

# Queensland public sector LGBTIQ+ inclusion strategy

A strategy for sexual orientation, gender  
diversity and intersex inclusion

2017-2022



Queensland  
Government

## A note about terminology

Throughout this strategy, the terms sexual orientation, gender diversity, intersex and LGBTIQ+ are used interchangeably to refer to the wide range of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and intersex variations that exist among the Queensland community.

The acronym LGBTIQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer/ questioning, and the + represents other identities not captured in the letters of the acronym.

Every LGBTIQ+ person or community has terms and language they prefer when describing their own sex, gender and sexual orientation. The use of these collective terms is not intended to be limiting or exclusive of certain groups, although not all LGBTIQ+ people will use these specific terms. When referring to individual groups within the LGBTIQ+ community, or issues that affect individual groups, it is recommended to use the terms specific to that group. For detailed terminology refer to page 15.

## Queensland public sector LGBTIQ+ inclusion strategy

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## Introduction – why LGBTIQ+ inclusion?

A diverse workforce is one of the Queensland public sector's key strengths. Genuinely diverse and inclusive workplaces consistently report higher employee engagement, resilience, productivity and performance, all of which lead to better outcomes for the organisation and its customers.

People of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex variations make a significant contribution to the public sector's overall diversity. It is estimated that up to 11 per cent of Queensland's population are LGBTIQ+<sup>1</sup> – which equates to around 23,000 public sector employees.<sup>2</sup>

While everyone may know someone who identifies as a part of the LGBTIQ+ community, research shows that not all LGBTIQ+ people feel comfortable or safe bringing their whole selves to work. Evidence shows that people continue to experience discrimination, harassment and

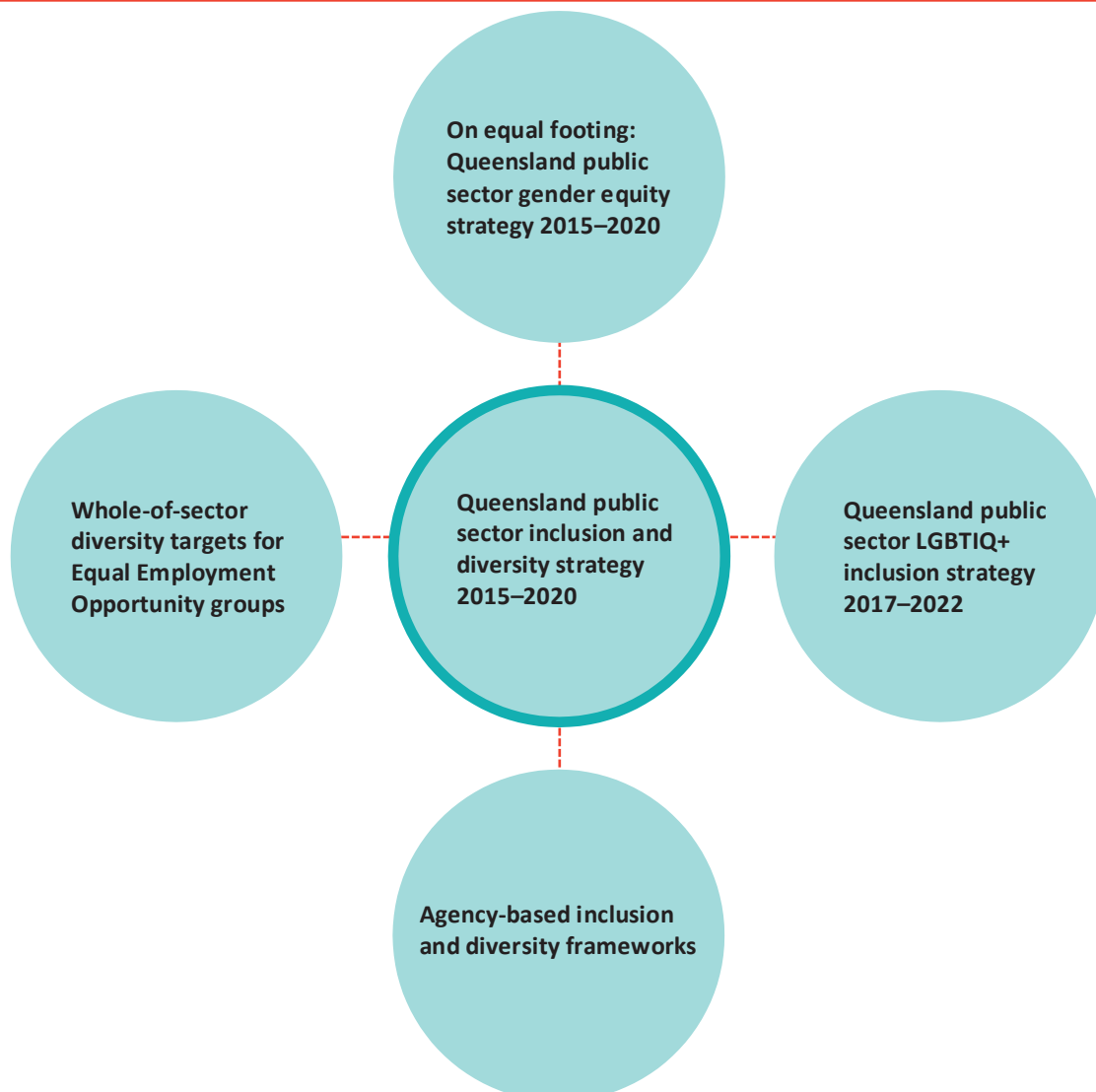
stigma based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status, and feel excluded and invisible in their workplaces. This strategy is about changing that experience.

