in Diversity.

This is where your organisations formal transitioning policy or process documentation comes into play.

Formal policy documentation would ideally include:

- Your organisational stand on diversity and inclusion
- Your support of LGBTI employees
- Your support of employees transitioning
- Communication that every person's transition is different and will be treated as such
- Communication of commitment to the individual transitioning and support available to them throughout the process
- High level outline of any formalised processes involved
- Contact points for manager and/or employees
- Where to go for further information or assistance

Transitioning Process documentation if separated may include more detail around processes, timelines, checklists, contact points, external support contacts, templates, HR requirements, support processes, dress codes.

While some organisations put all of the above into one document, others will separate the documentation into one or more of the following:

- Managers Guides
- Employee Guides
- HR Guides
- Policy Documents
- Process Documentation

It is important that whatever documentation you create, it is well aligned to your current HR / diversity policies and processes. The key to the documentation, regardless of its name is that when an employee does communicates their intention to transition, there is a formal policy in place to support the employee and a process that can be followed to support both the employee and his or her work colleagues every step of the way.

## Don't underestimate the importance of a process map or plan

While your policy document may be a generic document for all staff, detailed processes or roadmaps are usually kept confidential to HR and the individuals that they are involved in the process.

It is not sufficient to rely on internal experience or expertise in this case. A formal process, albeit high level not only ensures that additional staff can step into the support role confidently but also guarantees that formally approved processes are followed and consistent across the organisation. It also allows the organisation to adjust or update the documentation as lessons are learned along the way. Documentation would ideally be version controlled and kept in a logical place.

The requirements of the individual transitioning and the organisation will vary greatly and it is critical that this is always kept in mind. Any planning or process documentation needs to be high level enough to be flexible while providing enough detail to provide ample support to those involved in transition support.

## Guideline 3: Establish a support team

The support team is essentially the team that will be responsible for developing the plan, communications strategy and return to work.

Typically the support team includes:

- The employee transitioning (this ensure that they are actively involved in the process)
- The employee's immediate manager
- An HR representative
- An external subject matter expert

The support team is responsible for developing and agreeing a clearly articulated plan specific to the individual transitioning.

## Guideline 4: Create a comprehensive plan based on the high level process map

While the employee transitioning may already have a clear idea of when they wish to start presenting in their affirmed gender, there is a lot of work for the organisation to do behind the scenes to ensure that this all happens smoothly. Hence the need to plan well. The support team is responsible for drawing up a timeline or plan along with associated checklists. Guidelines for this will be gleaned from the high level process map or plan provided within the organisations support documentation.

The planning stage will be different for every person transitioning. Some people may have already partially transitioned at work; others may be just starting the planning process.

When assisting employees' transition, Pride in Diversity's planning process generally considers the following:


- An initial meeting with the employee, their manager and HR to determine:
  - ◇ the date in which the employee seeks to change their gender expression at work,
  - ◇ agreed levels of transparency/confidentiality in terms of communications
  - ◇ key stakeholders to be notified (team, along with others that hold a close working relationship with the employee and in some cases, clients, customers, external partners)
  - ◇ the need for any leave and the type of leave available within the organisation
  - ◇ key support team going forward (in terms of working with the employee and their team to ensure a smooth and positive transition)
  - ◇ any paperwork required by the organisation

Areas that will need to be considered during the planning process include:

- Right to privacy and confidential communications
- Time away before returning to work as their affirmed gender alongside any leave available
- Return to work date and process
- Admin checklists for HR processes, security passes, logins, name changes etc (see checklist)
- Communications strategy and timing (to include training)
- Formal documentation changes ie employee superannuation, insurance alongside documentation relating to any other company benefits

The following checklist may be used as a guide for the employee's return:

## Example: Return to work checklist

	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY
	Employee ID / security pass / photo ID	
	Email address	
	Email distribution lists	
	Name badges / signs / desk name plates	
	HR Records (including gender marker)	
	Logins – computer	
	Logins – additional software (ie. HR systems)	
	Internal or paper based phone directories	
	Voicemail	
	Team phone lists / directories / communications	
	Referral sheets (if a point of contact for others)	
	Organisation charts	
	Mailing lists	
	Qualifications	
	Name on insurances / superannuation any company benefits	
	Assisting scripts for teams (addressing calls, determined within planning stage)	
	Morning / afternoon tea : first day	
	Scheduled follow-up	

## Guideline 5: Include a good communications strategy

In assisting people transition, several employees have requested that they return to work in their affirmed gender on a given day and just get on with work as per usual without any communication, training or fuss. Our experience has been that it would be a rare instance in which this would work well without it resulting in innuendo, talk and general isolation of the person involved; let alone contention around the use of bathrooms.

People do talk. People may gossip. Without an understanding of what transitioning means people make their own meaning, fill in their own blanks and unfortunately this can often lead to negative mistruths that only serve to isolate the person transitioning, not support them. An effective and targeted communication strategy will help to avoid these pitfalls.

The communication strategy needs to be a consultative process between the support team and the person transitioning. The transitioning employee, their immediate manager and HR will work together to identify who needs to know, who doesn't, how that communication will occur, when and what will be said. This communication strategy sits within the overall transition plan.

It is important that the employee identifies the level of disclosure that they are comfortable with and clearly indicates their preferences around the handling of calls (when someone asks for them) and personal questions (what they are, or are not comfortable being asked going forward).

Helpful scripts utilised as guides may also be useful for immediate team members to assist them in responding to questions in a way that is appropriate for both the employee transitioning and the organisation.

In developing the communications component of your overall plan consider the following groups:

- Leadership: The transitioning employee's manager and their managers to the agreed/appropriate level
- External customers, partners, stakeholders with whom the employee currently works
- Floor occupants (essential to stopping water cooler rumours and gossip)
- Wider team – regardless of where they are located
- Immediate team

Consider also the method of communication:

- Formal training / awareness meetings
- Formal written communications
- Emails
- Face to face meetings
- Private conversations
- Letters (external stakeholders)

## Guideline 6: Squash the rumour mill through training

Without an understanding of what it means for someone to transition, people can assume meaning, fill in the blanks and not only draw their own conclusions but potentially communicate them as well. Training for immediate team members and beyond would ideally comprise a confidential awareness session with the opportunity for team members to ask questions in a safe, non-judgemental and supportive environment. Ideally the session would be attended by a senior manager (several reporting lines up) and HR as well as the employee's immediate manager and a subject matter expert.

It is important that this training be conducted before the rumour mill starts, preferably just before the employee returns to work. Once again it is important that the transitioning employee be aware of what the training will cover, who will be attending the training and be given the option to input into the content. While unusual, some transitioning employees may wish to attend portions of the training in order to answer questions that arise and to break the ice a little once the team has had an opportunity to ask questions in their absence.

It is also important for the transitioning employee to communicate what they will or will not be prepared to discuss with team members post training (this is almost always asked by team members within training sessions) along with any personal messages that the employee would like conveyed to the team at this time.

Typically the training sessions that Pride in Diversity have conducted have included:

- An introduction from a senior manager stating clearly the organisation's commitment to diversity and inclusion and their support of the employee transitioning
- A presentation by ourselves or other subject matter experts on the differences between anatomical sex, gender identity, gender expression, orientation along with the non-binary realities of each. Why people transition is covered along with any messages that the employee wants communicated. A section of the training also discusses the timeline for the return to work of the employee, the ongoing use of personal pronouns, next steps and the use of bathrooms.
- A word from HR discussing any HR related matters and answering any HR related questions.
- The provision of a very safe opportunity to address questions.
- The offer of support to any team members who really struggle with this.
- Reiteration of the organisation's support and expectations in terms of behaviour, respect, support, confidentiality.

Ideally a top-down approach to the training would be:

- Executive/Leadership in reporting line – a conversation and a request to open the team training session stressing the importance of diversity and inclusion and respect for individuals
- Members of the immediate team
- Members of the wider team (those on the same floor, those working closely with the person etc).
- External partners, customers, key stakeholders.

Typically an employee will have a short period of time away from the office before returning to work in their affirmed gender. This is the ideal time to conduct some of the training and communications.

## Guideline 7: Plan the return to work

Thought needs to be given to the employee's first day back at work in their affirmed gender. For some people, this can be an incredibly difficult time. There is also, more often than not, some nervousness within the team in regard to how they will respond to, and interact with their colleague going forward.

Careful planning will have ensured that the return back is as seamless as possible with passes, logins, emails, voicemails etc., already in place. Regardless, it can still be an incredibly stressful time.

This stress of that first day back can be reduced significantly by implementing one or all of the following strategies:

- An afternoon tea away from the work area (another floor, boardroom) a couple of days before the person's return with the team to welcome them back in their affirmed gender and break the ice. We have attended many of these over the years and they are extremely well received by both the person transitioning and their team. Ideally you would have the manager there, HR and anybody else who has been instrumental in assisting the employee throughout the process.
- Staggering the first couple of weeks back. First week back, perhaps three days, then four, then five. We have found that this has been extremely beneficial in reducing the stress of the first week back for the employee.
- Touching base with the employee regularly to ensure that everything is going well.
- Addressing any inappropriate commentary/behaviour immediately and reiterating to the team that the need to do the same.

