



# LGBTIQ + Plan

2017-2020

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Deakin University aims to be a leading LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer plus) inclusive educator and employer in the higher education sector by adopting best practice diversity and inclusion strategies for LGBTIQ+ students and staff.

Deakin sees the diversity of its staff and students as a great strength and a much valued asset for our learning community. We support diversity in the higher education sector and we recognise the rights of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex students and employees to learn, live and work, free of prejudice and discrimination, with all the essential freedoms enjoyed by other members of our university community and the broader population.

“Learning and academic achievement will flourish when all members of our community have their dignity and equality recognised.” Prof Jane den Hollander, AO Vice-Chancellor.

### PURPOSE

The LGBTIQ+ Plan provides information on the need for targeted strategies to support the inclusion and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ members of the University community and outlines the context at Deakin and actions to address identified needs.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Plan is framed around goals for people, community and the organisation, to realise individual, group and systemic change.

The LGBTIQ+ Plan has four core Guiding Principles that inform decision making and actions.

#### 1. **Leadership**

University leaders (Executive, managers and supervisors) demonstrate an active commitment to LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

#### 2. **Inclusive Policies and Practice**

Deakin’s practices, policies and procedures include and support LGBTIQ+ members of the University, including through the acknowledgement of intersex status and diverse gender identities.

#### 3. **Inclusive teaching, language and curriculum**

Academic research is harnessed to inform inclusive curriculum, including LGBTIQ+ inclusive language and perspectives in University teaching, policies and practices.

#### 4. **Culture and visibility of LGBTIQ+ members of the University**

Students and staff experience a University culture which treats LGBTIQ+ individuals with respect and dignity and promotes an awareness and understanding of issues affecting people of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities.

## BACKGROUND

### Why do we need LGBTIQ+ inclusion strategies?

LGBTIQ+ members of the community often face discrimination, harassment and bullying in many aspects of everyday life. Research has consistently identified higher than average rates of violence, harassment and bullying towards LGBTIQ+ people in Australia, with the situation even more acute for trans and gender diverse people.<sup>1</sup> In relation to university students, the Australian Human Rights Commission has reported in [Change The Course: National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities \(2017\)](#) that 16.2 per cent of trans and gender diverse university students who responded to their survey experienced sexual assault in 2015 and/or 2016.

Research suggests that the rate of suicide for LGBTIQ+ people is 3.5 to 14 times higher than the general population. LGBTIQ+ people are also at a higher risk for a range of mental health diagnoses and significantly more likely to be diagnosed with depression or anxiety. The Australian Human Rights Commission has reported that experiences of interpersonal and institutional discrimination are amongst the key factors that contribute to this risk profile.<sup>2</sup>

The *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic) and the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) provide protection from unlawful discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex/intersex status in various areas of public life, including employment, education, accommodation and the provision of goods and services.

An inclusive environment affords all staff and students a sense of belonging and an equal chance of success whether it be through study or work.

Additionally, by removing both cultural and systemic barriers the benefits of diversity can be realised for the organisation. There is much evidence that having diverse talent in a workforce improves productivity and the retention and engagement of staff. The Diversity Council of Australia (DCA) also emphasises the importance of brand and reputation as major aspects of the business case for LGBTIQ+ inclusion. Being LGBTIQ+ inclusive demonstrates an organisation's commitment to leading edge diversity and inclusion practice. Students and newer members of the workforce are increasingly discerning about the diversity track record of potential places to study or work.<sup>3</sup>

### The Deakin context

An Ally Program was established at Deakin in 2012 as a support and advocacy network for LGBTIQ+ students and staff and others wanting to contribute and demonstrate support. The Program was facilitated by Equity and Diversity, and activities included awareness-raising and participation in events such as the Pride March and IDAHOBIT Day (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia). More recently, the Ally Program has been replaced by the LGBTIQ+ Community. An LGBTIQ+ Community Working Group has also been established. More details about this Working Group are outlined below.

