Local Government Youth Service Benchmarking Findings (Part 2)

Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ+) Diversity and Inclusion of Young People, Families, Allies and Community in **Secondary Schools**

Introduction

In May 2021, Greater Dandenong Youth and Family Services commenced a benchmarking exercise to understand the breadth of services provided to LGBTIQA+ young people by other local government youth services. The report titled *Part 1, Building the Picture, Local Government Youth Service Benchmarking Findings* was undertaken to learn from the experiences of other youth service providers to ensure that as a generalist youth service, we were maintaining progressive, evidence base program design. Whilst overall, the findings emphasised that our service was keeping step with service benchmarks, it did highlight that we could extend our level of review to include the experiences of secondary schools, largely because of the captive audience of young people aged 12-18 years in school, and because historically our service has provided support to school communities in assisting them to create safe and inclusive environments for LGBTIQA+ students.

Therefore, two additional and complementary school surveys were prepared and administered between June and August 2022 to local secondary school wellbeing personnel and a cohort of students engaged in Youth and Family Services' *Inclusive Youth Ambassadors* program.
This supplementary report has been prepared and summarises the information gathered from this work, providing further insights, from a local perspective, into the services and supports provided to LGBTIQA+ students in local secondary schools.

Background to scope of work

The findings of this work respond to recommendation 7 from the previous report, which cited the need for Youth and Family Services to undertake further exploratory work with secondary schools in the City of Greater Dandenong, to continue to build a more informed picture, and identify service and knowledge gaps that exist in local educational settings for students aged 12-18 years.

Victorian schools are not mandated to implement the Safe Schools initiative, which provides evidence-based and age-appropriate guidelines for fostering an environment that is inclusive and supportive for LGBTIQA+ community members. Given that there is no prescribed approach, this benchmarking project sought to document the work of local secondary schools – capturing best practice examples and case studies that we can learn from, while also identifying areas where further improvement is required.

It is intended that the findings of Part 1 and Part 2 of our analysis of service supports to LGBTIQA+ young people in the Greater Dandenong community will assist us to inform the work of YFS provide guidance where organisations and schools can direct resourcing to young people, families, and allies from the LGBTIQA+ community.

Role of schools and teachers

Fostering safety and belonging through inclusive practices at secondary school is vital to the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ young people. The Victorian government outlines the duty of schools to ensure support for students who identify as part of the LGBTIQA+ community, and guarantee that policies, practices, and activities are inclusive and take positive action to eliminate discrimination or harassment[i].

The *'Free2Be…Yet?'* national survey published by Western Sydney University (2021), explored the experience of Australian LGBTIQA+ young people at secondary school, and highlighted low teacher intervention in response to physical harassment and bullying. 57.6 per cent of respondents reported there was never, or hardly ever, any adult intervention, while 21.6 per cent experienced adult intervention only some of the time[ii].

Over 55 per cent stated there was no information or support on sexual orientation available at school, and 59.6 per cent said the same of gender expression. A further 77.8 per cent identified no availability of LGBTIQA+ support activities or events at school.

The evidence indicates that experiences of bullying and discrimination, coupled with a lack of curriculum exposure and adult intervention, is leading to poor mental health, social and learning outcomes for LGBTIQA+ young people. The experience of a safe and inclusive secondary school for LGBTIQA+ young people, without discrimination or fear, is vital to their ongoing health and development.

Experiences of LGBTIQA+ young people in school

Every young person has a right to health, safety, and belonging at school. While secondary school works to educate young people in preparation for adulthood, it also serves as an environment for formative development, and to foster social connections and friendships. However, young people who identify as part of the LGBTIQA+ community disproportionately experience stigma and discrimination in secondary school, which can have lasting consequences on social and mental health and can lead to an increased likelihood of school disengagement, low self-esteem, and low academic performance.

La Trobe University's *Writing Themselves In 4* (2021) national survey highlighted the inequitable experience of Australian LGBTIQA+ young people at secondary school. Only 30 per cent of respondents felt they could safely use their gender affirming bathrooms, and 41 per cent could safely use their preferred name and pronouns. Almost 60 per cent reported frequently hearing negative remarks about their sexuality, and 38.3 per cent admitted to missing school due to feeling unsafe[iii].

The *Free2Be…Yet?* survey had similar results. Aimed at quantifying experiences of safety and belonging of LGBTIQA+ young people, and their exposure to LGBTIQA+ curriculum, the report identified lower experiences of agency, lower capacity to manage bullying, and a lower sense of

connectedness than their peers. 97.2 per cent of respondents reported hearing homophobic language weekly, with 36 per cent hearing it daily. A further 90.9 per cent reported hearing transphobic language weekly. Additionally, 28.6 per cent of respondents reported experiencing physical harassment at school.