As Queensland's largest and most diverse employer, the public sector has a unique opportunity and responsibility to make a positive contribution to LGBTIQ+ inclusion. This strategy, developed in consultation with agencies, LGBTIQ+ employees and external LGBTIQ+ organisations, makes the case for a fresh focus on sexual orientation, gender diversity and intersex as part of the public sector's overarching inclusion and diversity commitment. It also provides a framework for actions and approaches that can be taken at a sector, agency and individual level to build workplaces where LGBTIQ+ employees feel safe, valued and supported to bring their whole selves to work.

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**This strategy is positioned within the Queensland public sector's inclusion and diversity eco-system aligning with, and complementing, the goals of existing sectorwide and agency-based inclusion and diversity frameworks, including:**

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# LGBTIQ+ inclusion

## in the workplace

### The case for change



Up to

11%

of Australians are of diverse sexual orientation, diverse gender identity, or intersex. <sup>1</sup>

That's around

23,000

Queensland public sector employees. <sup>2</sup>



In Australian workplaces

45%

of LGBTIQ+ people hide their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status at work.

One-third of those expend significant energy hiding their identity.

Younger employees (25–34) are more likely to hide their identity: only one-fifth are 'out' at work. <sup>4</sup>

In the Queensland public sector

1 in 4

respondents to the 2016 *Working for Queensland* survey said sexual orientation might be a barrier to success in their organisation. <sup>3</sup>

In Australian workplaces

1 in 2

LGBTIQ+ employees have witnessed homophobia (jokes, harassment or discrimination) at work. <sup>5</sup>



1 in 6

LGBTIQ+ employees have personally experienced homophobia at work. <sup>5</sup>



## International research shows



85%

of LGBTIQ+ people see inclusion as more important than all other job factors. <sup>6</sup>



25%

of LGBTIQ+ people have stayed in a job specifically because it was an inclusive environment. <sup>7</sup>



20%

of LGBTIQ+ people have looked for a new job because they were made to feel unwelcome. <sup>7</sup>



30%

decrease in productivity where employees feel they have to hide their identity. <sup>7</sup>

To be a truly inclusive and diverse public sector, LGBTIQ+ employees need to feel safe, valued and supported to bring their whole selves to work.

## The benefits of inclusion

Creating workplaces that are actively and genuinely inclusive of all sexual orientations, gender identities and intersex variations can have a significant impact on the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people, especially those who continue to experience discrimination, violence, isolation or marginalisation in their personal lives. These personal benefits are complemented by benefits the broader public sector reaps by having a culture of inclusion, leading to higher performance and productivity, stronger engagement, and a better understanding of the community we serve.

LGBTIQ+ inclusion benefits all of the public sector because:

**1. When people feel safe bringing their whole selves to work, everyone benefits.**

Open, inclusive workplace cultures create an environment where LGBTIQ+ employees know they will be safe, valued and accepted for bringing their whole selves to work because no-one has to expend energy hiding who they are. This in turn leads to increased engagement and career satisfaction, and more open and respectful relationships with colleagues, all of which contribute to a higher-performing public sector.<sup>8</sup> Also, open, inclusive workplace cultures will have a positive impact on the partners, spouses and children of LGBTIQ+ employees.

**2. To best serve the community, we need to understand and embody its diversity.**

As a public sector, we have a responsibility to serve and make the best decisions for all our customers, including Queensland's LGBTIQ+ community. Actively recognising the diversity that exists in the LGBTIQ+ community and valuing the experiences of LGBTIQ+ employees not only enables a deeper understanding of the community's needs, but also creates empathy, promotes new ways of thinking and drives innovation.<sup>9</sup>

**3. LGBTIQ+ inclusion positions us as an employer of choice.**

To attract and retain the best talent, the public sector needs to demonstrate genuine inclusion of all diverse groups. Eighty-five per cent of LGBTIQ+ people rate inclusion as more important than any other job factor, including salary and promotion.<sup>10</sup> And it is not just LGBTIQ+ people who value inclusive workplaces. The new workforce, Gen Y and beyond, increasingly perceive a potential employer's diversity and inclusion track record as critical.<sup>11</sup>

## Creating change

Creating and fostering sustainable change for all employees requires a collective and holistic approach. Genuine inclusion is more than a one-off activity or a few individuals advocating for change. It requires commitment and action from all parts of the public sector.

