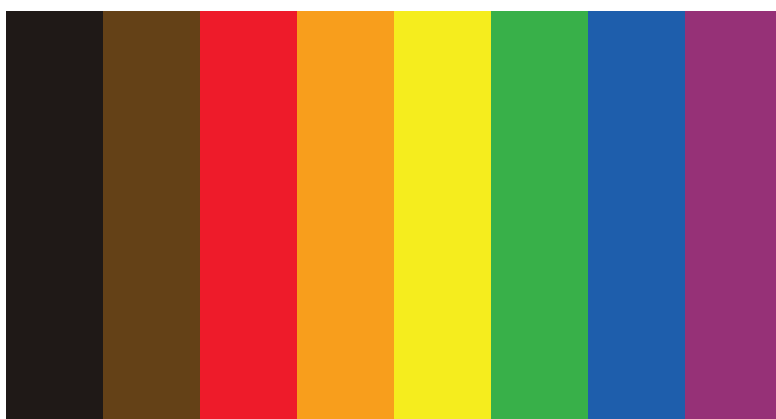




FAQS RAINBOW TICK



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1. ORGANISATIONAL QUESTIONS

What is the Rainbow Tick?

The Rainbow Tick (RT) is a national accreditation to assist organisations in delivering Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex (LGBTI) inclusive service. It is a comprehensive process which includes all aspects of an organisation such as culture, policies, training programs, marketing, consultation, and access/intake procedures. Please note the RT uses the acronym "LGBTI", for the definition of this acronym refer to 'Definitions' section of this document.

Why are we undertaking the Rainbow Tick?

Carers Victoria acknowledges that due to various contributing factors LGBTIQ+ communities have unique needs, and we strive to be able to meet these needs as an organisation. We have a responsibility to provide a high quality of care that goes beyond acceptance and moves towards celebration. Carers Victoria is committed to LGBTIQ+ inclusion and has been working towards the RT since 2012.

Carers Victoria is committed to achieving the RT for the following reasons:

The RT accreditation will ensure we are able to provide an inclusive service and acts as evidence that our service is equipped and capable of meeting the needs of LGBTIQ+ carers and carers of LGBTIQ+ people.

The RT ensures cultural safety and risk mitigation for carers, staff and the organisation. The RT is a highly visible assurance to community that they will receive genuinely inclusive and culturally safe services.

Carers Victoria strives to be an employer of choice, and the RT will ensure our workplace is culturally safe for LGBTIQ+ staff members and will attract and retain a skilled work force.

The RT aligns with the Victorian Government Human Services Standards¹ and Commonwealth Diversity Plan and the Aged Carer Quality Standards and Aged Care Charter of Rights.

The RT will embed inclusive practice in our organisation, taking the work load off dedicated individuals. It will enable Carers Victoria to implement processes and procedures that ensure all aspects of the organisation contribute to an inclusive culture.

The RT will provide a competitive advantage above other organisations when applying for tenders and grants.

This project will enable Carers Victoria to better partner with stakeholders and service providers to increase carer awareness, identification and referral, and ultimately provide a better quality service to carers as well as attract more LGBTIQ+ carers.

1. www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/populations/lgbti-health/rainbow-equality/principles-and-standards

Why are we spending money on the Rainbow Tick when the organisation will be losing funding?

Achieving the RT accreditation has been an organisational priority for some time and was only recently actioned due to changes in senior personnel and organisational strategic planning. Despite being in a period of transition Carers Victoria is operating on a business as usual framework. The RT will also work to our advantage when applying for tenders.

What do we do to support LGBTIQ+ carers?

