

RAINBOW VOTES REPORT



2025 LGBTIQ+ FEDERAL
ELECTION SURVEY REPORT

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ABOUT EQUALITY AUSTRALIA

Equality Australia is a national LGBTIQ+ organisation dedicated to achieving equality for LGBTIQ+ people.

Equality Australia brings together legal, policy and communications expertise, along with thousands of supporters, to address discrimination, disadvantage and distress experienced by LGBTIQ+ people.

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We acknowledge that our offices are on the lands of Bunurong, Gadigal, Jagera and Turrbal peoples, and we pay our respects to traditional custodians.

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Our federal election work has been made possible thanks to the support of thousands of people who responded to our survey.

Content warning

This document includes content regarding suicide, conversion practices and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people. If this content triggers something for you, you can contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 (24 hours/7 days), or QLife, LGBTIQ+ peer support and referral, on 1800 184 527 (3pm-midnight, 7 days).

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FOREWORD FROM OUR CEO



For the second time, Equality Australia has surveyed LGBTIQ+ voters and their supporters to understand what matters most to them in the 2025 federal election.

What stands out clearly from our findings is that even amid the economic pressures of the cost-of-living crisis, LGBTIQ+ voters remain deeply focussed on how policy issues affecting our communities will shape our lives and our futures.

Addressing ongoing injustices such as discrimination, conversion practices, and unnecessary, non-consensual medical treatments on intersex people top the list of voter priorities. Close behind are improving outcomes for rainbow families and addressing the mental health crisis within our communities.

But there is another interesting finding – we're seeing even higher levels of electoral indecision within our community compared with 2022. Many survey respondents expressed uncertainty about which party or candidate will best represent their interests in the upcoming election. This reflects both the complexity of today's political landscape and the growing expectation that parties must *earn* our votes through meaningful policy commitments.

In our score card examining the 3 years since the last election, we report that the current government has made significant strides in LGBTIQ+ health, including mental health and working to reduce suicidality in our communities, as well as in taking steps to address domestic, family and sexual violence, and hate crimes. They've also paved the way for greater inclusion in the Census for LGBTIQ+ people, despite some setbacks.

However, the community has been let down by a failure to act to protect LGBTIQ+ students and teachers in schools. The absence of a dedicated voice for LGBTIQ+ issues in government continues to limit progress in a range of areas.

It's crucial to remember that we represent a powerful voting bloc of over one million voters across Australia; and that doesn't include our countless allies who stand alongside us. Together, we have the collective strength to influence policy directions and electoral outcomes.

Our voices matter, our votes count, and our community's concerns deserve to be addressed with substantive policy solutions.

I want to extend my gratitude to each of the 6481 survey respondents who took the time to share their thoughts, concerns, and priorities in our 2025 LGBTIQ+ Federal Election Survey. Without your input, the insights gained from this survey simply wouldn't have been possible. Your voices are the backbone of our advocacy efforts as we approach this next election.

As we move closer to election day, we will continue to call for policies that protect and advance the rights and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people. We remain committed to ensuring that all political parties understand the issues that matter most to our diverse community.

Anna Brown OAM
CEO, Equality Australia

KEY INSIGHTS

NEARLY
1 MILLION

voters in Australia are estimated to be LGBTIQ+ people.



1 in 5 LGBTIQ+ voters are currently undecided.

37%

of LGBTIQ+ voters intend to change their vote.

TOP 5 LGBTIQ+ ISSUES



1

End conversion practices



2

Improve protections from discrimination



3

End unnecessary, non-consensual medical treatments on intersex people



4

Remove barriers to parenthood and support rainbow families



5

Deliver improved LGBTIQ+ mental health and suicide prevention

Labor

25%

of previous Labor voters now unsure of who to vote for.

PARTY RETENTION RATES

1



91%

2



85%

3

Independents

83%

4



68%

Labor

19%

of previous Labor voters now plan to vote for The Greens.

SCORECARD: WHAT HAS BEEN PROMISED AND DELIVERED?

Below is a summary of progress on LGBTQ+ policy issues since the last election.



PROGRESS MADE

POLICY AREA	PROGRESS
LGBTIQ+ health & wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National consultations on LGBTIQ+ health and mental health completed. 10-year LGBTIQ+ Health Action Plan delivered.¹ \$15.5M allocated to improve access, including a \$13M grants program for dedicated services, programs and research.² Funding restored to AFAO and NAPWHA.³ National HIV Taskforce established.⁴ \$43.9M investment to end HIV transmission by 2030.⁵ \$22M investment in health and medical research to improve treatment and care for LGBTIQ+ people through the NHMRC's Medical Research Future Fund.⁶ \$500k to expand InterLink program,⁷ providing psychosocial support for intersex people Increased and continued funding for QLife.⁸
Trans rights and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHMRC commissioned to review and update national guidelines on gender affirming medical care for trans young people.⁹ Denied visas to public figures with histories of anti-trans hate speech.¹⁰ Government senators voted down multiple anti-trans motions in the Senate and suspended debate to prevent misleading and harmful speeches about trans and gender diverse people on the public record.

¹ Australian Government, 'LGBTIQ+ people's health', *Department of Health and Aged Care* (Website) <<https://www.health.gov.au/topics/lgbtqiplus-peoples-health>>.

² Hon. Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, 'System-Wide' Change: 10-Year Action Plan for better LGBTIQ+ health', *Ministers – Department of Health and Aged Care* (11 December 2024) <<https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-mark-butler-mp/media/system-wide-change-10-year-action-plan-for-better-lgbtqiplus-health#:~:text=The%20National%20Action%20Plan%20for,health%20outcomes%20across%20the%20community>>.

³ Hon. Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, 'Accelerating Australia's efforts to eliminate HIV', *Ministers – Department of Health and Aged Care* (1 December 2022) <<https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-mark-butler-mp/media/accelerating-australias-efforts-to-eliminate-hiv>>.

⁴ Australian Government, 'Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) Taskforce', *Department of Health and Aged Care* (Website, last updated 5 February 2025) <<https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/hiv-taskforce>>.

⁵ Hon. Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, '\$43.9 million to boost fight against HIV', *Department of Health and Aged Care* (21 May 2024) <<https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-mark-butler-mp/media/439-million-to-boost-fight-against-hiv>>.

⁶ Hon. Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, 'Pathway to better health for LGBTIQ+ communities', *Department of Health and Aged Care* (1 March 2024) <<https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-mark-butler-mp/media/pathway-to-better-health-for-lgbtqiplus-communities>>.

⁷ Hon. Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, 'System-Wide' Change: 10-Year Action Plan for better LGBTIQ+ health', *Ministers – Department of Health and Aged Care* (11 December 2024) <<https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-mark-butler-mp/media/system-wide-change-10-year-action-plan-for-better-lgbtqiplus-health#:~:text=The%20National%20Action%20Plan%20for,health%20outcomes%20across%20the%20community>>.

⁸ \$400k included in the 2025-26 federal budget.

⁹ Australian Government – National Health and Medical Research Council, 'National clinical practice guidelines for the care of trans and gender diverse people under 18 with gender dysphoria', *NHMRC*, (Website) <<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/guidelines-care-trans-and-gender-diverse-people>>.

¹⁰ Josh Butler, 'Australia Rejects Visa Application by Rightwing US Pundit Candace Owens' *The Guardian* (27 October 2024) <<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/oct/27/australia-rejects-visa-application-by-rightwing-us-pundit-candace-owens>>

POLICY AREA	PROGRESS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported consideration of an application to amend and introduce new MBS items that enhance access to gender-affirming medical services for trans adults.¹¹
LGBTIQ+ community safety and equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eSafety Commissioner launched new resources to help LGBTIQ+ people safely navigate online hate.¹² Hate crime laws¹³ passed, protecting LGBTIQ+ people, people with disabilities, and their associates for first time at the federal level. Announcement of a national database to tackle hate crimes.¹⁴ Significant investment in responses to domestic, family and sexual violence through inclusion of our communities in the <i>National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032</i>, development of a national LGBTIQ+ gendered violence framework, funding for frontline services, and specialised research.¹⁵ Inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people as a priority group for funding for frontline legal services, commencing 1 July 2025.¹⁶
Data collection and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New topics of sexual orientation and gender to be included in the 2026 Census.¹⁷ More work and commitment needed to ensure inclusion of intersex people and young people. The Australian Bureau of Statistics released Australia's first official estimates of LGBTI+ populations in Australia.¹⁸ NHMRC released a statement to promote inclusive, accurate data collection in health and medical research.¹⁹

¹¹ Australian Government, '1754 – Surgical Procedures for Gender Affirmation in Adults with Gender Incongruence', *Department of Health and Aged Care, Medical Services Advisory Committee* (Website) <<https://www.msac.gov.au/applications/1754>>. The government has expressed support for facilitating the consideration of this application in Action 10 of the National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ People 2025-35, available at: <<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-12/national-action-plan-for-the-health-and-wellbeing-of-lgbtiqa-people-2025-2035.pdf>>.