Deakin achieved Bronze Employer status for the third consecutive year in 2018 in the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) for LGBTI inclusion. AWEI is administered by Pride in Diversity, a national non-profit organisation which works with employers to improve LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the workplace.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Australian Human Rights Commission, *Resilient Individuals: Sexual Orientation Gender Identity & Intersex Rights: National Consultation Report*, 2015. Available: <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sexual-orientation-sex-gender-identity/publications/resilient-individuals-sexual> [accessed 13 October 2017]

<sup>2</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission, *Resilient Individuals: Sexual Orientation Gender Identity & Intersex Rights: National Consultation Report*, 2015, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> 'LGBT Diversity: Show me the business case', Out Now Global LGBT 2020 Study, 2015. 'Business Case: LGBTIQ+', Diversity Council Australia. <https://www.dca.org.au/topics/lgbtiq/business-case-lgbtiq>

Despite this commitment, it is acknowledged that further improvements need to be made, particularly in relation to the inclusion of people of diverse sexes and genders. With aspirations to become a gold tier member of AWEI we must strengthen our resolve and look to target measures that specifically address the inequities that persist for LGBTIQ+ staff and students.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Equity and Diversity**

Equity and Diversity's mission is to foster a diverse, accessible and inclusive University community to strengthen performance in teaching, research and community partnership and enrich the Deakin experience for the benefit of all.

Equity and Diversity facilitates and advocates for LGBTIQ+ inclusion within the University through:

- developing and ensuring the effective and timely implementation of this LGBTIQ+ Plan in partnership with others across the University
- providing strategic direction via the development of plans and reports, including communication of the LGBTIQ+ Action Plan and progress
- providing administrative support to the LGBTIQ+ Community Working Group
- taking a primary role in the delivery of LGBTIQ+ events
- internal and external reporting, including coordinating the preparation of the Australian Workplace Equity Index (AWEI) accreditation submission and the SAGE Athena SWAN pilot program application
- coordination of the delivery of training and development of training content in LGBTIQ+ inclusion
- collaboration with the Human Resources Division (HRD) on relevant data collection and analysis, the development and amendment of policies and procedures, and reporting.

### **Deakin LGBTIQ+ Community Working Group**

The Deakin LGBTIQ+ Community Working Group is a network of staff and students who align themselves with, advocate on behalf of, and celebrate a diversity of bodies, identities and individuals within the LGBTIQ+ umbrella term. The (informal) role of the Working Group, in collaboration with Equity and Diversity, is to:

- actively plan, promote and participate in community events and communications that celebrate, advocate for and promote LGBTIQ+ inclusion
- contribute to strategic direction through consultation on the development of plans and reports
- contribute to the enhancement or development of policies and procedures for inclusive clauses, language and benefits through consultation
- contribute to internal and external reporting, in particular the AWEI accreditation
- contribute to communication of the Deakin LGBTIQ+ strategy through events, coordination of LGBTIQ+ advocates and an online presence
- harness Deakin research to inform improved practices at Deakin and other research bodies.

## **Human Resources Division**

The Human Resources Division (HRD) provides a comprehensive range of policies, procedures, tailored employment services and solutions to contribute to the positive experience for staff working at the University.

The role of HRD in LGBTIQ+ inclusion is to:

- contribute to the development of strategies to achieve, maintain and monitor LGBTIQ+ inclusion at Deakin.
- provide links to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to support LGBTIQ+ staff.
- provide support to the Gender Equity team in relation to the preparation of the AWEI accreditation submission.

## **Faculties and Portfolios**

The role of Faculties and Portfolios in relation to LGBTIQ+ inclusion is to:

- demonstrate visible leadership in driving LGBTIQ+ inclusion
- actively communicate with and provide support to LGBTIQ+ staff and students, and implement LGBTIQ+ inclusion strategies in accordance with University policies, procedures and practices, and with the guidance of HRD and Equity and Diversity.

## **Division of Student Life**

The Division of Student Life (DSL) provides a range of services for students, including counselling and health services. These cater for LGBTIQ+ students and the Health Service is undertaking Rainbow Tick Accreditation to ensure that their services are relevant to and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ students.

DSL supports Equity and Diversity's LGBTIQ+ inclusion events through engagement with the student body.

## **Deakin University Student Association**

The Deakin University Student Association (DUSA) provides advocacy and a range of services for students, including support to the LGBTIQ+ student community. DUSA's Queer Officer acts as a point of contact for resources and advocacy for LGBTIQ+ students and each campus has an LGBTIQ+ Pride club and/or society. Equity and Diversity regularly liaises with these clubs. DUSA is also an active participant in the Deakin LGBTIQ+ Community Working Group.

The LGBTIQ+ Plan will be led by the Chief Operating Officer through Equity and Diversity to progress the initiatives in the attached Action Plan.

