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Australian Government
Department of Home Affairs



A plan for PRIDE

LGBTIQ+ Action Plan 2024–2026

Acknowledgement

The Department of Home Affairs proudly acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their cultures and to their elders past and present.

About the Department

The Department of Home Affairs was created as part of the Home Affairs Portfolio on 20 December 2017. Home Affairs brings together Australia's national, cyber and transport security, emergency management, multicultural affairs, immigration along with customs, civil maritime and border management functions, Australian Border Force (ABF) working together to keep Australia safe. The ABF is Australia's frontline border law enforcement agency and customs service, operating as an independent body within the Home Affairs portfolio.

Terminology

For the purpose of this document the acronym LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer) will be used. The Department of Home Affairs acknowledges that different variations exist with the LGBTIQ+ acronym which are used by other agencies and organisations. The Department of Home Affairs has adopted the LGBTIQ+ acronym as the plus+ encompasses other and emerging sexualities.

Legislation

The following legislation and guidelines supports the LGBTIQ+ Action Plan:

- Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Act 2013 (Cth)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Australian Capital Territory – Discrimination Act 1991 • New South Wales – Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 • Northern Territory – Anti-Discrimination Act 1996 • Queensland – Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 • South Australia – Equal Opportunity Act 1984 • Tasmania – Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 • Victoria – Equal Opportunity Act 2010 • Western Australia – Equal Opportunity Act 1984.

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A message from our Champions

It is critical that we create inclusive spaces that mean every person is proud to be themselves at work. The journey toward equality is felt differently by every person, whether that's through lived experience or by supporting somebody close to us.

As champions, we are proud to support the LGBTIQ+ 'Plan for Pride' Action Plan 2024–2026. The Action Plan is a promise to our staff, our peers and our colleagues, that we are committed to creating an equal and equitable future.

We have seen progress within the department and ABF, creating an inclusive culture, but there is more to be done. This action plan builds on the progress we've made so far, establishing a clear pathway for continued change, and creating growth opportunities for all staff

The Action Plan celebrates our differences and acknowledges the challenges LGBTIQ+ staff face. The creation of our reference committee and steering committee, and collaboration with our LGBTIQ+ network, allies and broader staff has ensured we have a robust action plan to become an employer of choice for the LGBTIQ+ community.

As champions, we are passionate about empowering real change and breaking down barriers. We look forward to working with you all over the coming years to drive initiatives through this action plan to ensure our workplace is safe and inclusive place for all.



Nicole Spencer, First Assistant Secretary, Civil Maritime Capability Strategy



Erin Dale, Illicit Tobacco and E-Cigarette Commissioner

Our aim

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ+) Action Plan 2024–2026 sets out how we will work together to continue to build and strengthen diversity, equity and inclusion at the Department of Home Affairs and Australian Border Force (Home Affairs) through the lens of LGBTIQ+ experiences. The aim of our Plan for Pride (2024–26) is to continue to ensure that Home Affairs is a place where our:

- People can bring their authentic self to work
- People feel respected and valued for who they are
- People can realise their full potential and contribute to a high performing APS
- Workforce is diverse and inclusive
- Workplaces are safe and welcoming

What does Pride look like in Home Affairs?

The picture below is a representation of the LGBTIQ+ focus groups' views on what the department and ABF are doing well for LGBTIQ+ staff.

Our vision for Pride

The diversity of our people is one of our greatest assets as a workforce, and we consider organisational diversity, equity and inclusion to be a top strategic priority.

We recognise and celebrate the diversity of our staff and officers across a spectrum of gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation, and strive to promote inclusion and understanding for everyone. Participating in a supportive, inclusive and equitable work environment enables our people to realise their full potential and bring their authentic selves to work.

An organisation publically recognised as an inclusive workplace has higher resonance in the broader community. In turn, it will be better positioned to attract and retain a diverse and talented workforce, increase engagement and innovation, and improve decision making. This is our roadmap for how we will strengthen our position as an employer of choice.