¹² eSafety Commissioner, 'Play nice, stay safe: New resources to support LGBTIQ+ community online' (27 September 2022) <<https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/media-releases/play-nice-stay-safe-new-resources-support-lgbtiq-community-online>>.

¹³ Criminal Code Amendment (Hate Crimes) Bill 2025.

¹⁴ Standing Council of Attorneys-General, *Communique* (21 February 2025) <https://www.ag.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-02/scag-communique_21-feb-2025.pdf>.

¹⁵ Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP and Hon. Justine Elliot MP, 'Preventing sexual violence in LGBTIQ+ communities', *Ministers for the Department of Social Services* (2 August 2024) <<https://ministers.dss.gov.au/media-releases/15516>>; Hon. Justine Elliot MP, 'Groundbreaking survey to strengthen the understanding of sexual violence prevention in LGBTIQ+ communities' *Ministers for the Department of Social Services* (15 September 2023) <<https://ministers.dss.gov.au/media-releases/12496>>; Hon. Justine Elliot MP, 'Ongoing commitment to improving the safety of the LGBTIQ+ Community', *Ministers for the Department of Social Services* (22 February 2024); Our Watch, 'Latest news – Our Watch partners with Rainbow Health Australia', *OurWatch* (2 April 2024) <<https://www.ourwatch.org.au/news/our-watch-partners-with-rainbow-health-australia>>; LGBTIQ Health Australia, 'Federal Labor commits to 15 community sector workers in LGBTIQ+ community organisations', *LGBTIQ+ Health Australia* (17 March 2022) <https://www.lgbtiqhealth.org.au/federal_labor_commits_to_providing_1200_more_lgbtiq_people_with_family_violence_support>.

¹⁶ *National Access to Justice Partnership 2025-30* (Web Page, Attorney-General's Department, 2024) <<https://www.ag.gov.au/legal-system/legal-assistance-services/national-access-justice-partnership-2025-30>>.

¹⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, '2026 Census content testing program', *Australian Bureau of Statistics* (13 September 2024) <<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/census-media-hub/releases-and-statements/on-the-record/2026-census-content-testing-program>>.

¹⁸ 'Estimates and Characteristics of LGBTI+ Populations in Australia' (Web Page, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 19 December 2024) <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/estimates-and-characteristics-lgbti-populations-australia/2022>>.

¹⁹ 'Statement on Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation in Health and Medical Research' (Web Page, Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, 29 July 2024) <<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/statement-on-sex-gender-variations-of-sex-characteristics-and-sexual-orientation-in-health-and-medical-research>>.

POLICY AREA	PROGRESS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2M to collect data through La Trobe University's 'Private Lives' and 'Writing themselves In' LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing surveys.²⁰
Foreign policy and international LGBTIQ+ advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created the Inclusion and Equality Fund to support LGBTIQ+ civil society and human rights defenders in Southeast Asia and the Pacific with an initial annual commitment of \$3.5 million.²¹ • Commitment to and progress towards a dedicated international LGBTQIA+ human rights engagement strategy.²² • Australia led a co-resolution in the Human Rights Council calling for enhanced efforts to combat discrimination, violence and harmful practices against intersex people.²³ • Inaugural Ambassador for Human Rights appointed, and role of Ambassador for Women and Girls expanded to Ambassador for Gender Equality, with both sharing responsibility for LGBTIQ+ rights.²⁴
Arts, culture & community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding support for Sydney WorldPride and the human rights conference. • \$1.5m funding for LGBTQIA+ museum Qtopia.²⁵ • Anthony Albanese was the first Prime Minister to march in Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras parade in 2023.

²⁰ Hon. Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, 'System-Wide' Change: 10-Year Action Plan for better LGBTQIA+ health', *Department of Health and Aged Care* (11 December 2024) <<https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-mark-butler-mp/media/system-wide-change-10-year-action-plan-for-better-lgbtqi-health>>

²¹ Hon. Penny Wong MP, 'Sydney WorldPride Human Rights Conference Opening Statement' (Speech, Sydney WorldPride Human Rights Conference, 1 March 2023) <<https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/penny-wong/speech/sydney-worldpride-human-rights-conference-opening-statement>>.

²² Australian Council for International Development (ACFID), 2024. 'Government must support LGBTQIA+ human rights defenders, says Australian aid peak.' [online] ACFID. Available at: <<https://acfid.asn.au/government-must-support-lgbtqi-human-rights-defenders-says-australian-aid-peak/>>

²³ 'United Nations Addresses the Human Rights of Intersex Persons in Ground-Breaking Resolution' (Web Page, Intersex Human Rights Australia, 4 April 2024) <<https://interaction.org.au/40833/unhrc-first-intersex-resolution/>>

²⁴ Penny Wong, 'Sydney WorldPride Human Rights Conference, Opening Statement' (Speech, 1 March 2023) <<https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/penny-wong/speech/sydney-worldpride-human-rights-conference-opening-statement>>.

²⁵ Qtopia Sydney, 'Qtopia launched by three levels of Government', (Media release, 28 February 2024), <<https://qtopiasydney.com.au/qtopia-launched-by-three-levels-of-government/>>; Douglas Magaletti, 'Prime Minister Anthony Albanese Announces \$1.5 million for LGBTIQ+ Museum Qtopia Sydney', *Star Observer* (23 February 2024). <<https://www.starobserver.com.au/news/australian-prime-minister-anthony-albanese-announces-1-5-million-for-lgbtqi-museum-qtopia-sydney/228839>>.



LACK OF PROGRESS

POLICY AREA	STATUS
Discrimination protections for LGBTIQ+ students & teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No changes to the <i>Sex Discrimination Act</i>, despite an election commitment and clear pathway forward offered by recommendations from the Australian Law Reform Commission.²⁶ The Prime Minister cited the need for bipartisan support before proceeding with proposed legislation.²⁷
Voice for LGBTIQ+ people in government policy making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No dedicated Minister, office, whole of government advisory council, or Commissioner to ensure LGBTIQ+ voices are heard in policymaking.²⁸
Conversion practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No federal action to prevent harmful anti-LGBTQ+ conversion practices, despite strong condemnation.²⁹
Intersex human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No progress on implementation of the AHRC's 2021 report,³⁰ and no progress at a federal level on national, or nationally consistent, laws to prevent unnecessary medical interventions on people with variations of sex characteristics.
Foreign policy and international LGBTIQ+ advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An ongoing and substantial increase to the Inclusion and Equality Fund is needed, with the sector calling for an increase to at least \$15m.³¹ Dedicated LGBTIQ+ human rights engagement strategy not finalised.
Sex and gender recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender</i>³² remain outdated and have not been reviewed and updated.
Addressing hate speech before it escalates into violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While the government recently passed legislation to protect LGBTIQ+ people from threatening or promoting violence or property damage,³³ no progress was made on protections from inciting hate.

²⁶ Australian Law Reform Commission, *Maximising the Realisation of Human Rights: Religious Educational Institutions and Anti-Discrimination Laws* (Final Report, December 2023).

²⁷ Paul Karp, 'Australia's Religious and Sex Discrimination Laws Need Fixing, a New Report Says. What Happens Next?' *The Guardian* (online, 23 March 2024) <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2024/mar/23/australias-religious-and-sex-discrimination-laws-need-fixing-a-new-report-says-what-happens-next>>

²⁸ Noting that while there was no whole of government mechanism, the government established the LGBTIQ+ Health and Wellbeing Expert Advisory Group and the National HIV Taskforce to inform decision making in these areas.

²⁹ April McLennan, 'Calls for Conversion Practices in Australia to Be Made Criminal amid Psychological Scars' *ABC News* (online, 17 May 2022) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-05-17/conversion-therapy-in-australia-calls-for-ban/101041368>.

³⁰ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Ensuring health and bodily autonomy: towards a human rights approach for people born with variations in sex characteristics* (Final Report, October 2021).

³¹ Equality Australia, *Partnering with Pride: The Case for Australian Action on Equality in Our Region* (Report, Equality Australia, February 2023) <https://equalityaustralia.org.au/resources/partnering-with-pride-the-case-for-australian-action-on-equality-in-our-region/>.

³² Australian Government, Attorney-General's Department, 'Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender', (Website) <<https://www.ag.gov.au/rights-and-protections/human-rights-and-anti-discrimination/australian-government-guidelines-recognition-sex-and-gender>>.

³³ Criminal Code Amendment (Hate Crimes) Bill 2025.

WHAT DO LGBTIQ+ VOTERS WANT IN 2025?

Between 19 November 2024 and 3 March 2025, Equality Australia ran a national online survey to identify the issues that matter most to LGBTIQ+ voters. A total of 5346 LGBTIQ+ people responded to our survey.³⁴ This survey was also conducted by Equality Australia in 2022, ahead of the last federal election, providing a valuable point of comparison over time.

Ahead of the upcoming 2025 federal election, LGBTIQ+ policy issues topped the priority list, followed by the environment and climate issues, and cost of living.³⁵

When asked to drill down on the LGBTIQ+ issues of most importance to them, survey respondents ranked ending conversion practices, addressing discrimination, ending unnecessary non-consensual procedures on intersex people, supporting rainbow families and improving mental health services, and as their top 5 issues coming into the 2025 federal election.

