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ABOUT THE  
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# ACCESS, EQUITY AND THE SYSTEMS THAT STILL FAIL TRANSGENDER COMMUNITIES

For transgender and gender diverse people in Australia, visibility has increased over recent years, but visibility alone does not equate to safety, access, or improved outcomes.

In fact, there is a growing disconnect between public discourse and the lived reality of transgender and gender diverse people attempting to access essential services. While many organisations identify as inclusive, this does not always translate into practice. Decisions made at a service delivery level can still result in environments that are inappropriate or unsafe, particularly in accommodation and residential settings where safety, dignity and identity must be central.

At The Gender Centre, we see every day that the core issue facing our community is not simply recognition, but access. Access to safe and stable housing. Access to timely, appropriate healthcare. Access to services that understand lived experience and respond without judgement.

Too often, the conversation around transgender inclusion focuses on visibility as though being

seen is the end goal. But for many transgender and gender diverse people, visibility without access offers very little in practical terms. Our communities do not simply need to be recognised, we need access to the same things everyone else relies on: safe housing, timely healthcare, respectful services, stable employment and systems that do not create additional barriers simply because of who we are. Visibility may shift public awareness, but without structural change it does not guarantee safety, equity or improved outcomes. What matters most is not whether we are visible, but whether we can access the same standard of care, opportunity and support as everyone else.

For over 40 years, The Gender Centre has supported transgender and gender diverse people navigating systems that were not designed with them in mind. While there have been incremental shifts in policy and awareness, the reality for many remains unchanged, people are still falling through the gaps, often at points of greatest vulnerability.

One of the most significant challenges continues to be navigating the health system.



While there are examples of excellent, affirming care, these services remain inconsistent, fragmented and, in many cases, difficult to access. For many individuals, the system is complex and opaque. People are required to coordinate their own care across multiple providers, often without the knowledge, resources or support required to do so effectively.

For those already experiencing mental health challenges, housing instability or social isolation, this is not simply difficult, it can be unmanageable. We must be clear: the issue is not a lack of willingness from individuals to engage with services. It is a system that assumes a level of stability, health literacy and resilience that many people simply do not have the luxury of holding.

Housing remains another critical pressure point. Transgender and gender diverse people continue to be disproportionately impacted by homelessness and housing insecurity, often as a direct result of family rejection, discrimination and systemic exclusion. Without

stable housing, engagement with healthcare, employment and community becomes significantly more difficult. The relationship between housing and health is well understood, yet policy responses continue to treat these issues in isolation.

**This fragmentation is not incidental, it is structural.**

This position is increasingly reinforced by national evidence. The recent Equal Identities report by the Australian Human Rights Commission highlights several reforms that are highly relevant to the lived realities of transgender and gender diverse communities and the service systems intended to support them. Among the most significant are calls for stronger representation in housing and community services, more inclusive domestic, family and sexual violence responses, properly funded and affirming homelessness and crisis accommodation systems, better data collection and reporting, improved access to healthcare and gender-affirming care, stronger workforce capability across mainstream services, equal access to publicly

funded services, and clearer organisational accountability to prevent discrimination. These recommendations confirm what specialist services have long understood: that meaningful inclusion requires systemic reform, sustained investment, and practical accountability across the systems people rely on every day.

We continue to see siloed responses across housing, health and community services, with limited coordination and insufficient investment in integrated models of care. As a result, individuals are required to navigate multiple systems simultaneously, repeat their stories, manage risk, and advocate for themselves at every point of contact. This places an unreasonable burden on people who are already navigating complex and often unstable circumstances.

Integrated, community-based models of care offer a clear and evidence-informed pathway forward. Services that combine health navigation, casework, peer support and community connection provide a more holistic response, one that recognises that health and wellbeing are shaped by social, economic and environmental factors, not just clinical intervention.

These models are not only more effective,

**they are more efficient.**

When people are supported early, when they can access the right service at the right time, we see reduced crisis presentations, improved engagement with care, and better long-term outcomes. This is not simply good practice; it is sound public policy and a more effective use of limited resources.

However, these approaches **require sustained and deliberate investment.**

Short-term, project-based funding cycles do not allow for the stability or continuity required to deliver meaningful change. If we are serious about improving outcomes, we must move beyond pilot programs and towards long-term, embedded service models that are properly resourced, evaluated and scaled.

There is also a clear and ongoing need to strengthen workforce capability across mainstream services. Many organisations are willing to provide inclusive care but lack the training, confidence or practical frameworks to do so consistently. This results in variability in service quality and, too often, experiences that deter people from seeking support altogether. Inclusive practice cannot be assumed, it must be built, supported and embedded.



**Importantly, this work must be systemic, not situational.**

Transgender and gender diverse people should not be required to navigate a patchwork of services to find safe and appropriate care. Inclusion must be reflected not only in policy, but in everyday decision-making, service design and front line practice. This requires accountability, leadership and a commitment to translating intent into action.

The conversation around transgender inclusion often centres on visibility, language and policy statements. While these are important, they must be matched with tangible investment in services that improve access on the ground and deliver measurable outcomes.

At its core, this is about equity. It is about ensuring that transgender and gender diverse people can access the same standard of care, safety and opportunity as anyone else, without additional barriers, delays or harm.

We know what works. We see it in practice every day.

What is required now is not further discussion, but **action**.

The challenge ahead is ensuring that effective models are not only recognised, but funded, scaled and embedded across the system, so that no one is left navigating these systems alone.

**Phinn Borg**  
Executive Director  
The Gender Centre



# MARDI GRAS

2026



On the evening of June 24, 1978, a daytime march and an evening parade in Sydney took place. This was the first Australian gay and lesbian Mardi Gras parade. The marchers travelled along Oxford Street, but police blocked their path and confiscated a truck and loudspeaker. When the parade began moving towards Kings Cross, police arrested 53 participants. These first marchers are now known and as the **78ers**.

Nearly half a century on from the first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade, the iconic route through the CBD has been recognised as part of Australia's heritage.

The two-kilometre parade route down Oxford Street in Darlinghurst towards Anzac Parade at Moore Park has been added to the National Heritage List by the federal government.

In 2024, the 78ers nominated the famous route to be added to the National Heritage List, which recognises places that contribute to Australia's national identity. On 26 February 2026 The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade Route was been added to Australia's National Heritage List. The Dept of Climate Change, Energy, The Environment and Water ( DCCEEW) website cited the following information: The Australian Heritage Council (AHC) found that the parade route meets 3 National Heritage criteria. The parade route has been listed for its:

- importance to Australia's cultural history
- connection with the LGBTQIA+ community and greater Australia
- connection with the 78ers : It holds particular significance for the '78ers', who took part in the first parade and associated protests in 1978.

The parade is a significant and enduring event in Australia.

- It has a rich national history
- It is a place of celebration of LGBTQIA+ community and culture.

"The heritage listing really recognises the rich history and outstanding historical value of the Mardi Gras Parade route to Australia as a whole," Senator Watt was cited as saying.

This year the 48th anniversary of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade, lit up Oxford Street and Flinders Street, on Saturday 28 February 2026. The theme was Ecstatica. Mardi Gras described Ecstatica as the big joy, bold self-expression, and being unapologetically you.

Sadly, the celebration of self expression and joy of Mardi Gras 2026 was dampened by a number of issues, such as parade representation, public debate about inclusion or exclusion, protests about the parade, and calls for the Government to no longer provide funding for the event.

These issues highlighted for many people and especially the Transgender and Gender diverse community that the Mardi Gras Parade wasn't just a celebration — it was a reminder that the core issues of dignity, legitimacy, visibility, safety and inclusion for Trans people in Australia remain deeply connected. As such the design and messaging of many floats was about more than glitter and performance. The messaging and design focussed on being seen, affirmed, and supported in public space.

