

Face the Facts:

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people

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1. 11 in 100 Australians are of diverse sexual orientation, sex or gender identity.
Description: graphic shows 100 figures arranged in a love heart shape, 11 are shaded in the colours of the rainbow, indicating the percentage of Australians who are of diverse sexual orientation, sex or gender identity.
2. The number of same-sex couples has more than tripled between 1996 and 2011.
Description: graphic shows a graph with two columns, one representing 1996 and the other 2011. In the 1996 column there is one same sex couple. In the 2011 column there are three same sex couples
3. In 2011, there were 6,300 children living in same-sex couple families. 9 in 10 are in female same-sex couple families. 
Description: graphic shows ratio of one house to nine houses. The graphic of one house is accompanied by a same-sex couple family with two fathers and the graphic of nine houses is accompanied by a same-sex couple family with two mothers.
4. 1.7% of children born in Australia are estimated to be intersex. 
Description: text is accompanied by a graphic that combines the symbols for male and female
5. Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are three times more likely to experience depression compared to the broader population. 
Description: text is accompanied by a graphic depicting the silhouette of a person sitting with their head in their hands.
6. Eighty per cent of homophobic bullying occurs at school.
Description: text is accompanied by a graphic of two older boys physically intimidating a younger boy.
7. Percentage of LGBTI who people hide their sexuality or gender identity at certain events:
Description: graphic shows bar graph with three columns, representing accessing services, at social and community events and at work. The percentage of LGBTI who people hide their sexuality or gender identity at certain events is as follows: accessing services (34 per cent), at social and community events(42 per cent) and at work (39 per cent).  
8. Often LGBTI young people report experiencing different types of abuse. 6 in 10 have experienced verbal homophobic abuse, 2 in 10 have experienced physical abuse and 1 in 10 have experienced other types of homophobia.
Description: graphic shows three rows of ten people with figures shaded to represent the proportion of LGBTI young people who have experienced verbal, physical and other types of abuse. 
9. Transgender males and females experience significantly higher rates of non-physical and physical abuse compared with lesbians and gay men.
Description: graphic depicts a bar graph showing the percentages of gay and transgender people who experienced verbal abuse in 2012. Gay men (26%), gay women (23%), trans men (47%), trans women (37%). 


# Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people

Equality and freedom from discrimination are fundamental human rights that belong to all people, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or because they are intersex.

On 1 August 2013, the [Sex Discrimination Act 1984](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/legal/legislation#sda) was amended to make discrimination on the basis of a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status against the law.

Despite this important step forward, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people in Australia still experience discrimination, harassment and hostility in many parts of everyday life; in public, at work and study, accessing health and other services and securing proper recognition of their sex in official documents.

## About LGBTI people

* Australians of diverse sexual orientation, sex or gender identity may account for up to 11 per cent of the Australian population.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* [Same-sex couples make up about 1 per cent of all couples in Australia. In 2011, the reported number of same-sex couples in Australia was around 33,700, which included 17,600 male same-sex couples and 16,100 female same-sex couples.[[2]](#footnote-2)](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/gender-equality-blueprint-2010#fn2) The reported number of same-sex couples has more than tripled between 1996 and 2011.[[3]](#footnote-3)
* In 2011, there were around 6,300 children living in same-sex couple families, up from 3,400 in 2001. Most of these children (89 per cent) are in female same-sex couple families.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* Intersex people are people born with physical, hormonal or genetic features that are neither wholly female nor wholly male, or a combination of female and male, or neither female nor male.[[5]](#footnote-5) As with the general population, people with intersex variations have a broad range of gender identities and sexual orientations.
* There are no firm figures for Australia’s intersex population. Estimates range from one in 2,000 births to four per cent of the population however the Organisation Intersex International Australia (OII Australia) recommends a mid-range figure of 1.7 per cent of all births.[[6]](#footnote-6)

## Key issues for LGBTI people

* A large number of LGBTI people hide their sexuality or gender identity when accessing services (34 per cent), at social and community events (42 per cent) and at work (39 per cent).[[7]](#footnote-7) Young people aged 16 to 24 years are most likely to hide their sexuality or gender identity.[[8]](#footnote-8)
* LGBTI young people report experiencing verbal homophobic abuse (61 per cent), physical homophobic abuse (18 per cent) and other types of homophobia (9 per cent), including cyberbullying, graffiti, social exclusion and humiliation.[[9]](#footnote-9)
* 80 per cent of homophobic bullying involving LGBTI young people occurs at school and has a profound impact on their well-being and education.[[10]](#footnote-10)
* Transgender males and females experience significantly higher rates of non-physical and physical abuse compared with lesbians and gay men.[[11]](#footnote-11)
* Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are three times more likely to experience depression compared to the broader population.[[12]](#footnote-12)
* Around 61 per cent of same-sex attracted and gender-questioning young people said they experienced verbal abuse because of their sexuality, while 18 per cent reported experiencing physical abuse. Young men (70 per cent) and gender-questioning young people (66 per cent) were more likely than young women (53 per cent) to experience verbal abuse.[[13]](#footnote-13)