TOP 5 LGBTIQ+ POLICY REFORM ISSUES

This top 5 is drawn from our survey data. Further information is contained on page 19 of this report under the heading *LGBTIQ+ priority issues* along with details about the other policy reform issues that LGBTIQ+ voters considered important.

We acknowledge that some of the below issues involve a complex interplay between state and federal responsibilities, with some matters best addressed at the state level.

1. End conversion practices

Practices that seek to change or suppress a person's sexuality or gender identity cause real and lasting harm, whether they occur in religious or health settings.

They're based on the lie that LGBTQA+ people are broken or disordered and that our sexuality or gender identity needs to be 'healed', 'treated' or 'suppressed'.

We know that conversion practices are devastating to mental health, as recognised by both professional associations for psychologists and psychiatrists.³⁶

While there has been progress in some states and territories, the protections are patchy. Laws should apply to any setting, religious or otherwise, with responses focussed on preventing harm before it occurs through education programs, alongside a civil redress for survivors.

Action can also be taken at a federal level to better regulate counsellors and to ensure that chaplains are not engaging in these practices in our schools.³⁷

³⁴ A total of 6481 people answered the survey, of which we were able to identify 5346 as LGBTIQ+ people. A survey respondent was considered part of the LGBTIQ+ sample if any of these applied: their gender is different to that assigned at birth, they have an intersex variation, or have a sexual orientation other than straight/heterosexual. For more information on who responded to our survey, see the section of this report entitled *Who did we hear from?* on page 25.

³⁵ The specific breakdown of responses was: LGBTIQ+ issues: 3,087 responses (16.29%), Environment/climate issues: 2,800 responses (14.77%), Cost of living/wages: 2,720 responses (14.35%).

³⁶ Australian Psychological Society, *Use of psychological practices that attempt to change or suppress sexual orientation or gender* (Position statement, last updated February 2021); The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, *Position statement 60: Sexual Orientation Change Efforts* (last updated March 2019); The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, 'The role of psychiatrists in working with Trans and Gender Diverse people' (Website, Dec 2023) <<https://www.ranzcp.org/clinical-guidelines-publications/clinical-guidelines-publications-library/role-of-psychiatrists-working-with-trans-gender-diverse-people>>; Australian Association of Social Workers, 'AASW stands against discrimination of the LGBTIQ+ community' (Website) <<https://www.aasw.asn.au/aasw-stands-against-discrimination-of-the-lgbtq-community/>>.

³⁷ More information on the policy reform options available is set out in this report: Timothy W. Jones, Anna Brown et al, *Preventing Harm, Promoting Justice – Responding to LGBT conversion therapy in Australia* (Report, 2018), and in this statement: SOGICE Survivors, *SOGICE Survivor Statement Calling for action on the LGBTQA+ conversion movement* (18 May 2020).

We call on the next elected government to:

- issue strong statements against conversion practices on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in all settings.
- introduce regulation of ‘counsellors’ and those who engage in counselling practices, through requiring appropriate qualifications, training and oversight.
- develop guidance material to make it clear that health providers understand that conversion practices are damaging and inconsistent with their obligations to provide non-discriminatory health services.
- insert a specific clause in agreements with state governments for the provision of the state chaplaincy program that prohibit conversion practices by contracted chaplains.
- consider the introduction of a redress scheme to support victim-survivors who incur costs when recovering from conversion practices.



“As the daughter of a gay man who underwent conversion practices before he was married to my mum (and knowing the damage) I’m very keen to ensure our political landscape understands the impact of what they legislate ... considering the ongoing ramifications.”

- 45-54 year old woman from regional New South Wales

“I put myself through 30 years of personal conversion therapy. I thought I could “overcome” it by prayer, fasting, self-harm, denial, and all manner of convoluted thought processes. I just wish people could grow up in an environment where they are accepted for who they are. We are not sick, we don’t need to be fixed, we are not immoral. We are just people who love and need to be loved - like anyone else.”

- 65-74 year old gay man in regional Queensland
-

2. Improve protections from discrimination

LGBTIQ+ people experience stigma and discrimination at higher rates,³⁸ so it isn't surprising that strengthening discrimination laws is a high priority for our communities.

Anti-discrimination law reform has been underway in some states and territories, but there's still work to be done to modernise and strengthen laws, particularly in NSW, South Australia and Western Australia, as well as improving the Commonwealth laws that apply across the country. The Australian Human Rights Commission have produced a position paper to provide a framework for improvements to the federal law.³⁹

Most states and territories and the Commonwealth also lack human rights legislation to ensure that government agencies respect and uphold our rights, including the right to equality and the right to privacy. A parliamentary joint committee recently recommended federal human rights legislation.⁴⁰

LGBTIQ+ people still experience discrimination in religious schools, organisations and faith-based service providers for being who we are.⁴¹ A recent report by the Australian Law Reform Commission⁴², yet to be implemented, found there was strong public support, including among parents and people of faith, for removing special exceptions allowing religious schools to discriminate against LGBTIQ+ people and others.

We call on the next elected government to:

- **implement the Australian Law Reform Commission's recommendations in the *Maximising the Realisation of Human Rights Report* on religious exemptions to discrimination (including section 38 of the Sex Discrimination Act, and the Fair Work Act).**
- **consolidate, modernise and strengthen federal anti-discrimination laws including vilification protections.**
- **introduce a dedicated LGBTIQ+ Commissioner.**
- **implement the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' recommendations in its Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework.**



"I am deeply affected by the religious discrimination/sex discrimination legislation as I work within a faith-based organisation and am a closeted queer person. The fact that I'm trying to work through the realisation of my queerness and what it means for my life, but unable to do so publicly and safely is deeply upsetting to me."

- 35-44 year old woman from remote metropolitan NSW

"Being an aged pensioner I have seen and felt the impact of decades of discrimination and vilification. Much has improved but we still have a long way to travel if we are going to address decades of misinformation and disinformation."

- 65-74 year old gay woman from metropolitan South Australia

"I used to be a Catholic School Teacher and lived in fear of my personal life being discovered, resulting in being sacked."

- 55-64 gay man from metropolitan New South Wales

"I have been sacked from a religious school because of my sexuality. I want this stopped at a national level."

- 55-64 year old gay man in regional New South Wales

³⁸ Adam Bourne et al, *Private Lives 3: The Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ People in Victoria* (Report, La Trobe University, 2020) https://www.latrobe.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1229468/Private-Lives-3-The-health-and-wellbeing-of-LGBTIQ-people-in-Victoria.pdf, Intersex Human Rights Australia, *Discrimination and Stigma* (Web Page, 2024) <<https://interaction.org.au/discrimination/>>.

³⁹ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Free & Equal: A reform agenda for federal discrimination laws* (Position Paper, December 2021).

⁴⁰ Joint Committee on Human Rights (Australian Parliament), *Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework* (Report, May 2024).

⁴¹ For examples, see Equality Australia, *Dismissed, Denied and Demeaned: A National Report on LGBTIQ+ discrimination in faith-based schools and organisations* (March 2024).

⁴² Australian Law Reform Commission, *Maximising the Realisation of Human Rights: Religious Educational Institutions and Anti-Discrimination Laws* (Final Report, December 2023).

3. End unnecessary, non-consensual medical treatments on intersex people

Every intersex person in Australia should be able to grow up to live a full and dignified life in which they decide what happens to their own bodies.

But around the country, many infants and children born with variations of sex characteristics are having unnecessary medical procedures without their consent.

Consequences of these early and unnecessary medical procedures can include:

- Loss of sexual function and sensation
- Loss of fertility
- Urinary tract issues, including incontinence
- A need for ongoing medical treatment/repeat surgeries
- Incorrect gender assignment
- Loss of autonomy and loss of choice⁴³

In 2023, the ACT became the first place in Australia to pass laws that end unnecessary medical procedures on intersex people without their consent, but intersex people remain unprotected in other states and territories.

We call on the next elected government to prioritise the human rights and wellbeing of intersex people by:

- **introducing national legislation or encouraging states and territories to adopt nationally consistent legislation to ensure people born with innate variations in sex characteristics, including children, are not subject to deferrable medical interventions, and that all procedures take place with sufficient oversight.**
- **improving overall health care for intersex people throughout their lives, including by collaborating, properly resourcing and supporting intersex peer-led organisations, and through considering the implementation of a redress scheme for those who have undergone harmful medical practices.**



“My child was born intersex and we were convinced by medical professionals that they needed surgery that it turns out they didn’t. I wish we had been able to talk to different points of view than “he is a boy and he needs to be able to pee standing up and pass for a normal boy” which is what we got from the urologists.”

- 35-44 year old man from regional Northern Territory

“I have connections with multiple intersex people who have expressed anger and sadness towards their “corrective” surgeries performed on them as infants or as children. Some even would be far healthier as adults now had they not undergone any medical “correction” as infants or children.”