**Liz Ceissman**  
Program Manager  
The Gender Centre

The Mardi Gras parade may only be a one night a year event, but the visibility sparked by Mardi Gras doesn't end when the parade finishes. It can influence and generate conversations about inclusion and safety, love and dignity, equity and Human Rights throughout the year.

The Gender Centre again had a float in the Parade and the design carried across these two concepts: celebration and protest. Ecstatica as a theme meant for the centre our participants marched with a message that Ecstatica was the FANTastic experience of authenticity. This celebration could be seen in the dances and fans that brightly waved along the route. But again, the messaging of protest could be seen in the banners that participants carried highlighting issues of needs, barriers to service and making the point that Trans people are not political fodder; they are people and they matter.

Participants said that Mardi Gras's history remains an important part of its meaning and they value this history by willing sharing the message that more needs to change.

"We should never forget how much people had to push for the right to be visible, to have access to basic human rights, and to celebrate their authentic self safely and publicly without shame."

### A true expression of Ecstatica





ANY DA

change a life

# FAIR DAY

The story of Fair Day stretches back as far as 1979, as Graham Carbery showed in his published history of Mardi Gras. The first Gay Alternative Fair took place in Hyde Park in 1979 and drew a crowd of about 700 attendees. It was part of the first full week of celebrations. It was in 1985 that it became part of the Mardi gras program run by the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Business Association. The event grew rapidly during the 1990s, attracting 3,000 in 1991 and some 20,000 in 1995. It moved from Glebe to the Victoria park location in 1998 - "despite a suggestion last year by South Sydney Council to move the event out to Sydney Park, Alexandria." (G Carbery, A History of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parkville, Vic.: Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives, 1995).

Fair Day 1998 was a huge hit, attracting 40-45,000 people in its new home "We don't only come out at night," said Mardi Gras. "Fair Day is fun, frolicsome and completely essential. See the breathtaking diversity of our community - and our community's pets - at our largest daytime gathering."

This year the Gender Centre was present at Fair Day celebrating one of the most important LGBTQIA+ events of the year. The GC team were proud to host a stall at Sydney Mardi Gras Fair Day in beautiful Victoria Park, on Gadigal land.

With over 70,000 people coming together in a vibrant celebration of pride and community, our team shared information and also resources about the services the Gender Centre offered, a pat or belly rub with Jack the centre's golden retriever and directions to our wonderful partners such as NSW health, who were next to us sharing information and resources about the under 25 Gender affirming care systems across NSW.

But days like this are about more than visibility and celebration. It is an opportunity to link vulnerable people in a welcoming, safe and celebratory space to the supports and services they had to come to fair day in the hope of learning about. Parents who had just learned of their children authentic sense of their own identity came to Fair Day in the hope of learning more about their child, their needs and loving pathways of



care and support. They came up to the stall asking questions and finding information and resources that could assist them and their family in the gender journey of their child.

Fair day is a much loved event of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras calendar of events. While it offers much to the community, it also is a time where the community have sent messages of support to others within the LGBTIQ+ international communities. Two examples come to mind. In 2014 the idea of sending messages of love and support to our LGBTQI friends in Russia was a recurring theme beginning with tens of thousands of people joining hands at Fair Day in a moment of solidarity.

In 2016 as the sun shone down on Fair Day attendees not only enjoyed the entertainment and community spirit, hundreds of attendees held hands in a symbolic 'Let Them Stay' gesture for asylum seekers.

These two examples and the opportunity to connect and support people on any Fair Day is a beautiful reminder of why inclusive, community led spaces matter.

It's these conversations, amidst an atmosphere of pride, inclusivity and celebration, that make our work with and for communities so meaningful.

## References

See Graham Carbery, *A History of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras* (Parkville, Vic.: Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives, 1995)

MARDI GRAS TOURISM AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SYDNEY AS AN INTERNATIONAL GAY AND LESBIAN CITY Kevin Markwell

**Liz Ceissman**  
Program Manager  
The Gender Centre

# THE GENDER CENTRE'S DFV PROGRAM

## Briana Shorten

DFV Caseworker  
The Gender Centre

The Gender Centre provides a dedicated Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Program that supports our ongoing commitment to safety, advocacy, and inclusion for the transgender and gender-diverse community.

DFV is a significant issue experienced by LGBTIQ populations yet engagement with support services following family violence is low among this group, indicating there are barriers to this.

Analysis of data from the largest LGBTIQ health and wellbeing study in Australia, Private Lives 3 found that:

- **61%** of participants reported experiencing some form of intimate partner violence (IPV)
- **65%** reported experiencing some form of domestic and family violence
- **49%** of participants reported having experienced sexual assault
- Only **26%** of participants who indicated they had experienced family violence in their lifetime reported their most recent experience to service providers. Of these, only **2%** made reports to specialist services and **6%** to police.

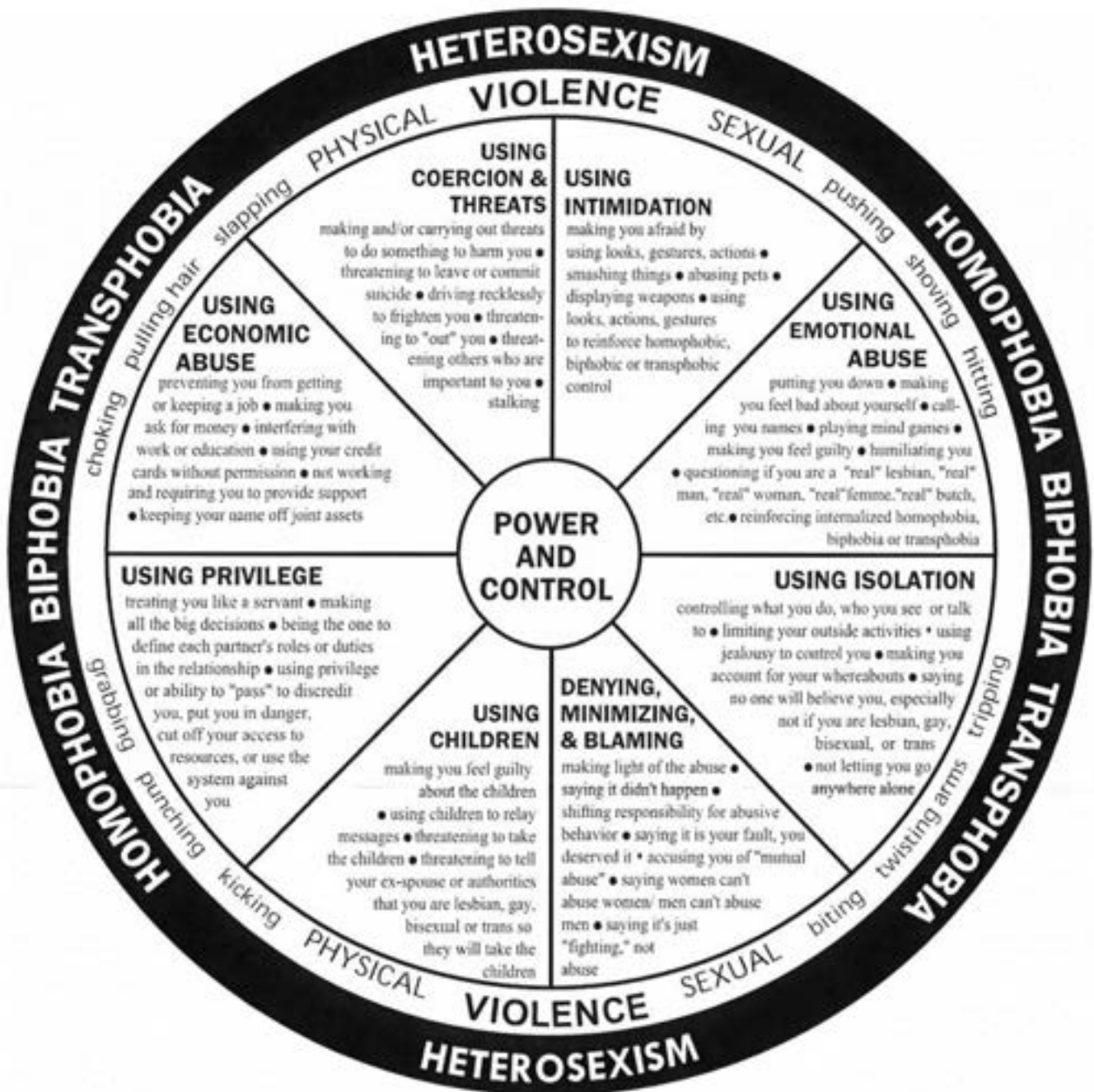
Private lives 3 is Australia's largest national survey of health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people to date. It was conducted by the Australian research centre in sex, health and society at La Trobe Uni in 2021. Almost 7000 participants completed the private lives 3 survey, and of that 4.4% were trans men,