Kean Selway

**Chief Operating Officer**

December 2017

## Deakin University LGBTIQ+ Action Plan

Guiding Principle	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
<b>1. Leadership</b> University leaders (Executive, managers and supervisors) demonstrate an active commitment to LGBTIQ+ inclusion.	<b>1.1</b> Request the VC provides email communications to all staff and students affirming that Deakin values diversity and supports LGBTIQ+ inclusion.	VC, Equity and Diversity	Ongoing
	<b>1.2</b> Senior Management group to undertake LGBTIQ+ inclusion training	Executive, Equity and Diversity	2018
	<b>1.3</b> Enlist support of Executive champions and other senior staff to participate in and promote key LGBTIQ+ awareness-raising events and activities.	Equity and Diversity	Ongoing
<b>2. Inclusive Policies and Practice</b> Deakin's practices, policies and procedures include and support LGBTIQ+ members of the University, including through the acknowledgement of intersex status and diverse gender identities.	<b>2.1</b> Review and develop policies to ensure LGBTIQ+ inclusiveness including a gender transitioning/transgender policy and include a transitioning guide for staff and students.	Equity and Diversity	2017 – 2018
	<b>2.2</b> Conduct a review on the inclusiveness of the language used in all University communications drawing on the research expertise within the University.	Equity and Diversity Marketing	2018
	<b>2.3</b> Complete the annual AWEI submission, working towards an increase from bronze to silver accreditation.	Equity and Diversity	Annually
	<b>2.4</b> Obtain Deakin LGBTIQ+ diversity data to inform practice and program development for both staff and student cohorts.	Equity and Diversity HRD DSL	2018

Guiding Principle	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
	<b>2.5</b> Undertake an analysis of complaints of discrimination and sexual harassment by LGBTIQ+ students and staff, including their experience of the complaints process.	Equity and Diversity	2017 – 2018
	<b>2.6</b> Investigate the provision of appropriate LGBTIQ + spaces and gender neutral toilets on each campus.	Equity and Diversity Facilities DUSA	2017 - 2018
	<b>2.7</b> Provide LGBTIQ+ training (face-to-face and online) for managers and supervisors, key student facing frontline staff, HDCOs and Child Safe Advisors, utilising <i>Pride in Diversity</i> trained facilitators and Deakin research expertise.	Equity and Diversity DSL	Implementation throughout 2018
	<b>2.8</b> Collaborate with key stakeholders to deliver orientation and welcome packs that include LGBTIQ+ resources.	Equity and Diversity DSL	2017-2020
	<b>2.9</b> Liaise with Marketing and student news channels to include LGBTIQ+ student stories to support LGBTIQ+ inclusion.	Equity and Diversity Marketing DSL	2017-2020
<b>3. Inclusive teaching, language and curriculum</b> Academic research is harnessed to inform inclusive curriculum, including LGBTIQ+ inclusive language and perspectives in University teaching, policies and practices.	<b>3.1</b> Develop appropriate curriculum informed by LGBTIQ+ research based knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equity and Diversity</li> <li>Deakin Research</li> <li>Learning and Teaching</li> </ul>	2017 – 2018
	<b>3.2</b> Provide an LGBTIQ+ inclusive language guide as a reference to inform policies and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DVC (E)</li> <li>Equity and Diversity</li> <li>Learning and Teaching</li> </ul>	2018

Guiding Principle	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
<p><b>4. Culture and visibility of LGBTIQ+ members of the University</b></p> <p>Students and staff experience a University culture which treats LGBTIQ+ individuals with respect and dignity and promotes an awareness and understanding of issues affecting people of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities.</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Support the LGBTIQ+ Community Working Group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equity and Diversity</li> <li>• LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee</li> </ul>	<p>2017 – 2020</p>
	<p><b>4.2</b> Provide accessible information about the Deakin LGBTIQ+ Community and other LGBTIQ+ resources and contact information to students and staff, including in student orientation and staff induction processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equity and Diversity</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p><b>4.3</b> Promote and deliver LGBTIQ+ events and significant days on all Deakin campuses,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equity and Diversity</li> <li>• DSL</li> <li>• DUSA</li> <li>• Deakin LGBTIQ+ Community</li> </ul>	<p>2017 - 2020</p>
	<p><b>4.4</b> External Advocacy – sponsoring and working in collaboration with LGBTIQ+ organisations in order to promote Deakin support to LGBTIQ+ staff and students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equity and Diversity</li> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• External Stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p>2018-2020</p>