## Guideline 8: Follow-up and learning

It is important that HR or the person's direct manager touches base with the employee several times during the months post transition to ensure that all is well and that they are not encountering any difficulties. The timeline and frequency of these follow up meetings may be agreed during the planning stages.

This also provides an opportunity to seek feedback from the employee on the support that they received, the process that was followed along with any recommendations for improvement. Again, every person's transition will be different, but there will always be lessons that can be learned along the way. Ensure that you document these lessons for consideration the next time you are called on to assist and if necessary, seek for these lessons to be incorporated within the official process documentation.

## Other Considerations

### In regard to bathrooms

This is without a doubt the most commonly asked question in relation to an employee transitioning in the workplace.

Once the employee is presenting in their affirmed gender, then they use the bathroom of their affirmed gender. If anybody is uncomfortable with that, then the person uncomfortable may opt to use a bathroom in another location should they so choose. In no instance should the person who has transitioned be forced to use a bathroom that is misaligned with their gender expression.

Asking a person to use a bathroom that is not aligned to their current gender expression or denying them access to bathrooms is gender based discrimination and in violation of the Sex Discrimination Act.

In respect to employees who are gender fluid or bigender, please see the section on *Bigender and gender fluid employees*.

### Leadership messages

All communications in regard to the employees transition should be dealt with respectfully and sensitively. At all times there should be a strong leadership message around the organisations commitment to diversity and inclusion and your organisational values around respectful behaviour.

Your leadership messages are critical during this process which is why throughout the planning phase we recommend that your leaders are trained by an external subject matter expert (be it via a one-on-one conversation or formal trainer) and that they attend the team training / briefings to convey a strong leadership message of support. This will help to quash some of the negative banter that may occur.

### Addressing negativity

While most organisations would hope that immediate team members and those with whom the employee works most closely would be supportive and respectful, it would be naive to assume that there won't in some instances be people who struggle with the change of a team members gender expression. This is why training is so critical. Without team training, people can fill in their own blanks and unhelpful untruths can circulate.

Negative behaviour, destructive gossip and deliberate attempts to isolate or make your transitioning employee uncomfortable need to be handled quickly. The employee's immediate manager needs to be watchful and the offending personnel need to be spoken to.

Under no circumstances should destructive or disrespectful behaviour be tolerated by the manager or colleagues. This includes commentary around bathroom use or the intentional or ongoing misgendering through the use of incorrect names / personal pronouns.



## Team Support

Not all people who struggle with this situation will be deliberately offensive or seek to cause distress. For some, religious or cultural background pose a real dilemma. For these employees it is important that the organisation also offers support, either through an internal support mechanism or an employee assistance program.

While you can be supportive of the diversity of your team, it is important to communicate that treating co-workers with respect is critical and expected of all. Under no circumstances should the transitioning employee be made to feel as if they personally are the cause of somebody else's negative reactions or stress.

## Use of personal pronouns

This section refers to male to female transition or female to male transition. Refer also to the section on personal pronouns for non-binary gender identities.

It will take a little time for direct team members to get used to the change in names and personal pronouns and that is to be expected.

It is important that both the person who has transitioned and the team themselves acknowledge this and provide a little 'slack' during the very early days of the persons return to work. If however the misuse of names or personal pronouns continues well into the persons return, this needs to be addressed and corrected quickly. This typically falls into the domain of defiance and resistance and therefore becomes a behavioural issue.

Guidelines for direct team members re: the use of personal pronouns:

- Understand that you will sometimes make mistakes. That's OK. Rather than making a big issue of the mistake and over emphasising it (which will make everybody uncomfortable), just correct yourself and move on with the conversation.
- Don't avoid your team member for fear of making mistakes. This is the same person you have always worked with, a few mistakes is far less harmful than social isolation.
- Know that it won't be too long before it will be second nature to refer to your colleague by the correct name / personal pronouns. It's a change for everybody.

Guidelines for the person who has transitioned:

- Know that people will make a mistake, that's OK. More often than not, it's not intentional. The more comfortable you make people feel, the easier it will be for them should they slip up now and then.
- If you sense the errors are deliberate, speak to your immediate manager or one of the support team involved in the planning of your transition at work. This behaviour is destructive for both you and your immediate team and needs to be addressed.
- Some people choose to be light-hearted in their approach to this. We worked with one person who created a personal pronouns charity jar. Gold coin donation for every error. It was a fun way to address this. There may be ways that you and your team can work on this together.

## Dress Codes

Some organisations do have uniforms / dress codes and these will need to be covered off in detail for the returning employee. Dress codes are for all employees and need to be communicated in that context, they are not specific to the person transitioning.

If the employee is transitioning from male to female, then female dress codes should be outlined, while emphasising that the codes are for all women. Likewise if the employee is transitioning from female to male.

Uniforms should always have gender neutral alternatives. While many employees will be comfortable with male/female uniform styles, many will not, regardless of their gender identity. Others will be deeply offended and isolated by the restrictive choices. True respect for gender diversity and expression will accommodate gender neutral / unisex styling within the uniform range.

## Gender affirming surgery

An employee may or may not require some leave to undergo surgery or to adjust to hormone treatment. The type of leave taken, when and how much should be discussed during the planning stages. This leave is no different from any other leave consideration given to an employee requiring surgery or medical attention over a period of time.

Undergoing surgery or hormone treatment is not a prerequisite to affirming one's gender at work. Unless applying for leave or support, then this topic should be irrelevant.

## Documentation required for change of gender on official records

The Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender ([www.ag.gov.au/genderrecognition](http://www.ag.gov.au/genderrecognition)) provides a comprehensive coverage on sex and gender classifications within the Australian Government along with the documentation required by the Government for the amendment of gender in official records. These recommendations provide a good guide for all employers regardless of whether or not they work within government.

It is not a prerequisite in Australia to have undergone sex reassignment surgery or be undergoing hormone therapy to have records formally changed.

The following documents are considered sufficient for these changes to be made:

- (a) A statement/letter from a registered medical practitioner or registered psychologist
- (b) Valid Australian Government document (ie Passport) which specifies their affirmed gender
- (c) An amended State or Territory birth certificate which specifies affirmed gender or;
- (d) a State or Territory Gender Recognition Certificate showing that a change of sex has been accepted within the Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages.

In regard to birth certificates:

At the time of publication, Australian Law does not allow those seeking to transition who are currently married to change their sex on a birth certificate (this would result in a same-sex marriage). While a non-married person may choose to present an amended birth certificate, it can be extremely stressful to married individual to be asked to provide one. A letter from a registered medical practitioner or psychologist will suffice. It is important that HR teams and those involved in supporting someone transition are aware of this. This should be clearly communicated within all formal transition process documentation.

In recognition of the possibility of these laws changing in time, we recommend that you refer directly to any amended documentation within the Government Guidelines on Sex and Gender, Attorney-Generals Department or Human Rights Commission.

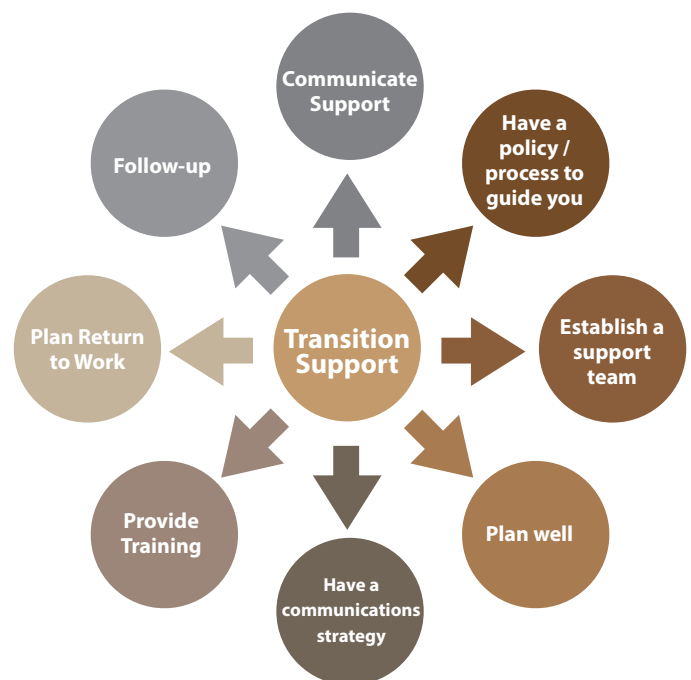
## The continuity of employment records

When someone changes their name and gender then it is necessary of course to make some amendments to employment records. Employment records are highly confidential and are only accessed by those within the organisation with the appropriate privileges. The use and disclosure of personal information is protected by privacy laws (Privacy Principle 10, 11) and that information applies as much to records pertaining to one's gender as it does other personal information.