4.2% were trans women and 14% identified as non-binary. So, whilst it is Australia's largest survey asking these types of questions, the trans and gender diverse representation was low.

From research and experience, we know that TGD communities experience violence within their intimate relationships at rates similar to (and sometimes higher than) rates for cisgender and heterosexual relationships. TGD people can experience violence within their 'family of origin' (biological or adoptive family) that is uniquely related to disclosure of their identities.

Trans and gender diverse people report experiencing particularly high levels of sexual violence. TGD people that experience or perpetuate DFV/IPV often struggle to find and access appropriate support and interventions. It can be difficult to identify and understand TGD DFV due to the "heterosexual face" of domestic violence.

**The Power and Control Wheel** is a commonly used tool to help people understand the different ways domestic and family violence might present. Conversations with survivors revealed 8 different categories of tactics that are frequently used by perpetrators, these tactics can be seen inside the wheel. The outer rim of the standard power and control wheel has the words "physical and sexual violence" as a reminder that it is under the threat of, or actual use of, physical or sexual violence that these tactics can be effective. The extra rim on this wheel is intended to make people think about how being part of the LGBTQIA+ community might impact DFV.



## Our DFV program

The Gender Centre's DFV team operates in two distinct support models. We offer specialist DFV counselling. 12 free sessions are provided online or in person, with a trauma informed and client led framework. We also offer DFV casework, where a specialised caseworker will support the needs of the client in practical ways including safety planning, referrals, information and advocacy.

## Sector support

Beyond direct support, the DFV Program is also contributing to broader sector change. Staff are engaging in training, community education, and interagency collaboration to strengthen how domestic violence services respond to trans and gender-diverse survivors. By sharing knowledge and developing partnerships, the Gender Centre is helping shape a more inclusive DFV sector across New South Wales.

# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN BLACKTOWN

Where every voice is heard and  
every identity is celebrated

Blacktown Area Community Centres Inc. (BACC) is proud to announce the appointment of a dedicated Diversity & Inclusion Officer (LGBTQIA+), committed to supporting and empowering our local LGBTQIA+ community across the Blacktown local government area.

BACC has long championed the recognition and inclusion of LGBTQIA+ voices in Blacktown. Since 2016, we have hosted the annual Pride Flag Raising Ceremony for IDAHOBIT, with attendance growing year after year. Our advocacy has extended to calls for permanent pride displays, rainbow crossings, community safety plans and partnerships with other organisations to amplify LGBTQIA+ needs and priorities.

This ongoing commitment has now culminated in the creation of the Diversity & Inclusion Officer role, funded through the Community Benefits Grants from GambleAware NSW. We recognise this as a significant step forward in fostering equality and belonging.

The Diversity & Inclusion Officer (LGBTQIA+) provides a range of tailored supports and initiatives, including:

## Individualised Support

This includes helping people access LGBTQIA+-specific services, connecting them with mental health, housing, and health supports, and advocating to ensure their needs are met. The goal is to offer tailored assistance that empowers individuals and promotes wellbeing.

## Workshops and Training

Education is key to fostering inclusion, and our workshops and training programs aim to equip the broader community with the tools to be supportive allies. We deliver LGBTQIA+ awareness and allyship training for service providers, community workers, schools and general community members. In addition, we offer family-focused workshops to help loved ones navigate experiences such as coming out, transitioning or exploring identity. Parents, carers and allies also receive guidance on how to have affirming and inclusive conversations.

## Community Events

Celebrating diversity is at the heart of what we do. Our community events uplift and honour LGBTQIA+ voices through inclusive celebrations such as IDAHOBIT and Wear It Purple Day. These events are planned in consultation with LGBTQIA+ community members and delivered in collaboration with local groups and services, ensuring they reflect the values and aspirations of the people they represent.



In 2026 we will be launching our Wisdom and Pride Project (a regular support and story-sharing group funded by Seven Hills Toongabbie RSL) that will focus on fostering connection and preserving community stories.

For further information or to participate in our programs and activities please contact BACC on 9626 5312 or [info@bacc.org.au](mailto:info@bacc.org.au).




**BACC team**



# LGBTQIA+ Support and Inclusion

***Creating Connection. Building Understanding.  
Championing Pride.***

At BACC, we're proud to have a Diversity and Inclusion Officer (LGBTQIA+) committed to supporting our local LGBTQIA+ community across the Blacktown Local Government Area.

-  Providing support to LGBTQIA+ individuals and their families
-  Delivering training and workshops to community workers and the wider public
-  Coordinating and supporting LGBTQIA+ inclusive events across the Blacktown LGA



***For more information please call  
BACC on 9626 5312 or email***

***info@bacc.org.au***

***www.bacc.org.au***

# EQUAL IDENTITIES

A human rights review of the experiences of trans and gender diverse people in Australia.

In March the Australian Human Rights Commission released the publication *Equal Identities: A human rights review of the experiences of trans and gender diverse people in Australia*. This publication had the clear goal of explore challenges facing trans and gender diverse people across all domains of Australian society. The focus was on what must change to ensure trans and gender diverse people can fully realise their human rights.

The report, which is 166 pages, identified significant and preventable barriers to trans and gender diverse people's safety, dignity and full participation in society. The report identified that these barriers existed across all parts of day to day life including: healthcare, housing, education, employment and public life. It also suggested that the intersectionality of other vulnerabilities and experiences such as racism, ableism, ageism and other forms of marginalisation exacerbated the poor outcomes for TGD people. TGD Young people were also singled out as having additional challenges that were distinct and different to those experienced by older TGD people.

Three distinct themes became the focal point of the report, finding and recommendations:

- **being safe**
- **being seen and heard (dignity)**
- **being able to participate.**

The report is at times hard to read as it showcases quite distressing and significant challenges for TGD people living in Australia:

Human Rights violations and the day-to-day exclusionary practices that many TGD people face are a hard reality to read about. But I am sure everyone recognises that it is even harder to live with these experiences as part of everyday life. One key area that caught my attention was that it called out the impact of social media and online hate speech as key factors in the ongoing vilification of TGD people. **Disinformation and coordinated harassment (including doxxing) undermines dignity, privacy and participation.** These were the behaviours that were clearly shown to be significant problems. One key challenge with online misinformation and disinformation was that it can appear credible for example arguments that purport to use scientific language and evidence based research that when investigated has no true legitimacy or academic credibility.