- 18-24 year old bisexual man in regional New South Wales

“Truth telling in relation to gender. Born intersex. Surgically mutilated to resemble male genitalia. Birthday certificate issued as male. Developed breasts and started to menstruate late teens, had my vagina recreated in America as that procedure was not available in Australia...”

- 65-74 year old intersex person from regional New South Wales

⁴³ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Ensuring health and bodily autonomy: towards a human rights approach for people born with variations in sex characteristics* (Final Report, October 2021), 38-41.

4. Remove barriers to parenthood and support rainbow families

Following on from marriage equality, the number of LGBTQ+ parented families is increasing rapidly.⁴⁴

LGBTQ+ people still experience major legal, social and economic barriers to parenthood. Legal recognition of parents continues to be an issue, particularly for those who have conceived through surrogacy, and trans and gender diverse parents whose gender markers and parenting roles may not be properly recognised in law or policy. Prospective parents can also be denied Medicare rebates for assisted reproductive technology, depending on how they are trying to conceive a child.

We know that our children in LGBTQ+ parented families are thriving, but they still experience unequal treatment compared with their peers just because of who their family is. For parents, accessing government services is not easy – forms, policies, and programs are often not fit for purpose.

We call on the next elected government to improve pathways to parenthood and inclusion of rainbow families by:

- **working towards a fair and consistent approach to legal parentage and family recognition across Australia, including for children born via surrogacy.**
- **review forms, policies and processes, and invest in training for agencies we rely on such as Centrelink and the Australian Passport Office.**
- **ensuring equal access to Medicare for assisted reproductive technology.**



“The surrogacy laws do not support queer people: 1 - medical provisions for lesbian partners are inadequate. 2 - both partners are may not be legally recognised under Australian law (our children are positively discriminated against) 3 - Men in WA do not have a pathway for surrogacy (contravenes equality laws).”

- 45-54 year old gay man in metropolitan Western Australia

“The legal barriers around surrogacy. As a family currently working with the NSW Court on a parenting order this is particularly painful. What other father in NSW has to adopt his biological daughter? It makes no sense.”

- 45-54 year old gay man in metropolitan New South Wales

“Have lived experience of suicide due to rejection and discrimination for being gay. Have experienced discrimination due to being in a rainbow family. It is important that young kids growing up know it's okay to be yourself, and okay to be gay.”

- 25-34 year old woman in metropolitan Victoria

⁴⁴ While the last Census did not accurately record the number and diversity of rainbow families in Australia, the data available shows that from 2016 to 2021, the number of female same-sex couples with children increased by 4,900 or 84% and male same-sex couples with children grew by 1,700 or 161%. *Same-Sex Couples Living Together in Australia* (Web Page, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2022) <<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/same-sex-couples-living-together-australia#same-sex-couples-living-together-with-children>>.

5. Deliver improved LGBTIQ+ mental health and suicide prevention

We urgently need major, large-scale and long-term investment into quality, mainstream and specialist LGBTIQ+ culturally competent mental health and suicide prevention, aftercare and postvention programs to save lives, support our communities and meet growing needs, alongside meaningful law reform that protects LGBTIQ+ communities and improves our lives.

LGBTIQ+ people disproportionately experience situational distress and suicidality.⁴⁵ We often find that services are either not designed or tailored for us, are chronically underfunded, or unavailable where we live.

Accurate data collection is a huge issue. Lack of appropriate inclusion in police reporting, morbidity and coronial data, and in the Census has meant that we can't even accurately identify the nature or scale of suicide in our communities. What we do know though is that we keep losing friends to suicide, and that this number is increasing each year. The research tells us that our community remains in suicidal crisis, primarily driven, not by who we are but by how we are treated⁴⁶.

The current government has implemented a National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement with each state and territory, and LGBTIQ+ people are considered a priority population in these agreements, but LGBTIQ+ programs and services remain chronically under-resourced, with mainstream services not always being inclusive and affirming for our community.

The government introduced the new topics of sexual orientation and gender identity for the 2026 Census. However, there is more work and advocacy to be done to include intersex people⁴⁷ and young people.

We call on the next elected government to:

- ensure that we continue to be treated as a priority population in health planning nationwide.
- invest in programs to improve the cultural competence of health practitioners working with our communities.
- provide adequate, sustainable, ongoing funding for LGBTIQ+ specific suicide prevention and mental health programs.
- continue to implement the ABS Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sex Orientation Variables in data collection including the Census.



“I work as an academic in public health in the areas of suicide, mental health and equity e.g. housing. As a researcher working on some LGBTQA+ projects, I know that as world politics continues to trend to the far right, LGBTQA+ are not safe and rights are being repealed. I also know that all queer people, certainly those I encounter in both my professional and personal life feel stressed and uneasy about what it means to be openly and visibly identifying as queer.”

- 55-64 year old gay man from metropolitan Queensland

“My human rights is always my biggest concern when politicians use trans people and our human rights as a wedge in politics. The last 2020 federal election campaign took a tremendous toll on the mental health and physical well being of trans & gender diverse people which led to increased self harm and suicide. Most of us know someone who has taken their own life, or has passed away involuntarily far too young due to stress related illness.”

- 55-64 year old gay woman in regional Queensland

“I think we've come a long way in many ways but there is still serious work to be done to ensure all our community has access to resources relating to health and wellbeing. The high rates of suicidality are an indication that our communities need more sustained support, and regular access to a wide range of lgbtiqa+ sensitive services.”

- 65-74 year old queer woman in rural Tasmania

⁴⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 'Suicidal and Self-Harming Thoughts and Behaviours' (Web Page, 2024) <<https://www.aihw.gov.au/suicide-self-harm-monitoring/data/populations-age-groups/suicidal-and-self-harming-thoughts-and-behaviours>>.

⁴⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 'Suicidal and Self-Harming Thoughts and Behaviours' (Web Page, 2024) <<https://www.aihw.gov.au/suicide-self-harm-monitoring/data/populations-age-groups/suicidal-and-self-harming-thoughts-and-behaviours>>.

⁴⁷ Noting that the ABS did not recommend the inclusion of a new topic relating to variations of sex characteristics, after these questions tested poorly.

THE POWER OF THE LGBTIQ+ VOTE

Around 5.5% of Australian voters are LGBTIQ+.⁴⁸

This means that nearly 1 million voters in Australia are estimated to be LGBTIQ+ people.⁴⁹

Based on our survey results, around 1 in 5 LGBTIQ+ voters are currently undecided with more than one third indicating that they intend to change who they vote for.

This estimate also does not capture voters who are allies of LGBTIQ+ people, of which there are millions.

When considering the families, friendship networks, workplaces, and communities of LGBTIQ+ people, the number of voters connected to LGBTIQ+ people multiplies considerably. Close allies of LGBTIQ+ people may shift their vote depending on the party's position in relation to LGBTIQ+ people.

VOTING SHIFTS AND TRENDS

36.7% of LGBTIQ+ respondents to our survey indicated they would be changing their vote in the upcoming federal election compared with how they voted in the previous election.⁵⁰

Additionally, there were 20.5% of voters who were currently undecided. This shows an increase in voter indecision since the last election – our 2022 data showed that only 13.6% were unsure about who to vote for.

The intention of LGBTIQ+ voters to vote outside the major parties in 2025 is notable. We were able to identify a higher-than-average degree of indecision among previous Labor voters (24.8%), and a strong trend of 2022 Labor voters indicating an intention to shift their vote to the Greens (19.2% of previous Labor voters) or independents (7.3% of previous Labor voters).

Around 4.2% of LGBTIQ+ voters were intending to shift their vote from Greens to an independent candidate. However, only 3% intended to shift their vote from the Greens to Labor.

The Greens voters were the most stable in their voting intentions, with high retention rates from the 2022 election to the upcoming 2025 election.⁵¹

A small upward trend (a 19.6% increase) was noted in intended votes for Independents compared with the previous election, but this shift is modest compared with the intended shift from Labor to the Greens.

This sends a clear message that parties and independents cannot take LGBTIQ+ voters for granted, that they must win back past LGBTIQ+ voters as well as build support among LGBTIQ+ people who are undecided or considering other candidates. The work of appealing to LGBTIQ+ voters and their close allies necessitates that all parties and candidates consider the national federal issues that are important to LGBTIQ+ people and our allies, the extent to which LGBTIQ+ issues sway votes, as well as the specific LGBTIQ+ issues we care most about.

⁴⁸ According to recently published ABS data from 2022, 4.5% of Australians are LGBTI+. Refer to: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Estimates and characteristics of LGBTI+ populations in Australia', Australian Bureau of Statistics (Website, 19 December 2024) <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/estimates-and-characteristics-lgbti-populations-australia/latest-release>>. This figure is likely lower than the actual population because significant stigma remains for our communities, which may contribute to unreliable outcomes from in-person survey collection. Accurate estimations of intersex populations are difficult to obtain. InterAction cite a systematic review calculating an estimate of around 1.7% of all live births. For more information, see 'Demographics', InterAction for Health and Human Rights (Website, last reviewed 11 June 2024), <<https://interaction.org.au/demographics/>>. Considering that the 2022 ABS figures likely undercount intersex people and adjusting for the likelihood that stigma resulted in lower reporting across our populations, we have adopted an estimate that 5.5% of voters are LGBTIQ+.