A workforce that reflects the community it serves can provide better insight into policy and program development, and offer improved service delivery outcomes for the community. Our continued commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion is critical to the Department and ABF's ability to meaningfully contribute to advancing a prosperous, secure and united Australia.

This Action Plan is not just for people who identify as part of the LGBTIQ+ community. It is relevant to all department and ABF staff. Importantly, the Action Plan emphasises the need for LGBTIQ+ allies to show their visible and active support for LGBTIQ+ staff and officers. We all have a role to play in ensuring that Home Affairs is a safe and welcoming place for all our colleagues to work.

The plan is aligned to the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI), Australia's national benchmark for LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion. The plan considers the unique needs and challenges of our LGBTIQ+ staff individually and collectively. It celebrates and recognises diversity and intersectionality and identities, such as, but not limited to, gender, cultural and linguistic diversity, neurodiversity, disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The plan is endorsed by the Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Border Force Commissioner who are committed to supporting its implementation.

What does it mean to be an ally?

"My name is an Allan Srivastava, and I am an ally. As an ally, I support equal rights for all, including the rights of LGBTIQ+ communities.

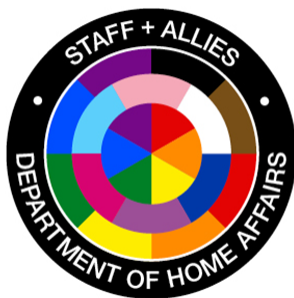
I'm an ally because it aligns with my personal values. I am passionate about standing up for and supporting human rights for all, including the rights of LGBTIQ+ communities. This not only means spreading awareness about issues affecting these communities, but also taking a stand against discrimination and encouraging others to become allies. In our workplace, I believe that all people deserve access to equal opportunities, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity. I am proud to be surrounded by a diverse range of people in my workplace where we foster a sense of inclusion for all employees.

The Department has provided me support in creating an inclusive environment helping to boost human rights, this in turn has:

- *Provided me with opportunities to learn about different cultures, races, religions and backgrounds represented by our colleagues*
- *Supported me with tools (Diversity training, exposure to external forums, organising Pride Month events etc.) that helped me in identify and address biases and promote respectful and positive interactions in the workplace.*

The LGBTIQ+ Action Plan is a great starting point in identifying current and future potentials while achieving deliverable outcomes for LGBTIQ+ communities."

"Looking forward to being part of this beautiful and fulfilling journey"



Our journey so far

Our inaugural 2019–2022 Action Plan set out to create awareness and deliver on our actions to show that Home Affairs is heading in the right direction towards embedding inclusion. Key achievements since our last Action Plan include:

- In 2021 and 2022, the Department of Home Affairs was named a Bronze Employer in the LGBTQ Inclusion Awards, based on the results of the annual Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) national benchmarking for LGBTIQ+ inclusion
- A well established, engaged LGBTIQ+ network focussed on inclusion and raising LGBTIQ+ awareness across the department and ABF
- Introduction of the Five plus Five forum , bringing SES together with LGBTIQ+ staff to hear their stories and experiences as staff members who identify in the department and ABF
- Staff and officer profiles, relevant LGBTIQ+ articles and good news stories shared on the LGBTIQ+ internal collaboration platform
- Recognition of days of significance that promote community awareness and education
- Development of an annual communication plan focussing on days of significance, network events, intranet stories and other education pieces.
- Updating internal staff resources with relevant and up to date information for staff and officers to access
- Strengthened support for LGBTIQ+ staff through SES engagement and representation



Sylvie's story

“I’m a lesbian, and I’ve never hidden this aspect of my life since joining the department in 2008.”

Not that I was particularly broadcasting it either, but when other staff chatted about their partners, if then if I was asked what I did on the weekend, I told them the truth. And it was fine: nobody said anything ugly or mean, or treated me any different. Even people that I knew that held deeply religious beliefs continued to behave quite normally towards me. Working in a small regional office fostered a family-like bond between us. When I told them I was going to legally marry my partner overseas, they gave us the most amazing surprise wedding banquet with delicious foods that obviously took each of them many hours to prepare; including a beautiful wedding cake. Those were the best bunch of people I ever worked with, and I will always love them for their kindness.

