



Guideline for the Inclusion of People with Diverse Genders and Sexualities (LGBTQIA+) in Surf Life Saving

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Introduction

This guideline outlines the standards for inclusion of people with diverse gender identity, sex and sexuality within Surf Life Saving, focusing on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, and Asexual individuals, collectively referred to as LGBTQIA+.

LGBTQIA+ inclusion is crucial, as extensive evidence^{1 2} shows that discrimination, including homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia, is prevalent in workplaces, community and sporting environments. Surf Life Saving Australia is dedicated to creating a safe and welcoming environment for all Australians, particularly for members who have not always felt included in traditional sport settings. This commitment ensures that surf lifesaving is accessible and supportive, promoting diversity and equity across our community. (include extensive evidence citation)

Scope and Target Audience

This guide outlines strategies and practices for fostering welcoming, respectful, and inclusive communities that embrace the participation of people with diverse genders and sexualities in all aspects of surf lifesaving activities, including training, competitions, and community engagement initiatives.

Note: The inclusion of Trans and Gender Diverse people in competitive Surf Sport is covered in the SLSA Trans and Gender Diverse Participation Guideline.

The target audience includes SLSA employees, volunteers, members, stakeholders, and external partners involved in surf lifesaving activities. This guide supplements and supports the SLSA Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Policy, SLSA Trans and Gender Diverse participation Guideline and aids in achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the SLSA DEI Framework and Strategy.

Understanding Gender, Sex and Sexuality Diversity

Terminology, language, and ways people describe their identities change regularly. It is ok to not know the most appropriate or up to date language, and SLSA understands that many people will be on their own journey. Be open to learning, and understand the lived experience of LGBTQIA+ people and the language they use to describe themselves and their identities.

¹ Storr, R., Jeanes, R., Rossi, T., & Lisahunter. (2022). Are we there yet?(Illusions of) Inclusion in sport for LGBT+ communities in Australia. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 57(1), 92-111.

² Symons, C., O'Sullivan, G., Borkoles, E., Andersen, M.B., and Remco C. J. Polman, R.C.J., (2014). The Impact of Homophobic Bullying During Sport and Physical Education Participation on Same-Sex-Attracted and Gender-Diverse Young Australians' Depression and Anxiety Levels 'The Equal Play Study'. Melbourne: Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living (ISEAL) and the School of Sport and Exercise at Victoria University.



Gender, sex and sexuality

Gender, sex and sexuality are all separate concepts.³

Gender	How a person identifies themselves, which can be as a man, woman, both, neither, or somewhere along the spectrum. It's about how you feel inside and how you express yourself.
Sex	The biological traits that society typically associates with being male or female, such as anatomy, chromosomes, and hormones.
Sexuality	Who a person is attracted to romantically or sexually. It can include being attracted to people of the same gender, different genders, both, or neither. There are an infinite number of ways in which someone might define their sexuality and people can identify with a sexuality or sexual orientation regardless of their sexual or romantic experiences. Some people may identify as sexually fluid; that is, their sexuality is not fixed to any one identity.

LGBTQIA+ is a commonly used acronym and reflects people of diverse genders, sexualities, and sex characteristics (you may have seen or heard the term intersex). It stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual. The plus sign refers to all other identities associated with sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics such as pansexual or non-binary.

L	Lesbian Lesbian is an individual who identifies as a woman and is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other people who identify as women.
G	Gay Gay is an individual who identifies as a man and is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other people who identify as men. The term gay can also be used in relation to women who are sexually and romantically attracted to other women.
B	Bisexual Bisexual is an individual who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of the same gender and people of another gender. Bisexuality does not necessarily assume there are only two genders.
T	Transgender

³ Pride in Sport, Terminology, url: <https://www.prideinsport.com.au/terminology/>, accessed: 18 July 2024.