## Positive developments

* LGBTI young people at schools where protective policies are in place are more likely to feel safe compared with those in schools without similar policies (75 per cent compared with 45 per cent). They are almost 50 per cent less likely to be physically abused at school, less likely to suffer other forms of homophobic abuse, less likely to self-harm and less likely to attempt suicide.[[14]](#footnote-14)
* People in same-sex couples tend to be more highly educated[[15]](#footnote-15), more likely to work in highly skilled occupations (53 per cent compared with 43 per cent)[[16]](#footnote-16) and more likely to have higher incomes.[[17]](#footnote-17)
* On measures of general health and family cohesion, children aged 5 to 17 years with same-sex attracted parents had significantly better scores when compared to Australian children from all other backgrounds and family contexts. For all other health measures, there were no statistically significant differences.[[18]](#footnote-18)

## Did you know?

* **Almost half** of all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people **hide their sexual orientation or gender identity** in public for fear of violence or discrimination.[[19]](#footnote-19)

## Our role

The Commission can investigate complaints of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status under the [Sex Discrimination Act](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/legal/legislation#sda), which was amended in August 2013.

The amended Act also protects same-sex couples from discrimination under the definition of “marital or relationship status”.

We have conducted a number of major projects in recent years to identify and build community awareness around the human rights issues faced by LGBTI people.

Find out more about [our work](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sexual-orientation-sex-gender-identity) in this area.

## Find out more

* Australian Human Rights Commission, *[Addressing sexual orientation and sex and/or gender identity discrimination: Consultation Report](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/addressing-sexual-orientation-and-sex-andor-gender-identity-discrimination-consultation)* (2011)
* Australian Human Rights Commission, [*Sex Files: the legal recognition of sex in documents and government records*](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sex-files-sex-gender-diversity-project-2008) (2009)
* Australian Human Rights Commission, [*Same-Sex: Same Entitlements*, Report of the National Inquiry into discrimination against people in same-sex relationships in the area of financial and work related entitlements](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/same-sex-same-entitlements) (2007)
* Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, [*Private Lives 2: The second national survey of the health and wellbeing of GLBT Australians*](http://www.glhv.org.au/files/PrivateLives2Report.pdf)(2012)
* Beyond Blue, [*In my shoes: Experiences of discrimination, depression and anxiety among gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex people*](https://www.bspg.com.au/dam/bsg/product?client=BEYONDBLUE&prodid=BL/1013&type=file) (2012).

1. Department of Health, Australian Government, [*National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Ageing and Aged Care Strategy*](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/ageing-and-aged-care/older-people-their-families-and-carers/people-from-diverse-backgrounds/national-lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-and-intersex-lgbti-ageing-and-aged-care-strategy) (2012), p 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics, [*4102.0 - Australian Social Trends, July 2013, Same-Sex Couples*](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features10July+2013) (July 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics, above. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Australian Bureau of Statistics, note 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See the information page [What is Intersex? Defining Intersex](http://oii.org.au/18106/what-is-intersex/) on the [OII Australia](http://oii.org.au/) website for a more detailed explanation of intersex. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [OII Australia](http://oii.org.au/), [On the number of intersex people](https://oii.org.au/16601/intersex-numbers/) information page [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, [*Private Lives 2: The second national survey of the health and wellbeing of GLBT Australians*](http://www.glhv.org.au/files/PrivateLives2Report.pdf) (2012) pp 45-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, above, p 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, [*Writing Themselves in 3: The third national study on the sexual health and wellbeing of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people*](http://www.glhv.org.au/files/wti3_web_sml.pdf) (2010), p 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, above, p 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. For example, while 26 per cent of males and 23 per cent of females reported experiencing verbal abuse within a 12 months period, the percentages jump to 47 per cent and 37 per cent for trans males and trans females respectively. See Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, note 7, p 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Beyond Blue, [*In my shoes: Experiences of discrimination, depression and anxiety among gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex people*](https://www.bspg.com.au/dam/bsg/product?client=BEYONDBLUE&prodid=BL/1013&type=file) (2012), pp 1-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, note 9, p 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. T Jones and Western Australian Equal Opportunity Commission, [*A report about discrimination and bullying on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Western Australian education*](http://www.eoc.wa.gov.au/Libraries/GBTI_project/2012-GBLTI_-_Tiffany_Jones_report.sflb.ashx) (2012), p 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Australian Bureau of Statistics, note 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Australian Bureau of Statistics, note 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Australian Bureau of Statistics, note 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. University of Melbourne, [*Australian Study of Child Health In Same-Sex Families (ACHESS): Interim report*](http://www.achess.org.au) (2013), p 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, note 7, p 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)