The exposure to rhetoric through media and online content was reflected in the raw data analysis which showed that respondents reported the following experiences:

- **72.1%** to anti-trans rhetoric online multiple times each week
- **68.9%** to international anti-trans legislation and violence (e.g. news reports about violent hate crimes against trans people)
- **58.2%** to anti-trans rhetoric in the news media
- **37.6%** to anti-trans rhetoric by Australian politicians and other high-profile individuals.

The flow on effect of this data matched international data which also highlighted greater risk to personal safety as current research reinforces that a rise in violence against LGBTIQ+ people occurs when there is increased negative public discourse.

The report is worth a read but as already noted is distressing in content. There are many salient points made. The recommendations are an important part of the journey forward. Below is a summary of the recommendations as taken straight from the report.

They are very policy driven around change. In simple terms the recommendations focus on four key areas:



### **Recognition of Expertise**

Ensuring that mechanisms within federal, state and territory governments are established to ensure that TGP people, their experiences and their expertise are considered in the development of policy, programs and frameworks that affect them



### **Protection and Safety**

Changes to or the introduction where nothing already exists to legislation and policies with the aim of ensure that TGD people are consistently and assuredly protected from hate speech and harmful conversion practice



### **Access**

Ensuring that TDG people have equal access to all public services, including education and housing



### **Care and wellbeing**

Creating accountabilities to ensure that the criminal justice system and healthcare sector have the education and support to ensure that trans and gender diverse people can enjoy their right to health and to legal redress.

## **Recommendation 1**

Federal, state and territory governments should introduce consistent legislation to protect LGBTIQ+ people and their associates from vilification, incitement of hatred and threats of physical harm. Governments should design these laws in consultation with LGBTIQ+ communities, including trans and gender diverse communities, and should include both civil prohibitions and criminal offences.

## **Recommendation 2**

The Australian Government Department of Social Services should require and report on LGBTIQ+ and trans and gender diverse representation in their workforce and on key advisory groups, committees and rapid reviews in key areas such as housing, domestic, sexual and family violence prevention, and community services.

## **Recommendation 3**

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (DFSVC) should establish an ongoing LGBTIQ+ working group, including trans and gender diverse representation, to:

- a. provide advice on initiatives to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, including implementation of the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032
- b. develop initiatives to build workforce capacity and understanding of how intersecting forms of discrimination can affect trans and gender diverse people's experiences of domestic, family and sexual violence
- c. strengthen relationships and cross capacity building between the DFSVC, crisis response services and trans and gender diverse stakeholders

## Recommendation 4

The Australian Government Attorney General's Department, along with state and territory governments, should establish LGBTIQ+ justice working groups that include trans and gender diverse representation. The working groups should protect the human rights of trans and gender diverse people by: a. working with criminal justice systems (police, courts and prison systems) to design and monitor policies and practices b. working with the trans and gender diverse community to develop methods to identify and track hate crimes, including community reporting mechanisms c. advancing priority areas of justice and law reform, including decriminalisation of appropriate offences, justice reinvestment and measures to address and prevent discriminatory behaviours.

## Recommendation 5

Federal, state and territory governments should provide sustainable, targeted funding to address capacity gaps in legal service provision for trans and gender diverse people, as identified in the 2025 report 'A Blueprint for Equality: Resourcing LGBTIQ+ Community Legal Centres'.

## Recommendation 6

Federal, state and territory governments should ensure crisis accommodation and homelessness support services offer inclusive support and are adequately funded to do so. This includes increasing sector-wide awareness, understanding and capabilities about intersecting marginalisations which affect trans and gender diverse people from diverse backgrounds.

## Recommendation 7

All government-affiliated and government-funded bodies that collect demographic data should ensure data on gender, sexuality and innate variations of sex characteristics (sometimes known as intersex variations) is collected in line with the ABS Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables (2020). This includes:

- a. collecting data on gender identity from everybody to ensure that health and support services have the data necessary to meet the needs of trans and gender diverse children and adolescents
- b. implementing new data collection protocols in partnership with LGBTIQ+ and trans and gender diverse specific organisations to establish community trust and ensure privacy and sensitivity concerns are understood

## Recommendation 8

The Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing should require and report on LGBTIQ+ and trans and gender diverse representation in their workforce and on key advisory groups, committees and rapid reviews. The Department should also establish a specific ongoing LGBTIQ+ Health Advisory Group to:

- a. provide advice on matters relating to trans and gender diverse health, and LGBTIQ+ health more broadly
- b. provide advice on relevant government initiatives affecting LGBTIQ+ communities, such as the National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2025-2035 and the National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People 2025–2035
- c. advise on LGBTIQ+ health data collection and contribute to the continuous improvement of the Health Data Portal and key national data sets.

## Recommendation 9

Healthcare providers and education and training institutions (i.e. universities, TAFEs) should ensure that all healthcare and healthcare-adjacent workers and students receive education and ongoing professional development on inclusive care for trans and gender diverse people. This includes awareness of how intersecting forms of discrimination can affect trans and gender diverse people's health and access to healthcare services.

## Recommendation 10

Federal, state and territory governments should introduce or amend legislation to ban conversion or suppression practices. This legislation should follow the following principles:

- a. design the legislative framework in consultation with survivors of conversion or suppression practices
- b. apply the ban on conversion and suppression practices to both religious and secular settings
- c. make it unlawful to take someone out of the jurisdiction for conversion or suppression practices
- d. allow reporting by third parties
- e. carefully define and provide examples of what is and is not a conversion or suppression practice
- f. include an education plan which covers:
  - i. who is protected by the law
  - ii. how to identify conversion or suppression practices
  - iii. awareness of harm caused by conversion or suppression practices.

## Recommendation 11

Federal, state and territory governments should reduce barriers that prevent trans and gender diverse people from accessing all forms of healthcare, including gender affirming healthcare. Reducing barriers includes: a. increasing staff and service resourcing to meet urgent needs on existing waitlists for publicly funded hospitals and clinics b. running proactive public awareness campaigns that address misinformation and disinformation which target trans and gender diverse people's healthcare c. funding service access for trans and gender diverse people in remote, rural and regional communities

## Recommendation 12

Federal, state and territory governments should: a. end pauses on puberty suppressants and other hormone therapies for children and young people b. ensure that, in line with other areas of adolescent medicine, Gillick competence and clinical standards of care are the framework guiding the provision of healthcare to trans and gender diverse children and young people.

## Recommendation 13

The Australian Government should repeal Section 43A of the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth).

## Recommendation 14

The Australian Government should:

- a. amend section 37(1)(d) and repeal section 38 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) and make consequential amendments to the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth), as recommended by the Australian Law Reform Commission in its 2024 report 'Maximising the Realisation of Human Rights: Religious Educational Institution and Anti Discrimination Laws'
- b. request the Australian Law Reform Commission to further review and make recommendations about how to amend the exemption for religious bodies under section 37(1)(d) of the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth).

## Recommendation 15

State and territory governments should review and amend their antidiscrimination legislation to ensure that trans and gender diverse people have equal access to publicly funded services, including those provided by religious bodies.

## Recommendation 16

The Australian Government Department of Education should require LGBTIQ+ and trans and gender diverse representation on key advisory groups, committees and rapid reviews. The Department should also establish an LGBTIQ+ Youth Advisory Group to provide input into:

- a. education policy settings
- b. the role of teachers
- c. curriculum content
- d. targeted anti-bullying program support.

## Recommendation 17

Federal, state and territory education departments should review their current policies, practices and curricula to ensure that they support an inclusive model. This model should embed inclusion of trans and gender diverse students as part of teacher training and professional development for all staff across all levels of government funded education institutions.