Both reports revealed that LGBTIQA+ young people experiencing non-inclusive school environments had low mental and social health. The *Free2Be* survey used data from the 2018 *Attitudes to School Survey* (*ATSS)* to compare experiences and found that while 80 per cent of *ATSS* respondents felt they could easily make friends, only 50 per cent of *Free2Be* respondents felt the same. When asked if they felt they belonged, 72 per cent of *ATSS* respondents said yes, compared to 40 per cent of *Free2Be* respondents.

Similarly, 81.9 per cent respondents from *Writing Themselves In 4* had been identified as having high or very high psychological stress, compared to 27.2 per cent of 16–17-year-olds in the general population *(Second Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, 2015*[iv]). Nearly 65 per cent of respondents have been diagnosed with a mental illness, and 58.2 per cent had been experiencing suicidal ideation in the past 12 months.

Approach

Two surveys were prepared and distributed simultaneously to gather feedback from both teaching staff and students attending secondary schools. The survey *(refer Appendix 1)* was prepared and distributed by email to all 19 secondary schools in the Greater Dandenong municipality. The scope of benchmarking questions included:
- Current commitment statement to LGBTIQA+ students
- Range of supports offered to LGBTIQA+ students
- The use of external services and referrals
- Inclusion of a cultural lens approach in supporting culturally diverse LGBTIQA+ students
- Opportunities for Youth and Family Services to support

The survey was revised for young people to garner insight into their awareness, understanding and impact of their school's current LGBTIQA+ practices. The survey was implemented at the 'Building Bridges' event as part of the five-week *Inclusive Youth Ambassadors* program. The two participating schools unified for the third week to hear from LGBTIQA+ keynote speakers and plan an awareness project. The survey was administered via a QR code preceding the project planning portion of the event. This was to ensure students were prepared to answer survey questions after reflecting on their schools practice and activating ideas for planning.

Reponses

School personnel

A total of 9 secondary schools responded to the survey. All schools were contacted via email and follow up phone calls. The survey was also distributed in person to schools participating in the 2022 Youth Summit.

Student Cohort

All sixteen students answered the survey. There were nine students from *School 1* and seven students from *School 2*.

FINDINGS

Benchmarking findings in this report are presented as de-identified. However, for reference, Appendix 2 and 3 provide a full list of each of the secondary schools who participated in this benchmarking exercise.

School personnel

School Commitment Statement

Guidelines from Safe Schools Victoria outline the inclusion of a commitment statement for schools to demonstrate support for creating a safe and inclusive schools for LGBTIQ+ students[v]. A commitment statement should be clear and explicitly state the commitment to LGBTIQA+ students, and promote commitment to actions such as:

- Reviewing policies and procedures
- Support student-led action
- Professional learning
- Challenge discriminatory language
- Being visible

Four of the nine respondents stated they did have a commitment statement to LGBTIQA+ students and as being a Safe School. One school identified that their commitment statement was currently being revised by a newly developed youth led LGBTIQA+ Pride Group. While one school said no commitment statement existed, three schools stated they were unsure. Schools that selected 'unsure' all responded that they were currently in the process of developing this. Feedback around lack of a commitment statement was largely attributed to limited staff resourcing and capacity, further exacerbated by the challenges of COVID-19.

However, schools that answered 'yes' to the existence of a commitment statement did not include the statement when requested.