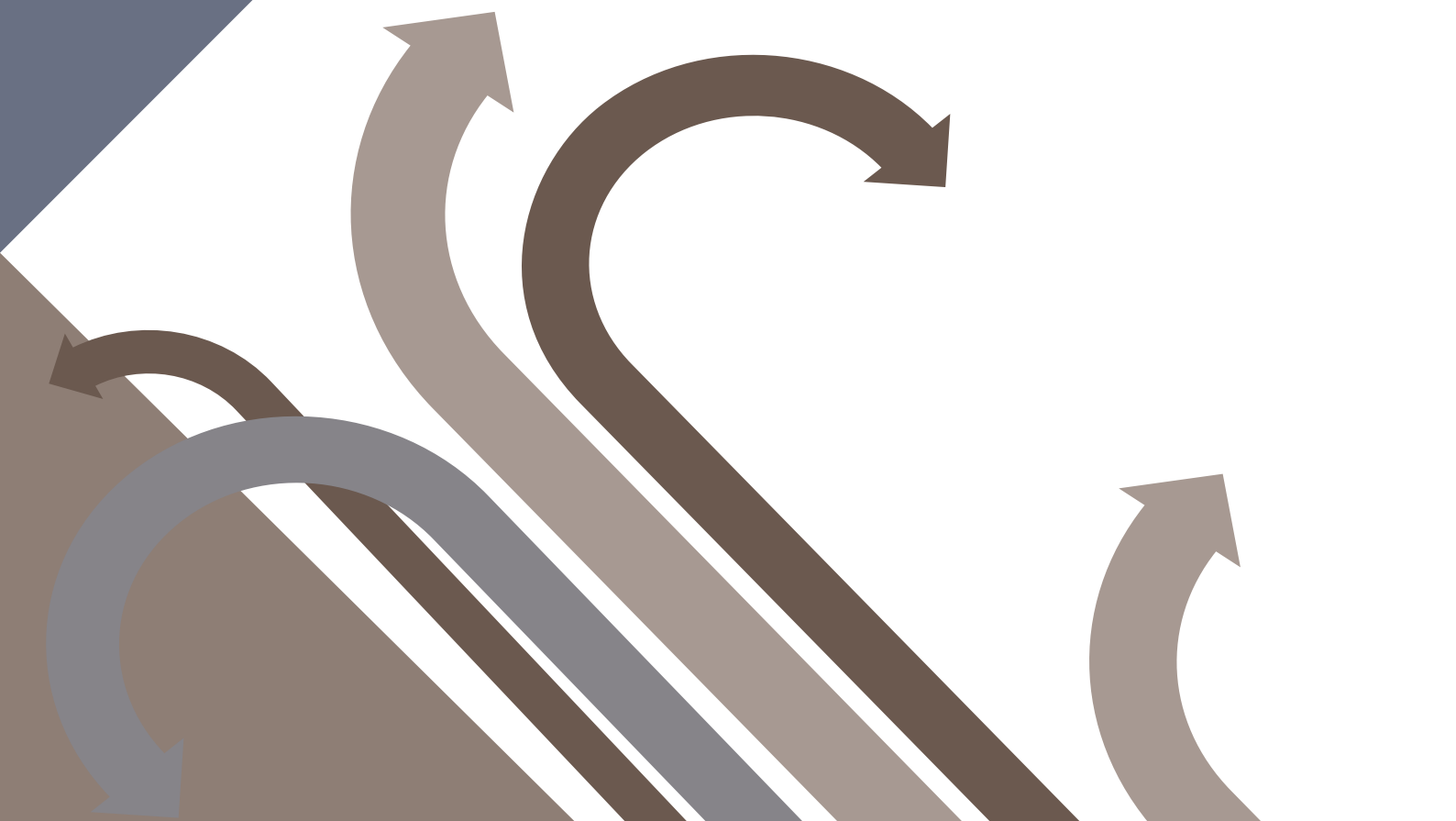
The Attorney General's Government Guidelines on Sex and Gender discusses the Government's approach to identity security and the need to ensure the record continuity of an individuals identity. For these reasons, the document states that only one record should be made or maintained for an individual regardless of a change in gender or personal identity. The document furthers states that this history should be subject to appropriate security controls, only recorded and accessed when absolutely necessary.

While the above is focusing on department and agency records, continuity of employment record also allows the individual to obtain reference checks post employment. This is something that can be discussed with the individual transitioning with further professional advice being sought as required.

## Visual Summary



**LET'S TALK NON-  
BINARY; LET'S  
TALK FLUIDITY**



While the language may seem new, gender fluidity or non-binary genders have been around since the dawn of time.

Gender identities are not just limited to male and female. For many people, it's just not quite that simple. For some, their gender is much more fluid, it may vacillate between male and female, it may be neither, or both.

We understand that sex is not binary (see our publication on Intersex Inclusion), we understand that gender expression is not binary (understanding terminology such as androgynous and creating newer terms such as metrosexual to accommodate changes in western norms) and of course we understand the non-binary nature of sexual orientation in bisexuality. But we still get stuck on gender. Time for change.

It is important to understand that these different ways of considering or experiencing gender have always been around but due to the lack of understanding or unacceptability of any gender expression outside of the binary, many have actively tried to either masque their identity or just force fit themselves into societal norms at great cost to themselves.

With the rise of LGBTI inclusion initiatives, we are not only seeing more transgender people communicate their wish to transition in the workplace, but we have also witnessed a notable rise in the number of employees wishing to be their authentic selves in terms of their non binary or fluid gender identity.

At Pride in Diversity we have worked with:

- those who wish to express their gender fluidity;
- and those who wish to be heard in terms of being Agender.

These scenarios pose some interesting questions for employers and require some significant rethinking in terms of acknowledging gender diversity within the celebrated diversities of our employee and customer base.

Many people for whom this is a concern may never want to officially transition, change their name or their gender marker (some will), but may want to dress according to their gender identity and be addressed by the appropriate personal pronouns.

Some may wish you to discontinue personal pronouns such as he/she, him/her altogether with a preference for the use of their name. Others may be more comfortable with "they" instead of him/her. Others may ask that the pronoun used reflects the gender that they are currently expressing.

This raises some very real challenges for organisations and some significant adjustment for teams and colleagues. However, it is not unqualified to be asked to be addressed according to your gender expression and the fact that one does not fit neatly into the binary of male and female should not disqualify somebody from this right.

It is perfectly OK to ask respectfully which personal pronouns the person would like you to use. It is not okay to intentionally use the incorrect pronouns once they have advised you of their preference.

Continually misgendering an individual though the prolonged use of incorrect pronouns can cause great stress to an individual and be paramount to harassment, however the transition to different or multiple personal pronouns can be difficult for team members and so there has to be a mutual agreement in terms of when and how this change will take place.

It is not unqualified to be asked to be addressed according to your gender expression and the fact that one does not fit neatly into the binary of male and female should not disqualify somebody from this right.

This is where the individual can play a significant role in educating others in what it means to be gender fluid, bigender, agenda or gender queer (depending on the term utilised). An understanding of the challenges and experiences of individuals will not only create a greater level of understanding but a greater willingness to make that conscious effort to change their language.

Considerations and discussions between the employer and employee should include:

- Preferred personal pronouns
- Fluidity of gender and impact on a range of stakeholders and workplace relationships
- Gender presentation (male/female/both/androgynous/neither)
- Gender markers
- Names on legal documentation
- Details on HR documentation
- Training / Communications
- Use of bathrooms or gender specific facilities (ie changerooms, showers)

In many ways, a persons request to change personal pronouns or present differently at work is not unlike a transition in terms of the processes and communications that may need to take place.

As every individual and work circumstance is different, it is impossible to provide a set of guidelines that will fit every situation, but discussions, processes and checklists throughout this publication should provide an ample guide as to how you might go about supporting both the individual and the team.

## Frequently asked Questions

### Salutations and Pronouns

The salutations and personal pronouns the people use can vary significantly; hence the importance of asking the individual which they prefer. Here are some of the more common:

#### Binary pronouns

She/He	He/She said	Going to meet him/her	That is hers / his	Thinks as herself/himself & themself
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#### Gender neutral pronouns

Ze and Hir (Ze could also be zie or sie)	Ze said	Going to meet hir	That is hirs	Thinks as hirself
Ze and mer	Ze said	Going to meet mer	That is zers	Thinks as zemself
Zhe, Zher, Zhim	Zhe said	Going to meet zhim	That is zhers	Zhimself
Xe	Xe said	Going to meet xem	That is xyrs	Thinks as xemself

#### Replacements:

- Mx (in place of Mr., Miss, Mrs)
- Ze, zie, sie, ze, zhe, xe (in place of he/she)
- Hir, mer, zhim, xem (in place of him/her)
- Hirself, zemself, zhimself, xemself (herself, himself)

### Working with non-traditional pronouns

It would be nion impossible and unrealistic for employers to educate all employees, customers, stakeholders in the use of preferred personal pronouns for every gender diverse employee. At the moment, we are still trying to get employers to rethink their definition and use of the word gender. And this is where both the employee and the transition support team (employer) need to agree on a way forward that will satisfy both parties.

In some instances, the employees immediate work circle might be quite comfortable learning how to address the employee; and in some cases, this is going to cause confusion and hesitation. What we do not want is the employee being isolated and excluded because it is just too hard to address them or ongoing and intentional misgendering that will grieve the employee.

Many of the employees that we have worked with have defaulted to the use of their name or they/their/them. Others have spoken to their teams and communicated their preference and are understanding when people do make unintentional mistakes.

The purpose of this document is simply to educate employers and in particular HR and managers in the growing use of non-traditional, non-gendered pronouns; what they are, where they fit and to hopefully put you in a better position to have those conversations when they arise.

### Bathrooms for gender fluid or non binary gendered employees

When an employee is transitioning from a male gender expression to a female gender expression or vice versa, the answer is simple. The employee uses the bathroom aligned to their gender expression. So the moment the employee returns to work as their affirmed gender, then the employee will use the bathroom of their affirmed gender. However, until the employee returns as their affirmed gender, the bathroom of their current gender expression should be used.

