



RAINBOW FUTURES W.A.

THE WA RAINBOW VOTES REPORT 2021

**The Pre-Election Survey of the LGBTIQ+
Community of Western Australia**

PREFACE

This survey was conducted online in November and December 2020. It was promoted via social media through a mix of paid and organic posts, and direct email. Respondents were self-selecting.

Figures quoted in this paper are from the survey carried out by Rainbow Futures and Equality Australia in November and December 2020.

Comparative figures are from the 2016 census conducted by Australian Bureau of Statistics unless otherwise specified.

Rainbow Futures wishes to thank Equality Australia and the rainbow community organisations of WA for their support in carrying out this survey.

PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS

322 people in total participated in the survey. It was promoted via social media and email, through individuals and community groups.

94% of respondents were WA residents.

88.2% of respondents described themselves as part of the LGBTIQ+ community, 19% said they were a friend or relative and 16.6% regarded themselves as an ally.

Gender Identity

When asked about their gender, respondents self-identified as:

- 46.2% female
- 32.6% male
- 14.5% non-binary

Another 2.4% identified as another gender and 0.6% as agender. 3.6% answered NA to this question.

In answer to the question *"Is your gender different to the one assigned to you at birth?"*, respondents answered:

- 1.2% don't know
- 1.2% prefer not to say
- 27.9% Yes
- 69.6% No

Intersex Respondents

1.2% of respondents described themselves as intersex. Although not significantly lower than the estimated intersex population of 1.7%, Rainbow Futures should engage more with intersex community members to ensure a viable sample size in future.

Sexual Orientation

The survey offered a range of answers for respondents in regards to their sexual orientation.

- 2.1% identified as asexual
- 11.2% as straight/heterosexual
- 16.9% as queer
- 41.7% as lesbian/gay/homosexual
- 23.9% as bi/pansexual

0.6% selected "another identity," and a further 0.6% "prefer not to say." The 3% of remaining respondents selected NA.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Participation

1.5% of respondents stated they were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. This is well below the 4% of the population of Western Australia that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people account for.

Rainbow Futures has already committed to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations to improve participation in future surveys as a priority.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse People

14.2% of respondents stated they were from a CaLD background. While this is only marginally lower than the 17.7% of Western Australian residents who speak a language other than English at home, the English-only nature of the survey may have been a barrier to participation. Given additional resources and time, this barrier could be overcome.

ISSUES

The survey was divided into two main parts, one focussing on legal reform and the other on service provision.

Legal Reform

On the matter of legal reform, respondents were asked "How important are the following legal reforms to you?" and could choose from: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, neither important nor unimportant, and not important at all. Top ranking issues, as indicated by respondents choosing either extremely or very important, are displayed overleaf.

How important are the following legal reforms to you?	Extremely Important	Very Important	Total
Strengthening anti-discrimination protections in employment, education and service provision to protect all LGBTIQ+ people and remove exemptions for faith-based organisations.	87.6%	9.7%	97.3%
Ending so-called LGBT "conversion therapy" and similar practices, and ensuring support for survivors.	91.4%	5.2%	96.6%
Prohibiting deferrable medical interventions performed on people born with intersex variations without their consent.	74.8%	19.3%	94.1%
Ensuring single people and male couples are not discriminated against in surrogacy laws.	65.6%	23.4%	89.0%
Ensuring trans and gender diverse people can easily update their gender markers on official documents without the need for medical or surgical treatment.	67.8%	20.9%	88.7%

The clear priority issues identified are ending so-called conversion therapy and the strengthening of anti-discrimination protections in employment, education and service provision. Those issues scored highest both overall and in the number of people who regarded them as very important.

While there may be barriers to achieving legal reform in the next four years, Rainbow Futures believes the next State Government has a moral obligation to ensure all Western Australians have equal rights and equal dignity under the law. It

is incumbent on them to work with the community to give LGBTIQ+ legislation the best opportunity possible to pass, not to avoid the issues and hope for a more pliable upper house at some undefined point in the future.

Government Services

Respondents were asked: *“Which of the following government services are doing a good job of recognising and accommodating for the unique needs of LGBTIQ+ people, and which do you think could do better?”* and could answer with: *needs a lot of improvement, needs some improvement, needs no improvement and don’t know/NA.*

Which of the following government services are doing a good job of recognising and accommodating for the unique needs of LGBTIQ+ people, and which do you think could do better?	Needs a lot of improvement	Needs some improvement	Total
Health – General Medical, GPs, Hospital Admissions	43.4%	40.1%	83.5%
Education - Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary	48.5%	30.9%	79.4%
Health – Mental Health Services, Addiction Services	38.0%	39.4%	77.4%
Community Services – emergency accommodation, youth-oriented services, family and domestic violence services	42.7%	32.8%	75.5%
Health – Sexual Health, Pathology	26.9%	45.0%	71.9%
Law – Police, fines enforcement, legal aid	48.9%	22.4%	71.3%
Education – VET, University	27.5%	43.5%	71.0%
Aged Care	51.1%	18.5%	69.6%
General customer-facing government services (vehicle registration, local government, consumer affairs etc)	37.5%	32.4%	69.9%

Around half of all respondents said that aged care (51%), law – police, fines, legal aid (48.9%) and pre-tertiary education (48.5%) needed a lot of improvement in recognising and accommodating the unique needs of LGBTIQ+ people, although the total number of people who thought health services were in need of improvement was higher.

CONCLUSION

Rainbow Futures has a long-term goal of a comprehensive approach to LGBTIQ+ legal reform and service provision by the State Government. This survey demonstrates why such an approach is necessary and overdue.

It is disturbing that, over thirty years after the first wave of LGBTIQ+ law reform, two thirds to three quarters of respondents believe that government services are in need of improvement when it comes to identifying and accommodating the needs of LGBTIQ+ people.

More disturbing is the fact that half of respondents regard three areas as in need of a *lot* of improvement: pre-tertiary education, law and aged care. (We note that aged care and law both contain elements of federal responsibility.)

This survey does not – cannot – give a detailed breakdown of the reasons *why* LGBTIQ+ community members feel this way towards these potential legal reforms and service provision. This is a limitation of both the survey format and the resources available to ourselves and our partners Equality Australia.

It is the responsibility of the State Government in partnership with the community to identify these reasons and alleviate the harm or discrimination, whether by intention or omission, caused to LGBTIQ+ people by WA State Government services and policies.

Single issue solutions, however well intentioned, will not tackle underlying problems. Single portfolio approaches, such as the WA LGBTI+ Health Strategy, would (if adequately funded) deliver improved outcomes, but are still too limited in their scope.

It is the view of Rainbow Futures WA that a comprehensive strategy is required to address both the issues raised in this survey and the related issues around funding stability for LGBTIQ+ community organisations.

We thank the WA LGBTIQ+ community for sharing their opinions and experiences with us and commit ourselves to advocating for the legal and policy changes they need and deserve.