	<p>Transgender (commonly abbreviated to 'trans') is a general term used to describe a person whose gender identity is different to the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender is about how an individual describes their own gender. It is not necessarily about their biological characteristics.</p> <p>Trans people may position 'being trans' as a history or experience, rather than an identity, and consider their gender identity as simply being female, male or a non-binary identity.</p> <p>Some trans people connect strongly with their trans experience, whereas others do not. Processes of gender affirmation may or may not be part of a trans or gender diverse person's life.</p>
I	<p>Intersex</p> <p>Intersex (Intersex status) is a protected attribute under the Act. Under the Act 'intersex status' means the status of having physical, hormonal or genetic features that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• neither wholly female nor wholly male• a combination of female and male, or• neither female nor male. <p>The term 'intersex' does not describe a person's gender identity, a person with an intersex variation may identify as a man, woman, neither or both.</p>
Q	<p>Queer</p> <p>Queer a term used to describe a range of sexual orientations and gender identities. Although once used as a derogatory term, the term queer now encapsulates political ideas of resistance to heteronormativity and homonormativity and is often used as an umbrella term to describe the full range of LGBTIQ+ identities.</p>
A	<p>Asexual</p> <p>Asexual is a sexual orientation that reflects little to no sexual attraction, either within or outside relationships. People who identify as asexual can still experience romantic attraction across the sexuality continuum. While asexual people do not experience sexual attraction, this does not necessarily imply a lack of libido or sex drive.</p>
+	



Consider the most appropriate language to use when discussing issues involving LGBTQIA+ people. Avoid referring to being LGBTQIA+ in a negative way, for example being gay or trans is a lifestyle or preference.

Overcoming Barriers

There are several areas of best practices related to LGBTQIA+ inclusion:

LGBTQIA+ inclusive language

Using inclusive language is essential for creating a welcoming environment for LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Suggestions:

- **Respect Personal Terms:** If someone shares their LGBTQIA+ identity with you, ask what terms they use to describe themselves and mirror that language.
- **Avoid Assumptions:** Do not question or assume anything about someone's gender, sexuality, or relationships. Accept and respect their self-identification.
- **Inclusive Relationships:** Use language that acknowledges diverse relationships and families. For example, use terms like “partner” or “parents” when talking about groups.

Use Pronouns

Pronouns are words people use to refer to themselves and others. Most men (including trans men) use 'he', and most women (including trans women) use 'she'. Some people use gender-neutral pronouns like 'they' (e.g., "Pip drives their car to work. They don't like walking because it takes them too long").

Suggestions:

- **Don't assume:** Try not to make assumptions about people's gender, especially in online environments. Many people have gender-neutral names so it is best not to assume a person's gender. Some people may use different pronouns in different contexts for safety or comfort.
- **Just ask:** If you're unsure of someone's pronoun, ask respectfully and privately, such as, "Can I ask what pronoun you use?" Avoid saying "What pronoun do you prefer?" since a pronoun is not a preference but an identity.
- **Share your pronouns:** Include your own pronouns on email signatures or when communicating online, especially if you are in doubt over another person's pronouns or gender. This way, it builds a culture of trust and respect, and the person is more likely to feel safe to share their pronouns.



Being out/disclosing LGBTQIA+ identity

The process of coming out/inviting in – or when an LGBTQIA+ shares their identity, is a deeply personal experience and is done at different stages of the life course. Your club or organisation may have LGBTQIA+ members, but they have not told anyone, or only told some people. This may be due to the perceived safety within the environment, or not feeling comfortable to tell people.

Suggestions:

- **Create Safe Spaces:** Establish confidential support groups or safe spaces where LGBTQIA+ members can share their experiences and feel supported without pressure.
- **Training and Education:** Provide training for all members on LGBTQIA+ issues, including how to respond supportively when someone comes out and the importance of confidentiality.
- **Visible Support:** Display inclusive symbols, such as rainbow flags, and visibly support LGBTQIA+ events and initiatives to signal a welcoming environment.

Calling out discrimination

Verbal discrimination (including bullying, harassment, and vilification) through homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and interphobia is the most common form of discrimination for LGBTQIA+ people.⁴ Calling out, reporting, and communicating that this behaviour is not acceptable and has lasting impacts on LGBTQIA+ people is important in building a culture of respect.