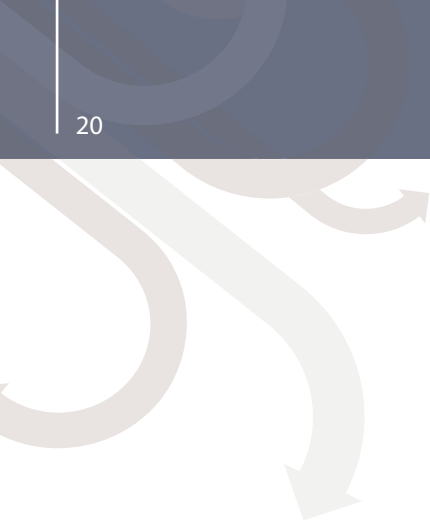
In terms of non-binary genders or gender fluid employees, this requires a little more consideration. Once again, this is where it is important to strike a balance between the care and wellbeing of all employees, not just the employee who identifies as neither male, female or both. If someone does not identify as male or female then utilising the male/female bathrooms may not only be uncomfortable for them, but others around them.

The most workable solution to date is to have a nearby unisex bathroom open to all employees be that on the same floor or close to. Many gender diverse employees feel uncomfortable using a bathroom specifically set up for a person with disabilities as (a) they may not have a disability and (b) it opens them up to questions, commentary or disapproving glares when they enter or exit a bathroom that has been specifically set up for people with a disability.

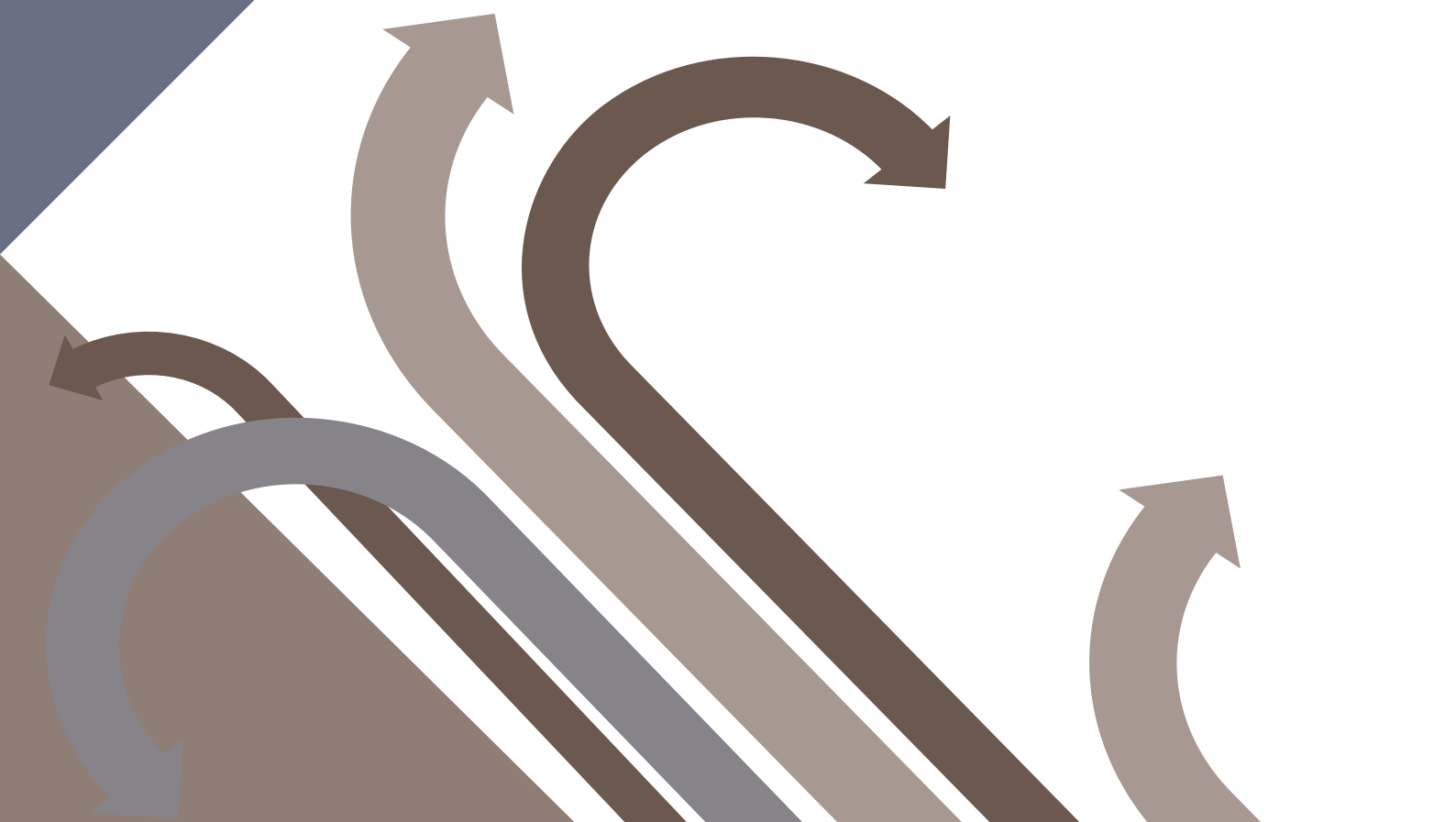
People are not unused to unisex or gender neutral bathrooms.

### Gender specific services

If services are set up as gender specific and there is a genuine need for them to be gender specific, then somebody who does not identify as that gender would not have access to that service. The question may therefore be more related to "do we have a similar service for those who may require it who are not of that gender or who's gender is more fluid"?



# HEARING FROM GENDER DIVERSE EMPLOYEES



As part of our work at Pride in Diversity we have had the pleasure of working with many gender diverse individuals and hearing their stories. We asked a number of people if they would be happy to contribute to this publication by sharing their stories. From a range of questions that we asked, we have compiled a series of responses in the hope that it will give you an idea of how differently people may identify and how far reality is from what we have known as the binary constructs of male and female.

## Ali

### How do you identify? And could you tell us a little more about what that means?

I usually use “non-binary,” which feels appropriately vague. I’m comfortable with genderqueer and agender, as well. For me, it has been largely about coming around to the realisation that I’m the outlier—I thought all my life that everyone felt pretty confused about what gender is and that the categories seemed weird and arbitrary. I’m a scientist both in work and at heart, and learned that sex isn’t a binary as a young kid. When I was in uni, I had my first binary trans friends. Seeing them so strongly identify as male and female gave me the perspective I was missing: clearly gender’s really deeply important to other people, which means my sense of being not gendered is weird.

### What does workplace inclusion mean to you?

Little things, like access to unisex toilets, and big things like having people use the correct pronouns for me. It means the chance to be myself in a way cis people usually take for granted.

## Anonymous

### How do you identify? And could you tell us a little more about what that means?

I identify as gender fluid, and that means my gender changes over time. Most of the time I am non-gender, which means I am a person without being male or female or any other gender. Just me. My preferred pronouns are zie and hir.

### What does workplace inclusion mean to you?

Workplace inclusion means a culture that recognises you as an individual and respects your identity. At my work, there’s hardly any awareness of gender diverse identities, especially non-gender ones. That can be exhausting, as people constantly misgender me and reinforce gender stereotypes at marketing meetings and over lunch. I think inclusion starts with awareness, and this helps people avoid making assumptions of you based on your appearance and opens up space for people to self-identify if they choose. Asking for people’s preferred pronouns in meetings would be excellent, plus allowing people to identify as M/F/X on HR forms and surveys.

### Is there anything else you’d like to share?

When I’m misgendered or have unpleasant gender conversations at work, my main feelings are frustration, anxiety and exhaustion. But I believe that each individual can change the culture around them – because we are part of the culture. I’ve raised awareness of gender diversity at work, and seen changes in the way people behave. It’s definitely better than it was a year ago, although it’s still pretty grim and a lot could improve. I hope that the culture we shape today will support other people in the future.



## Roxanne / Bobby J

**How do you identify? And could you tell us a little more about what that means?**

I identify as gender fluid. To me this means that I do not wish to be restrained to one gender, being female, all of the time. I feel confident both as female and male and if I am unable to be my male identity from time to time I feel lesser than my whole self. Being gender fluid, I feel, can be complex as when people ask when I will transition I need to keep reiterating that I am both[male and female] and most likely will never transition fully to male only. I always make a point of clarifying this to people in relation to myself as I need people around me to understand that as a gender fluid person I wish to be both and that this should be ok.

**What does workplace inclusion mean to you?**

This to me means that I can be whoever I wish to be on any given day and still be taken seriously, accepted, embraced and celebrated by my colleagues and clients. I am thankful that at Deakin University this has always been the case.

**Have you transitioned in the workplace, and if so, what was that experience like for you?**

I have been to work as both my female and male self on a number of occasions and have had no negative issues. People wish for me to tell them more in a respectful way and I love to talk about my experiences with them. They also ensure they use my correct name and pronoun depending on if I am Roxanne or Bobby J on the day and this means a lot to me.

**Is there anything else you'd like to share?**

We need to acknowledge people in the workplace for who they wish to be, without question or judgement. If we do this, we surely will create a much richer workplace to work in and consequently a richer community to live in.