Support available specific to LGBTIQ+ carers includes:

- LGBTIQ+ carer support group in collaboration with City of Melbourne and Queerspace
- Opportunities to make connections with other LGBTIQ+ carers through social events such as movie screenings
- Counsellors that specialise in working with LGBTIQ+ identifying clients
- Specific resources for LGBTIQ+ carers such as infographics and flyers
- One off education sessions for LGBTIQ+ identifying carers in areas such as mental health, support for self-advocacy and facilitator training

Engagement in broader community work:

- Presented at the 3rd National LGBT&I Ageing & Aged Care Conference
- Sponsoring Melbourne Queer Film Festival
- Supporting Pride March and Carnival as part of Midsumma Festival
- Celebrating days of significance for the community such as International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia
- Supporting the “yes” vote during the marriage equality survey
- Creating an eLearning module on young LGBTIQ+ carers for organisations to use
- Creating a Carers Handbook with Living Positive Victoria with information and resources for older people living with HIV (PLHIV) and their care team (including carers, care workers, health professionals and family and friends)
- Representing LGBTIQ+ carers interests at government forums such as the National Ageing and Aged Care Roundtable which was convened to review the progress of the National LGBTIQ+ Ageing and Aged Care Strategy
- Participation in the National LGBTI Carers Network.

Research:

- Carers of LGBTQIA+ people with mental illness (2017)
- An Extra Degree of Difficulty: Older LGBTI carers (2015)

Advocacy:

- After campaigning to all parties on behalf of carers interests in the lead up to the 2017 Victorian election, the Andrews Government committed to \$4 million for carer support groups, focused on carers in regional areas, and under-recognised groups such as young carers and LGBTIQ+ carers
- Ongoing work with LGBTIQ+ organisations to represent carers needs, such as Val's Cafe, Switchboard, Living Positive Victoria, Minus 18 and National LGBTI Health Alliance.

Organisational commitment:

- Organisational commitment to developing LGBTIQ+ inclusive and culturally safe services through the RT program, which has support from the Senior Leadership Team and is now incorporated into strategic imperatives
- Diversity Committee including LGBTIQ+ sub group
- A staff Pride Network, through which we strive to be an employer of choice for the LGBTIQ+ community.

What legislation covers LGBTI inclusion? *(NB: government uses the acronym LGBTI)*

Equal opportunity is a requirement under both Victorian and Commonwealth legislation. LGBTI discrimination is covered under the following Commonwealth legislation:

- the Fair Work Act 2009
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (the 2013 Amendment to include Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status)
- the Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- the Age Discrimination Act 2004
- LGBTI discrimination is covered under the following Victorian legislation:
- The *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* - prohibits discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, and race
- The *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic) and the *Same-Sex Relationships (Equal Treatment in Commonwealth Laws) — General Law Reform Act 2008* - require that same-sex couples and families are treated equally for the purposes of federal laws
- The *Public Administration Act 2004* (Vic) outlines the values, employment principles and standards that apply to public officials and all public sector employers. Under this Act, the Victorian Public Sector Commissioner must promote the public sector values and principles and issue standards concerning the application of the principles.

2. DEFINITIONS

What is the difference between LGBTI and LGBTIQA+?

LGBTI stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and/or intersex. It is a term used by government and by the Rainbow Tick accreditation. It is more commonly used in services that provide aged care support, as the word 'queer' can be offensive for older generations.

LGBTIQA+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer, questioning, asexual and plus. It is a more comprehensive and inclusive term. It has a broader scope as it includes more identities as part of the acronym. The staff body voted on what term to use and decided on LGBTIQA+ (66% of staff voted in favour of the extended acronym).

Please refer to the Carers Victoria glossary for definitions of each of these terms.

What does the + (plus) mean?

Other diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

There are many different terms which are used by LGBTIQA+ communities to describe their identities and the 'plus' covers any terms not included in L, G, B, T, Q, and A. Examples of these include;

Agender: A term that can literally be translated as 'without gender'. It can be seen either as a non-binary gender identity or a statement of not having a gender identity.

Gender fluid: A person whose gender is not fixed.

Genderqueer: A person whose gender identity is not limited to or by the binaries of male or female. Can be used as an umbrella term.

