

Diverse sex, sexuality and gender

Summary

Fourth Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*

Summary of Consultation – 7 September 2018

The Department of Social Services acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

About this document

This material was commissioned by the Commonwealth of Australia to assist in the collection of information from consultation sessions workshops around Australia. The purpose of this material is to summarise consultations held by the Department of Social Services as part of the development of the Fourth Action Plan.

The Department of Social Services thanks all participants of this discussion for their contributions as part of the development of the Fourth Action Plan. The views expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect those of the Commonwealth, or indicate a particular course of action.

Copyright notice — 2018

This document is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence Licence URL: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode> Please attribute: © Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Social Services) 2018 Notice identifying other material or rights in this publication: 1. Australian Commonwealth Coat of Arms — not Licensed under Creative Commons, see <https://www.itsanhonour.gov.au/coat-arms/index.cfm> 2. Certain images and photographs (as marked) — not licensed under Creative Commons'

Participants

- AIDS Council of New South Wales (ACON)
- Domestic Violence New South Wales
- Domestic Violence Victoria
- Women and Girls Emergency Centre
- Sydney Queer Muslims
- LGBTI Health Alliance
- Switchboard Victoria
- Western Sydney University
- Proud2Play
- Drummond Street
- Queerspace
- Australia's National Organisation for Women's Safety

- City of Parramatta
- City of Sydney
- White Ribbon
- 1800RESPECT
- New South Wales Policy Force
- ACT Government
- Office of the eSafety Commission
- Women NSW (NSW Government)
- Department of Human Services (Commonwealth)
- Department of Social Services (Commonwealth)

Executive summary

- Domestic, family and sexual violence is a major area of concern for individuals and communities of diverse sex, sexuality and gender. However, there are few services and little funding across the country to specifically support these communities.
- There are distinct differences in how some individuals of diverse sex, sexuality and gender experience violence. For example, the experiences of lesbian women or gay men can be very different to the dynamics of abuse of trans and gender diverse people. It is important to be cognisant of both the similarities and differences when responding to domestic, family and sexual violence across the spectrums of diverse sex, sexuality and gender.
- Mainstream prevention and service provision lacks inclusion and diversity. To address this gap, there should be an increase in representation in mainstream organisations and specific interventions from LGBTIQ+ organisations for people of diverse sex, sexuality and gender.
- There are examples of good practice, including around prevention, service design, workforce development and research. However, they are unevenly distributed across the country (with most examples in Melbourne and Sydney). A way of sharing the information and lessons across the country is needed.
- The importance of an intersectional approach is high, as many LGBTIQ+ individuals' circumstances are compounded with other complexities, including discrimination based on race and social class.
- Jurisdictions with more inclusive policy frameworks are able to achieve more attention to LGBTIQ+ domestic, family and sexual violence
- Rigid gender roles, patriarchal systems and binary thinking provide the basis of both violence and discrimination. There is also strong link between these themes and domestic, family and sexual violence in the wider community
- Current data collections restrict LGBTIQ+ people from identifying themselves on their own terms –particularly for individuals that are trans or gender diverse, or intersex. This compounds the lack of awareness and focus due to lack of accurate statistics.

Good practice currently underway

Policy

- Best practice is to acknowledge LGBTIQ+ communities with inclusive language, and actively consult during development and implementation.
- There is some government funding for LGBTIQ+ specific initiatives.
- There is funding for LGBTIQ+ specific family, domestic and sexual violence programs in Victoria and New South Wales.
- Establishment of Gender and Sexuality Commissioner in Victoria contributed to focus on LGBTIQ+ across government policy.

Programs

- Trials for development of toolkit for primary prevention developed by City of Parramatta.
- Responses that help LGBTIQ+ victims, such as Respect Victoria and queer specific refuges.
- Referral to appropriate services that specialise in supporting LGBTIQ+ communities.
- Training about LGBTIQ+ people/community in agencies (e.g. Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, 1800RESPECT).

Research

- There is research occurring across jurisdictions. There may be opportunities to better share across jurisdictions.
- A lot of work has been driven out of Victoria, in response to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence.
- However, there is not enough data across the LGBTIQ+ communities and existing data sources don't collect this information.

Barriers to accessing services

Community barriers

- Challenges associated with acceptance and awareness of LGBTIQ+ communities and issues.
- Building trust with large organisations and institutions with a history of tension with LGBTIQ+ communities (e.g. Police, Faith-based organisations).
- Intersectional lens needs to be applied.
- Rigid gender roles and heteronormative norms perpetuated by patriarchy create barriers to acceptance of LGBTIQ+ individuals and communities.
- Addressing lateral violence between different parts of the LGBTIQ+ community.

Research

- Significant research gaps around prevalence of LGBTIQ+ domestic, family and sexual violence; and practice for addressing.
- Data needs to ask the right questions at the start, in an inclusive way, so people can see themselves in the question and response.

Service system

- Very few LGBTIQ+ specific services for addressing domestic, family and sexual violence.
- Organisations that provide services that do not have understanding of LGBTIQ+ issues, or have history of discrimination (e.g. some faith based organisations and Police).
- Lack of LGBTIQ+ accreditation in most jurisdictions and a need for safe spaces.
- Need for a coordinated approach across country to share knowledge, research and information around programs.

Workforce

- Workforce training for specialist and non-specialist workforces is generally tokenistic (e.g. training needs to be more than 15 minutes).
- Action needs to be taken to have more representation from people of diverse sex, sexuality and gender in workforce – people are more comfortable when they can see a bit of themselves in the workforce.

Policy

- Diverse sex, sexuality and gender individuals and communities need to be considered a priority population.
- Adequate funding for the longer term.
- Using funding agreements to incentivise organisations to commit to standards protecting LGBTIQ+ communities.

Prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence

Building knowledge and understanding

- Understanding the LGBTIQ+ umbrella consists of many different communities with different experiences and issues – not considering as one ‘community’.
- Understanding the different types of relationships and power imbalances exist within relationships with people of diverse sex, sexuality and gender.
- Greater knowledge and research of dynamics of family, domestic and sexual violence in LGBTIQ+ communities.
- Improving data collection on LGBTIQ+ experiences.

Representation and inclusion

- Greater representation in media, policy and public documentation and statements – LGBTIQ+ individuals need to see themselves in these representations.
- Increase inclusion and have greater diversity in mainstream prevention and service provision.
- Avoiding gendered language which is generally binary.
- Being intersectional in approach, noting the specific contexts of many individuals of diverse sex, sexuality and gender (e.g. Indigenous Australians, culturally and linguistically diverse communities).

Specific actions

- Empowering communities that can lead immediate action, create specific interventions for LGBTIQ+ populations and have influence over the broader community.
- Using funding agreements and procurement as an incentive to deliver more inclusive policies and programs.
- Having a coordinated and multi-pronged approach to addressing problems in LGBTIQ+ communities, both through mainstream and targeted campaigns.
- Addressing concurrent issues which are linked to violence in LGBTIQ+ communities, such as discrimination, minority stress, social isolation and suicide.
- Training and shifting attitudes in mainstream agencies.
- Government informing people of what their rights are and the laws that aim to protect them.