How does someone who is gender diverse fit comfortably in to all aspects of the workplace? This is a question I wish to work on for a positive outcome not only for me but for all who identify as gender diverse.

We need to also acknowledge that the family, friends and work colleagues of someone who newly identifies themselves as GLBTIQ will also go through a 'transition' period themselves and how do we support these people too? This has come up in my own personal journey.

## Jasmine

**How do you identify? And could you tell us a little more about what that means?**

I am a post transition transgender woman. Born as male sex, I identified as female from a very young age, basically when I began to understand what gender was. At 25 I was living as a gay man but made the decision to come out as a heterosexual female so that I could live life as the real me. I have since undergone both hormone replacement treatment and sex affirmation surgeries to align my sex with my gender.

**What does workplace inclusion mean to you?**

Workplace inclusion is of the upmost importance. From a business standpoint, fostering an inclusive environment where everyone is allowed to be their authentic selves, free from ridicule and judgement, provides staff a level of comfort and security to be more productive and achieve better outcomes. From a personal standpoint, working in an inclusive workplace without the need to hide who I am has given me peace of mind that my job security is not at stake and that I can remain unafraid of and optimistic for my personal future. After all, a positive life requires us to be independent financially through adequate employment, and if we feel that employment is at risk, we are placed under intense stress and fear in and for all areas of our life.

**Have you transitioned in the workplace, and if so, what was that experience like for you?**

Transitioning in the workplace was like sharing my darkest secret with strangers I had known for years. While they didn't know, I had been living a double life for some time. A girl learning to be a woman outside of work who returned to work Monday to Friday in boys clothes with a male name she'd always hated. Though terrified, I worked through the process of communicating my impending transition to my colleagues and clients with the support of my HR department and the team at Pride In Diversity, and after a lot of logistical and emotional planning, I returned to work for the first time in the right clothes with my real name. No more lies. No more hiding. It was one of the most liberating experiences of my life, and for the first time in my life 'I' was living a complete life. I was genuinely surprised at the level of support and the lack of negativity. I had braced for backlash, but simply fell right back into routine and got on with the job.

**Is there anything else you'd like to share?**

Transition is a bumpy ride. Mistakes were made by myself, by my family, by my friends and by my colleagues and clients and compassion and forgiveness are heavily relied upon. But there comes that point when the journey of transition ends and the next journey of life begins. And that life is happier, healthier, more productive, more positive and genuinely worth the fight! Workplaces that increase both acceptance and inclusion will certainly reap the rewards of a happier, more secure and more committed contingent of diverse employees.

## Spence

### **How do you identify? And could you tell us a little more about what that means?**

I identify as Queer. For me, Queer means living, loving and learning in an ever-changing body in an ever-changing world.

### **What does workplace inclusion mean to you?**

Workplace inclusion is more than just being there (in the workplace). For me, it means feeling supported and valued in the workplace and feeling proud in yourself in being there.

### **Have you transitioned in the workplace, and if so, what was that experience like for you?**

I have transitioned from using binary pronouns to now using the non-binary pronouns of they and their. I have been incredibly supported by management who provided appropriate information to my colleagues on my behalf. I feel respected in my workplace and that allows me to focus and do the job I am here to do! I know my own experience of transitioning in this way in the workplace is a rare experience.

## Caitlin

### **How do you identify? And could you tell us a little more about what that means?**

I identify as a woman but I am also proud to say that I am a Transsexual woman despite the pain that reminds me of. I have learnt to trust my own inner conviction on who I am and embrace life on my terms while sitting comfortably with the conundrum of my background. My heart resonates with the suffering many Trans people endure which drives me to fight to end the injustice we experience.

### **What does workplace inclusion mean to you?**

For me, workplace inclusion means fostering a work environment where everyone is free to bring their whole-self to work without self-censorship and without fear. It means acknowledging, educating on and celebrating difference not only because it is good business practice but because it is ethical and socially just.

### **Have you transitioned in the workplace, and if so, what was that experience like for you?**

Without the support of IAG, I doubt I would be here today. I transitioned in 2002 at a time when workplace support for transition was in its infancy. To their great credit, senior management at IAG went to extraordinary lengths to educate themselves and provide awareness training to management and frontline staff that was educational and deeply empathetic to my journey. I was treated with the utmost respect by all of my colleagues and felt as though there was a real empathy for what I was going through. My psychiatrist wrote a template on workplace transition for his other Trans patients based on the approach IAG took.

### **Is there anything else you'd like to share?**

In the thirteen years since my transition, I have thrived in my roles at IAG, and with that secure foundation I have completed post-graduate counselling studies, and now work part-time as a counsellor and community advocate for the Transgender community; I also lead Mardi Gras's Trans and Gender Diverse Working Group. Within IAG I am now leading our LGBTIQ inclusion initiative. I am immensely grateful to IAG for their courage all those years ago and their continuing support. I hope that my journey shows that with acceptance and support in the workplace that Trans people can reach for their dreams.

## Jessica

### How do you identify? And could you tell us a little more about that?

I identify as a female- my background is, to couch it in the accepted terminology, an assigned male at birth transgender woman. I find gender identities very problematic, as the workplace is still not yet at the point where they can handle the changes in how people are identifying, and disentangling the connection between biological sex and gender, which are not inextricably linked. I am binary on the spectrum, but an increasing number of people are choosing to identify as both, or neither gender, which will be a fresh set of challenges as these people enter the workforce.

### What does workplace inclusion mean to you?

I am drawn to a recent campaign about trans rights by the Australian HRC, where they clearly define inclusion as being given the same rights, equality, dignity and respect as any other employee. Sadly, this does not regularly occur, despite it being 2015, I feel we still have some way to go, part of the reason I reached out initially. While most of us in the community are probably well aware that we are officially protected by the anti-discrimination act, we also probably realise this protection only extends so far.

Ideally, I desire a workplace where I can be open and proud of who I am and what I have achieved, where I do not have to live in the shadows and remain isolated and excluded solely because of my gender identity. I do not expect special treatment or preference, but I do expect fair and equitable treatment- that is inclusion.

Invoking the 80/20 rule, I would say I am 80% [accepted] and 20% rejected at work. Professionally, in my role requirements, my interactions with others are positive, or at least neutral, but there is little to no social engagement or inclusion in work social events etc. I have been 'encouraged' by some in the past to remain silent about my personal life, and to not push the envelope on how much people are willing to accept. Some have told me being trans is 'enough' and I have also been discouraged from venturing into certain areas of the business where it might make people 'uncomfortable'- all unofficially, of course.

On paper, I have officially had no formal issues with inclusion here, it is hard to describe what has in fact occurred at times, I have attempted to in the next section.

### Have you transitioned in the workplace, and if so, what was that experience like for you?

I began my transition in Oct 2013, but did not come out at work until March 2014. To be honest, my initial plan was to resign and start afresh elsewhere in my new identity, but a sympathetic manager convinced me to stay. Do I regret it? Sometimes. While people are, for the most part, tolerant, that is kind of the problem- there is a significant gulf between tolerance and acceptance. While I am acknowledged in my true gender now, which is incredibly gratifying, there is the issue that everyone knew me as my old identity, some for years, and that comes with its own specific set of challenges that simply wouldn't exist if people knew me only in my new, real identity.

This might sound unduly negative; it isn't meant to be but the fact is, once you transition, the way the world interacts with you shifts irrevocably. There are great positives- being able to finally live authentically was such a tremendous release, and there is a

particularly gratifying feeling of being able to live totally honestly, and even when it isn't so easy, I have absolutely zero regrets whatsoever.

The flipside is, you need to prepare for some changes in your career, particularly if you are someone who is a high achiever and on a strong career trajectory. There are a number of relationships that will be ruptured, some irreparably. There are also new relationships that can be forged, but in a lot of ways you are starting over in a lot more ways than just your work ID photo. You have the constant issue of trying to maintain your professional reputation, how to handle using previous work experience tied to your old identity, reference checks from people you do NOT wish to be outed to, qualifications from conservative establishments or overseas institutions that may not be agreeable to reissuing, etc.

There is a constant, tiring need to strive for acceptance and to 'fit in', don't be too noisy about being trans, don't talk about your personal life, be diplomatic when misgendered, which can initially happen multiple times a day, and is what puts a great many people off. I know more closeted Trans people than I do out ones, at least from a work perspective, and this is one of the many challenges that still lie ahead of us.

### Is there anything else you'd like to share?

It would be irresponsible of me to encourage anyone to push ahead with transitioning without being aware of the challenges they will (not may, will) face. I admit I am fortunate to work for an organisation that is compelled by legislation to accept (tolerate) LGBTIQ employees; well, all organisations are, technically, but small businesses and independents often slip under the radar, and the cost, both financially and emotionally, of pursuing justice is beyond most trans people.

There is a definite improvement in quality of life that comes from being able to live authentically, but I see far, far too many trans people throw aside all personal and professional relationships in a myopic pursuit of the elusive moment they will feel 'real'. To me, with my background, such actions from a financial perspective are foolish. Transitioning costs are high, very high, and again not just financially- it takes a great deal of time, motivation and personal resolve to achieve results.