This strategy provides a framework for strengthening LGBTIQ+ inclusion across the sector. The actions and approaches outlined build on existing foundations which are already driving inclusion across the sector. These include:

- commitment to LGBTIQ+ inclusion by the Queensland public sector Inclusion Champions of Change (ICC)
- development of the first Queensland public sector LGBTIQ+ inclusion strategy
- establishment of a cross-agency LGBTIQ+ steering committee to promote inclusion across the sector and support agencies to implement inclusion initiatives
- establishment of an LGBTIQ+ employee network, piloted across five agencies
- sectorwide participation in the Brisbane Pride March in 2016
- policies that allow employees in same-sex relationships equal entitlements to leave, including parental, surrogacy and adoption leave, superannuation and domestic and family violence support.

The new approaches and actions outlined under the strategy's three levers for change represent good practice, both in Australia and internationally. The actions include increasing the visibility of LGBTIQ+ diversity in the public sector, building the awareness and capability of leaders and employees, providing support for LGBTIQ+ employees, and ensuring LGBTIQ+ perspectives are considered in policy and practice. They also highlight the importance of non-LGBTIQ+ allies in advocating and driving cultural change.

All agencies are encouraged to identify and implement the actions that will best work for them and their employees. Which approach is chosen may depend on the agency's size, approach to inclusion and diversity, or existing LGBTIQ+ inclusion initiatives. In order to achieve sustainable change, it is recommended that agencies also embed LGBTIQ+ inclusion into broader inclusion and diversity frameworks, customer engagement strategies and strategic workforce planning.

To guide agencies in determining their current state and desired future state, an LGBTIQ+ inclusion pathway is provided as Appendix 1. The pathway identifies best practice and outcomes for agencies to work towards as they develop their approach to LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

### Did you know?

- Under the *Same-Sex Relationships Acts 2008*, same-sex couples in Australia have access to many of the same entitlements and legal rights as heterosexual de facto couples, including those relating to superannuation, taxation, health, social security and citizenship.
- From 9 December 2017, sex or gender no longer affects the right to marry under Australian law.
- In Queensland, a person can only change their gender identity on their birth certificate if they are over 18, have undergone sex reassignment surgeries, and are unmarried (unlike passports, which do not require individuals to undergo medical procedures).
- In 2016, the Queensland Government passed new legislation allowing same-sex couples to adopt, and equalised the age of consent for all sexual activity.

# Levers for change

## Vision

*A public sector that reflects the diversity of the community and leads social change, where people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and intersex variations feel safe, accepted and valued.*

## Levers for change

The three levers for change highlight the importance of leadership, education, visibility and inclusive policy to LGBTIQ+ inclusion, as well as the important role that allies play in creating cultural change. While the individual actions and approaches outlined under each lever for change will contribute to building more inclusive workplaces, the most impactful results will be achieved by the combination and integration of initiatives at both an agency and a sector level.





# 1. Capability and leadership

## Outcome

*Visible and knowledgeable allies at all levels who actively champion LGBTIQ+ inclusion within their agencies, and amplify the voices of LGBTIQ+ people across the public sector.*

### The Public Service Commission will:

- work with the Queensland public sector ICC and Leadership Board to make LGBTIQ+ an ongoing priority for inclusion and diversity across the sector.
- foster inter-agency shared learning by promoting and sharing best practice LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion policies and practice.

### Agencies can:

#### **Demonstrate strong leadership to support LGBTIQ+ inclusion within the agency by:**

- visibly demonstrating that senior leaders recognise the importance of LGBTIQ+ inclusion and are committed to fostering inclusive workplaces
- identifying visible LGBTIQ+ allies and champions within agencies, including at a senior executive level.

#### **Build the knowledge and capability of leaders, allies and employees in sexual and gender diversity by:**

- providing specialised education for executive leadership teams to build a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities of LGBTIQ+ inclusion
- providing formal awareness and LGBTIQ+ inclusion training opportunities for allies and managers to build capability across the agency
- providing resources about how to support LGBTIQ+ colleagues and employees
- holding informal and peer-led education sessions available to all employees to raise awareness around all aspects of LGBTIQ+ inclusion, including sexual orientation, gender diversity and intersex issues e.g. lunchbox sessions, Q&A sessions, speaker events
- providing reverse-mentoring opportunities to build the capability of managers and leaders
- providing resources and information relevant to different cultural groups e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Brotherboys and Sistersgirls
- developing an understanding of the intersections between the LGBTIQ+ community and other diverse groups e.g. people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

#### **Demonstrate leadership about LGBTIQ+ inclusion within the broader community by:**

- identifying opportunities to lead the development of provision of service standards or guidelines which address issues of accessibility, inclusion, responsiveness and respect for LGBTIQ+ government clients
- participating in the Australian Workplace Equality Index, co-ordinated by Pride in Diversity, to benchmark success against other leading organisations
- supporting local LGBTIQ+ community events, including regional events and festivals
- partnering with other agencies and external organisations to share expertise and support them on their LGBTIQ+ inclusion journey.

