

RAINBOW FUTURES WA

# WA LGBTIQA+ COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



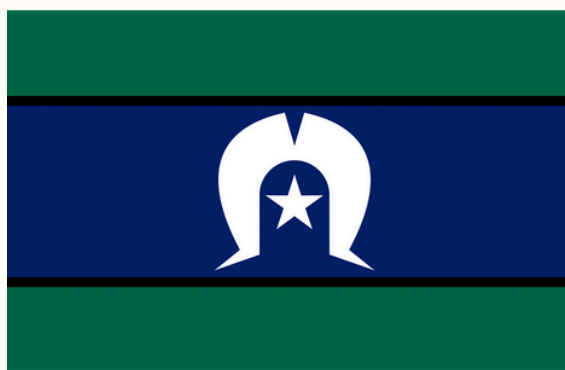
## SURVEY REPORT 2025



## Acknowledgement of Country

Rainbow Futures WA acknowledges the Whadjuk Noongar people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this report was written. We pay our deepest respects to Elders past and present and recognise the enduring strength, wisdom, and culture of First Nations peoples.

We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and that this always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land. We commit to listening, learning, and working in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the pursuit of justice, truth, and self-determination.



**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this report contains an image of a group of advocates from 2019, including Aunty Vanessa Smith, who has since passed away.**

We honour Aunty Vanessa's legacy as a respected leader in LGBTIQA+ and First Nations communities, whose advocacy and strength continue to inspire. The image included in this report reflects her leadership and invaluable contributions to creating a more just and inclusive world. We extend our deepest respects to her family, community, and all who were touched by her work and advocacy.

## LETTER FROM THE CEO

**I'm really pleased to present Rainbow Futures WA's second LGBTIQ+ Community Priorities report, reflecting the views of almost 600 community members and allies on law reform and government service improvement for a safer, more inclusive future.**

It has been five years since Rainbow Futures WA was established, growing from an increasing urgency to come together to advance the rights and wellbeing of the LGBTIQ+ community. I recall the very first of many community gatherings of key WA groups and individuals in November 2019; the frustration of under-resourced peer-led services struggling to sustain their essential work, balanced by the ferocity and determination of seasoned advocates volunteering their time and expertise to build collective impact.

Since then, together we have achieved a number of significant successes, building on the inaugural WA LGBTIQ+ Community Priorities survey in 2020. This includes a whole-of-government proposal to the Premier that resulted in the development of the WA LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy and securing the first-ever round of operational funding for community organisations.



*Image: The first meeting of LGBTIQ+ advocates on 4 Nov 2019.*

Rainbow Futures WA has also been instrumental in advocating for law reform on gender recognition, banning conversion practices, updating surrogacy laws, intersex rights, and reforming the outdated Equal Opportunity Act.

In November 2024, Rainbow Futures WA became the official state LGBTIQ+ peak body, emerging from these initial gatherings and building on subsequent successes. We remain focused on the long-term well-being of the community, working collaboratively to build capacity, partnerships, and opportunities for funding, advocacy, and consultation.

The upcoming election presents an opportunity for us to come together once again to seek commitment from WA's political parties on progressing the issues that are important to our community. We look forward to continuing this work, and creating the momentum for the government to deliver a safer, more inclusive future.

Misty Farquhar OAM,  
CEO, Rainbow Futures WA



## INTRODUCTION

**Rainbow Futures WA surveyed almost 600 WA LGBTIQ+ community members and allies online between May and August 2024 to determine what is important to them. Participants overwhelmingly reiterated the importance of law reform and that government services are still in desperate need of improvement.**

This survey is the second priorities survey conducted by Rainbow Futures WA. Our 2020 survey identified these same issues, which we concluded could only be addressed by a comprehensive whole-of-government approach. Since then, huge strides have been made toward legislative change and work has progressed on a WA LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy.

### Law Reform: Alleviating Harm

Strong support remains for the government to work with LGBTIQ+ communities to urgently address the following policies, practices, and laws that cause us harm:

- Strengthening **anti-discrimination protections** to protect all LGBTIQ+ people and remove exemptions for faith-based organisations
- Ending so-called "**conversion therapy**" and similar practices that seek to change or suppress sexual orientation or gender identity, ensuring support for survivors.
- Ensuring trans and gender diverse people can easily update their gender markers on official documents through **self-identification**.
- Prohibiting **deferrable medical interventions** performed on people born with intersex variations without their personal informed consent.
- Ensuring LGBTIQ+ people are not discriminated against in **surrogacy laws**.



