

NT Health Inclusion Strategy

Plan of actions 2019 - 2022

*Respecting people with diverse
sexualities and gender identities*



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CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE



*The NT Health Oversight Committee (NTHOC) members (L-R) Jo Norton, Xavier Schobben, Catherine Stoddart, Hugh Heggie and Maggie Jamieson
Not pictured: Sue Korner, Michelle McKay and Nick Good*

NT Health's executive leadership team (*the NT Health Oversight Committee*) is committed to championing the changes needed for NT Health to become an inclusive organisation, and will report annually to consumers and staff on progress against this strategy.

***The NT Health inclusion strategy:
respecting all people with diverse sexualities
and gender identities promotes the health
and wellbeing of sexuality and gender diverse
people, families and communities.***

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The *NT Health inclusion strategy: respecting people with diverse sexualities and gender identities* promotes the health and wellbeing of sexuality and gender diverse people, families and communities. It builds on current initiatives and sets clear aims and actions to improve our services and workplaces to become more aware and inclusive of sexuality and gender diverse people. This strategy contributes to NT Health's purpose of working together to deliver better health for all Territorians, with healthy Territorians engaged and living in healthy communities.

Many people who are sexuality and gender diverse enjoy a healthy and happy life, however international and Australian research reveals inequities in overall health status when compared with the broader population.


Populations marginalised by gender identity and sexuality have for the most part been excluded from health policy and services design, delivery and evaluation. Recent studies show people who are sexuality and gender diverse are at a higher risk of developing mental health conditions, suicidal thoughts, certain cancers, other chronic conditions and sexually transmitted infections. People who are sexuality and gender diverse also experience higher levels of violence, assault and injury. A major underlying cause of poor health outcomes is discrimination and stigma



directed towards sexuality and gender diverse communities and reduced access to quality health care.

These factors contribute to, and interact with, individual, family and community social determinants of health leading to additional challenges or protection in health and wellbeing outcomes.

People who are sexuality and gender diverse make up a significant and important part of the Territory's population.



Through this strategy, NT Health aims to strengthen services and programs, which address risk factors and areas of health need for people who are sexuality and gender diverse. This strategy is also about supporting our employees who are sexuality and gender diverse.

People perform at their best when they feel safe in being themselves at work and given equal opportunities to develop their skills and careers.

NT Health recognises in recent years, community understanding, expectations and laws around the rights and wellbeing of people who are sexuality and gender diverse have changed. These changes have influenced the range of health services available, the quality of service delivery and raised the potential for more inclusive working environments. In 2018, NT Health committed to provide respectful, inclusive and evidence based services and environments for people with Differences of Sex Development (DSD or intersex characteristics) and transgender clients and employees. NT Health will review and build on this work, and continue to collaborate with partners across the health and wellbeing sector to support clients who are sexuality and gender diverse, develop supportive care pathways, with consistency and strategic approaches across the sector.

NT Health inclusion strategy: respecting people with diverse sexualities and gender identities was developed under guidance of an advisory group drawn from NT Health and consumers. It positions NT Health as a leader in supporting professional development and best practice health care for people who are sexuality and gender diverse in the Territory. As an organisation, we recognise the importance of diversity within our workforce and this strategy emphasises a commitment to ensure all our people are heard and valued.

NT Health recognises sexuality and gender diverse communities themselves are fluid and varied in membership, needs and expression. We acknowledge we have not heard from all sectors of the Territory's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and intersex community. As implementation of this strategy takes place we regard it as a 'living' document and remain open to hearing further about how our services and our workplace can improve to support health, build on the strengths of sexuality and gender diverse communities and deliver actions which have real impact.

LANGUAGE

It is important to acknowledge the power and changing nature of language.



NT Health has heard there is a preference for less rigid and more inclusive language to be used in our workplaces and with our clients, their families and communities.

Therefore we have moved from the acronym LGBTQI+ which refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer / questioning, intersex and all other identities to using the term 'sexuality and gender diverse' to **embrace all spectrums of sexuality, sex and gender**. Other terms such as 'the LGBT community', 'sistergirls' or 'brotherboys' can be acceptable in conversation, and listening to the views of communities and individual preferences shows respect and courtesy.