Internal Supports and Services

Graph 1: Breakdown of internal supports and services provided by secondary schools
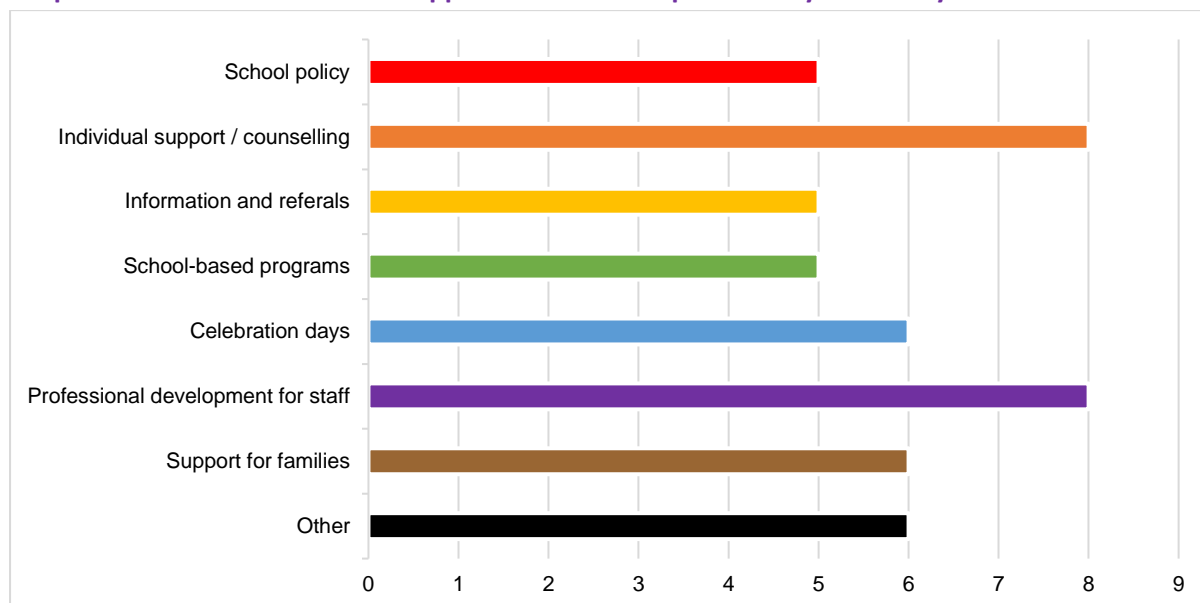
The most common approaches implemented by secondary schools were individual support and counselling, and professional development for staff, identified but all but one school. The acknowledgment and celebration of awareness days, and support for parents and families, were also commonly cited - implemented by two thirds (66 per cent) of responding schools.

Less common approaches included school policies, information/referrals and school based LGBTIQA+ alliances, implemented by just over half (55 per cent) of schools. Two schools identified further support for students, such as an in-school safe space, a youth-led pride group, and a staff LGBTIQA+ committee. One school stated they implement none of the identified services and follow the minimum requirements of the Child Safe Standards.

External Supports and Services

External service or support providers for LGBTIQA+ young people are essential for the provision of holistic psychosocial supports that schools may not be able to offer. Referrals to external services can provide young people with access to specialised and ongoing support.

Eight schools identified service providers they refer LGBTIQA+ young people to, and one identified they did not offer any. Headspace was the most frequently cited service, with five schools identifying them as an external support. There was a mix of internal and external service and support providers identified, listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: External supports and services referred by secondary schools
Headspace
Beyond Blue
Internal psychologists or counsellors
Minus 18
Greater Dandenong Youth and Family Services
Gender Dysmorphia Clinic
General Practitioner

Understandably, the service providers identified are focused on mental health. For example, Headspace and Beyond Blue have a strong association with mental health support, and psychologists and general practitioners offer medical intervention. These services are essential and important to offer all young people, including those who identify as part of the LGBTIQA+ community. However, whilst mental health services are important, it is also critical to provide services and supports to where LGBTIQA+ young people can form social connections and strengthen community belonging. There is an opportunity to promote service providers that focus on social inclusion and safe spaces, such as Queerspace and Zoe Belle Gender Collective. Advocacy programs such as Inclusive Youth Ambassadors, could also be utilised to build allyship and provide a platform for LGBTIQA+ young people looking to get more involved.

Cultural Lens

As the City of Greater Dandenong is one of the most multicultural local government areas in Australia, the overlay of intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalisation needs to be considered. Using a cultural lens to support diverse LGBTIQA+ young people can work to approach these complex intersections with sensitivity and consideration to each individual's unique needs and context. It is important to consider a cultural lens in this space as converging specifically with LGBTIQA+ needs.

Schools were asked whether they used a cultural lens to support diverse LGBTIQA+ young people. Six schools responded in the affirmative, with one advising their cultural lens was used sensitively by utilising allies within the young person's extended family. One school reported that post-covid capacity for providing support is low and pragmatic, one-on-one assistance is currently offered, but a cultural lens is something that could be developed. Two schools stated they used no cultural lens.

Four of the six responding schools reported a cultural lens being present due to the student population being very diverse. However, details of a cultural approach or framework for diverse LGBTIQA+ young people were not specified. Additionally, schools who responded yes to the existence of a cultural lens reported requiring support to address the nuanced needs of culturally diverse LGBTIQA+ young people.

Youth and Family Services Support

When asked on how Youth and Family Services can offer support to assist with the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ students, most schools requested to be informed of any programs and resources we could offer. One school specified the presence of homophobia in the school and requested support in tackling this. Two schools also advised they would like to utilise programs run by Youth and Family Services to build the capacity of their newly developed pride groups and garner feedback from young people. This indicates that schools require assistance in ongoing education and empowerment of young people, to ensure that student voice is at the forefront of creating change.