⁴⁹ 17,676,347 people were on the certified list for all divisions the last time there was a national vote (on the 2023 referendum). Refer to Australian Electoral Commission, '2023 referendum enrolment statistics', Australian Electoral Commission (Website, last updated 21 September 2023) <https://www.aec.gov.au/enrolling_to_vote/enrolment_stats/referendum/index.htm>. We have calculated that 5.5% of 17.67m voters is 970,000 people.

⁵⁰ 4863 LGBTIQ+ people answered these questions, and 1785 of them indicated a change in vote.

⁵¹ Among voters who knew who they would vote for (removing those from the sample who said they were 'unsure'), the Greens had an 91% retention rate, followed by 85% for Liberals and 83% for independents. Labor had a 68% retention rate. National and One Nation voters were also very consistent in their voting intentions, but the sample was too small to be reliable.



“I have been personally affected by quite a few of these issues. I’d like to add that I am very concerned that Dutton will use queer issues as political football and that if the liberals win, we will see a roll back in queer rights. Additionally, with Trump now in power, we will be seeing a lot of candidates who are not afraid to attack queer rights.”

- 25 – 34 year old non-binary person from metropolitan Victoria

“I don’t understand why discrimination still exists and why the Labor Government in particular is so afraid of taking a strong stand on anything LGBTIQ+. It is pathetic and gutless. We are human beings. Just remove the discrimination already so we can live full lives. No one should have to fight this long for really basic rights.”

- 45-54 year old bisexual woman from regional Victoria

“There is a steadily increasing rise in prejudice. Inspired by what’s happening overseas, the US in particular, and fuelled by a profound dissatisfaction with the status quo. People will support whatever political outfit seems like the most viable means to achieve their needs. In a country where the left is suppressed, the ALP want to maintain the status quo and Liberals want a US-flavoured status quo, the far-right is both appealing and heavily promoted. It’s scary and it will become increasingly dangerous if nothing changes.”

- 35-44 year old gay man from metropolitan Western Australia

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO LGBTIQ+ VOTERS?

NATIONAL PRIORITIES

LGBTIQ+ voters share the same universal concerns as many other Australian voters, such as the cost of living, housing, healthcare and environment.⁵² However, in this pre-election survey, LGBTIQ+ policy issues emerged as the highest priority for our respondents, ranking five percentage points higher than the next most important issue, the environment. This marks a shift from 2022, when the environment was the top concern, followed by LGBTIQ+ issues, and then healthcare.

This change may reflect concerns about global anti-rights movements, as well as frustration over the lack of progress on key issues affecting LGBTIQ+ people since the last election.

From a list of 9 issues, survey respondents were asked to identify up to 3 issues that were the most important to them in the upcoming federal election.

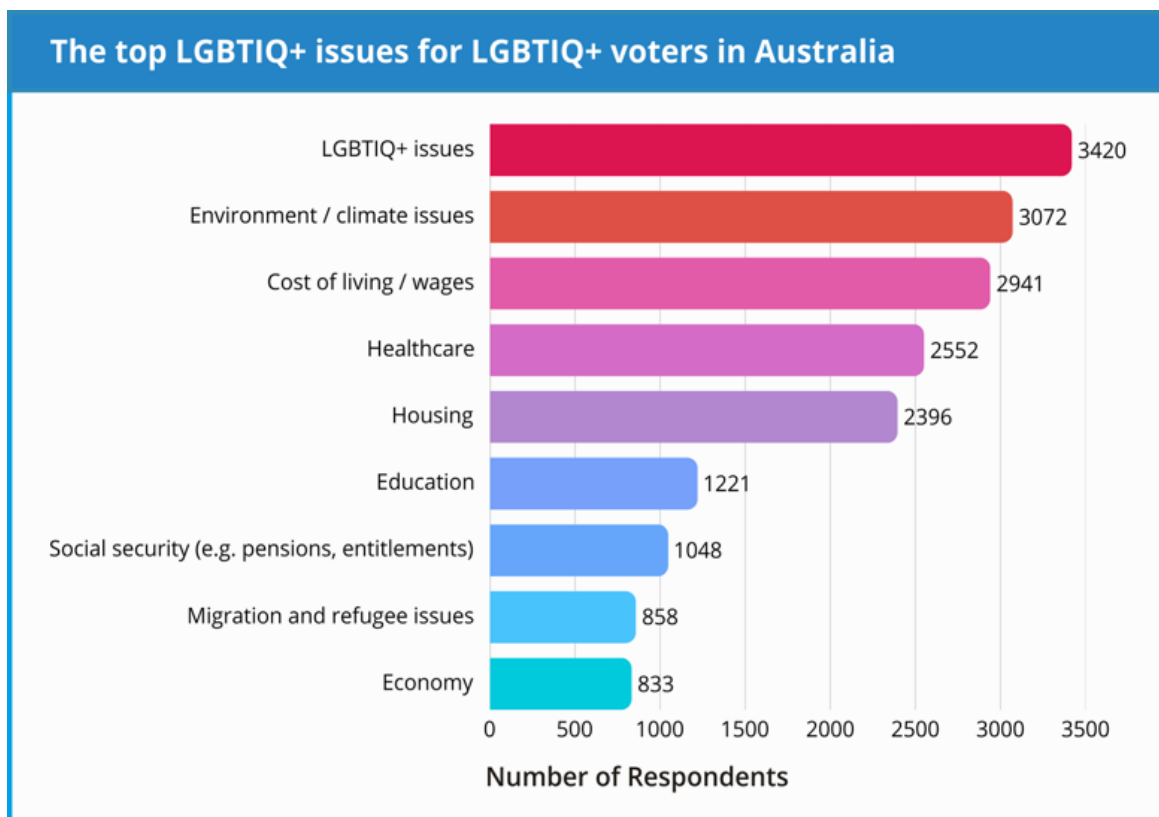


Figure A: Frequency of responses by LGBTIQ+ survey respondents to a question about the most important issues to them in the upcoming election (respondents could pick 3).

The survey also allowed for open-text responses for participants to raise further issues. The issues that were prominent in this qualitative data were:

Human rights and governance

- Humanitarian crisis overseas, particularly caused by wars in Ukraine and Gaza
- Formal legal protections for human rights, through Australia adopting its own Bill of rights
- Transition to a republic.

⁵² Polling from January 2025 found that cost of living dominated voter concerns, and while the issue has fallen in importance with voters compared with 2022, 'global warming and climate change' was still found to be a high priority. Refer to: Roy Morgan, 'Top 10 Issues Shaping the 2025 Federal Election: Cost of Living and Crime on the Rise, Climate Change Fades', (Website, 23 January 2025) <<https://www.roymorgan.com/findings/9797-most-important-issues-facing-australia-january-2025>>.

Mental health

- The need for increased funding
- Improving availability and accessibility of support
- An overhaul or major reforms of the system.

Sovereignty and justice for First Nations people

- Enhanced support, recognition and treaty
- Centring First Nations perspectives in policy development
- Addressing disproportionate criminalisation, and keeping children out of care.

LGBTIQ+ PRIORITY ISSUES

Around 95% of LGBTIQ+ people surveyed said that LGBTIQ+ issues are important to them in deciding who they will vote for.⁵³

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of a series of 10 key LGBTIQ+ policy issues. Significantly, all these 10 issues received strong support from across the LGBTIQ+ voters, with every issue being identified as either 'very important' or 'important' by at least 85% of LGBTIQ+ survey respondents.

The top 5 issues identified from that survey data are explored in more detail earlier in this report on page 10.