### Teams and individuals can:

- actively promote a culture of open and respectful discussion around sexual orientation, gender diversity and intersex
- encourage team members to share resources and information with their colleagues to build knowledge and understanding
- lookfor opportunities to develop understanding of the LGBTIQ+ community, and learn more about the experiences of LGBTIQ+ colleagues who are willing to share.

## 2. Supportive workplace cultures

### Outcome

*Increased visibility and awareness about LGBTIQ+ inclusion, creating workplace cultures where employees feel valued and supported to bring their whole selves to work every day.*

#### The Public Service Commission will:

- promote and encourage whole-of-sector participation in the Brisbane Pride March and regional pride festivals to show visible support for LGBTIQ+ employees
- support the Queensland public sector LGBTIQ+ steering committee with sectorwide awareness, engagement and inclusion initiatives for LGBTIQ+ employees and allies.
- support LGBTIQ+ employees by providing education about complaints and appeal processes.

#### Agencies can:

##### Provide support for LGBTIQ+ employees within the agency by:

- establishing and maintaining agency-based networks for LGBTIQ+ employees and allies to connect, support each other, provide education and promote workplace inclusion
- providing a mentor or buddy program for LGBTIQ+ employees, especially those new to the agency
- providing a workplace environment where transgender and gender diverse employees feel safe to present as their affirmed gender
- supporting LGBTIQ+ employees by providing information about complaints and appeal processes.

##### Visibly demonstrate that LGBTIQ+ people are recognised and accepted in workplaces by:

- encouraging all employees to visibly show support for LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the workplace e.g. through email signature blocks, wearing rainbow lanyards or laces
- displaying posters and resources, and actively communicating to employees that homophobia and transphobia are unacceptable in the workplace and have negative effects on all employees
- celebrating LGBTIQ+ awareness days within the agency e.g. International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, Wear it Purple Day, Transgender Day of Visibility, Intersex Awareness Day
- using Yammer, employee newsletters and other agency communication channels to raise awareness and share stories relating to LGBTIQ+ employees, programs and activities.

##### Actively promote the Queensland public sector as an inclusive employer of choice to the broader community by:

- visually reflecting LGBTIQ+ inclusion in internal and external documents and promotional materials, and using non-binary language when referring to sex, gender or sexual orientation
- flying the rainbow flag on LGBTIQ+ awareness days or during local LGBTIQ+ events
- actively representing the agency as inclusive of LGBTIQ+ people and communities at promotional, recruitment and community engagement events.

##### Teams and individuals can:

- respect that not all LGBTIQ+ people feel safe or wish to disclose or talk about their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex characteristics, and always be mindful of their privacy
- speak out against homophobic, or other negative transphobic comments, jokes or behaviours, even when LGBTIQ+ people are not present
- participate in LGBTIQ+ related networks or activities as an ally or advocate
- avoid heteronormative assumptions, comments and questions e.g. assuming that a single female colleague is interested in dating men.

### 3. Inclusive policy and practice

#### Outcome

*LGBTIQ+ inclusion is considered at all levels of policy and practice, and agencies have the capability to support the needs of LGBTIQ+ employees and measure progress towards specific outcomes.*

#### The Public Service Commission will:

- broaden the sector's understanding of diversity, and explicitly incorporate sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex into diversity definitions and categories
- investigate options to expand sex and gender identification options and inclusive spousal references in payroll, HR and other data collection systems on a sectorwide level, including with relevant partner organisations
- leverage the Working for Queensland survey to gain a better understanding of LGBTIQ+ people and issues within the sector, and explore options for broadening other sectorwide data sets to report on sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex
- work with the Queensland public sector ICC to investigate options for sectorwide membership of Pride in Diversity for access to resources, professional training and support.

#### Agencies can:

##### **Strategically integrate LGBTIQ+ inclusion into agency policies and inclusion and diversity programs by:**

- ensuring the rights of employees of all sexual orientations, gender identities and intersex variations are considered in all agency HR policies and processes
- incorporating LGBTIQ+ awareness into inclusion and diversity training, induction and on-boarding processes
- investigating ways to better understand the experiences and needs of LGBTIQ+ employees in the agency, including those who also identify with other diverse groups e.g. through employee opinion surveys or focus groups
- leveraging agency LGBTIQ+ networks, working groups or advisory groups for policy advice, training and awareness initiatives, and seeking advice from external advocacy organisations if appropriate representation cannot be sourced internally
- developing ways of measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of workplace inclusion initiatives, and regularly reporting on progress to executive leadership teams.