Soon after I joined the Melbourne office, my manager had taken me around the office to introduce me to everyone and noticed rainbow lanyards were made available. My manager arranged to have some supplied to our team, which I really appreciated as a gesture of inclusion and support on her part as our manager. I’m sure she doesn’t even remember as she probably did without even a second thought. It’s precisely these moments that have always stayed with me throughout my career with the department.”



Actions for success

The LGBTIQ+ Action Plan for 2024–2026 outlines tangible actions and outcomes specifically targeted to achieve an inclusive and supportive workplace for all LGBTIQ+ staff and officers. Where actions are important to advancing the diversity of all staff, actions will be progressed through broader avenues, such as the Culture Reset, People and Workforce Plan 2025 and in departmental action plans in response to the APS Employee Census each year.

This plan links to the Corporate Plan and the department's People and Workforce Plan 2025 priority of 'building and valuing a workforce that fosters an inclusive culture and embraces the diversity of its people'. To bring it together, we collaborated and consulted with our network, celebrated their successes and used lessons learnt to select three pillars to focus our attention. Keeping the department and ABF staff at the forefront of our minds, through the use of Human Centred Design, goals and outcomes were identified and will be used as benchmarks for achievement over the next three years.

Measurements of success will include:

- Reduced occurrences of bullying and harassment of LGBTIQ+ staff on matters of gender expression as indicated through the APS Employee Census, AWEI survey, case management, and Peer Support Officer involvement.
- Improved staff engagement in the AWEI Survey
- Growth in LGBTIQ+ network active members and staff who choose to self-identify through Internal HR system
- Managers feel well equipped to support LGBTIQ+ staff challenges and barriers within the workplace.
- AWEI recognition as a bronze, silver or gold employer for our workplace inclusiveness.

1	Awareness and Education	Impacts	Action Completion	Responsibility
1.1	Continue to resource participation in the AWEI submission to continue our journey to becoming an inclusive employer that recognises our diverse staff and officers. Promote staff participation in the annual AWEI survey.	Shows we are meeting industry standards in LGBTIQ+ inclusion	2024 - Complete 2025 - In Actioned 2026 - To be Actioned	FAS People
1.2	Continue to support participation in external Pride events representing the department and ABF (AWEI Silver/Gold)	Indicates an inclusive department to external parties and helps us become an employer of choice	2024 - Complete 2025 - In Action 2026 - To be Actioned	All SES
1.3	Incorporate bullying and harassment awareness in LGBTIQ+ awareness training	Stems from survey and Census results – creating bullying and harassment awareness may have a positive effect on our census results	2026 - To be Actioned	AS Recruitment, Diversity and Learning
1.4	Build a culture that ensures staff and officers are supported by managers to attend LGBTIQ+ network meetings and events.	Creating a leadership team that promotes diversity and understanding	2026 - To be Actioned	All SES
1.5	Continue to promote and build on LGBTIQ+ initiatives through external social media platforms.(AWEI silver/gold)	Promote Home Affairs as an inclusive employer to attract diverse staff	2024 - Complete 2025 - In Action 2026 - To be Actioned	AS Media and Communications
1.6	Continue to work with the network to create an inclusive, supportive space for staff and officers to come together and share experiences.	Creating a safe space for staff and officers, increasing awareness	2024 - Complete 2025 - In Action 2026 - To be Actioned	LGBTIQ+ Champion. ABF Diversity Champion. AS Recruitment, Diversity and Learning
1.7	Continue to promote days of significance and educate staff and officers on the importance of these days (AWEI silver/gold)	Education, awareness	2024 - Complete 2025 - In Action 2026 - To be Actioned	AS Recruitment, Diversity and Learning. Internal Communications