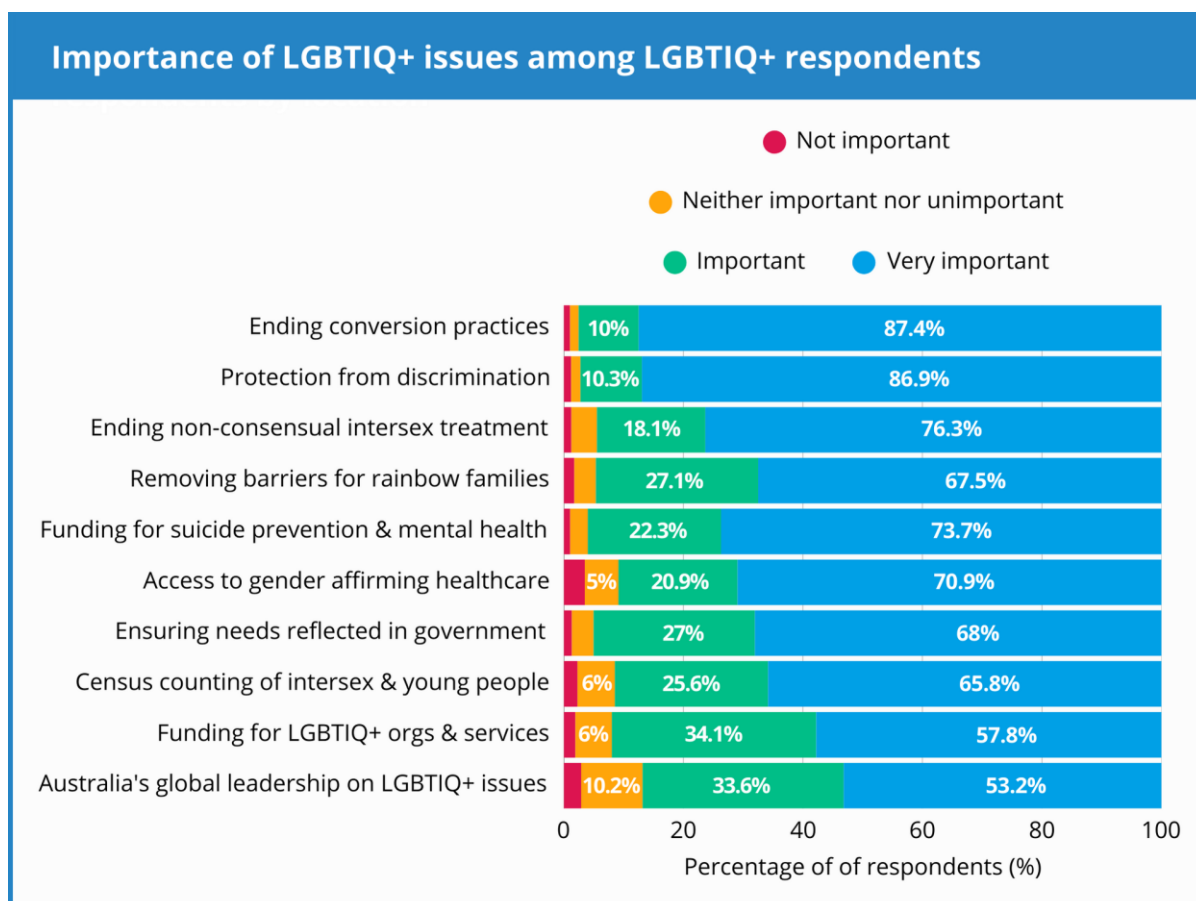


Figure B: Responses by LGBTIQ+ survey respondents about how important each of these LGBTIQ+ policy issues is to them.

In 2022, the responses were similar – with protection from discrimination topping the list, followed by ending LGBTIQ+ conversion practices, ending unnecessary medical treatment on intersex people without their personal consent, and increased funding for LGBTIQ+ suicide prevention and mental health programs.

⁵³ Around 70.5% of LGBTIQ+ survey respondents rated LGBTIQ+ issues as very important in determining who they will vote for, and about 24.6% said they were important. Only around 4.8% either were neutral or found them not important, and negligible responses preferred not to say.

There was strong support for removing barriers faced by rainbow families. While this issue was not included among the key LGBTIQ+ policy topics for participants to rate by importance in the 2022 survey, it emerged as the fourth most important concern for voters overall in the 2025 data. Meanwhile, progress on Census inclusion likely led to a decrease in its overall significance for voters (noting though further work is needed to include intersex people and those under 16).

Most important LGBTIQ+ issues by LGBTIQ+ subpopulation

We examined the relative importance of LGBTIQ+ issues to subpopulations:⁵⁴

- LGBTIQ+ men, women and non-binary people.
- Intersex people of any gender and sexual orientation.
- Trans people of any gender and sexual orientation.
- Older and younger LGBTIQ+ people.
- LGBTIQ+ people living regionally, rurally or remotely.
- First Nations LGBTIQ+ people.
- LGBTIQ+ people who grew up with a language other than English in the home (cultural diversity).

On most issues, such as protections from discrimination, conversion practices and suicide prevention there were no significant differences between these subpopulations and the whole LGBTIQ+ voter group.

Our analysis of the 2022 survey results found that LGBTIQ+ people in Australia are united on the issues that matter to them. Even policy issues that do not personally affect them are still considered highly important. This trend remains consistent in the 2024-25 data. For example, there was also almost no difference in relation to the importance of ending unnecessary medical treatment on intersex people whether a person was themselves intersex, or not.

Trans and gender diverse respondents

Ensuring better access to gender affirming health care was rated of high importance to the whole LGBTIQ+ voter sample (71.3%), but this was of even greater importance to trans people, with 90.1% rating this as 'very important'. Non-binary voters rated gender affirming care the highest of any gender, with 92.3% considering it to be 'very important'.



"I'm trans and I live in a regional area, so the accessibility of gender affirming healthcare is a big one for me, and one I've had difficulties navigating. Ensuring that the few services available in regional and rural services are accessible to LGBTIQ+ people is also a big one, and one way to ensure it is to bolster anti-discrimination laws. For example, the largest youth mental health service in my area is Church-run, which means there are limits as to how much support its staff can offer young LGBTIQ+ people who come through its doors, which is unacceptable."

- 35-44 year old trans man in regional New South Wales

"There is a very vocal right-wing voice that wishes to take away our rights to be treated as equal human beings, and I am concerned that if the Liberal party win the Federal election, that Dutton will use the Trump playbook. I do feel very fearful for young LGBTIQ people who are working, requiring care, etc as they can be so easily discriminated against."

- 65-74 year old gay woman in regional Queensland

⁵⁴ To do this, we compared the extent to which survey respondents from these subpopulations rated an issue as 'very important', as compared with the whole LGBTIQ+ voter sample.

Intersex respondents

Intersex survey respondents placed more importance on funding for LGBTIQ+ organisations relative to the whole LGBTIQ+ voter group.⁵⁵

In addition, intersex survey respondents had a more global outlook on issues, with 64% of intersex people rating 'seeing Australia take a leading role on LGBTIQ+ issues' as very important, compared with 53% across the whole LGBTIQ+ voter group. This may stem from the broad coalitions that intersex people have built across the globe.



"I am intersex and faced shame and discrimination, including medical abuse and loss of body autonomy. Data on intersex people is vital for records and ensure intersex people have rights and are respected in the future."

- 45-54 year old Intersex person from metropolitan Queensland

"Having grown up during the 1970's and 1980's where I never had the knowledge that what I was feeling actually had a name and that I was not the only one experiencing this, I would like to see the advances we have made in our society protected... MOST of all I would like for politicians to concentrate on the important issues such as the environment and the economy and stop using the Trans and LGBTIQ+ communities a political footballs to distract from the fact they do not have any solutions for the real issues the broader community faces everyday."

- 55-66 year old intersex woman from metropolitan Western Australia

Gender trends

We looked for any significant differences based on whether a person said that they were male, female, non-binary or identified their gender in another way. Male survey respondents (cis and trans) were generally less likely to consider the LGBTIQ+ issues 'very important' and were more likely to rate issues as 'important' across the board.

The largest gender gaps were observed in relation to LGBTIQ+ organisation funding (16.9%-point difference) and gender-affirming health care (22.8%-point difference), with men less likely to rate these as 'very important' compared with women, non-binary people and other genders.



"I'm not generally involved in politics much, but I would like to see a wider acceptance of LGBTQIA+ people and a removal of stigma or discrimination in and from our government and across our community. Everyone should have equal rights no matter how you identify."

- 25-34 year old gay woman in metropolitan New South Wales

⁵⁵ Around 73% of intersex survey respondents indicated this was 'very important', compared with around 58% of the LGBTIQ+ voter sample as a whole.

Age trends

Respondents aged under 25 (who made up approximately 20% of the sample) were more likely to consider access to gender affirming care 'very important' (83.5%, compared with 71.3% across the whole LGBTIQ+ voter group), but differences in relation to other issues were negligible, and there were no significant differences in priorities within the older cohort of those aged over 65.



"Everyone should have access to the supports they need whether that applies to gender affirming care or mental health resources. I'm also a firm believer in your body, your choice... people should have access to gender affirming care and be the ones to make decisions about unnecessary surgeries in regard to intersex people. Queer people need a voice in parliament and should be, like all - minorities, the ones to decide as a collective community what is needed and how to go about making things happen/improve."

- 18-24 year old non-binary person in regional New South Wales

People living in regions, rural or remote areas

We identified a general trend of more 'very important' responses from rural, regional and remote LGBTIQ+ people when compared with the whole LGBTIQ+ voter sample. There was greater weight given to Census inclusion (around 6% difference), increased funding for suicide prevention and mental health (around 6% difference) better funding for LGBTIQ+ organisations and service delivery (around 7% difference), and seeing Australia take a lead on LGBTIQ+ issues globally (around 7% difference).



"I grew up in a rural area which still has no healthcare options for transgender people, including mental health care. I didn't know that being a trans man was a thing until I was 14/15. I had to wait until I was legally an adult to travel three hours each way to a specialist to get gender-affirming care which was paid out of pocket. My gender affirming surgeries were over \$10 000 with the help of insurance, not including cost of food, travel and accommodation for the week I was required to stay in the city. In a country that supposedly has free healthcare it is ridiculous that I should have to pay so much for a necessary surgery."