In this document the definitions for these key terms are:

- **Gender:** is part of a person's social and personal identity. It refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual identity and the way a person presents and is recognised within the community. A person's gender refers to outward social markers, including their name, outward appearance, mannerisms and dress. A person's sex and gender may not necessarily be the same. An individual's gender may or may not correspond with their sex assigned at birth, and some people may identify as neither exclusively male nor female (non-binary).
- **Sex:** refers to the chromosomal, gonadal and anatomical characteristics associated with biological sex. Individuals may have a range of circumstances or undergo a variety of treatments that make it difficult to define a true biological sex.
- **Sexuality:** a central feature of being human that is deeply individualised. It includes sexual feelings, thoughts, attractions, preferences and sometimes behaviour.

A further glossary of common terms used by sexuality and gender diverse communities is at the back of this document.

VISION FOR CHANGE

Respecting people with diverse sexualities and gender identities

OUR VISION

NT Health engages with sexuality and gender diverse communities we serve to promote health and build wellbeing. We support a diverse and inclusive workforce who are empowered to be who they are, to deliver the best service possible.

OUR GOALS

1	Safe, high quality and inclusive services for people who are sexuality and gender diverse	
2	Connected care through innovative and sustainable service pathways	
3	A capable, inclusive and diverse workforce	
4	Contemporary and accountable systems, records and processes	
5	Engaged partners leading positive change for sexuality and gender diverse people, families and communities	

SETTINGS

- NT Health service delivery environments
- NT Health corporate and human resource functions
- Working with partners across the health sector and NT Government agencies

RATIONALE

Overall sexuality and gender diverse communities have poorer health, and individual needs are not well met by mainstream health services. People with diverse sexuality and gender identities experience harassment and discrimination at work and often don't feel welcome for who they are.

Goal 1



Safe, high quality and inclusive services for sexuality and gender diverse people

Actions to progress

Implement welcoming and comfortable entrances, foyers and waiting rooms for people with diverse sexuality and gender identities

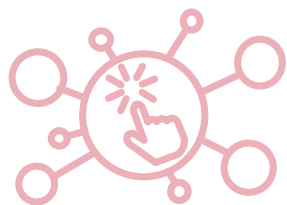
Redesign NT Health service, program and health promotion material to be inclusive of people with diverse sexualities and gender identities

Provide localised and focused health service information and health promotion material

Patient care reflects the needs of sexuality and gender diverse clients and their families

Promote the safe and secure use of telehealth and new digital technologies

Goal 2



Connected care through innovative and sustainable service pathways

Actions to progress

Work with health sector partners to establish consistency, shared understanding and culturally safe care pathways

Continue to include people with diverse sexualities and gender identities into sustainable specialised and mainstream services

Improve access to safe, high quality and inclusive services to people with diverse sexualities and gender identities in regional and remote areas

Goal 3



A capable, inclusive and diverse workforce

Actions to progress

Update and provide employee training in sexuality and gender diversity awareness, language, appropriate workplace behaviour and unconscious bias

Promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion in the workplace, including a 'champions and allies' program

Develop human resource / manager guidelines to implement inclusive workplaces and support staff with diverse sexualities and gender identities

Implement inclusive recruitment policies and practice

Embed sexuality and gender diversity health in relevant clinical training

Strengthen research in diverse sexuality and gender identity health issues and support translation of knowledge into practice

Goal 4



Contemporary and accountable systems, records and processes

Actions to progress

Develop performance measures and targets for this strategy

Include non-binary gender / sex markers on employee, client and patient records and systems

Maximise opportunities for services delivered through grants and commissioned arrangements to be inclusive and accountable

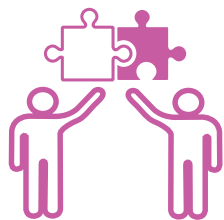
Explore and promote privacy options for sensitive information on patient records to protect individuals

Include sexuality and gender diversity issues in staff surveys

Establish a focus within existing systems for complaints / compliments on issues of sexuality and gender identity

Embed diversity and inclusion principles in NT Health corporate communications, media and publications

Goal 5



Engaged partners leading positive change for sexuality and gender diverse people, families and communities

Actions to progress

In collaboration with partners, explore options for health information and training resources which recognise sexuality and gender diverse communities and their needs

Address and counter discrimination and stigma, contribute to improving community awareness

Build partnerships between NT Health and sexuality and gender diverse communities to strengthen inclusive practice

Strengthen awareness on sexuality and gender diverse young people's health and wellbeing needs across the NTG service sector

Promote awareness among sexuality and gender diverse communities on how to raise issues including discrimination



Darwin Clinic 34 staff

**“To create a workplace and service provider that is
free from stigma and discrimination
and is genuinely and actively inclusive
of all gender identities, sexual orientations
and intersex variation”.**