##### **Develop policies and approaches to support the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ people by:**

- providing options for employees to accurately indicate their gender identity or intersex status in agency-based systems if they wish to
- developing guidelines or policies to support gender diverse employees through transition in the workplace
- providing access to gender neutral or 'all gender' bathrooms with visible signage, and ensure new building fitouts consider the needs of gender diverse and/or some intersex employees.

##### **Consider LGBTIQ+ perspectives in external policies, strategies and procurement processes by:**

- incorporating LGBTIQ+ people and perspectives into external policies, strategies and projects, and consult with peak LGBTIQ+ stakeholder groups.

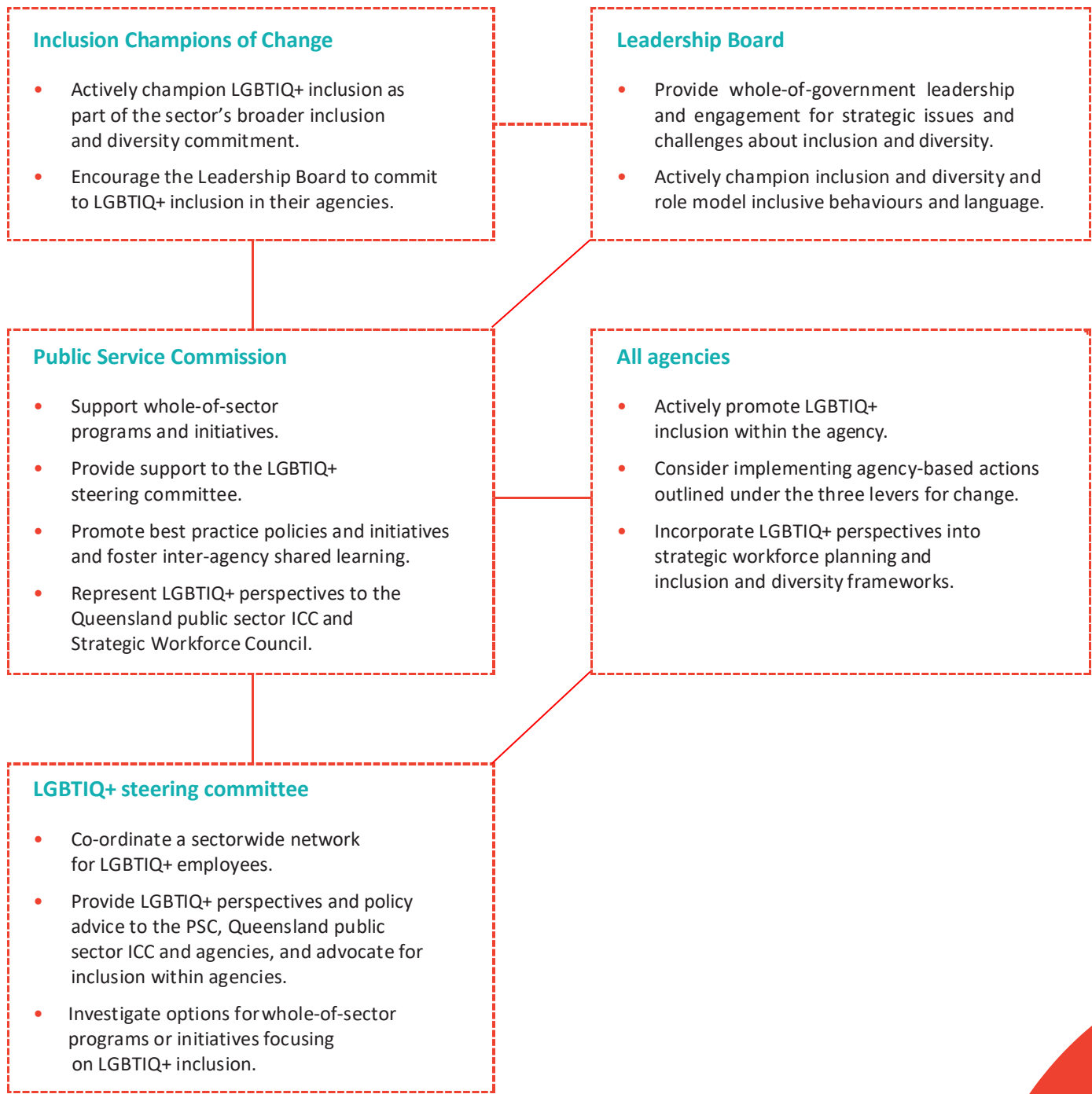
##### **Teams and individuals can:**

- respect and use colleagues' affirmed or preferred names and pronouns
- use inclusive or gender-neutral language when asking about or referring to partners, spouses and family members.