I would strongly urge anyone seeking to transition to establish themselves financially; I realise that sometimes it can be literally impossible to live as a lie any longer, but achieving permanent full time employment post-transition, as the laTrobe University studies have found, is extremely difficult. There are a large number of companies now that identify themselves as 'LGBT friendly', but you need to do a little research and see how much applies to the 'T'.

There was an excellent article online recently about the 'cisgender stare', which occurs infrequently these days but was very daunting in the first few weeks of my transition. You become keenly aware of the intense scrutiny you are under- it does pass, as you grow into your own (new) skin, but it is challenging and you actually learn quite a lot about passive discrimination and the little prejudices all humans have, which only emerge under certain triggers.

As stated, I do not regret anything for one second, I am Jessica, but I am also cognizant of the toll it can take on you, and that is why I have decided in my time outside of my employment to work with others and provide any help I can. I am starting as a volunteer phone counsellor for GLWA in August, and intend to continue to remain active in the local community, and use my own experiences to help others in their journeys.

## Ted

**When Ted affirmed his male gender, life changed. Here is a recent article by Ted that provides insight into that journey and the experience of behavioural norms across the two genders. Does the world treat men differently to women? Here's what Ted has to say...**

As my physical form began to shift to more visibly male, I witnessed the world beginning to turn toward me. I found myself able to take up space both physically and emotionally; I was listened to, I was no longer interrupted and I felt the breathtaking dizziness of power. I was suddenly the potential predator as a new awareness dawned while, walking down the street at night, the woman in front of me was afraid.

A female friend would pay for something and the change would be given to me; if I was angry, my deepened voice would startle and scare, even if the words I was saying hadn't changed.

I tend to identify as a man with a trans history and to live in the world with the experience of being seen first as a woman and now as a man is quite something indeed. My gender is binary because identify as male, however, challenging the rigid construct of pink or blue can be nothing but a great thing.

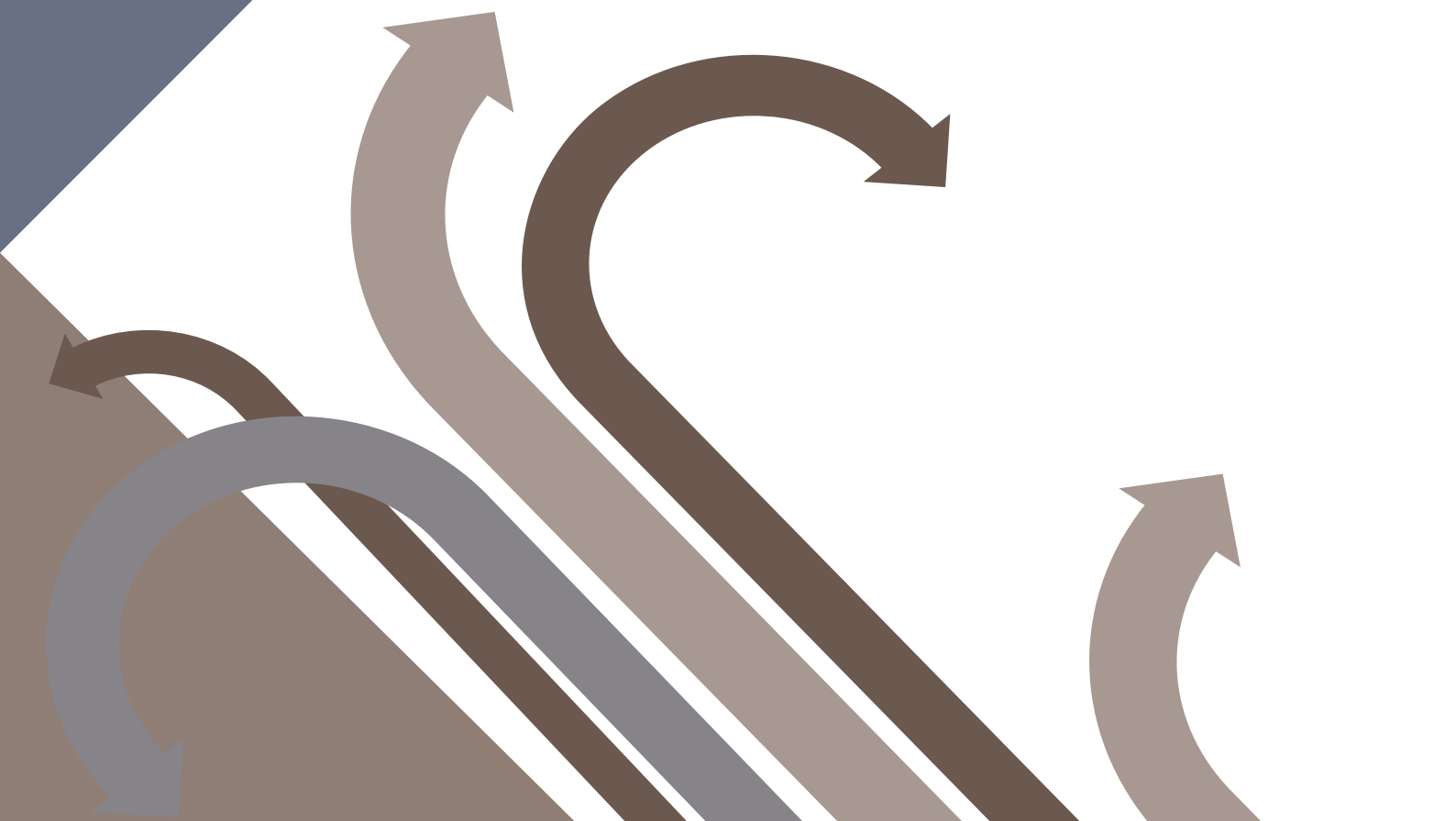
The richness of identity and experience exists, not on the edges but within and across a continuum of being, so when we squeeze everything about a person into boxes of 'either' and 'or' we truly do miss out.

Where else is this further evident than in the rules and roles of gender identity, gender experience and gender expression? The intersection of homophobia and gender expectations mean that young boys who aren't rough and tumble must be gay and the young 'tomboy' girls who are must be lesbians. I was allowed to be a tomboy until a certain age and then I was just assumed to be a gay woman, whoops.

Let's get this spectrum right: gender identities include male, female and non-binary spaces such as bigender, agender or genderqueer. The experience of being transgender is not a gender identity so if your forms ask 'Is your gender male, female or transgender?' it would be a good idea to address that if you want to be inclusive and capture meaningful data. When we ask questions like the above we are saying that all transgender people are an homogenous group whereas the reality is that trans men have a different lived experience compared to trans women and non-binary people and vice versa. Questions asked this way also suggest that trans people cannot be and are not female or male. I'll say it again, transgender is not a gender identity. You could ask if someone's gender is male, female or non-binary and then if it's necessary, ask what sex/gender they were assigned at birth (male/female). Or if that's too much, ask 'Are you: transgender, intersex or neither'

In a world that seems to find comfort in constriction and pushing square pegs into round holes, we must smash, warp and bend binaries in order to find and be allowed the freedom to be exactly who we are, whether it be those who embrace the binaries of manhood or womanhood but also the many who dwell in the in-between spaces of not here nor there, but indeed everywhere.

# APPENDICES



While we want to ensure that we create a safe and inclusive workplace for our employees, we also want to show our customers and those we provide services for the same amount of respect.

There will be many gender diverse individuals that utilise your services, buy from you, bank with you, consult with you or in some way work with you outside of employment. The same people, daily, face the same challenges. This is where you can make a difference.

To support all of your customers, those you do business with, or provide services for:

- Openly communicate your support for diversity and inclusion on your external website and ensure you include LGBTI people and those who may be gender diverse.
- Train your recruiters, consultants, trainers, customer facing staff, customer service operators and call centre staff in LGBTI awareness, challenges, language and respectful engagement. Then train everybody else!
- Review your forms, intake forms/processes for questions or tick boxes that blatantly exclude intersex, transgender or gender diverse people.
- Encourage feedback, learn from mistakes.
- Where there are gender specific services, question whether or not gender diverse people could equally benefit from such a service.
- Where appropriate, provide brochures or information sheets that specifically answer questions relevant to gender diverse people.

National Australia Bank (NAB) have a strong LGBTI inclusion focus and were the first bank to create specific policies and processes to assist Bankers facilitate requests from customers wanting to change their name and gender on banking records, cards and accounts.

The change management process around this included:

- Training on LGBTI inclusion and awareness more generally
- Formal process documentation outlining the steps the banker should take to ensure that the changes are made
- A list of documents required by the bank to make these changes
- How to make the changes within the system
- How to remove salutations if the customer does not wish to see these
- Different request scenarios and how to respond to these
- Stipulation that such conversations with customers are private and should occur in a private setting.

Changes supporting customers wishing to change their gender/ name were then communicated extensively to:

- Front line bankers
- Call centre staff
- Other areas of the business that could potentially receive calls from customers wishing to change their details.

NAB have also paid targeted attention to feedback received from transgender customers and put processes in place to ensure that feedback is continually monitored and responded to.

LGBTI inclusion and awareness is regularly offered across the bank with the Pride@NAB employee network providing ongoing expertise and advice across all areas of the business.

Throughout the change process it was repeatedly stressed how important it was that their employees act in accordance with NAB's values and expected behaviours. Through inter-bank networks, NAB have shared this work in detail with other banks, many of whom were early adopters of the process.