- Advisory Group member

OUR PRINCIPLES

Principles which underpin this strategy and shape how we achieve our goals:

- ✓ **Respect:** We treat all sexuality and gender diverse people with respect through awareness of people's differences and choices, learning from our peers and colleagues, and actively listening to our clients.
- ✓ **Recognise:** We create a culture which clearly welcomes sexuality and gender diverse clients and staff.
- ✓ **Value:** We advocate for a society that embraces diversity and promotes supportive and inclusive workplaces and communities.
- ✓ **Empower:** We foster environments where sexuality and gender diverse people are encouraged to develop confidence in their own abilities and expressions and supported to voice their concerns and needs.
- ✓ **Celebrate:** We promote the collective expression of success among sexuality and gender diverse communities, from the small gains through to the big wins.



NTAHC Darwin staff and members

“Educating staff to challenge their own perceptions will be integral in building staff competence to respectfully address the needs of the LGBTQI+ community”.

- Advisory Group member



NT Health Advisory Group members and HOC members

ADVISORY GROUP

The NT Health Advisory Group for People with Diverse Sexualities and Gender Identities

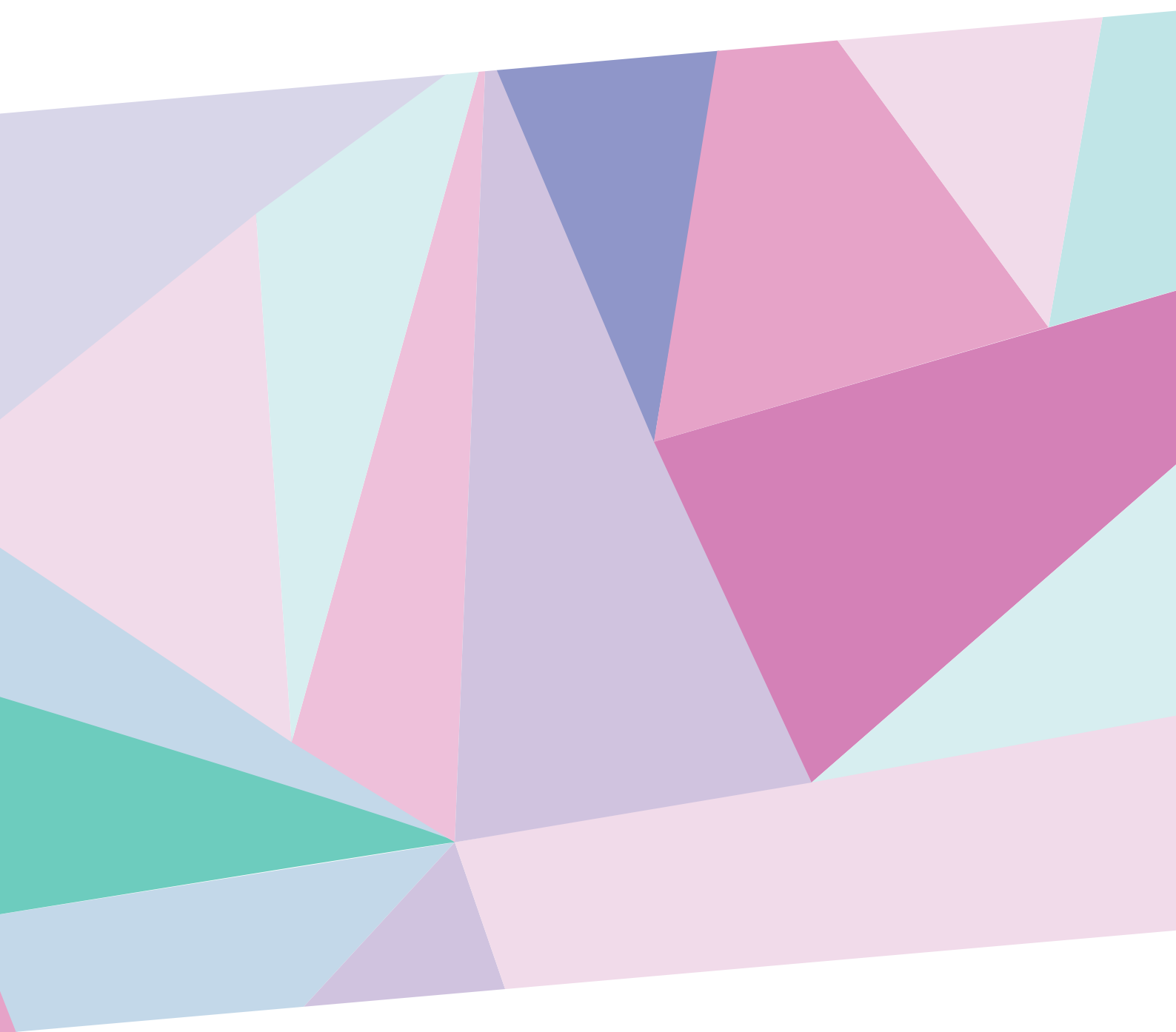
This strategy has been guided by the NT Health Advisory Group for People with Diverse Sexualities and Gender Identities. The project team acknowledge the interest, commitment and foresight provided by advisory group members in shaping this strategy and seeking to benefit the NT Health workforce, consumers and the broader Territory community. Membership of the advisory group was sought through expressions of interest from across NT Health in late 2018. Membership comprise employees from the Department of Health, Top End Health Service and Central Australia Health Service as well as members of the sexuality and gender diverse community (consumer representatives). Together with advisory group members, the project team consulted with consumers and staff to inform the vision for change, goals and actions.