## Recommendation 18

Educational institutions receiving government funding should have policies to prevent discrimination and harassment of trans and gender diverse students, staff and parents.

## Recommendation 19

The Australian Government should expand the positive duty in the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) to cover protected attributes outlined in sections 5A, 5B and 5C of the Act.

What I have written is a brief overview of a detailed report. If you want to read it, please go to <https://humanrights.gov.au/resource-hub/by-resource-type/reports/lgbtqia/equal-identities> to find a downloadable copy. Again I remind people that reading the challenges and stories can be distressing and confronting. But I hope they also serve as a reminder to people that change is needed to remove this Human Rights exclusions from the everyday experience of TGD people in Australia.



# TRANS PEOPLE IN HISTORY



Most of us have probably heard by now the idea that trans people have always existed, which is of course true.

They might not have called themselves trans exactly, that is a very modern understanding, but gender diversity and expressions of gender beyond the binary have definitely always existed.

We know this because of countless examples across time and place, as far back as ancient Egypt, through the Roman Empire, and Edo-period Japan to early Industrialization in Europe. We of course also have the living traditions of gender diversity amongst the Indigenous people of America as well as amongst Aboriginal nations in Australia. And we also have countless individual stories like that of Joan of Arc or the trans Roman Emperor, Elagabalus.

Even so it can still be a little finicky to find super obvious evidence of trans people throughout history, at least in a way that affirms our lived experience of transness today. It's not like we have records on records of gender transition rituals or ancient graffiti on some Roman ruin that says 'I'm a girly, Julius, and you shall regard me as such'.

The truth is history is messy, and even more than that, gender is messy. How gender was thought of 500, 1000, 2000 years ago is very different to how it is thought of today. On top of this, history has also often been unkind

to trans people and so the evidence we do have is often merely a cautious suggestion of transness, the sort of thing that's easily explained away by those not looking to find it.

Which is why this poem from Qalonymus ben Qalonymus, a Jewish philosopher, who lived roughly around the 13-14th century in what is now France, is so remarkable. Now read this and tell me this isn't us represented in history, clear as day.

*What an awful fate for my mother  
That she bore a son  
What a loss of all benefit!  
Cursed be the one who announced to my father:  
"It's a boy!..."*

[...]

*Oh, but had the artisan who made me  
created me instead – a fair woman. (cont.)*

Oh babe, get in line! As if you're the first to have these feelings!

*Today I would be wise and insightful.  
We would weave, my friends and I,  
and in the moonlight spin our yarn,  
and tell our stories to one another,  
from dusk till midnight.  
We'd tell the events of our day, silly things,  
matters of no consequence.  
But also I would grow very wise from the  
spinning,  
and I would say, "Happy is she who knows how*



*to work with combed flax and weave it into fine white linen."*

*And at times, in the way of women,  
I would lie down on the kitchen floor,  
Between the ovens, turn the coals, and taste  
the different dishes.  
On holidays I would put on my best jewelry.  
I would beat on the drum  
And my clapping hands would ring.*

[...]

*Father in heaven, who did miracles for our  
ancestors with fire and water,  
You changed the fire of Chaldees so it would  
not burn hot,  
You changed Dina in the womb of her mother  
to a girl,  
You changed the staff to a snake before a  
million eyes,  
You changed [Moses'] hand to [leprous] white  
and the sea to dry land.  
In the desert you turned rock to water,  
hard flint to a fountain.*

*Who would then turn me from a man to  
woman?  
Were I only to have merited this, being so  
graced by your goodness.*

And then this next section is quite sad, and I advise you to read it only at your own cost.

*What shall I say? Why cry or be bitter?  
If my Father in heaven has decreed upon me  
and has maimed me with an immutable  
deformity,  
then I do not wish to remove it.  
And the sorrow of the impossible  
is a human pain that nothing will cure  
and for which no comfort can be found.  
So, I will bear and suffer  
until I die and wither in the ground.  
And since I have learned from the tradition  
that we bless both the good and the bitter,  
I will bless in a voice, hushed and weak,  
Blessed are you, O Lord,  
who has not made me a woman.*

*I warned you!*

Even though trans history is messy, we can and should see ourselves in it.

So, if ever you hear some drivel along the lines of 'there weren't any trans people in the 60s', or 'where has all this ridiculous trans nonsense come from' etc. etc. you should know that we have always existed and that we have always been some of the strongest, most beautiful and incredible people. And in some way, I think we owe it to the trans people of the past not to forget that.

**Raili Haagensen**

# TRANS LIVES

## Introducing the new book

There are already lots of books about trans people, and there are enough media reports to sink a battleship. Why write another?

It's a fair question. In fact a couple of the very best books about trans life come from Australia. Roberta Perkins' book *The 'Drag Queen' Scene: Transsexuals in Kings Cross* tell their own story was a remarkable work by a young anthropologist. Roberta, a trans woman herself, collected life stories and lived in the inner-city scene. It was a world-first project, and though it was published in 1983, it's still fresh and interesting to read.

Then there's the best novel about a trans character ever written, in my opinion: Patrick White's *The Twyborn Affair*. Patrick wasn't trans himself, but he was homosexual, and in his generation that raised questions about gender. And he was a brilliant novelist. So in *The Twyborn Affair*, published just four years before Roberta's book, he could think himself into the emotions of a character who was veering uncertainly across boundaries between man and woman.

But that was then, and this is now. Things have changed, and in the last ten to fifteen years they have changed quickly for the worse. Trans existence is targeted in multiple statements from the Vatican and denounced also by fundamentalist Protestants. Hundreds of cruel anti-trans laws have been introduced by Republican Party extremists in state legislatures in the United States.

A vicious anti-trans law was passed a couple of years ago by Putin's followers in Russia. Gender studies has been banned from universities in Hungary, and words like 'transgender' are being banned now by the Trump government. And this pattern of anti-trans cruelty is now being taken up by right-wing politicians in Queensland and the Northern Territory.

So it's time to re-think our ideas about trans lives and how they can be defended. The new book is an attempt to help that re-thinking. It doesn't address every issue, for sure. But I hope it suggests ways we can build on trans experiences to grapple with the new situation.

I start *Trans Lives* by telling the stories of trans groups in seven different countries - plus the Internet - over the last half-century. I then pose some of the basic questions. How do we understand gender itself, which always involves an interplay - and a tension - between our bodies and our societies. And what does transition involve, as a real-life experience? It surely involves a lot of work - and who exactly is the workforce?

Then I look at the social background of trans lives, which is much more than a matter of norms or roles. We have to consider structures like social class and race; and we have to consider institutions, like the family and the state. Many trans lives, especially in the post-colonial world, are extremely precarious; the big issues here are not so much about individual rights as about basic

social justice. I take a special look at the institution of medicine, particularly how trans medicine emerged, and the dramatic changes it has gone through since the 1950s.

Finally I turn to the new situation, taking a close look at the anti-trans campaigns and the groups involved. I don't think 'transphobia' is a helpful concept - it's vague and usually lays the blame in the wrong place. In the final chapter I emphasise the importance of trans organizing, the remarkable range of groups and projects that have already been created, and the question of alliances - or better, solidarity. Which means trans groups giving, as well as receiving, support.

So that's what *Trans Lives* tries to do. Though it deals with some difficult issues, I've tried to write in a clear and accessible style. I hope the book is useful, and I welcome feedback!

Note: *Trans Lives* is published by Polity Press (in Australia, Wiley); the link on the publisher's website is

[www.politybooks.com/bookdetail?book\\_slug=trans-lives--9781509572038](http://www.politybooks.com/bookdetail?book_slug=trans-lives--9781509572038)

**Raewyn Connell**

Polare **MAGAZINE**



# BEYOND VISIBILITY

Trans Day of Visibility (TDOV) is an International Day of Observance held each year on 31 March. Its purpose is to celebrate transgender and gender diverse people, highlight their achievements and contributions, and raise awareness of the discrimination and barriers many still face. Unlike days that focus on mourning or loss, TDOV is intentionally about visibility, recognition, and affirmation.