## Governance, roles and responsibilities

The Leadership Board is responsible for driving inclusion and diversity across the Queensland public sector. CEO performance agreements also refer to ‘enhancing decisions and productivity through safe and inclusive workplaces and a workforce drawn from diverse backgrounds and experiences.’ The Leadership Board is supported and advised by the Queensland public sector ICC, who lead sectorwide inclusion and diversity priorities and initiatives.

The PSC, through the Queensland public sector ICC, will lead sectorwide initiatives outlined in this strategy, and support the work of the LGBTIQ+ steering committee. All agencies are encouraged to actively work towards inclusion by incorporating LGBTIQ+ inclusion into existing inclusion and diversity frameworks, policies and initiatives, and considering the better practice actions and approaches outlined in this strategy.



## Measuring success

Cultural change can be difficult to achieve and measure, particularly when information about sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex is not accurately captured. The success of LGBTIQ+ inclusion and the aspirational goals of this strategy will be measured by:

- greater visibility and representation of LGBTIQ+ people in all parts of the public sector and at all levels in individual agencies, including the ability to capture information about the LGBTIQ+ diversity of the Queensland public sector workforce
- increased understanding of all aspects of sexual orientation, gender diversity and intersex by employees across the sector, especially by leaders and allies
- workplace cultures where sexual and gender diversity is openly valued and celebrated, rather than ignored or perceived as irrelevant
- shared leadership on LGBTIQ+ inclusion, with allies and LGBTIQ+ people working together to foster inclusive workplaces and practices
- equitable access to support, benefits and policies for LGBTIQ+ people
- recognition as being an inclusive employer of choice.

As the sector's ability to capture and report on data relating to sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex expands, additional success measures will include:

- increased visibility of LGBTIQ+ employees and their experiences in the *Working for Queensland* survey and agency-based surveys and data sets
- LGBTIQ+ employees' perceptions of their workplaces e.g. of workplace culture, fairness and inclusion, reflect those of non-LGBTIQ+ employees
- data about LGBTIQ+ employees shows increased attraction, retention and job satisfaction as the agency's maturity in LGBTIQ+ inclusion grows.
- annual progress reporting on LGBTIQ+ inclusion through annual reports and chief executive performance reports to enable sector-wide reporting to the Leadership Board.

## Strategic links

The *Queensland public sector LGBTIQ+ inclusion strategy* aligns with the following whole-of-sector strategies, programs and initiatives:

- Queensland public sector inclusion and diversity strategy 2015–2020
- Queensland public sector gender equity strategy 2015–2020
- Workplace package to domestic and family violence
- White Ribbon Australia workplace accreditation
- Queensland sexual health strategy 2016–2021
- Queensland women's strategy 2016–2021
- Be Healthy, Be safe, Be well
- #BeHere4Qld