- 18-24 year old man in metropolitan Queensland

"As a mother of a transgender adult I am often concerned about the discrimination shown towards her. Ensuring she lives in a safe environment and is treated with respect and dignity is a major concern. Accessibility in rural areas for medical help is important."

- 55-64 straight woman in regional New South Wales

First Nations respondents

There were minor differences between the responses of First Nations LGBTIQ+ survey respondents and the broader LGBTIQ+ voter sample. One notable difference was the high priority placed on increasing funding for LGBTIQ+ suicide prevention and mental health services, with 81.7% of First Nations respondents marking it as 'very important,' compared to 73.4% across the broader LGBTIQ+ community. This outcome aligns with mental health data highlighting the significant burden carried by First Nations LGBTIQ+ populations, including Sistergirls, Brotherboys and trans mob.⁵⁶

First Nations people also expressed a stronger connection to Australia's leadership role on the global stage (6% increase on ratings of 'very important' when compared with the whole LGBTIQ+ group). First Nations peoples may

⁵⁶ *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQIASB+ People and Mental Health and Wellbeing* (Report, Indigenous Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Clearinghouse, 2023) 6 <<https://www.indigenoumhspsc.gov.au/getattachment/2b03460f-1f9f-4d1a-9be2-36e216838ad8/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-lgbtqiasb-people-and-mental-health-and-wellbeing.pdf>>.

see their struggle for justice as part of a broader global movement, with strong connections and solidarity with groups working toward First Nations justice worldwide.

Cultural diversity

Although we asked survey respondents about whether they grew up hearing another language other than English spoken at home, there were no statistically significant differences between those who were culturally diverse and the broader LGBTIQ+ voter sample.

OTHER PRIORITIES: EDUCATION, HATE SPEECH AND AGED CARE

The survey prompted respondents to rate the importance of key LGBTIQ+ policy issues in Australia. These are set out on page 19 of this report.

We also asked whether there were any additional issues of importance and gave participants the opportunity to provide open text responses.

Key further issues identified were inclusive schools and education, aged care and hate speech.



I am disturbed by the escalation in anti-LGBTQIA+ and particularly, anti-trans hate crimes around the world - including Australia (e.g. violent threats against drag shows and events for gender-diverse youth). These services need our support more than ever right now... I am concerned that even the federal Labor Party could sacrifice its support for trans rights out of cynical electoralism, placing my community in danger. The recent census debacle did nothing to assuage my fears.

- 35-44 year old bisexual woman in metropolitan Victoria

I am single, no children and 63 years old living in a rural/regional area of NSW. I worry about aged care for myself i.e. I do not want to end up in care and being discriminated.

- 55-64 year old gay woman in regional New South Wales

Inclusive schools

Survey respondents raised how schools could be more inclusive places for LGBTIQ+ children, and how LGBTIQ+ topics, rights or awareness may be incorporated into educational programs or curricula.



“Greater local support for trans and gender diverse young people under 12... Reach out and advocacy support roles would be great to support schools and other people/families/providers who are often meeting their first trans kid...Not always retrofitting a regional/rural/remote context.”

- 35-44 year old queer woman living in a rural area of Victoria.

Dignity and inclusion in aged care

Addressing the needs of ageing LGBTIQ+ community members was also seen as a priority issue by survey respondents. There were calls for inclusive mainstream services, and development of more specialised services. Respondents emphasised that LGBTIQ+ older persons have different needs, particularly due to historical discrimination and trauma.



“There's going to be a tsunami of boomer LGBTQs requiring aged care. I will be following closely as Gen X. Our needs are different to mainstream folk and I am concerned there isn't sufficient attention being made to it. Also - as time goes on, happily more disabled LGBT are coming to the fore. Our LGBTQI disabled also have different needs which must be given attention.”

- 55-65 year old gay man from metropolitan NSW.

Tackling hate speech and online harassment

Many survey respondents raised concerns about increases in hate speech experienced by LGBTIQ+ people, particularly on social media. Specific concerns were raised about online attacks on the trans community, and how this vitriol was being exploited by some politicians. Some drew links to misinformation and disinformation campaigns. Survey responses highlighted the need for better legal protections to curb hate speech, and more accountability and regulation of online platforms.



“Hate speech is being normalised. People do not understand the difference between freedom TO and freedom FROM. Freedom from hate is vital. Freedom to speak sounds fine but unless it is tightly coupled with the responsibility NOT to speak untruths, hate, divisiveness, pseudoscience etc, we will never be free FROM trolls and ignorance.”

- 55-64 year old woman from metropolitan Victoria.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS NOT IN LGBTIQ+ SAMPLE

Around 1135 survey respondents either:

- did not identify as LGBTIQ+, nor indicated they had an intersex variation
- did not complete sufficient information for us to ascertain that they are LGBTIQ+.

As this group was recruited through the same channels as the identifiable LGBTIQ+ respondents, it is likely that this sample would be biased in favour of those who support LGBTIQ+ causes, and/or is comprised of allies of LGBTIQ+ people such as family members and friends.

There were few differences between the responses from this group when compared with the LGBTIQ+ sample. In examining the most important issues for survey respondents who did not indicate they are LGBTIQ+, the results show strong support for LGBTIQ+ issues with over 70% rating for the top three issues as ‘very important’. The highest priority issue for these respondents was ensuring LGBTIQ+ people are protected from discrimination (76.5%). This was closely followed by ending conversion practices (75.94%) and ending unnecessary medical treatments on intersex people without their consent (70.87%).

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

RECRUITMENT

The Equality Australia election survey that is the basis of this report was open between 19 November 2024 and 3 March 2025. Survey respondents were recruited through social media, direct email outs and community outreach among LGBTIQ+ individuals, stakeholders and organisations. Meta advertisements that ran between 21 December 2024 to 5 January 2025 were responsible for a significant number of responses, followed by mail outs to Equality Australia’s supporter database and outreach among its network of community organisations. We also promoted the survey at Mardi Gras Fair Day on 16 February 2025.

WHO DID WE HEAR FROM?

People of many ages, locations, diverse characteristics and cultural backgrounds were represented in the sample.

Demographic questions were all optional and some survey respondents chose not to answer some or all of these questions.

LGBTIQ+ identification

Of the 6481 survey responses, we identified 5346 as being LGBTIQ+ people. Some respondents may have been left out of the LGBTIQ+ sample if they preferred not to answer the relevant demographic questions.

The following section breaks down the demographics further within the sample identified as being LGBTIQ+.

Location

Of the LGBTIQ+ survey respondents, 68.8% were from metropolitan areas and 31.2% were from rural, regional and remote areas. The distribution of survey respondents was approximately in alignment with the spread of population throughout Australia, and most of the survey respondents were from NSW (31.3%), Victoria (25.6%) and Queensland (17.1%). populations of the states and territories.⁵⁷

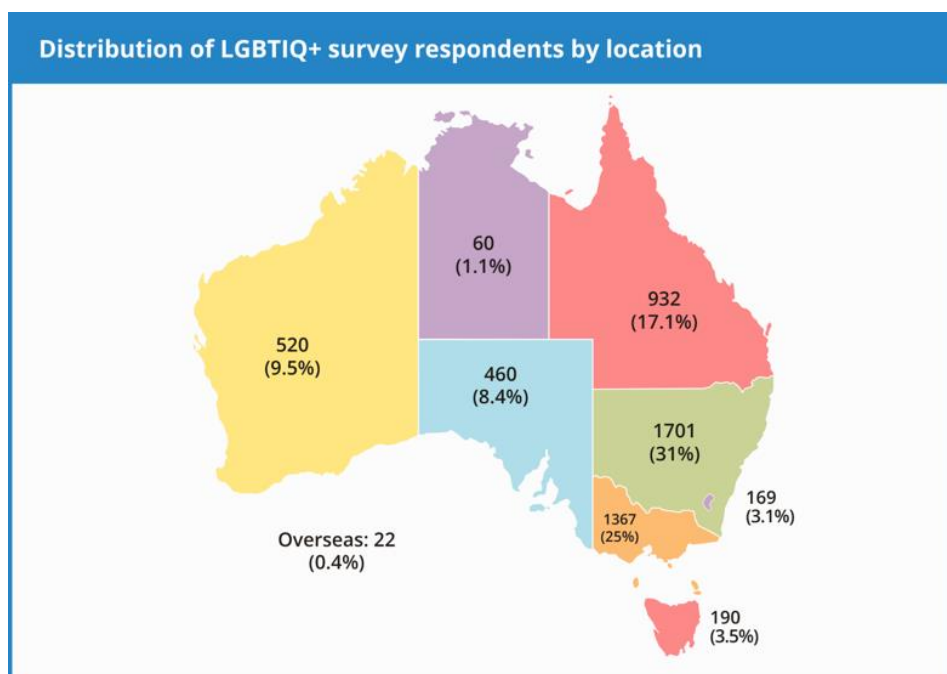


Figure C: Location of LGBTIQ+ survey respondents based on postcode.

⁵⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'National, state and territory population' (Website, September 2024) <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/latest-release>>.