In this context, Visibility can include sharing trans stories and lived experiences; recognising trans leaders, artists, advocates, and professionals; challenging stereotypes and misinformation; and creating safer, more inclusive environments where trans people can be open about who they are.

TDOV is also marked by organisations like The Gender Centre for community outreach, education, and advocacy, as well as celebrating the strength and diversity of trans communities. Other activities that might be advertised around gender-friendly spaces are educational talks or panel discussions, public statements of support or allyship, and highlighting their trans-inclusive services and supports.



## Visibility Is Not the Same as Safety

Trans Day of Visibility is often framed as a celebration of being seen. But for many trans and gender diverse people, visibility is not neutral—and it is not always safe.

Choosing not to be visible does not mean someone is ashamed, disengaged, or lacking pride in their identity. It often means they are making a rational, self-protective decision in a world where visibility can come with real consequences.

Some people might choose not to be visible, and there are plenty of reasons for this.

### 1. Safety and Risk Management

For many trans people, visibility can increase exposure to harassment or violence. They may fear discrimination at work, school, or in housing, or worry about online abuse. Bigger concerns of family rejection or loss of support mean that in this context, invisibility is not silence—it is risk assessment.

Visibility can be empowering, but it can also make people targets.

### 2. Financial and Workplace Vulnerability

Not everyone has job security, legal protection, or supportive employers. Some trans people are casual or contract workers, work in industries with little inclusion protection, or rely on employers, clients, or customers who may not be affirming.

For them, being visible can mean losing income or career opportunities.

### 3. Cultural, Family, and Community Contexts

Visibility does not exist in a vacuum. Cultural background, migration status, religion, and family dynamics all shape what is possible. In these cases, people might be out in one space but not another. They could be visible

to friends but not family, or the opposite - affirmed privately but hiding publicly.

This is not inconsistency—it is navigation.

### 4. Emotional and Psychological Energy

Visibility often comes with an expectation to educate others. Trans and gender diverse folk are often called to correct misinformation, represent the entire community, and all the while, be resilient in the face of ignorance. Not everyone has the capacity to do this, and no one owes it. Rest, privacy, and quiet existence are valid needs.

### 5. Visibility Has Historically Been Unequally Distributed

The trans people most encouraged to be visible are often those who already have majority privilege in other areas. They are white, middle class, have citizenship, and live in safe suburbs.

Those facing intersecting marginalisation may experience higher costs for the same visibility.

So, What does this all mean? Rather than asking “Why aren’t more people visible?”, we can ask:

- Who is able to be visible—and why?
- Who is protected when they are visible?
- How can we support people regardless of whether they are out?

Visibility should be an option, not an obligation.

Supporting trans people means respecting personal choice, not prescribing how pride or authenticity should look.

Trans Day of Visibility should remind us not only of those who are seen, but of our responsibility to create a world where visibility is safe—and where invisibility is still respected.

**Candy Jacques**  
Senior Counsellor  
The Gender Centre

# E-SAFETY AND THE SOCIAL MEDIA BAN

As it stands in March 2026

In December 2025 the social ban for young people under 16 came into effect. Whilst controversial, the e safety commission set forth the information directly copied below to explain their rationale for the ban.

eSafety's approach to implementing the social media minimum age will be based on research, evidence, deep consultation and careful consideration of the best interests of children.

It is informed by guiding principles developed through stakeholder consultation on eSafety's Age verification roadmap:

1. Take a proportionate approach based on risk and harm.
2. Respect and promote human rights.
3. Propose a holistic response that recognises the roles of different stakeholders and supports those most at-risk.
4. Ensure any technical measures minimise data and preserve privacy.
5. Consider the broader domestic and international regulatory context.
6. Consider what is feasible now and anticipate future environments.

What the ban meant in simple terms was two key actions:

1. Age-restricted social media platforms needed to take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under 16 years old from having accounts on their platforms. Online gaming and standalone messaging apps, among a number of types of services have been excluded from this expectation and young people under 16 could continue to access these platforms
2. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Threads, TikTok, Twitch, X, YouTube, Kick and Reddit are age-restricted platforms, and young people under 16 would not be able to access these platforms.

It is now almost 4 months since the social media changes came into effect. The E-safety commission has released a report that evaluates how this legislation has travelled in



implementation and impact. Key observations in the report included:

1. Messaging to children aged under 16 on some platforms has encouraged them to attempt age assurance even where their declared age prior to 10 December 2025 was under 16 years of age
2. In some cases, platforms have enabled children aged under-16 to repeatedly attempt the same age assurance method to ultimately obtain a 16+ outcome
3. Pathways for reporting children aged under 16 have generally not been accessible and effective, particularly for parents
4. Some platforms appear not to have done enough to prevent children aged under 16 from having accounts

What happens now is the final part of the report the E safety commission released in March.

The commission reports they plan on taking a holistic approach to on line safety and that all online platforms have risks. The SMMA (Social media minimum age) obligation is only one part of a broader strategy to make online spaces safer.

The eSafety's role is to implement and enforce the Online Safety Act. This includes a number of interconnected measures designed to promote and improve online safety for Australians and reduce online harm, this includes:

1. including Online Safety Codes and Standards to safeguard Australians from unlawful and illegal material and

2. prevent children's access and exposure to age-inappropriate content.
3. administers complaint schemes under the Online Safety Act which are designed to protect Australians from serious online harm.

This complaint scheme includes:

1. Cyberbullying
2. Adult Cyber Abuse schemes

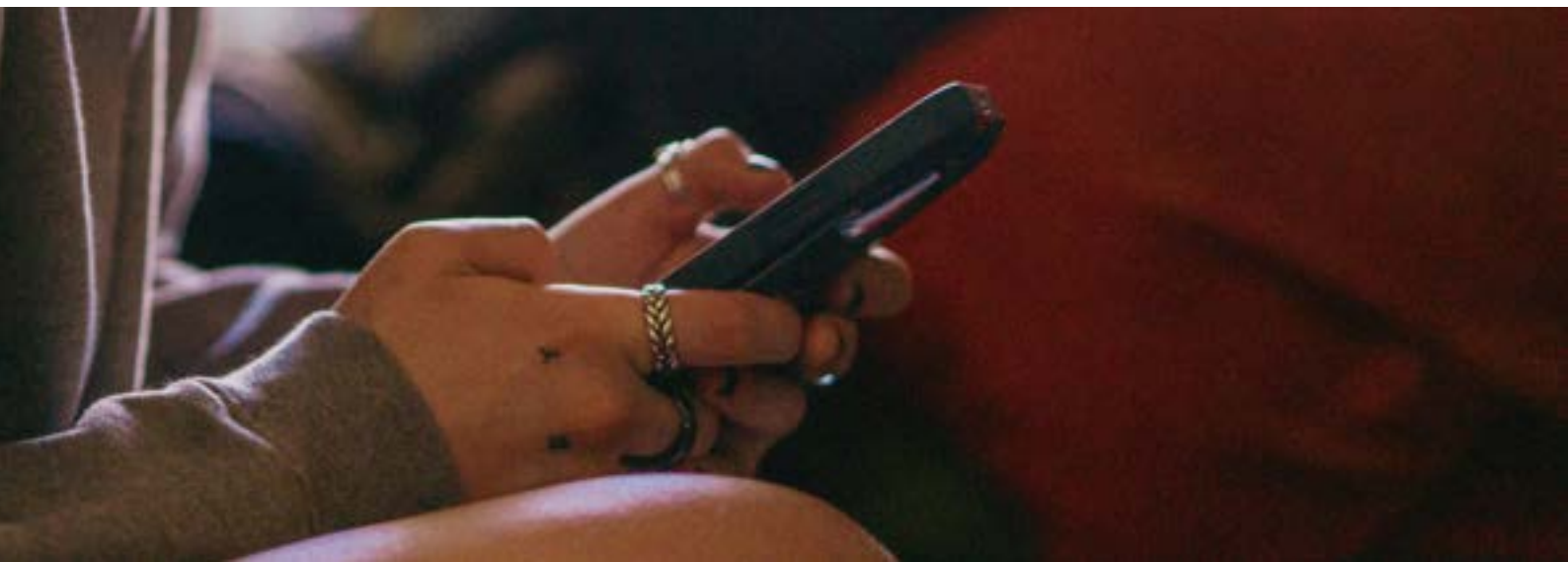
These schemes act as safety nets when harmful content remains online after a user has reported it to the platform.