# Appendix 1: Gender and sexual diversity inclusion pathway

	1 Inconsistent	2 Understanding	3 Embedded	4 Leading
Capability and leadership	Agencies have limited understanding of the need for LGBTIQ+ inclusion, and minimal or inconsistent consideration of gender and sexual diversity within the agency	Agencies understand the case for LGBTIQ+ inclusion and have specific initiatives and policies in place	LGBTIQ+ inclusion is seen as business as usual, and fully integrated into inclusion and diversity initiatives	Agencies strategically leverage their reputation as leaders in LGBTIQ+ inclusion and drive social change
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders do not demonstrate understanding of the barriers LGBTIQ+ people face in the workplace or the benefits of inclusion.</li> <li>There is no visible commitment to LGBTIQ+ inclusion from leaders and/or employees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders show understanding of the barriers LGBTIQ+ people face in the workplace, and demonstrate their support for LGBTIQ+ inclusion initiatives.</li> <li>Resources on LGBTIQ+ are available to all staff, and specific training is provided to targeted groups, e.g. leaders, HR professionals.</li> <li>Leadership development in inclusion and diversity incorporates LGBTIQ+ perspectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders actively and visibly champion LGBTIQ+ inclusion initiatives and policies in a way that demonstrates understanding of the broad-ranging benefits of inclusion.</li> <li>Leaders proactively identify and implement solutions to support LGBTIQ+ inclusion.</li> <li>Training programs and opportunities build the capability of staff at all levels and in all parts of the agency.</li> <li>There are opportunities for leaders and employees to openly discuss workplace diversity, including gender and sexual diversity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agencies are recognised as leaders in LGBTIQ+ inclusion and actively seek opportunities to share knowledge and learnings with other organisations and the broader community.</li> <li>Agencies demonstrate courage and innovation in their approach to gender and sexual diversity, and actively challenge the status quo.</li> <li>Agencies' commitment to inclusion actively supports the creation of broader social change.</li> <li>Agencies are identified outside the sector as a leader in inclusion and diversity e.g. through participation in the Australian Workplace Equality Index.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is limited or no visibility of gender and sexual diversity in the workplace.</li> <li>It is unclear where/how LGBTIQ+ employees can access support within the agency.</li> <li>Issues may be managed as they arise, but there is no evidence of proactive approaches to inclusion measures around gender and sexual diversity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiatives to support LGBTIQ+ people and build awareness of gender and sexual diversity are undertaken on an as-needed or periodic basis.</li> <li>Inclusion initiatives are driven primarily by LGBTIQ+ individuals or corporate teams.</li> <li>LGBTIQ+ resources are readily available to employees and there are visible signs of commitment/support.</li> <li>There is evidence that homophobia and transphobia are unacceptable in the workplace.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LGBTIQ+ inclusion is seen as everyone's responsibility, and initiatives are driven by LGBTIQ+ employees, allies and teams across all parts of the agency.</li> <li>Workplace culture is shaped by sharing success stories and promoting LGBTIQ+ initiatives.</li> <li>LGBTIQ+ employees feel supported to bring their whole selves to work every day.</li> <li>Open and respectful discussion of gender and sexual diversity is a norm.</li> <li>Agencies are able to attract and retain diverse employee groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LGBTIQ+ inclusion is a cultural and business norm at all levels of the organisation.</li> <li>Agencies leverage their strength in inclusion and diversity to actively position themselves as an employer of choice for LGBTIQ+ people and their allies.</li> <li>Agencies support community LGBTIQ+ events as part of their commitment to creating broader social change.</li> <li>Regular engagement and feedback loops across the agency shed light on organisational culture in real time.</li> </ul>
Inclusive policy and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is minimal reference to, or consideration of, gender or sexual diversity in agency policies and procedures.</li> <li>Diversity programs and/or plans don't provide actions to support or promote LGBTIQ+ inclusion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is evidence of some support for the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ people within broader diversity policies and programs, e.g. gender transition policies or guidelines.</li> <li>Steps are taken to better understand the experiences and needs of LGBTIQ+ employees e.g. employee networks, consultative approaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agencies have access to data allowing them to measure engagement of LGBTIQ+ employees and identify areas for improvement e.g. through the Working for Queensland survey.</li> <li>Gender and sexual diversity is sustainably integrated into broader inclusion and diversity and workforce planning strategies and programs in all parts of the organisation.</li> <li>Sexual and gender diversity is incorporated into Inclusion and diversity training, induction and on-boarding processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy, practices, industrial conditions and legislation foster inclusive practices and promote best practice.</li> <li>Agencies advocate and demonstrate support for reforms and initiatives that enhance LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the broader Queensland community.</li> <li>Accurate and timely data and metrics are used as a strategic lever for designing future workforce initiatives.</li> <li>Sector-wide issues and successes are shared in a systematic joined up approach.</li> </ul>

# General terminology

## Sexual orientation

A person's emotional, romantic or sexual feelings towards other people. Sexual orientation is based on attraction, rather than behaviour, and is therefore not a choice. When referring to sexual orientation, avoid using terminology such as 'sexual preference' or 'lifestyle,' which are often used to discredit a person's orientation. Sexual orientation is separate from a person's gender identity or expression.

Terms to avoid: sexual preference, gay lifestyle, homosexual lifestyle, sexual identity.

## Sex

Sex refers to a person's biological and physical characteristics, and is usually described as male, female or intersex. A person's sex does not have to correlate with their gender identity.

## Gender identity or gender expression

Gender identity refers to a person's internal, personal sense of identity in relation to the categories of male and female. Some people may not identify with either category. Gender identity can be separate from biological sex and may change over the course of a person's life.

Gender expression refers to a person's public presentation of their gender, including their name, preferred pronouns, dress, hair, body language and voice. Terms

to avoid: sexual identity, transgender identity.

## LGBTIQ+

An acronym describing people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and sex characteristics, short for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer. The + reflects that the letters of the acronym do not capture the entire spectrum of sexual orientations, gender identities and intersex variations, and is not intended to be limiting or exclusive of certain groups. Other commonly used acronyms include LGBT, LGBT+ and LGBTI.

Terms to avoid: gay community (unless explicitly referring to the gay male community).

## Heteronormativity and heteronormative

The assumption that heterosexuality is the norm, and that there are two distinct, binary genders with 'natural' roles in life. A heteronormative perspective is one that conflates biological sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender roles.

## Coming out, out or outed

The process by which a person recognises and acknowledges their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status to themselves and to other people. Because it is often assumed that people are heterosexual, cisgender and have male or female sex characteristics, coming out is often an important step for LGBTIQ+ people. Coming out can be a continuous process as people change workplaces and social circles throughout their lives.

Many LGBTIQ+ people may require support in the process of coming out, especially if faced by hostility from friends and/or family. A person who has their sexual orientation, transgender or intersex status revealed without their consent or knowledge is said to have been 'outed.' This may have serious repercussions for the person and should always be avoided.