Gender

While there was strong representation of women, non-binary people and other genders, we note that there were disproportionately fewer men (either cis or trans) in the sample. Of note is the high number of people who responded that they have a gender different from their sex assigned at birth. Of the LGBTIQ+ people who answered this question, an estimated 32% were trans voters, split across non-binary people, trans women and trans men. This indicates that trans voters are strongly invested in this upcoming election and what it may mean for their futures.

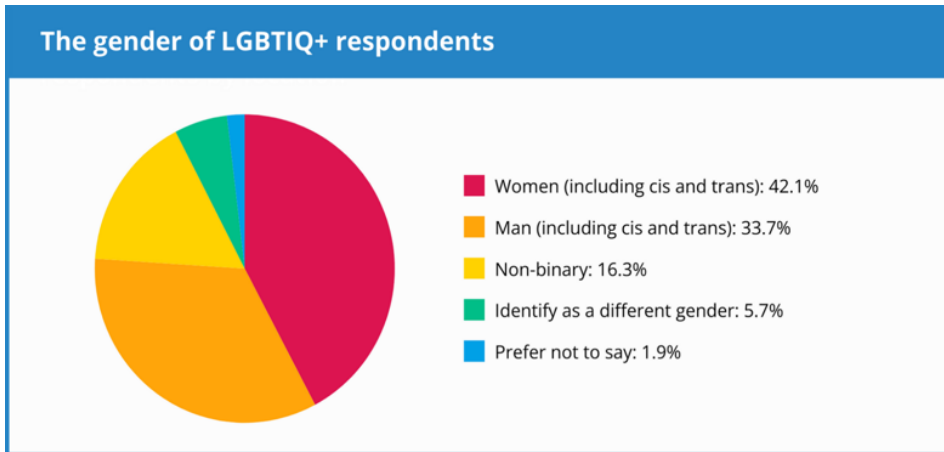


Figure D: Gender breakdown of LGBTIQ+ survey respondents.

People with innate variations of sex characteristics

We heard from 107 people (around 2%) of the LGBTIQ+ sample who indicated they were Intersex.

Sexual orientation

Most survey respondents in the LGBTIQ+ sample were lesbian or gay (44.6%), with bisexuals and pansexuals making up the second largest group (24.9%).

While there are limited data sources on diverse sexualities, the sample of those who answered our survey seems to include an overrepresentation of lesbian and gay respondents relative to other sexualities including bisexual and pansexual respondents, when compared with recently published ABS population data.⁵⁸

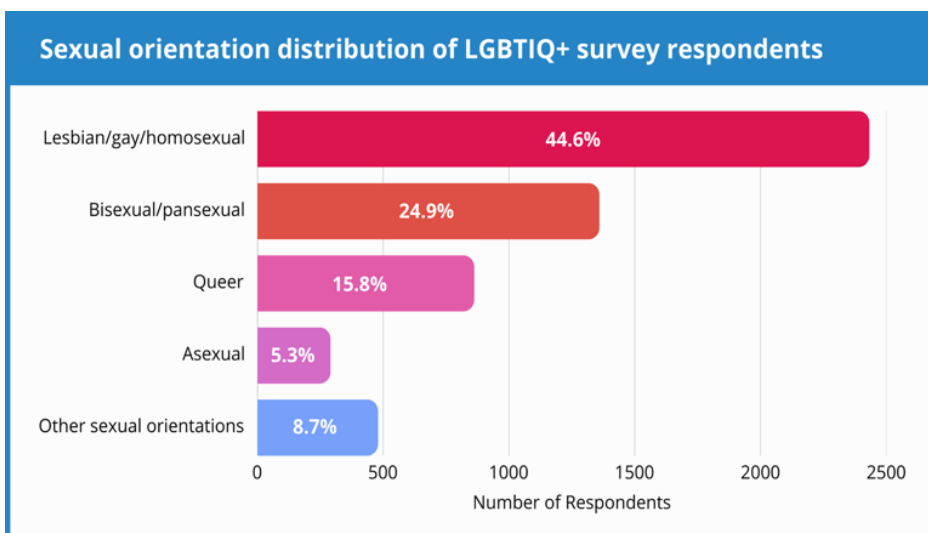


Figure E: Sexual orientation of LGBTIQ+ survey respondents.

⁵⁸ In 2022 data published by the ABS in December 2024, 3.6% of the population were estimated to be LGBTQ+. 1.5% of the population were gay or lesbian, 1.7% were bisexual and the remainder used a different term (0.4%). Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Estimates and characteristics of LGBTIQ+ populations in Australia', (Website, 19 December 2024) <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/estimates-and-characteristics-lgbti-populations-australia/2022#sexual-orientation>>.

Age distribution

We heard from people of a wide range of ages. Most survey respondents were aged between 25-44 years of age.

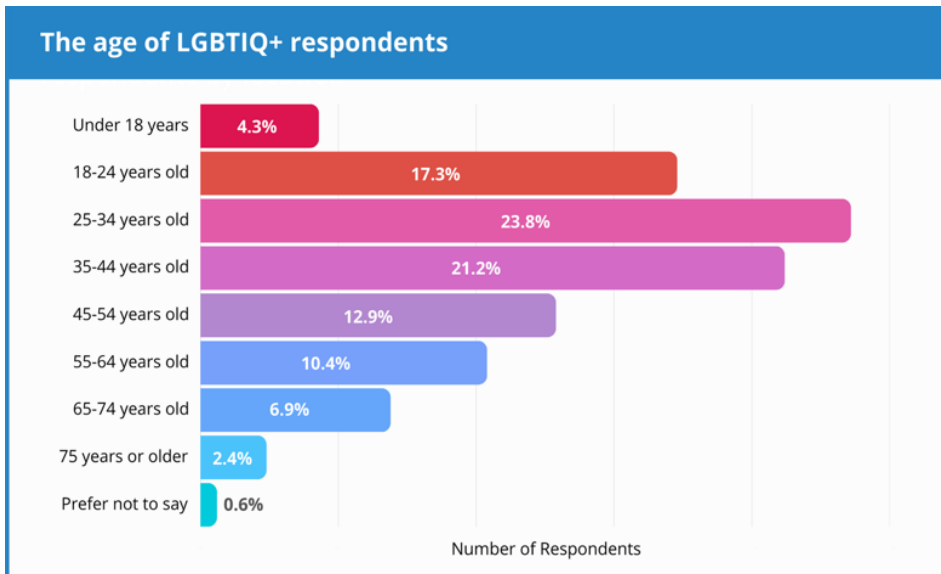


Figure F: Age range of LGBTIQ+ survey respondents.

First Nations identification

Of the survey participants, 147 were Aboriginal, 13 were both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and 1 was Torres Strait Islander (totalling 161 overall). This means that about 3% of survey participants are First Nations. We recognise that this is an underrepresentation as 3.8% of Australians are First Nations according to the 2021 Census.⁵⁹

Cultural diversity

Of the LGBTIQ+ survey participants 671 indicated that they grew up hearing a language other than English in their home, or around 12.5% of the sample. The most common languages heard were Italian, Greek and French.

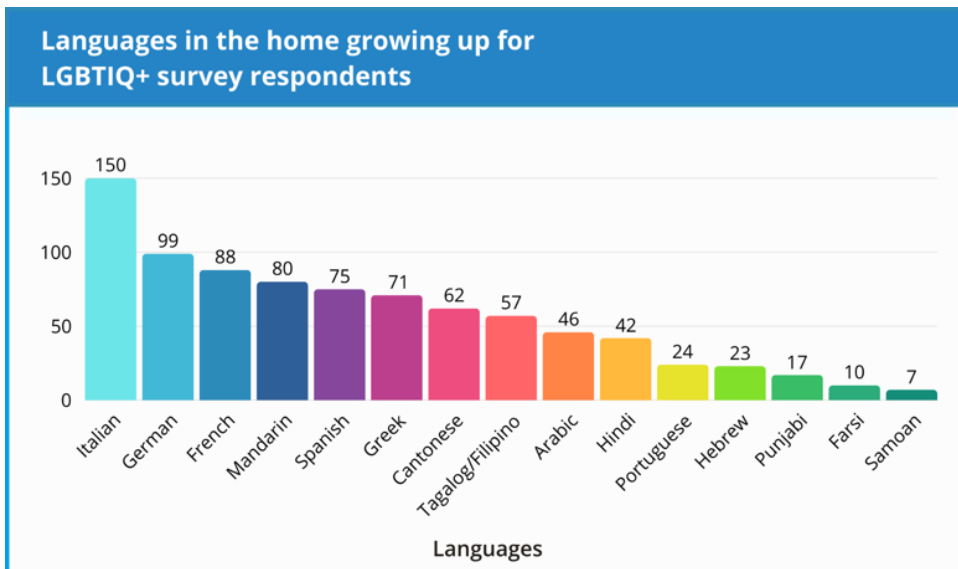


Figure G: The languages heard by LGBTIQ+ survey respondents who nominated that they grew up hearing a language other than English at home. More than one option could be chosen.

⁵⁹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 'Profile of First Nations people'. (Website, 2 July 2024) <<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/profile-of-indigenous-australians?embed=true>>.