Non-binary: People who are non-binary may have sex characteristics that do not fit a binary model of male or female or may express their gender in ways that do not match the dominant social expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth.

Omnisexual/Polysexual: Terms used to describe people who have romantic, sexual or affectional desire for people of all/multiple genders and sexes.

Pansexual: A term used to describe someone who is sexually and emotionally attracted to other people regardless of their sex, gender or gender identity.

Please note: The plus does not include disorders. Associating the LGBTIQA+ communities with paedophilia, bestiality and incest is inappropriate.

What is the difference between sexuality, gender identity and biological sex?

Sexuality: Describes emotional, romantic and/or sexual attractions towards others, often describing the gender of people with whom someone builds relationships.

Gender Identity: Describes someone's own understanding of who they are (e.g. woman, man, no gender etc.), as distinct from their physical characteristics.

Biological sex: the physical sex characteristics you're born with and develop.

Please note: The “LGBA” in “LGBTIQ+” refers to sexuality. The “T” in “LGBTIQ+” describes gender identity. The “I” refers to biological sex. Intersex is not considered a sexuality or gender identity; intersex people have different sex characteristics and therefore intersex is part of biological sex. The Q and + are umbrella terms referencing both gender and sexuality.

3. CULTURE CHANGE

What can I say when a staff member, carer or someone else uses inappropriate language?

Please refer to this document on inclusive language written by the Diversity Council of Australia www.dca.org.au/sites/default/files/dca_wordsatwork_overall_guide.pdf

Calling in is a strategy used to bring awareness to non-inclusive language without using judgement or shame.

The calling in framework acknowledges that we all make mistakes and notes that society has shaped us to assume some things are ‘normal’. Using inclusive language requires us to ‘unlearn’ certain behaviours and habits that have been ingrained throughout our lives. This requires practice. The most important element of calling in culture is avoiding shaming someone for lack of knowledge or for a mistake.

It is important to note that *calling in* culture is not about accepting non-inclusive language and practices. It is unacceptable to use non-inclusive language knowingly and with mal intent. The calling in framework is useful for us to self-reflect on our language.

We all need to confront our non-inclusive habits and work through the parts of our practice which can be improved. We should support each other in a process of learning and keep each other accountable in a supportive way.

It is important that the responsibility to have these conversations doesn’t constantly fall on those who are impacted by non-inclusive language. One of the best ways to support the LGBTIQ+ community is by being a strong ally who helps to have these conversations with others.

What can I say if someone wants to get involved or wants more information?

For staff: Carers Victoria encourages you to join the Carers Victoria Pride Network. A confidential fortnightly email of LGBTIQ+ news and resources. You can do this by emailing: pride.network@carersvictoria.org.au

For carers: Carers Victoria is hosting multiple carer consultations, visit our website for more information www.carersvic.com.au/lgbtiqaconsults. Otherwise you can contact our Rainbow Tick Project Officer by emailing pride.network@carersvictoria.org.au

What to say if a carer comes out or tells you personal information about their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status?

Avoid exclamations of shock or surprise, but do not ignore the comment. Listen to them and have a conversation about it. After you have finished the conversation ask two important questions:

1. **"Do you want me to keep this information between us or is it ok for me to note this on your client record? It is important that you feel confident that:"**
 - we are asking these questions so we can improve the services we provide you
 - we ask these questions to collect overall statistical information – not to pinpoint individuals
 - your information is safe – there are strict laws to make sure your information is stored safely and responsibly
 - your answers are confidential – and we'll always tell you how they're going to be used before we ask.

In the past, we've used this information to establish a support group for LGBTIQ+ carers. We also have specific services for LGBTIQ+ communities, such as counsellors we can refer you to.