With LGBTI inclusion now being recognised by many as one of the fastest growing areas of diversity practice within Australian workplaces, the number of Australian employers actively promoting LGBTI inclusion both internally and externally seems to be growing exponentially. At Pride in Diversity we are constantly in awe of some of the initiatives being undertaken by our members and the community organisations that are being supported in the process.

Employers are now actively promoting their LGBTI initiatives at recruitment fairs, community events and within recruitment guides encouraging people from within the LGBTI community to seek them as an employer of choice. But what is often not talked about is the difficulty that transgender people face when seeking employment.

We have spoken to many transgender people over the years who have been extremely distressed by the challenges faced in seeking new roles as a direct result of their transgender history. While some people can “pass” easily there is still an issue of employment history, credit checks, name changes, gender marker change that will at some stage come up within any extensive checks that a potential employer may undertake. Disclosure at the interview stage is important if somebody wants to go into a role without the ongoing fear of being “found out”, negative repercussions as a result of their history or of not disclosing in the first instance.

It is imperative that recruitment teams are trained in LGBTI awareness / inclusivity and that sufficient coverage is given to the difficulty faced by many transgender people. While this may not be the experience of every transgender person, the fear around recruitment is very real for the majority of people.

While organisations can train their own internal recruiters, education for your external recruiters of choice is also important. Your recruiters need to know that you have strong LGBTI inclusion initiatives. These should be clearly spoken about amongst your other diversity initiatives as a cultural value add during the recruitment process. This will provide people with the confidence to disclose or ask further questions in relation to the extent of your inclusivity. Ensure that your recruiters know that your LGBTI inclusion does not only include lesbian, gay, bisexual employees, but also transgender and intersex people. Even though we include transgender and intersex people within our commonly used acronym, you need to communicate this to ensure that others understand that your language is not tokenistic.

Gender diverse individuals generally will have some obstacles to overcome in seeking new employment that most of us will not have given consideration too. If you do promote yourself as an LGBTI inclusive employer, it is imperative that your recruiters, both internal and external are trained to tackle questions from and respond to your gender diverse applicants.

For more information on training for Recruiters, please contact Pride in Diversity on 02 9206 2139.

### Recruiter quotes:

*“Get yourself off the internet. Make sure that anything which mentions you being trans is taken down. Employers will not hire you if their clients are able to find out about you.”*

*“My cousin is gay, and I love him, but his father would turn in his grave if he saw how gay he is. He puts gay equal rights stuff on his Facebook page and it’s just too much. You can’t do that if you’re in business, you need to respect that other people don’t agree with you, and if clients find out about your opinions it will destroy business relationships.”*

*“I know a few successful gay people, but you’d never know they are gay. The best gay employees are those who just blend in and keep it to themselves.”*



Affirmed Gender	The gender to which one identifies, which may or may not match the individual's gender at birth.	Family	In this definitions list, family may include biological family or family of choice. Due to possibly having experienced rejection from their biological families, some LGBTI people may form core relationship links with others who they may refer to as their 'family of choice'. This is similar to many other people's relationships with their biological family.
Agender	a term which can be literally translated as "without gender". Those who identify as agender., do not typically identify as male, or female or any other gender.		
AISSGA	Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome Support Group Australia, a peer support, information and advocacy group for intersex people in Australia.	FtM (F2M)	Female to male. (sometimes written as FtoM.
Bigender	Two genders, or double gender. Bigender people may experience two gender identities at the same time or at different times. Typically bigender identities are male and female, but may also include non-binary identities. May also include a tendency to move between masculine and feminine gender-typed behaviour depending on context, expressing a distinctly male persona and a distinctly female persona.	Gay	A person whose primary emotional and sexual attraction is towards people of the same sex. The term is most commonly applied to males, although some females use this term.
		Gender	Gender is part of a person's personal and social identity. It refers to the way a person feels, presents and is recognised within the community. A person's gender expression refers to outward social markers, including their name, outward appearance, mannerisms and dress.
Bisexual	A person who is emotionally, sexually attracted persons of the same and opposite sex.	Gender Diverse	An umbrella word for people with diverse or non-conforming gender identities. Sometimes used in preference to the term transgender. Intersex should not be conflated with gender diverse.
Brother Boys	Brother boys are aboriginal transgender men.		
Cis or Cisgender	A term used to describe when a person's gender identity matches social expectations for their sex assigned at birth; the opposite of transgender. It is unclear how this term relates to people with intersex variations, if at all.	Gender Fluid	A gender identify that varies over time. A gender fluid person may feel like a mix of genders, but more male on some days, female on others.
		Gender Identity; Gender Expression	Gender identity, and related appearance or mannerisms or other gender related characteristics of a person. This includes the way people express or present their gender. It recognises that a person may identify as a man, woman, both, neither or otherwise. Intersex people have a range of gender identities, just like non-intersex people.
Coming Out	The process through which an individual comes to recognise and acknowledge (both to self and to others) their sexual orientation / gender identity. People with intersex variations typically find out about their status from their parents or a doctor.		
Congenital	Also "innate", a term meaning that something is present at birth.	Genderqueer	Most commonly used when someone feels that their gender identity does not fit into the socially constructed norms associated with their biological sex.
D&I	Diversity and Inclusion, a workplace strategy to promote diverse workplaces free from discrimination.	Hetronormative	The assumption that heterosexuality is the norm and that everyone is heterosexual.

Hermaphrodite	A misleading term sometimes used to describe intersex people. In biology, hermaphrodites such as snails, some fish and plants, possess fully functioning fertile sets of both "male" and "female" sex organs. This is impossible in mammals. Some intersex medical diagnoses have been termed "pseudo-hermaphrodites" or "true-hermaphrodites". While some intersex people reclaim the term, others find it stigmatising due to its medical and biological uses.	Non-binary	Someone with a gender identity other than man or woman; there are a diverse range of non-binary gender identities. Some intersex people and some trans people have non-binary gender identities.
		Queer	An umbrella term for a wide range of non-conforming gender identities and sexual orientations.
		Same-sex Attracted	Attraction towards people of one's own gender. The term has been used particularly in the context of young people whose sexual identity is not fixed, but who do experience sexual feelings towards people of their own sex.
Homophobia	A term used to describe the irrational fear, hatred, aversion to or discrimination against people who are homosexual, or same-sex attracted, or who are perceived to be homosexual or same-sex attracted.	Sex	Refers to the chromosomal, gonadal, and anatomical characteristics associated with biological sex.
Intersex	A simple and least stigmatising term for a broad range of congenital physical traits or variations that lie between stereotypical ideals of male and female. Intersex people are born with physical, hormonal or genetic features that are neither wholly female nor wholly male, or a combination of female and male.	Sexual Orientation	A person's sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, persons of a different sex, persons of the same sex and persons of a different sex, or persons of neither sex. Intersex persons have diverse sexual orientations.
Intersex Status	An attribute in the Commonwealth of Australia Sex Discrimination Act 1984, as amended in 2013 The attribute is defined in physical terms. It is deliberately separate from attributes of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and disability.  The Act contains exemptions relating to competitive sport and recognition of non-binary identities. No specific religious exemptions were intended, due to the physical, innate characteristics of intersex.	Sister Girls	Sister girls are aboriginal transgender women
		Transgender or Trans	A person who identifies their gender as different to what was assumed at birth may consider themselves transgender or trans. A trans person might identify as male or female, or as non-binary (and relate to terms such as gender fluid, genderqueer, bigender etc). Some women might use terms such as trans woman or Male-to-Female (MtF) and some men might use terms such as trans man or Female-to-Male (FtM) to describe their lived experience, others do not. Additionally, Indigenous trans women might identify as Sistergirl, Indigenous trans men as Brotherboy.
Misgendering	Describing or addressing someone using personal pronouns or other language that does not match a person's gender identity. Deliberate misgendering constitutes bullying/harassment and needs to be addressed as such. For people with intersex variations, this may include a presumption that they have a non-binary gender identity, just as much as an assumption that they are a man, or a woman.	Transition	Describes both a public act and a process. It involves the permanent and public adoption of the style and presentation of the gender different to that of a person's birth-assigned sex. It usually includes a change of name, chosen style of address and pronouns, as well as adopting the dress and style of a person's innate gender. Transition might also include medical intervention such as hormones and/or surgery, many people do not want or cannot access these interventions
MtF (M2F)	Male to Female. Sometimes written as MtoF		

Many of the support organisations on the following page will have access to, or can point you in the direction of useful resources to support your gender diverse employees or to provide awareness across your employee population. You may also like to consider:

## USEFUL PUBLICATIONS, FACTSHEETS & WEBSITES

- An excellent publication on becoming a trans positive / inclusive organisation is *Shining the Light* by Benjamin Gooch from gallop.org.au. We highly recommend this. <http://www.galop.org.uk/shine-galop/shining-the-light-resource/>
- Sexual Orientation, gender Identity and status discrimination Information Sheet, AHRC, Australian Human Rights Commission <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/new-protection>
- Gender Centre in NSW has a wide range of papers, kits and fact sheets on their website: <http://gendercentre.org.au/>
- Sister girls are aboriginal transgender women. Brother boys are aboriginal transgender men. For more information, visit: <http://sistersandbrothersnt.com>
- Trans\*@Work, A guide for trans\* employees their employers and colleagues. Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland. You can download a soft copy of this publication at [www.adcq.qld.gov.au](http://www.adcq.qld.gov.au)
- Government Guidelines on Sex and Gender can be found on the Attorney-General's Department website: [www.ag.gov.au/genderrecognition](http://www.ag.gov.au/genderrecognition). This document also contains templates for use by registered medical practitioners or registered psychologists certifying the sex and/or gender of a person who is intersex, transgender or gender diverse.
- Guideline: Transgender people at work. Complying with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 in employment. <http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/our-resources-and-publications/ea-practice-guidelines/item/632-guideline-transgender-people-at-work-complying-with-the-equal-opportunity-act-2010>

## YOUTUBE

Search for keywords such as Agender, BiGender, Gender Fluid, Transgender to view a growing number of videos and tutorials. Many of these are home-made by individuals telling their story and talking about their experiences of being gender diverse. There are some amazing videos here that are highly beneficial in training. Personal stories are powerful and there is certainly no shortage of them on YouTube. It may take you a little while to find the ones that best fit your purpose, but certainly worth investing the time.