Student Cohort

SCHOOL 1

Participants from School 1 were studying in Year 10 (aged 15-16 years). Students unanimously affirmed there was a school commitment statement or policy in place, which indicated strong promotion of their school's stance in supporting the LGBTIQA+ community. However, feedback on how this could be improved indicated a lack of enforcement of the commitment statement when slurs and negative language are being used by students.

"The statement which attempts to protect LGBTIQA+ students is rarely enforced. Teachers should also help protect their students. Both teachers and students need to be calling out homophobic and transphobic behaviour."

"We have a lot of people who don't understand the impact of what they say."

"My school promotes decent awareness of the LGBTIQA+ community and I don't ever see homophobic or transphobic behaviour other than negative use of words."

"We hear slurs used in almost every class, every day. It's often ignored by teachers."

Students noted the school does facilitate LGBTIQA+ days of celebration. One student praised them by saying: *"We do celebrate days and encourage students to come out."* While committed to celebration days, students indicated more could be done to reach a wider audience and use these events as opportunities for meaningful learning:

"More days should be actively participated in and advocated for."
"Staff and students that are from the community or are allies should be encouraged to wear something that represents the community."

"I think if we had more promotion of days like Wear It Purple Day and had more events to celebrate Queer identity. I don't think many people will wear purple this Friday because most people don't even know that it's an option."

It was indicated that there should be an expansion of educational workshops and programs to reach a wider cohort of young people, as LGBTIQA+ initiatives are currently an optional 'add on' for students and many don't participate. While School 1 participated in the Inclusive Youth Ambassadors program, students noted the opportunity to include compulsory programs that involve a larger cohort:

"We don't have compulsory workshops for students other than the little mention in the health unit in Year 9 and I'm unaware about professional development for teachers."

"People should be given an insight on how slurs and homophobic behaviour affects LGBTQIA+ people."

Seven out of nine students affirmed the presence of LGBTIQA+ education being included in the school curriculum, which was noted as being a part of health class. Students suggested this could be improved upon by expanding LGBTIQA+ learning topics to other classes (such as history and sociology) and developing LGBTIQA+ curriculum to be both informative and positive:

"The school should include teaching students about being a good ally to their peers."

"There is one short unit in Year 9 health that goes over gay, lesbian, asexual, and other types of relationships but it is a minor unit and many students don't take it."

"Showing students that it's all good to be part of the community."

"We need more in-depth, inclusive education about relationships and sexuality, and more opportunities to explore identity in class."

Students indicated a strong awareness of the wellbeing support for LGBTIQA+ students and teachers at the school, and cited the existence of counselling, a safe space, and posters around the school advising students where to get help. Feedback noted this to be a supportive inclusion that was appreciated, and gave positive thoughts on how it could be expanded:

"We have access to support through the wellbeing team, but a step further we can take to improve is making clubs and groups where students can support each other."

"We have a safe space that's open on Mondays at lunch time. However a lot of students don't know about it, and some are coming for the wrong reasons."

When asked if their school supported LGBTQIA+ students in a culturally appropriate way, four students answered yes and five answered that they were unsure.

SCHOOL 2

Participants from School 2 were a more diverse group, spanning across Years 7 to 10 (aged 12-16 years). Students had low awareness of an existing school commitment statement or policy, with five answering no, one answering unsure, and one answering yes. When asked what could be improved, students inferred a lack of acknowledgement of the LGBTIQA+ community, and called for visible teacher commitment in their school setting:

"School staff helping and teaching students."

"If the principal talks to students about how slurs are bad and they hurt people from the LGBTIQA+ community, they would surely take some consideration into stopping."

"I think we could help to improve this by being more encouraging and supportive and being inclusive with everyone."

Six out of seven students advised there were no days of acknowledgement or celebration events at their school. There was a strong call for the inclusion of these events to spread LGBTIQA+ awareness, empowering young people to take an active lead in planning and implementing activities:

"Our school definitely needs a pride flag. We don't celebrate anything to with the queer community at all. I think we should make a team and create and plan some special days for the community such as pride week and more."

This was similar to feedback regarding workshops and programs being run for students. While four students answered yes to their existence, comments highlighted the need to 'do more' for the queer community and teach students to 'respect each other's differences'.

Students from School 2 indicated a low presence of LGBTIQA+ education being included in the curriculum. While two students answered yes, three answered no and a further two answered unsure. Again, students called for greater teacher involvement in this space, and advocated for greater representation in learning materials:

"Yes, they do talk about LGBTIQA+ topics at school, but it's kind of dismissive and not thorough enough to build our understanding."