2. **"Do you need additional support? You can contact Qlife – 1800 184 527. Qlife provides phone counselling and referrals for LGBTIQ+ friendly services."**

Read this document for further information about people coming out [www.qlife.org.au/uploads/4-Coming-Out-and-Disclosure.pdf](http://www qlife.org.au/uploads/4-Coming-Out-and-Disclosure.pdf)

4. HOW TO RESPOND TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

We treat everyone the same, so why do we need to do this?

'Treating everybody the same' usually means that all people are treated as heterosexual, cisgender or non-intersex and this can be alienating for LGBTIQ+ people. LGBTIQ+ people have different life experiences and health needs from their heterosexual, cisgender and non-intersex peers.

It is true that we need to treat everyone with respect, and for the LGBTIQ+ communities they need more than being treated 'like everyone else' because of the discrimination they face. There may be things we are doing that we do not realise are disrespectful. For example assuming carers sexual orientation, gender and/or intersex status. We are not all the same, we need to treat people as individuals. We may already treat everyone with a level respect, but we need to deliver quality services that respond to individuality to be truly respectful.

Sexuality is none of our business, why is it important?

While sexual orientation is a personal thing, it is on display in ways that we might take for granted. For example, we talk about our families, bring our partners to events, wear wedding rings, and talk about our weekends.

These are all displays of sexual orientation. While they may not be a cause for concern for heterosexual people (who feel accepted and “normal” when they talk about such things), this may be very stressful for non-heterosexual people, who are concerned about how their sexual orientation will be perceived by their peers. Non-heterosexual people may seek to avoid revealing these kinds of details about themselves in fear of negative consequences.

The reason we encourage open and respectful attitudes towards sexual orientation is to encourage everyone to bring their whole selves to our service, so that no one has to hide who they really are, or be fearful of negative consequences if they do reveal their whole selves.

Why is it relevant to explore LGBTIQ+ issues in a workplace?

The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) necessitates the provision of equal opportunity to all employees regardless of age, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexual orientation. Furthermore, the Australian Human Rights Commission can now investigate and conciliate complaints of alleged discrimination and human rights violation under federal law. The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission can also conciliate complaints of alleged discrimination and human rights violation under Victorian Law.

This means that cases of discrimination, harassment and victimisation must be addressed as a matter of law. Employers can be held responsible for the actions of their employees in **unless** they can show that they have taken all reasonable steps to prevent the discrimination from occurring (vicarious liability). Workplaces must protect themselves from legal action by creating a safe and respectful environment to all staff and volunteers.

The Act specifically covers both direct and indirect discrimination against LGBTI employees and in doing so introduces new responsibilities for employers to prevent and respond to discrimination.

Examples of both direct and indirect discrimination:

Direct: Refusal of promotion based on one’s orientation, gender identity or intersex status.

Indirect: An employer’s family or benefits policies indirectly discriminating against an employee who has a same sex partner or the inability to change the sex on an employee’s record.

Is this political correctness gone mad?

This project is not about being politically correct; it is about providing a quality service for everyone. It is also about upholding the law as stated above. LGBTIQ+ people have the right to access services like non-LGBTIQ+ people. This project is about ensuring that everyone is welcome at Carers Victoria and that there are no barriers to accessing our services. The way we work has had to change over time to keep pace with many social, economic and technical shifts. This is another example of needing to change to strengthen Carers Victoria’s values and behaviours.

Why the focus on LGBTIQ+ communities rather than other marginalised communities?

Carers Victoria is currently undergoing the process for a Reconciliation Action Plan and a Disability Action Plan. The RT is an involved process that requires many actions on broader inclusivity to meet the standards. Unfortunately, there are currently no other “diversity standards”. However some RT standards lend themselves to be extended to include other communities, and the project will ensure an intersectional lens is applied.

NB: Intersectionality understands that identity, a person’s sense of ‘who they are’ is not singular but rather an effect of multiple, intersecting social categories. E.g. Many LGBTIQ+ people may also identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, as having a specific religion, and/or having a disability.

Why does one group of people receive preferential treatment?