Glossary of Terms

Affirming gender	The process of adopting a way of life or body that matches a person's sense of their gender
Ally	A person who considers themselves a friend and active supporter of the sexuality and gender diverse community
Asexuality	A lack of sexual desire or attraction, but may experience romantic attraction towards others
Bisexual	A person who is sexually and emotionally attracted to people of both sexes
Brotherboy	Aboriginal transgender person, who was considered female at birth but chooses to live life as a male
'Coming Out'	The process through which an individual comes to recognise and acknowledge (both to self and others) their sexual orientation/gender identity/intersex status his or her sexual orientation/gender identity/intersex status
Cis	A person who identifies with their birth assigned sex e.g. ciswoman, cisman
Gender Identity	The gender that a person identifies as, regardless of their biological sex
Difference of Sex Development (DSD)	A term which describes a range of conditions in which a person's genetics, hormones, internal organs or external genitalia are atypical (see also 'intersex')
Female-to-male	Adjective to describe individuals assigned female at birth who are changing or who have changed their body/or gender role from birth-assigned female to a more masculine body or role
Gay	A homosexual person - man or woman (see also lesbian)
Gender dysphoria	Distress or discrepancy between a person's gender identity and that person's sex assigned at birth
Gender diverse	An umbrella term used to describe all those whose gender identity is at odds with their biological sex
Gender fluid	A gender identity where gender varies over time and may be a mix of male, female or other non-binary identity, or combination of identities
Genderqueer	Identity label used by individuals whose gender identity and/or role does not conform to the categories of man or woman, male or female
Homosexuality	Romantic attraction, sexual attraction or sexual behaviour between members of the same sex or gender
Intersex	A general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive condition or sexual anatomy (internal and/or external) that are not typically 'male' or 'female' (see also 'Differences of Sex Development'). Intersex people have a diversity of bodies and identities, and may identify as male or female or neither.
Lesbian	A woman whose enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction is to other women
Male-to-female	Adjective to describe individuals assigned male at birth who are changing or who have changed their body and/or gender role to a more feminine body or role
Misgendering	Using language, especially a pronoun or form of address that does not match how a person identifies their own gender or body
Non-binary	A general term for gender identities that are not exclusively male or female (see also genderqueer)
Pansexual	Not limited in sexual choice with regard to biological sex, gender or gender identity
Queer	An umbrella term for sexual and/or gender identities who do not correspond to established ideas of sexuality and gender, especially heterosexual norms
Questioning	The 'Q' in LGBTQI, can refer to a person who is still exploring or questioning their gender or sexual orientation
Sexual Orientation	Sexual attraction towards people of a particular sex (or sexes in the case of bisexuality). This is different to a person's sex or gender identity
Sexuality	A central feature of being human that is deeply individualised. It includes sexual feelings, thoughts, attractions, preferences and sometimes behaviour
Sistergirl	Aboriginal woman who was considered male at birth but chooses to live life as a woman
Trans or Transgender	A general term for a person whose gender identity is different to their sex at birth or upbringing. Within Aboriginal communities the terms Brotherboy and Sistergirl are sometimes used to describe transgender females and males
Transition	A term used when a person begins living as the gender with which they identify rather than the gender they were assigned at birth, which often includes changing one's first name as well as dressing and grooming differently



NT Health celebrates Darwin Pride 2019



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