There is also a scheme to address the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. This Online Content Scheme allows Australians to report online material they believe is illegal or should be restricted. Reporting of online abuse can be done via the E- safety website

This site also helps people access other forms of support and resources.

To read the full report about the impact and issues so far go to [www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2026-03/](http://www.esafety.gov.au/sites/default/files/2026-03/)

**Liz Ceissman**  
Program Manager  
The Gender Centre



# SOCIAL MEDIA BAN



It's been a few months since the under 16s social media ban was implemented. In just the first half of December, approximately 4.7 million accounts had their access removed from a number of social media sites designated as risks for young people. It's no surprise that the eSafety commission considers this a huge success, even while acknowledging the impossibility of banning every single relevant account with no margin of error.

I'm someone who grew up as part of the first generation that had unfettered, widespread access to social media as they navigated the most turbulent years of their lives: the teenage years. Social media existed before I started high school, but the 2010s saw a huge boom in social media usage, especially as many of us had our first smartphones that we could download whatever apps we wanted onto. Admittedly, within my peers I was an outlier; I didn't have many of the mainstream social media accounts. I didn't use Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat or Instagram. Instead, I grew up in the online gaming space, which meant games like RuneScape and League of Legends were my primary sources of online interaction. I used Skype to voice call with my friends, and when Discord released, we all migrated there. The online gaming space also had certain sites we gravitated to more than others. In particular, Twitch, YouTube and Reddit. But regardless of which corner of the internet a 2010s teenager ended up on, we all had one thing in common; we had to learn everything for ourselves.

We may have had the occasional computer class in primary school that taught us how to send an email, we'd do a weekly BTN report (Behind The News, shoutout to those who remember) where we were encouraged to practice researching skills, a seminar about cyberbullying here and there, and that's about it. With how quickly the internet was advancing, the education system was not prepared to teach us how to navigate the landscape of online interaction beyond "Don't trust everything you read on the internet" and vague notions of not sharing personal information with people we don't know.

There was a lot to be gained from this freedom. The ability to interact with our peers without having to organise a hangout meant that we were able to remain social regardless of our circumstances. I could still play games with my friends online to catch up with them even if I was sick and couldn't attend school. This has also been huge for remote and marginalised communities, giving them a chance to form online groups and meet other people with lived experience to learn from and share in joys unique to their experience (I myself lurk across a couple of trans subreddits just because I appreciate the relatable memes). YouTube can be an incredible source of entertainment, information, news and advice, which as a trans woman, has been so helpful for learning hair and makeup tips, as well as dispelling many of the unknowns that comes with transitioning. YouTube "cracked my egg" (an online way of saying "helped me come out as trans").



With all that being said, the internet wasn't always sunshine and rainbows for me. As a teenager, I didn't know I was trans, having only come out a little into my adult years. Part of this could be attributed to a lack of understanding. There really was little education on LGBTQ+ topics at the time, a trend that doesn't seem to have changed much since. But perhaps more important was the prevalence of hateful content that surged in popularity in the mid 2010s, right in the middle of my formative teenage years. And even worse, it was widespread within the online gaming space, where I spent most of my time. I was a depressed teenager, uncertain of my place in the world, making me a prime target for this kind of content. Sites like YouTube function using an algorithm. Once you interact with one post, the algorithm feeds you more content like it to keep you hooked without any consideration for how damaging the content can be. In fact, outrage is well known to be a driving force for interaction, so creators are incentivised to pump out divisive and controversial content to feed into the algorithm to generate more views and therefore more money. And on the other end are people like teenage me, being incited to feel vitriol towards whichever minority group is the target in order to line someone else's pockets.

It seems silly to look at it now, having grown so much since then. But at the same time, I pity myself for not having the critical thinking skills I have now. Had I been able to properly question the content I was consuming and

form my own opinions back then, maybe I would've explored my own gender identity earlier in life instead of thoughtlessly parroting the hateful things I had been told by online agitators. And that brings me back to the social media ban.

My biggest concern with the ban is that it doesn't necessarily protect kids from online dangers; it merely delays them until they are 16. Without proper education into critical thinking skills, and specific education on how current day social media sites are used and abused, no one can reasonably expect a 16 year old to be able to safely and thoughtfully navigate through the infinite database that is the internet. Nowadays, we also are dealing with the onslaught of AI content, which is only becoming more and more difficult to discern from reality, with very little action from lawmakers to proactively impose restrictions.

Additionally, the ban is letting social media corporations get away with not having to moderate the content that their algorithms are pushing. These sites have no incentive to remove a lot of hateful content because it ultimately drives engagement, which to them and the advertisers on their platforms means profit. The ban doesn't acknowledge that the dangers of these algorithms don't suddenly disappear when kids turn 16; many adults are also incredibly susceptible to outrage-based content. As long as these platforms do not have to regulate the content that gets recommended to users, everyone is a potential victim of "ragebait" so that someone else can profit from it.



So where does that leave us? Social media is simultaneously one of the most powerful tools for people to connect and learn with and one of the most dangerous devices to lure people into harmful echo chambers. But most importantly, social media is never going away. Even as individual platforms collapse, new ones will come in and replace them. And if we refuse to educate kids on how to identify dangerous patterns in the content they are being fed, then it doesn't matter what age we allow them access to social media; even as adults they will be unequipped to deal with the dangers of social media algorithms.

There is unfortunately no simple solution to such a nuanced issue. I wish the under 16s ban really did solve everything, and that once kids turned 16 they would be perfectly capable of safely using social media. That, of course, is too good to be true. I don't feel as though the ban is purely negative, but in isolation I have little faith in its ability to address the root of the issue. That being said, I'm no expert in sociology. I certainly don't know the solution either. I'm just a trans woman who grew up during the social media boom, who wishes her teenage self had the tools to process everything she was being exposed to. And if there's anything I can recommend to kids and parents reading this, it's exactly that; critical thinking skills are so important in today's media landscape.

**Ruby RQ**



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# QUEER CAREERS EXPO

Finding a safe workplace as an LGBTQIA+ person shouldn't be as hard as it is

Existing methods involve a lot of research. Finding out whether the business is rainbow tick accredited, or part of an LGBTQIA+ inclusivity award like the AWEI awards. Checking company reviews on Glassdoor or stalking their LinkedIn for a rainbow logo and some actual follow through.

Often people end up falling back on word of mouth, but while that can sometimes mean working with your friends, it also means that queer people end up bunched into certain industries which isn't always ideal if you want to do your own thing.

