Gender Diverse, including LGBTIQA+

Phase One Consultation: National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality Introduction

# Introduction

Gender equality is at the heart of the Australian Government’s vision for a better future, and the Government is committed to restoring Australia’s leadership on gender equality.

The Government will develop a National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality (the Strategy) to drive this ambition.

## What will the Strategy do?

The Strategy will guide whole of community action to help make Australia one of the best countries in the world for equality between women and men. It is an important mechanism to elevate and prioritise actions that will achieve gender equality.

The Strategy will complement other efforts across Government to achieve gender equality, including:

* the [*National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–32*](https://www.dss.gov.au/women-programs-services-reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-end-violence-against-women-and-children-2022-2032) (National Plan)
* the Government’s response to the Australian Human Rights Commission’s [Respect@Work Report](https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/respectwork-sexual-harassment-national-inquiry-report-2020)
* the[*National Women’s Health Strategy 2020–2030*](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-womens-health-strategy-2020-2030)

It will also support the work of similar state and territory plans.

## How will the Strategy be developed?

The Government will deliver the Strategy by mid-2023.

The Office for Women will develop the Strategy in consultation with women and girls around Australia, with a focus on ensuring that diverse voices are heard and included.

The Government has also established the Women’s Economic Equality Taskforce (the Taskforce) to provide independent advice to Government, ensuring women are at the centre of policy and decision-making. The Taskforce will be a leading contributor to the Strategy, and as part of this will engage broadly with the Australian community to elevate and honour the voices of women in the Strategy.

The six [National Women’s Alliances](https://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/grants-and-funding/national-womens-alliances) will also play a key role in informing the development of the Strategy.

Consultation

Consultations will reach people with lived experience of gender inequality, living with disability, First Nations people, people who are LGBTQIA+, migrant and refugee women, those living in regional and remote areas and people from all backgrounds and classes.

The consultation will be undertaken in **two stages.**

Starting in November 2022, the Office for Women will lead targeted national consultations to inform the early development of the Strategy. These will take place across Australia and include discussions with a range of stakeholders including gender experts, academics, economists, women’s alliances, the community sector, unions and business.

In early 2023, broader community consultations will provide an opportunity for people to share their views of how we achieve gender equality and how this should be reflected in the Strategy.

The Strategy will draw from a comprehensive evidence base, and reflect public commentary, recent consultations and submissions to government. It will draw from contemporary research and reports, including those prepared for the [Jobs and Skills Summit and resulting Employment White Paper](https://treasury.gov.au/employment-whitepaper/jobs-summit)

Further information on consultation will be provided on the Office for Women’s [webpage](https://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/national-strategy-achieve-gender-equality).

For further information or to express interest in being included in consultation, please contact: OFWengagement@pmc.gov.au

# Current situation

(Note: The research and evidence outlined in this paper are not intended to be comprehensive, instead it is used to facilitate consultation.)

* Gender diverse people, including transgender and non-binary people experience physical and sexual assault, abuse, discrimination, homelessness, and suicide at disproportionately higher rates than cis‑gender people.
* People born with variations of sex characteristics experience stigmatisation, discrimination, bullying, body shaming and other forms of harm because of their sex characteristics, and also because of assumptions about their identities. These violate their rights and limit their participation in society.
	+ Many intersex people leave school early, without any qualifications. A 2015 sociological study in Australia found that 19 per cent of people born with atypical sex characteristics failed to complete secondary school. The reasons include bullying on the basis of physical characteristics, developmental delay, impact of medical interventions during puberty, and lack of inclusive curricula. Only 25 per cent of participants in the study have rated their overall education experience positively.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* Gender diverse, transgender and non-binary people experience significant health disparities
	+ 73 per cent reporting lifetime diagnosis of depression; 67 per cent reporting anxiety; 63 per cent reporting previous self-harm and 43 per cent reporting they had attempted suicide.
* Transgender and non-binary people experience the highest levels of intimate partner violence with 17.4 per cent of transgender women and 35.6 per cent of non-binary people reporting sexual violence.
* LGBTQIA+ communities face significant barriers to accessing essential inclusive services and supports in the community and are more likely in all Australian workplaces to experience sexual harassment.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* A large number of LGBTIQ+ people hide their sexuality or gender identity when accessing services (34 per cent), at social and community events (42 per cent) and at work (39 per cent).
	+ Young people aged 16 to 24 years are most likely to hide their sexuality or gender identity.[[3]](#footnote-3)
* LGBTQIA+ employees are more likely to report lower levels of inclusion and higher levels of exclusion in the workplace.
	+ A survey conducted by PWC Australia found that 50 per cent of LGBTQIA+ respondents had observed homophobia in the workplace.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* In the LGBTQIA+ community, 42 per cent of transgender women and 33 per cent of women of diverse sexualities report earning less than $400 a week, below the poverty line in Australia. [[5]](#footnote-5)
* 32 per cent of transgender women and 20 per cent of women of diverse sexualities have experienced homelessness, compared to 13.4 per cent of the general population. [[6]](#footnote-6)

# Drivers of gender inequality

Our initial research and stakeholder feedback to date suggests, but are not limited to, the following drivers of gender inequality for people who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community:

* Different people experience inequality differently. For many people, the impacts of gender inequality are compounded by other forms of disadvantage and discrimination.
* Inequality can be particularly compounded by the way gender-based discrimination intersects with other intersectional factors such as race, class, socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability.
* To achieve equality and respect for all women, gender inequality cannot be seen as separate from other forms of discrimination and disadvantage that women face.[[7]](#footnote-7)

# Discussion

We ask that you contribute your views on:

1. What are the drivers of gender inequality for people who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community?
2. What are the barriers to achieve greater gender equality for people who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community in Australia?
3. What are some concrete policy options that Government should consider to enable better outcomes for people who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community?
4. How do you think we best measure success of the Strategy?

We are mindful of the need to ensure the rich variety of lived experiences of people in Australia are captured during this consultation process. This includes hearing from those who:

* are living with disability;
* are First Nations people;
* are people who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community;
* are migrants and refugees;
* are people of colour;
* are living in regional and remote areas;
* are of different ages and life stages, education levels, migration status, and/or socio-economic background;
* have experience of trauma; as well as
* all other factors that may impact people’s experience of gender equality or inequality
1. Jones T (2016) “The needs of students with intersex variations’, *Sex Education,* 16: 602–618. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Australian Human Rights Commission (2015) ‘Face the facts: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex People’, <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/face-facts-lesbian-gay-bisexual-trans-and-intersex-people>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Private Lives 2: The second national survey of the health and wellbeing of GLBT Australians (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. GLEE@PwC (2017) ‘Perspectives on LGBTI+ inclusion in the workplace, PwC. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Hill A, Bourne A, McNair R, Carman M and Lyons A (2020) ‘Private Lives 3: The health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ people in Australia,’ *ARCSHS Monograph Series*, 122. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Hill A, Bourne A, McNair R, Carman M and Lyons A (2020) ‘Private Lives 3: The health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ people in Australia,’ *ARCSHS Monograph Series*, 122. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Our Watch (2018) [*Practice Guidance: Equality and respect for all women: an intersectional approach*](https://share.internal.pmc.gov.au/teams/spd_ofw/NSTAGE/Consultations/Consultation%20Phase%20One/PG_Equality-and-respect-for-all-women_UpdatedFeb2019.pdf%20%28ourwatch.org.au%29)*.* Workplace Equality and Respect, Victorian Government. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)