Suggestions:

- **Clear Policies:** Implement and enforce a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, clearly outlining the consequences of discriminatory behaviour.
- **Empower Bystanders:** Train members on how to safely intervene and report discrimination, creating a culture where calling out harmful behaviour is supported.
- **Support Systems:** Establish a reporting system for discrimination that ensures anonymity and provides support to those who report incidents.

Consulting and engaging with LGBTQIA+ communities

Inviting LGBTQIA+ people into decision making processes and providing opportunities to offer feedback and advice is important in building trust and respect with LGBTQIA+ communities. Avoid making decisions without their direct involvement, and ensure that decisions are made in consultation with LGBTQIA+ people across your club and Surf Life Saving.

Suggestions:

- **Inclusive Decision-Making:** Form an LGBTQIA+ advisory committee to participate in decision-making processes within the club.

⁴ Storr, R., Nicholas, L., Robinson, K., & Davies, C. (2022). 'Game to play?': barriers and facilitators to sexuality and gender diverse young people's participation in sport and physical activity. *Sport, Education and Society*, 27(5), 604-617.



- **Regular Feedback:** Conduct regular surveys and feedback sessions with LGBTQIA+ members to understand their needs and concerns.
- **Collaborative Events:** Host events in collaboration with LGBTQIA+ organisations to build relationships and trust within the community.

Communicate your LGBTQIA+ inclusion commitment

It is important to communicate any inclusion commitments and policies that directly impact LGBTQIA+ people. Many LGBTQIA+ people feel they must hide or not disclose their identity due to fear of negative comments or abuse. Therefore, it is important to let LGBTQIA+ communities know they are welcome and your club accepts, supports, and affirms LGBTQIA+ people. Research into LGBTQIA+ people in Australian tennis clubs⁵ found that unless told otherwise, through LGBTQIA+ visible signs and cues, LGBTQIA+ would often assume they were not welcome and would not be open about their identities.

Suggestions:

- **Public Statements:** Make public statements and commitments to LGBTQIA+ inclusion, highlighting policies and practices that support LGBTQIA+ members.
- **Visible Signage:** Use visible signage and symbols, such as rainbow flags or inclusion posters, throughout the club to signal a welcoming environment.
- **Inclusive Communication:** Regularly include LGBTQIA+ inclusion topics in newsletters, social media, and other communication channels to reinforce your commitment.

Safeguarding and young people:

Although young LGBTQIA+ people may not have come out yet or disclosed their identity to members in the club or sport, if they hear discriminatory language, it can have significant and long-lasting impacts on them. Members have a duty of care to ensure that all young people are respected and afforded a level of cultural safety that protects them from abuse or discrimination.

Suggestions:

- **Anti-Bullying Policies:** Implement comprehensive anti-bullying policies that specifically address and prohibit discriminatory language and behaviour towards LGBTQIA+ individuals.
- **Education Programs:** Develop and deliver educational programs for all members, emphasising the impact of discriminatory language on young LGBTQIA+ people and the importance of creating a safe environment.
- **Supportive Environment:** Ensure that all staff and volunteers are trained to provide a supportive environment, recognising signs of distress and knowing how to offer appropriate support to young LGBTQIA+ members.

⁵ Storr, R., & Richards, J. (2022). 'The tennis club is my safe space': assessing the positive impact of playing tennis on LGBT+ people in Australia. *Sport, Education and Society*, 1-14.



Responsibilities

Leadership: It is important to champion LGBTQIA+ inclusion and speak positively, to generate a culture of respect and support. Celebrating days of significance or events is an important way to signal that the organisation/ club/ or sport supports and is committed to enacting LGBTQIA+ inclusive policies and practices.

Managers/Supervisors: To ensure that LGBTQIA+ inclusive policies and practices are implemented across the club/sport, managers and leaders need to ensure they engage with this work, and promote the work within their club/ organisation.