Terms to avoid: a person 'admitting' or 'confessing' that they are LGBTIQ+.

## Allies

An ally is a person who supports LGBTIQ+ people and their rights, and actively challenges heteronormativity, negative stereotypes, harassment or discrimination. Many allies are heterosexual, cisgender and/or non-intersex people, but LGBTIQ+ people may also be allies to other groups within the broader LGBTIQ+ community. Having visible allies is very important to creating supportive and safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ people.

## -phobia (homo-, bi-, pan-, trans-, ace-, etc)

Fear, hatred or discomfort with people who are of (or perceived to be of) diverse sexual orientations, transgender or gender diverse people, or intersex people, often manifesting as discrimination, harassment, vilification or violence. Homophobia and transphobia are referred to most commonly, but variants specific to other orientation also exist, such as biphobia (bisexuality), panphobia (pansexuality) or acephobia (asexuality). These individual terms reflect the specific challenges, stereotypes or discrimination people in different groups of the LGBTIQ+ community experience.

## Sexual Orientation

### Lesbian (n. or adj.)

A woman whose primary sexual, romantic or emotional attraction is to other women.

Terms to avoid: homosexual, lesbianism, dyke (unless someone self-identifies this way).

### Gay (adj.)

A person whose primary sexual, romantic or emotional attraction is to people of the same sex. This term is most commonly used to refer to men, though some women also use it.

Terms to avoid: homosexual, using 'gay' as a collective term (e.g. 'gay rights' instead of 'LGBTIQ+ rights').

### Bisexual (adj.)

A person who is sexually, romantically or emotionally attracted to people of the same sex or gender, as well as people of other sexes or genders.

Terms to avoid: bi-sexual (hyphenated).

### Pansexual (adj.)

A person who is attracted to other people without regard to their gender or sex, including people of non-binary genders or intersex people. Pansexuality explicitly recognises that sex and gender go beyond the male/ female binary, but not all people who are attracted to multiple sexes and genders will identify as such.

Terms to avoid: pan-sexual (hyphenated).

### Asexual (adj.)

A person who does not experience sexual attraction and/ or desire towards other people, regardless of sex or gender. Asexual people often differentiate sexual and romantic attraction, and some are romantically attracted to people of the same or different sexes and genders. As such, some asexual people describe themselves as homo-, bi- or panromantic. Alternatively, asexual people who also do not experience romantic attraction often describe themselves as a romantic. Unlike celibacy or abstinence, asexuality is an orientation rather than a behavioural choice.

### Queer (adj.)

Though historically used as a negative term, queer has been reclaimed by many LGBTIQ+ people who feel that lesbian, gay or bisexual do not encompass their pattern of attraction. As such, it is often used as an umbrella term including a range of sexual orientations and gender identities. Some LGBTIQ+ people, particularly in older generations, may still perceive queer to be an insult.

Terms to avoid: 'a queer' (used as a noun).

## Sex and gender

### Transgender/trans (adj.)

An umbrella term for individuals whose gender identity or expression does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Transgender people may identify as men, women, both or neither. Terms for people who do not identify as men or women include (but are not limited to) gender queer, gender fluid, agender, androgyne, non-binary or gender non-conforming. A transgender person may also identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, asexual or any other sexual orientation.

Terms to avoid: transgendered, 'a transgender' or 'transgenders' as a noun, transvestite, transsexual (unless a person self-identifies as such), tranny, cross- dresser, gender-bender, shemale, he-she, it.

### Cisgender/cis (adj.)

A person whose assigned sex at birth and gender presentation aligns with their internal sense of gender identity, e.g. cis male refers to a man assigned male at birth. Cisgender is the opposite of transgender.

### Gender diverse or non-binary gender (adj.)

Catch-all terms to describe the range of gender identities that fall outside the distinct categories of man and woman.



## Gender transition

The process by which a person discovers and/or affirms their gender identity, which may but does not necessarily include changing their outward gender expression, changing their name, gender markers and pronouns, taking hormones, having surgeries, or counselling. The extent of a person's transition is highly personal and subjective, and a physical transformation is not always required for a person to transition, or identify as trans.

Terms to avoid: sex change, pre-operative, post-operative, pre-op, post-op.

## Intersex (adj.)

A person who is born with genetic, hormonal or physical sex characteristics that are not typically 'male' or 'female'. Intersex people have a diversity of bodies and identities.

A person's intersex status is separate to their sexual orientation and gender identity, which varies between individuals. Some intersex people may identify as cisgender and heterosexual.

Terms to avoid: hermaphrodite, disorder of sex development.

## Brotherboys and Sistergirls (n.)

Brotherboys and Sistergirls are transgender people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, whose spirits do not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Brotherboys and sistergirls often have a strong sense of their cultural and spiritual identity. Their gender identity is separate to their sexual orientation. Not all Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who are gender diverse also identify as brotherboys or sistergirls.

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