## REFERENCES

Attorney-General's Department (2014) Government Guidelines on Sex and Gender, [www.ag.gov.au/genderrecognition](http://www.ag.gov.au/genderrecognition).

# APPENDIX E: SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

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This is by no means a complete list in seeking support groups, this list was most readily available to us at the time of publication. Each of these organisations may be able to refer you on to other state based organisations if need be.

Name	Area	Description	Contact
A Gender Agenda	ACT	A Gender Agenda works with the intersex and gender diverse community. This includes intersex people, transsexuals, transgender people, cross-dressers and other gender variant or gender non-conforming people.	<a href="http://genderrights.org.au/">http://genderrights.org.au/</a>
Australian and New Zealand Professional Association for Transgender Health	National	To promote the health, rights and well-being of people who experience difference in sexual formation and/or gender expression, within professional training programs	<a href="http://www.anzpath.org/">http://www.anzpath.org/</a>
Genderqueer Australia	National	Genderqueer Australia is where you can find support if you identify as gender-questioning or genderqueer. You can also find support if you're family or friend or a professional helping out.	<a href="http://www.genderqueer.org.au">http://www.genderqueer.org.au</a>
Ausgender	National	Ausgender is a community based support and social group for the Transgender and Transsexual community	<a href="http://www.ausgender.com.au/">http://www.ausgender.com.au/</a>
The Peer Advocacy Network for the Sexual Health of Trans Masculinities (PASH.tm)	National	The mission of PASH.tm is to address the sexual health needs of gay, bisexual and queer transgender men	<a href="http://www.afao.org.au/pashtm">http://www.afao.org.au/pashtm</a>
FTM Australia	National	FTM Australia has provided resources and health information for all men (identified 'female' at birth), their family members, friends and healthcare providers, since 2001.	<a href="http://www.ftmaustralia.org/">http://www.ftmaustralia.org/</a>
Sistergirls & Brotherboys Australia	National	Gender diverse Aboriginal Sistergirls and Brotherboys .... we also invite family friends and supporters to join our closed group.	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/sistergirls.brotherboys">https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/sistergirls.brotherboys</a>
Transcend	National	Transcend is an information hub for parents and families of transgender children	<a href="http://www.transcendsupport.com.au/">http://www.transcendsupport.com.au/</a>
Trans Health Australia	National	A community run advocacy group & peer support network to address serious health and well being issues affecting Australian trans communities	<a href="http://www.transhealthaustralia.org/">http://www.transhealthaustralia.org/</a>
Gender Diversity Australia	National	Gender Diversity Australia is a peer facilitated social hub for gender diverse people living in Australia.	<a href="http://genda.com.au/">http://genda.com.au/</a>
The Gender Centre	NSW	The Gender Centre is an accommodation and counselling service for gender diverse clients from the age of 16 and up. The GC also provides education, support, training and referral to other organisations and service providers	<a href="http://www.gendercentre.org.au">http://www.gendercentre.org.au</a>
The Seahorse Society of NSW	NSW	The Seahorse Society of NSW is a social and support organisation for cross-dressers & transgender people, based in Sydney, NSW, Australia.	<a href="http://www.seahorsesoc.org/">http://www.seahorsesoc.org/</a>
NT Working Working Womens Centre	NT	All types of women, trans-people, intersex people, gender queer people, Brotherboys and Sistergirls are welcome to access the services of the NT Working Women's Centre.	<a href="http://www.ntwwc.com.au/">http://www.ntwwc.com.au/</a>
Sisters and Brothers NSW	NT	Sisters & Brothers NT is an advocacy and support group for people of diverse gender, sex and sexuality in the NT.	<a href="http://sistersandbrothersnt.com/">http://sistersandbrothersnt.com/</a>
Brisbane Gender Clinic	QLD	A primary health clinic run from Queensland AIDS Council's Brisbane office on Wednesdays in partnership with the Australian Transgender Support Association Queensland and Dr. Gale Bearman	<a href="http://brisbanegenderclinic.org.au/">http://brisbanegenderclinic.org.au/</a>

Australian Transgender Support Association Queensland	QLD	Formed in 1990, to help, advise and assist the transgender community in Queensland	<a href="http://www.atsaq.com">http://www.atsaq.com</a>
Seahorse QLD	QLD	A support and social group catering to the crossdressing and transgender community of Queensland, Australia	<a href="http://seahorseqld.org.au/">http://seahorseqld.org.au/</a>
Carrousel Club	SA	A social and peer support group for transgender and transsexual people, and cross dressers of all ages and nationalities, their partners, families and friends	<a href="http://www.carrouselclubofsouthaustralia.com.au/">http://www.carrouselclubofsouthaustralia.com.au/</a>
Working it Out	TAS	Tasmania's gender, sexuality and intersex status support and education service	<a href="http://www.workingitout.org.au/">http://www.workingitout.org.au/</a>
Transgender Victoria	VIC	The primary objective of the TGV is to achieve justice, equity and quality health and community service provision for *trans people, their partners, families and friends	<a href="http://www.transgendervictoria.com/">http://www.transgendervictoria.com/</a>
Zoe Belle Gender Centre	VIC	The purpose of this centre is to support and improve the health and wellbeing of Victoria's sex and gender diverse population.	<a href="http://www.zbgc.com.au">http://www.zbgc.com.au</a>
TransFamily	VIC	TransFamily is a Peer Support Group for parents, siblings, extended family and /or friends of a trans person.	<a href="http://transfamily.com.au">http://transfamily.com.au</a>
Ygender	VIC	Ygender is a peer led social support and advocacy group based in Melbourne, established in 2010.	<a href="http://www.ygender.com/">http://www.ygender.com/</a>
Seahorse Victoria	VIC	Seahorse Victoria Inc was formed in 1975 as a support and social group for the Victorian transgender community and is the longest running organisation of its type in Australia.	<a href="http://seahorsevic.com.au/">http://seahorsevic.com.au/</a>
The Chameleon Society	WA	A Perth based society which caters for trans people of all kinds as well as cross dressers	<a href="http://www.chameleonswa.org/">http://www.chameleonswa.org/</a>
Freedom Centre	WA	LGBTIQQ youth social and support group providing drop in services and programs for trans and gender diverse young people	<a href="http://www.freedom.org.au">http://www.freedom.org.au</a>
WA Gender Project	WA	WA Gender Project is a lobby, education and advocacy group based in Perth to advance the human rights of all transsexual, transgender and intersex (TTI) people	<a href="http://www.wagenderproject.org/">http://www.wagenderproject.org/</a> <a href="http://wagenderproject.org/">wagenderproject.org/</a>

## PRIDE IN DIVERSITY

Pride in Diversity is a social inclusion initiative of ACON, established in 2010 to reduce the stigma, discrimination and social isolation of LGBTI people at work thereby creating more inclusive workplaces and better health outcomes for LGBTI people.

Pride in Diversity operates as Australia's only national not-for-profit employer support program for all aspects of LGBTI workplace inclusion. Specialists in HR, organisational change and workplace diversity, Pride in Diversity has since its inception in 2010 established itself as an internationally recognised program and an integral partner to many LGBTI employer support organisations across the globe.

Pride in Diversity publishes the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI), Australia's definitive national benchmark on LGBTI workplace inclusion. This index not only benchmarks Australia employers but continues to shift and contribute to international best practice. The AWEI incorporates the largest national LGBTI employee survey which contributes to both national and international data on the impact of inclusion initiatives on LGBTI employees and the organisational culture as a whole. The AWEI annually generates an Australian Top Employers List for LGBTI employees along with several other awards for excellence in this area.

Web: [www.prideindiversity.com.au](http://www.prideindiversity.com.au)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/prideindiversity](https://facebook.com/prideindiversity)  
Twitter: [pridediversity](https://twitter.com/pridediversity)  
Phone: +612 9206.2139

For more information about the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) and associated employer awards, please visit:

[www.prideindiversity.com.au/awei](http://www.prideindiversity.com.au/awei)

## EMPLOYER SUPPORT

**For employer support on LGBTI Workplace Inclusion, the Australian Workplace Equality Index and associated Employer Awards, contact:**

Pride in Diversity  
PO Box 350  
Darlinghurst NSW 1300

[www.prideindiversity.com.au](http://www.prideindiversity.com.au)

Phone: +612 9206.2139





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