*Image: RFWA and LGBTIQ+ organisations and representatives sitting around a table and speaking with Hannah Beazley and the Department of Communities at the first WA LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy Reference Group Meeting.*



## Service Improvement: Supporting Equity

Government services remain inconsistent in the provision of **safe and adequate** services for the LGBTIQ+ community. In particular, there is an urgent need for appropriate gender-affirming care and housing, employment, education, and healthcare services. A community controlled and **peer-led approach** needs to be prioritised in filling service gaps and supporting community members to navigate discriminatory systems.

There was a strong focus in these survey results on ensuring the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people of all backgrounds, including Indigenous people, people of colour, and people with disability. Policy changes and other initiatives must be viewed through an intersectional lens, with a commitment to building safe and supportive environments for everyone.

Rainbow Futures WA wishes to thank everyone who shared their experiences, and LGBTIQ+ community organisations for supporting and promoting the survey. The results will be used to advocate for LGBTIQ+ rights in WA in 2025 and beyond.



*Image: RFWA member representatives and community members gathered for RFWA's Annual Community Meeting in 2023.*



*Image: Some of the members of the LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy Reference Group at Pride Fairday 2024 where the consultation period was launched.*



*Image: RFWA, Queer Liberation Boorloo and community members at the 'Gender Recognition Now' campaign stall at Fairday in 2023. The campaign was run in collaboration with Equality Australia.*



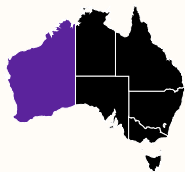
*Image: Peter Foster, Member for Mining and Pastoral Region, receiving RFWA's petition for law reform on the steps of WA Parliament in October 2022 from community, supporters and RFWA member organisation representatives.*

# PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW



**572**

people participated



**98.6%**

were WA residents



**83.4%**

were LGBTIQ+



**20.8%**

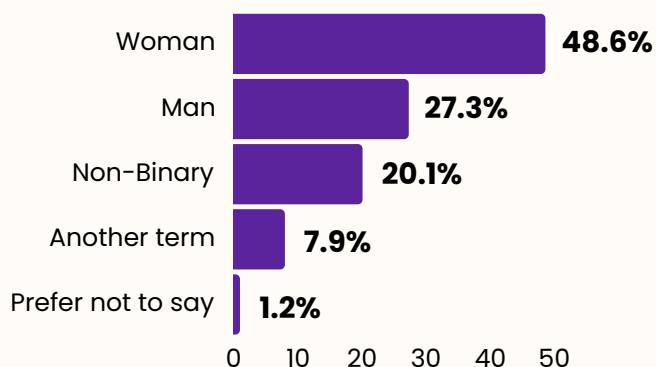
were a friend or relative



**16.5%**

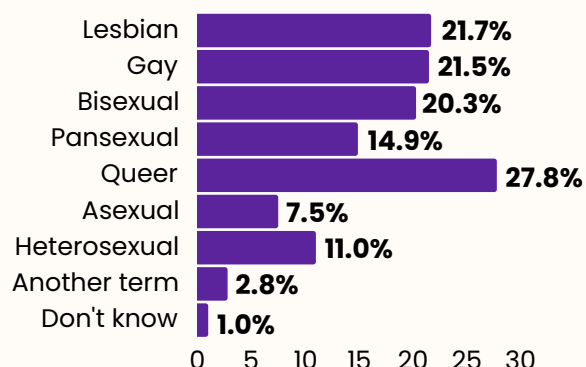
were LGBTIQ+ allies

## Gender identity



Respondents were given the option to select more than one answer. 37.8% did not identify with their sex assigned at birth. People who selected another term used terms such as **genderqueer, agender, gender defiant, genderfluid, trans femme, and trans masc.**

## Sexuality



Respondents were given the option to select more than one answer. People who selected another term used terms such as **polyamorous, ace, grey, sapiosexual and aromantic.**



**1.2%**

were intersex / had a variation of sex characteristics



**3.7%**

were Aboriginal



**0.4%**

were Torres Strait Islander



**14.9%**

were culturally and/or linguistically diverse



**57.5%**

were people with disability

## Notes on Demographic Data

### Variations of Sex Characteristics

Over 90 percent of respondents gave a definitive answer as to whether they had an intersex variation or not. This shows that the vast majority of people understand this question, despite most of them not being intersex themselves (endosex). This supports the need for a question on variations of sex characteristics to be asked in national data collection, such as through the Australian Census.