Diversity and inclusion initiatives are not about raising one group over another, they are about bringing everyone up to a level playing field.

LGBTIQ+ people do not enjoy many of the same privileges that heterosexual, cis gender and/or non-intersex people may enjoy. For example, they may not feel comfortable talking openly about their partner or family for fear of discrimination or harassment.

Efforts to support LGBTIQ+ people are not about giving them an advantage over others, but rather about providing equal opportunity. It’s about ensuring that everyone can come to work every day and feel safe, comfortable and able to perform to the best of their ability and about providing LGBTIQ+ carers with an inclusive and quality service.

Lots of people I’ve spoken to don’t think there is a problem, why do we have to worry about this?

It is important to remember that everyone’s personal experience is different, and we may not hear from people who do not feel accepted.

It is good to recognise and acknowledge the personal lens that we may be looking through. Our perception of how things are will be influenced by our own experiences and may not be the most accurate representation of someone else’s reality.

LGBTIQ+ people have varying degrees of self-comfort with being “out”. A lack of complaints is not an indication of inclusivity, especially for a population such as LGBTIQ+ people who may remain silent out of fear, or because they have no confidence in an organisation’s ability to deal with discriminating behaviour if it occurs. Furthermore, reporting discriminatory behaviour would mean “outing yourself” to another person and some LGBTIQ+ people may wish to avoid this.

This does not align with my personal beliefs, why do I have to partake in the RT project?

As a Carers Victoria employee you are obliged to abide by the organisation's values. At Carers Victoria we strive to be an LGBTIQ+ inclusive service and all staff are required to work within an inclusive framework.

Obviously, you hold your own personal beliefs. However, Carers Victoria requires you to abide by the commonwealth and state discrimination laws and to uphold the organisations policies. It is unlawful to discriminate against colleagues and/or carers, whether that be intentional or unintentional.

Workplace inclusion is about moderating workplace behaviour and professional interactions between employees and towards clients. As an employer, Carers Victoria have a duty of care to provide a work environment in which all employees can thrive and provide a service which is inclusive of everyone.

How can I and Carers Victoria ensure that our actions aren't tokenistic but rather genuinely include people from LGBTIQ+ communities?

The RT is comprehensive and requires an organisational commitment. It has been designed so that organisations must prove they are truly inclusive, otherwise they will not receive the accreditation. Ongoing accreditation is required to ensure we continue to meet this high standard of inclusivity. We are also holding LGBTIQ+ carer consultations to ensure we actively include LGBTIQ+ communities in our decision making. We are providing ongoing staff support and training to ensure that our staff are sincerely inclusive.

Why do we have the all gender toilet?

Carers Victoria takes safety and privacy in toilets seriously. This is the reason we have an all gender toilet, a female toilet and an accessible toilet.

The all gender toilet is a toilet anyone can use and is specifically inclusive of trans and gender diverse people. Trans is an umbrella term that describes a wide range of people whose inner sense of gender is different to the sex assigned to them at birth and/or society's expectations. Some trans and gender diverse people do not feel safe in the women's or men's toilet because their gender expression can be different from society's expectations.

It's important to note that many trans people's gender expression does fit into society's expectations and they would use the female toilet if they were a trans woman, and the male toilet if they were a trans man.

Carers Victoria welcomes trans and gender diverse people to use the toilet that they feel most comfortable with.

Trans people may be part of our workplace or be using our services, and they need to be able to use the toilet in safety. The all gender toilet is one way of working towards all people feeling safe in our building.



References

The definitions in this document have come from Waling, A., Lim, G., Dhalla, S., Lyons, A., & Bourne, A. (2019). Understanding LGBTI+ Lives in Crisis. Bundoora, VIC & Canberra, ACT: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University & Lifeline Australia. Monograph 112.

The FAQ answers have been based on the Victorian Government Education and Training LGBTI Inclusive Workplaces Guide www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/Documents/LGBTI-Inclusive-Workplaces-Guide.pdf

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