There's an element of risk involved in this trial and error approach that can make job searching harder than it needs to be. Revealing details about your identity in an interview to discover if the workplace responds well is a common technique to test the waters but for people who need the paycheck more than anything else, litmus testing your employer in the interview stage is a luxury not everyone can afford. Even deciding what to wear and how to present at an interview becomes a layered decision that cis people don't have to make.

As decisions around safety are being made as early as in the resume formulation stage when applying for a job (such as what name to use and whether including pronouns in your LinkedIn bio is safe to do), it becomes blatantly obvious that seeking employment for LGBTQIA+ people is a lot more complicated than it is for our cis straight allies and peers.

Aiming to take the stress out of finding an inclusive place to work is the goal of the Queer Careers Expo, a two day careers expo that will showcase employers who have all made a commitment to supporting LGBTQIA+ employees. The expo will be held at the Ashfield Civic Centre on June 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> 2026 and has space for 60 employers on each day, from a wide variety of industries.

The expo is a community led, free and accessible venture delivered in collaboration with the SEM Local Jobs Program, Inner West Council, Headspace Work and Study, Pride Business Association and Pride in Diversity and it is the first large scale event of its kind to happen in Australia.

At the expo, you can have direct conversations with the hiring teams for different businesses knowing that they will be inclusive and supportive to the LGBTQIA+SB community, cutting out all the extra research so you can find a workplace you feel safe at, that will support you as an LGBTQIA+ person.

To find out more, search [queercareersexpo.com](https://queercareersexpo.com) to check out our website to see what exhibitors have signed up and register for your free ticket today.



# AUS ALERT

In July you may receive an Alert message this will be part of the federal government's national warning system they are implementing to navigate emergencies occurring across our country.

Below is the information taken directly from the federal government's website [www.nema.gov.au/our-work/risk-reduction/ausalert](http://www.nema.gov.au/our-work/risk-reduction/ausalert)

The Gender centre thought it was important to keep the community updated on this process so that should you receive alerts on your phone especially the trial one in July you have a full understanding of what is happening and why.

## What is AusAlert?

AusAlert is a new national emergency warning system that sends urgent messages to compatible mobile phones and other mobile devices in a specified area.

AusAlert brings cell-broadcast technology to Australian emergency warnings. This technology is considered international best practice and is used by more than 30 countries for emergency warning communications.

AusAlert will allow emergency services organisations and some Australian Government agencies to send targeted warning messages. The system will be more reliable, accurate and efficient than current systems. This means authorities can reach people quickly when it matters most, keeping Australians informed and helping to save lives and property. In the future, AusAlert will also send automated voice messages to landline phones.

An AusAlert message will tell you:

- what the emergency is
- where it is happening
- how serious it is
- what you should do
- who the message is from
- where to find more information.

## When AusAlert may be used

AusAlert may be used for a range of situations, including:

- Natural hazards, such as bushfires, floods, cyclones and tsunamis
- Public safety and security threats, such as serious public safety incidents or terrorism
- Biosecurity incidents, such as animal or plant disease and biohazard outbreaks
- Health emergencies, such as pandemics or other national public health events.

## Benefits of AusAlert

AusAlert uses cell-broadcast technology, which is more efficient than current SMS-based emergency alerts. It is also safer, faster and more secure. Once active, AusAlert will have the following benefits:

### Targeted alerts

Alerts are sent only to mobile devices in a specified area. This can include areas that cross state and territory borders. Messages can be targeted to areas within 160 metres, such as a single building. This allows emergency services organisations to send precise evacuation messages. If you are not in the affected disaster area, you will not receive the alert.

### Fast

Everyone in the targeted area is sent the alert at the same time. This means alerts can reach millions of mobile devices almost instantly.

### Reliable

AusAlert messages are not text messages (SMS). Because they use cell-broadcast technology, alerts can still be sent and received when mobile networks are busy. Devices do not need an active SIM card to receive an alert.

### Private and secure

Only authorised emergency services organisations and Australian Government agencies can send alerts. AusAlert does not collect or store your mobile phone number or location. This helps protect you from scams.

### Loud and clear

During the most serious emergencies, AusAlert uses a loud warning sound and vibration. The alert will make this sound even if your phone is on silent or 'do not disturb'.

### Proven technology

Cell broadcast is widely used for public warning systems in other countries, including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and the European Union. It is a fast, location-based way to reach mobile devices during emergencies.

AusAlert will have the ability to broadcast messages during an alert period. If an alert is active, anyone who enters the emergency area will receive the message. You will only receive the alert again if it is updated with new information.

## Delivering AusAlert

AusAlert is currently being built. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has contracts in place for AusAlert to begin operating from October 2026. From then, the Australian Government and state and territory emergency services organisations will be able to send alerts, subject to individual state and territory agreements.

As part of early testing, during June 2026, some communities will receive a clearly labelled test message from AusAlert. If your community is involved in early testing, you will be told in advance. If you receive a test alert, you do not need to take any action. The communities that will be involved in testing are:

- Majura, Australian Capital Territory (micro test at Emergency Services Agency headquarters)
- Launceston, Tasmania
- Port Douglas, Queensland
- Liverpool, New South Wales
- Tennant Creek, Northern Territory
- Geelong, Victoria
- Goomalling, Western Australia
- Port Lincoln, South Australia
- Queanbeyan area, Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales (cross-border test)



After community testing, there will be a national test on Monday 27 July 2026. During this test, all compatible devices across Australia will receive a test alert. This helps ensure the system works as expected before it is used in real emergencies. The table below shows when the national test will be across time zones.

State	National test time (time zone)
Australian Capital Territory	2:00pm AEST (UTC+10:00)
New South Wales	2:00pm AEST (UTC+10:00)
Queensland	2:00pm AEST (UTC+10:00)
Tasmania	2:00pm AEST (UTC+10:00)
Victoria	2:00pm AEST (UTC+10:00)
South Australia	1:30pm ACST (UTC+9:30)
Northern Territory	1:30pm ACST (UTC+9:30)
Western Australia	12:00pm AWST (UTC+8:00)
Christmas Island	11:00am CXT (UTC+7:00)

AusAlert will align with the Australian Warning System to support a nationally consistent approach to emergency warnings. Messages will initially be sent in English only.

The AusAlert website is currently being built. Once live, you will be able to find information about testing, what to expect and whether you need to do anything to prepare. The website will also include information kits in several languages, and items such as factsheets, posters and social media content.

## Background

AusAlert is being introduced in response to the 2020 Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. The Royal Commission found that emergency warning systems, including mobile-based alerts, are critical.

The Australian Government funded the development of a national messaging system in the 2022–23 and 2023–24 Budgets. NEMA is co-delivering the system with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA).

The system is also being designed with relevant federal, state and territory government agencies, including emergency services organisations. This will ensure the coordinated and appropriate use of AusAlert and recognises the leading role state and territory emergency services organisations play in issuing warnings and responding to emergencies.

- Email
- Facebook
- Twitter



**Mental Health Centre  
Bondi**



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**Mental Health Centre  
Bondi**

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## Opening hours

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9am - 5pm**

## Visit us

**59 Newland Street,  
Bondi Junction.  
Walk-ins welcome.  
No appointment or  
GP mental health  
plan necessary.**

## Reach us

**02 9095 4300**

The Bondi Medicare Mental Health Centre is an interim service currently funded by the Australian Government. This service is commissioned by Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network and operated by New Horizons.



This service is funded by  
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CENTRAL AND  
EASTERN SYDNEY  
An Australian Government Initiative

# ABOUT THE GENDER CENTRE

The Gender Centre is committed to providing services and activities which enhance the ability of gender diverse people to live their best, most authentic lives. The Gender Centre is also committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of gender diverse people.

We offer a wide range of services to gender diverse people and their partners, TGD families and organisations, as well as service providers. We aim to provide a high quality service which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.

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## Photography

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