### Disability

People with disability made up the highest intersection with LGBTIQ+ identity with 57.5% identifying as a person with disability. This translates to more than half, or approximately 1 in every 2 respondents (328 in total). This is much higher than the reported estimate of 1 in 5 Western Australians with disability.

It should be noted that identifying as a person with disability can include a variety of lived experiences and variations/differences in a person's body/mind. People with disability may identify as having a physical disability, chronic illness, medical condition, experiencing a mental health concern/condition/illness and/or identifying as neurodivergent. Disability identity is individually defined and may change over time and in different environments.

This survey was not available in alternative formats to meet the diverse needs of people with disability which may have been a barrier to participation. Given additional resources, this barrier could be overcome.

### Cultural and/or Linguistic Diversity

14.9% 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.

### Age

Age was not collected in this survey but will be collected in future iterations.



## LGBTIQA+ Priority Issues

The survey was divided into three main parts, one focusing on **legal reform**, one on **service provision**, and one giving an opportunity for respondents to provide feedback on other issues impacting LGBTIQA+ people and their communities.

### Legal Reform

Respondents were asked "How important are each of the following LGBTIQA+ legal reforms to you?" and to rate these reforms on a scale: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, neither important nor unimportant, and not important. Top ranking issues, as indicated by respondents choosing either extremely or very important, are displayed below.

How important are the following legal reforms to you?	Extremely important	Very important	Total
Ending so-called LGBT "conversion therapy" and similar practices, and ensuring support for survivors.	87.6%	8.9%	<b>96.5%</b>
Strengthening anti-discrimination protections in employment, education and service provision to protect all LGBTIQA+ people and remove exemptions for faith-based organisations	82.5%	11.5%	<b>94%</b>
Prohibiting deferrable medical interventions performed on people born with intersex variations without their personal informed consent.	69.6%	19.2%	<b>88.8%</b>
Ensuring LGBTIQA+ people, particularly male couples, are not discriminated against in surrogacy laws.	60.8%	26%	<b>86.8%</b>
Ensuring trans and gender diverse people can easily update their gender markers on official documents through self-identification	59.8%	23.6%	<b>83.4%</b>

Ending so-called conversion therapy and strengthening anti-discrimination protections in employment, education and service provision scored highest both overall, and in the number of people who regarded them as very important. The next State Government must ensure that all Western Australians have equal rights and dignity under the law.

## 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 some improvement	Needs a lot of improvement	Total
Health – General Medical, GPs, Hospital Admissions	40%	42.1%	<b>82.1%</b>
General customer-facing government services (vehicle registration, local government, consumer affairs, etc)	37.9%	38.8%	<b>76.7%</b>
Education – Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary	46.2%	30.2%	<b>76.4%</b>
Health – Mental Health Services, Addiction Services	33.7%	41.8%	<b>75.5%</b>
Law – Police, fines enforcement, legal aid	21.3%	53%	<b>74.3%</b>
Community Services – emergency accommodation, youth-oriented services, family and domestic violence services	33.4%	40.4%	<b>73.8%</b>
Education – VET, University	21.9%	49.3%	<b>71.2%</b>
Health – Sexual Health, Pathology	43%	27.6%	<b>70.6%</b>
Aged Care	51.6%	16.6%	<b>68.2%</b>

Around half of all respondents said that aged care (51%), legal issues (48.9%), and pre-tertiary education (48.5%) needed significant improvement in the provision of safe and adequate services for the LGBTIQ+ community, although the total number of people who thought health services were in need of improvement was higher.

## Additional Feedback

### Health and Medical Access



**Gender Affirming Care:** More accessible, affordable, and timely gender-affirming healthcare for trans and gender diverse youth and adults is needed, including advocacy for gender-affirming surgeries to be classified as medically necessary and covered by Medicare. The lengthy waiting times, especially for puberty blockers and hormone replacement therapy, are detrimental to mental and physical health. Respondents expressed frustration over the lack of options in WA, where access to care is limited compared to other states.

**Medical Professionals:** Better education and training among healthcare providers is needed, especially those working with trans and gender diverse people. In particular, mental health professionals lack understanding of gender dysphoria, often leading to inappropriate treatment. There is also concern that funding is directed to private healthcare facilities operated by religious groups that are often unsafe for LGBTIQ+ people.