Employee/Volunteers/Members: All members/volunteers/employees have a duty of care to uphold inclusive environments for LGBTQIA+ people. This includes calling out and reporting discriminatory behaviour or practices. Active allyship is important so that the burden of calling out and responding to discrimination is not placed upon just LGBTQIA+ people.

External Partners: When partnering or working with external partners, ensure that they align with the organisation's values, and are LGBTQIA+ inclusive.

Raise Awareness

Many not-for-profit organisations actively raise awareness for greater LGBTQIA+ inclusion across the general population. In Surf Life Saving, there are Lifesavers with Pride, and they are running great programs like the Proud Beaches Scholarships and the Rainbow Beaches campaign across Australia's beaches. Here are some current examples:

Campaigns

- [Rainbow Beaches packs — Lifesavers with Pride](#)
- [Scholarships — Lifesavers with Pride](#)
- <https://equalityaustralia.org.au/>
- <https://www.minus18.org.au/>

Days of Significance

Consider what your club or organisation can do to help promote and celebrate days of significance for LGBTQIA+ communities. For a comprehensive list of all of the days of significance for each month of the year, take a look at the Pride in Sport Website:

- [Days of Significance - Pride in Sport](#)

Suggestions:

- [IDAHOBIT](#) (International Day against Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and intersex discrimination)



- [Wear it Purple](#) (celebrating LGBTQIA+ young people), which are ways to celebrate the communities and show your support and commitment.
- Pride Month – June annually. Pride Month is celebrated each year across the month of June to honour the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan.

More Help and Resources

There are many resources and websites to find out more about LGBTQIA+ inclusion in your club. The following website are a great starting point.

Organisations

- <https://www.lifesaverswithpride.com.au/>
- <https://www.prideinsport.com.au/>
- <https://www.proud2play.org.au/>
- <https://www.theequalityproject.org.au/>
- <https://www.acon.org.au/>

Supporting resources

- Lifesavers with Pride offers a range of resources and services to support Surf Lifesaving clubs to create LGBTQIA+ inclusive environments at this link: <https://www.lifesaverswithpride.com.au/rainbow-beaches-packs>.
- An introduction to LGBTQIA+ inclusion for sports clubs and organisations can be accessed via the Proud2Play education hub on their website, which can be accessed at this link: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/online-courses/creating-an-lgbti-inclusive-club>.
- There is also a range of resources, downloadable inclusion posters, and toolkits via the Proud2Play education hub, which can be accessed at this link: <https://www.proud2play.org.au/resources>.
- There is also a range of resources and information on trans and gender diverse inclusion in sport and movement settings on the Australian Sport Commission website, this was designed to support volunteers and clubs in ensuring trans and gender diverse people feel welcome in sport clubs. This can be accessed at this link: https://www.sportaus.gov.au/integrity_in_sport/transgender_and_gender_diverse_people_in_sport/resource.
- The Australian Human Rights Commission provides information and resources available at this link: <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/lgbti>.
- ABC News has produced a history of the first Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in Sydney in 1978, including original footage and interviews with some of the



participants. This can be accessed at this link: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-02-23/retracing-the-steps-of-the-first-mardi-gras-in-sydney-1978/101881890>

- More information on the Stonewall Uprising that is remembered during Pride Month can be accessed at this link: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/stonewall-uprising-50-years-lgbt-history>



References

1. Storr, R., Jeanes, R., Rossi, T., & Lisahunter. (2022). Are we there yet? (Illusions of) Inclusion in sport for LGBT+ communities in Australia. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 57(1), 92-111.
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4. Symons, C., O'Sullivan, G., Borkoles, E., Andersen, M.B., and Remco C. J. Polman, R.C.J., (2014). *The Impact of Homophobic Bullying During Sport and Physical Education Participation on Same-Sex-Attracted and Gender-Diverse Young Australians' Depression and Anxiety Levels 'The Equal Play Study'*. Melbourne: Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living (ISEAL) and the School of Sport and Exercise at Victoria University.
5. Storr, R., & Richards, J. (2022). 'The tennis club is my safe space': assessing the positive impact of playing tennis on LGBT+ people in Australia. *Sport, Education and Society*, 1-14.