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2	SES Engagement	Impacts	Completion Dates	Responsibilities
2.1	Secretary and all Senior Executives to visibly show support for LGBTIQ+ inclusion internally e.g., visible Pride pin, posters displayed (AWEI silver/gold)	Show support from the top down. Makes staff and officers feel safe to be themselves	2024 - Completed	All SES
2.2	Maintain a position for a dedicated department LGBTIQ+ Champion to work with the ABF Diversity Champion to drive initiatives as well as being visible and accessible to our LGBTIQ network	Helps to drive initiatives and creates a dedicated focus on LGBTIQ+ issues.	2024 - Completed 2025 - In Action 2026 - To Be Actioned	Senior Leadership Committee
2.3	Maintain ABF Diversity Champion` position to continue to work with the department LGBTIQ+ Champion to drive initiatives as well as visible and accessible to our LGBTIQ+ network	Helps to drive consistent initiatives across department and ABF	2024 - Completed 2025 - In Action 2026 - To Be Actioned	ABF Commissioner
2.4	Ensure Respect Officers are equipped to support LGBTIQ+ staff and officers	Results in a sense of safety for LGBTIQ+ staff and officers	2024 - Completed 2025 - In Action 2026 - To Be Actioned	AS Recruitment, Diversity and Learning
2.5	Extract and report on LGBTIQ+ related incidents of bullying and harassment. (AWEI silver/gold)	Linked to the census, helps us to break down the harassment to specific pillars to address	2025 - Actioned	AS Recruitment, Diversity and Learning
2.6	Encourage SES (identifying members and allies) to be more involved in LGBTIQ+ events including external events to show support (AWEI silver/gold)	Promotes Home Affairs as a safe and inclusive work place from the top down	2024 - Actioned	LGBTIQ+ Champion
2.7	Continue to work with LGBTIQ+ network and Diversity Champions to be visibly active in driving LGBTIQ+ inclusions as part of their commitments and priorities	Important to having someone advocating for them at an exec level and driving initiatives	2024 - Completed 2025 - In Action 2026 - To Be Actioned	AS Recruitment, Diversity and Learning
2.8	Secretary or Senior Executive to visibly show their support for LGBTIQ+ inclusion externally (AWEI silver/gold)	Showing Home Affairs is an inclusive employer	2025 - Actioned	LGBTIQ+ Champion ABF Diversity Champion

3	Policies and Procedures	Impacts	Action completion	Responsibility
3.1	Ensure full compliance with Australian Government guidelines on the recognition of sex and gender	Working in line with government standards	2025 - To be completed	AS Recruitment, Diversity and Learning
3.2	Report within the annual report on LGBTIQ+ initiatives and metrics	LGBTIQ+ initiatives are reported on and value shown	2024 - Completed	FAS People
3.3	Develop a departmental Gender Transitioning policy and embed clear ongoing communication of support for transgender staff and officers.	Clear guidelines for managers, staff and officers to support transitioning employees	2024 - Completed	AS Recruitment, Diversity and Learning
3.4	Continue to work on a policy for gender inclusive bathroom signage. The policy will be informed by feedback from other agencies that have introduced gender inclusive bathroom signage (AWEI silver/gold).	Create a sense of inclusivity	2026 - to be Actioned	Property services. AS Recruitment, Diversity and Learning. LGBTIQ+ Network.
3.5	Review policies, procedures and resources annually to ensure language and terminology is free from bias	Inclusiveness and awareness for managers	2024 - Actioned 2025 - In Action 2026 - To be Actioned	AS Recruitment, Diversity and Learning
3.6	Utilise mentor program to support and develop high performing LGBTIQ+ employees (AWEI silver/gold)	Giving LGBTIQ+ staff and officers the opportunity to seek guidance and career advice from a member of their community	2024 - Actioned	AS Recruitment, Diversity and Learning
3.7	Create resources for recruitment panels on barriers faced by trans and gender diverse candidates and how to safeguard against unconscious bias.	Increase awareness for recruitment panel members and make the process more safe and inclusive for potential employees making us employer of choice	2024 - Actioned	AS Recruitment, Diversity and Learning