### Legal and Policy Reforms

**Discrimination and Human Rights:** The LGBTIQ+ community faces discrimination across sectors, including housing, employment, and healthcare. Religious exemptions allowing discrimination against LGBTIQ+ individuals (such as in schools) need to be repealed, and anti-discrimination laws should be expanded to explicitly include sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability.



**Census and Data Collection:** LGBTIQ+ identities need to be included in national surveys and specifically the census to ensure adequate planning and resources for the community. This includes ensuring that intersections between LGBTIQ+ identities and other marginalised groups, such as people with disability, are considered in policymaking.



## LGBTIQA+ People With Disability

**Intersectionality:** Respondents highlighted the compounded discrimination experienced by LGBTIQA+ people with disability, including facing discrimination for their disability in LGBTIQA+ spaces, and facing discrimination for their LGBTIQA+ identity in disability spaces.

**Access to services:** Respondents raised the lack of access to services for LGBTIQA+ people with disability, including through the NDIS, highlighting a need for recognition and funding for sexuality and relationship supports including access to safe, same sex, sex workers for people with disability.



## Social Issues and Community Support

**Mental Health and Suicide Rates:** Respondents highlighted the disproportionate rates of mental health concerns and suicide among LGBTIQA+ individuals, particularly those in regional or rural areas, where social isolation and hostile environments often prevail. There's a significant need for more targeted support, including mentoring services for youth without supportive families.



**Support for carers of LGBTIQA+ people:** There is a lack of support for carers of LGBTIQA+ people, including a lack of recognition of distinct types of support provided and that carers of LGBTIQA+ people are often LGBTIQA+ community members who may not feel welcome in general carer spaces.



**Lack of Safe Spaces:** There's a notable shortage of safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ individuals in both urban and rural areas. Suggestions include more gender-neutral bathrooms to make facilities accessible, and the creation of community centres or "third spaces" where people can gather without the pressures of alcohol or commercialisation. The need for neurodivergent-friendly spaces for queer people was also emphasised.

**Intersectionality:** Many respondents pointed out the lack of attention given to the intersectionality of LGBTIQ+ identities, such as the unique challenges faced by Indigenous, culturally diverse, and disabled members of the community. There's also concern about the isolation felt by queer people in rural or less populated areas, with calls for increased resources, visibility, and solidarity with those at the intersections of multiple forms of marginalisation.



## LGBTIQ+ Youth

**Support for Young People:** The need for better services for LGBTIQ+ youth was strongly emphasised. This includes accessible support networks, mental health services, and safe spaces, especially in schools. LGBTIQ+ youth who are disabled, or come from diverse cultural backgrounds, face unique challenges that require tailored approaches.



**Safe Schools:** Respondents called for the reintroduction of and ongoing funding for the Safe Schools program to provide training, resources and curriculum support for school staff, as well as the need for psychologists and parents to better understand LGBTIQ+ student needs in WA.

**Sports and Education:** Concerns were raised about the lack of inclusivity in both sports and education systems for LGBTIQ+ individuals, particularly in rural areas. The focus should be on fostering a more inclusive environment where people can engage in physical activity and education without fear of discrimination.

## Social Media and Online Abuse

**Harassment and Abuse:** Many respondents expressed frustration with the harassment they face on social media platforms like Facebook, where reports of abuse are often ignored or dismissed. There's a need for stronger protection against online harassment and hate speech, especially targeting gender-diverse individuals and LGBTIQ+ people.



## Housing and Employment

**Housing Discrimination:** LGBTIQ+ individuals, particularly those over 30, face significant challenges in finding safe and supportive housing, with many reporting discrimination. Specific programs need to be created to address housing needs for older LGBTIQ+ individuals.



**Employment:** There's a call for workplaces to adopt inclusive policies such as gender affirmation leave, anti-harassment measures, and training to create more supportive environments for LGBTIQ+ employees. The government and employment services also need to be more attuned to the challenges of transitioning employees, including providing safe spaces and mental health support during job searches and transitions.

***This summary captures themes raised by respondents, with a strong focus on improving healthcare access, legal protections, and community support, while also addressing the intersections of various identities within the community.***



# CONNECT



[rainbowfutureswa.com](http://rainbowfutureswa.com)

[Facebook](#) - [Instagram](#) - [LinkedIn](#)

[Membership](#)

[Mailing List](#)