"Having more help from teachers."

"Talk to teachers about giving the LGBTIQA+ community a chance."

There were three students who affirmed the existence of support such as counselling outside of the classroom, but three who answered unsure – suggesting that these services are available but not widely promoted to students. Feedback noted that access to support depended largely on the autonomy of the young person experiencing hardship, as the onus was typically on the student to initiate contact with the wellbeing team:

"It depends on the impact the person has had to hold in. If a queer person has been able to cope with everything going on and stay standing, that's great. However, if another person is struggling, it's best that they ask and look for moral support."

It is worth noting that while School 2 does not have a Safe Space, students plan to create one as their project for the Inclusive Youth Ambassadors program. Like School 1, students from School 2 indicated low awareness of culturally appropriate support for LGBTIQA+ students, with six answering no and one answering yes.
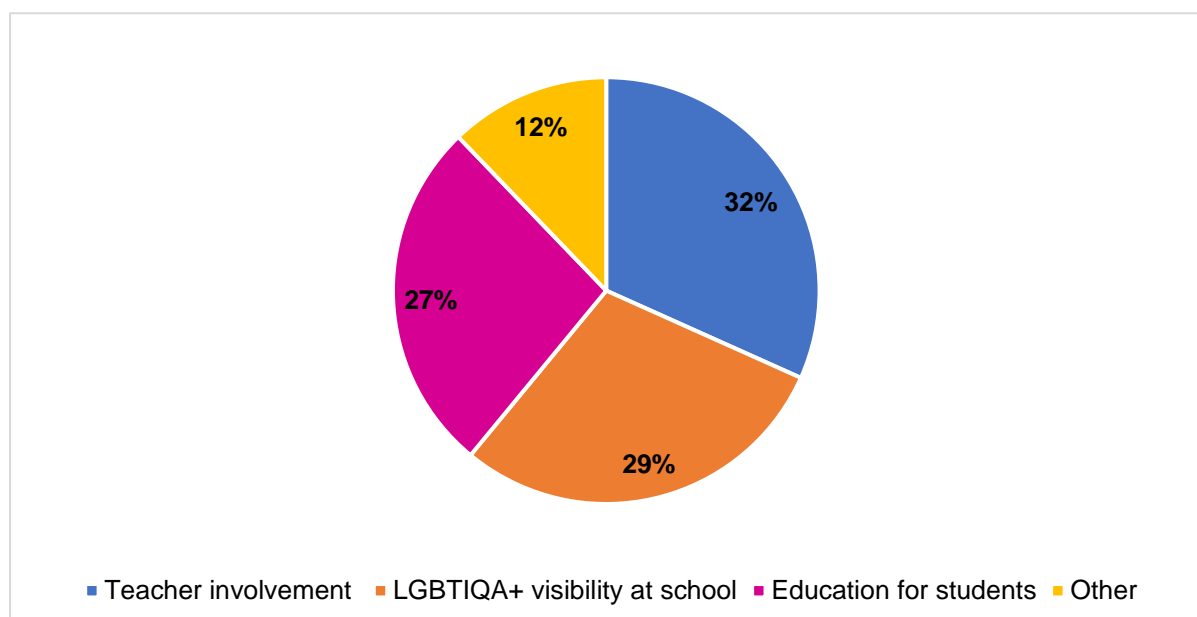
Suggested improvements

When turning their attention to solutions, students' biggest priority was strengthening teacher involvement, reported by one third (32 per cent) of respondents. This includes building teacher capacity to create a safe classroom environment, by providing inclusive practice training, and increasing accountability – ensuring that school staff are role modelling and enforcing LGBTIQA+ guidelines and policies. The second highest-ranking priority for students was increasing LGBTIQA+ visibility at school (29 per cent). Students suggested that this could be achieved via a range of methods including:

- Raising a rainbow flag at the front of school
- Displaying posters with messages of support
- Including a support statement and/or rainbow flag on the school website
- Encouraging school staff to include their pronouns in email signatures

Student education ranked as the third priority for action, reported by just over a quarter (27 per cent) of participants. Students cited that young people need to be educated about heteronormativity and slurs, to understand the harmful impact of their words. Participants also highlighted a greater need for LGBTIQA+ topics to be included in the classroom, and represented in literature and learning materials. 12 per cent of students cited other solutions including:

- Normalising the introduction of preferred names and pronouns by incorporating this in school systems and classroom activities
- Creating a safe space for LGBTIQA+ students
- Building gender neutral toilets

Graph 2: Suggested improvements to promote LGBTIQA+ awareness

Legend: Teacher involvement ■ LGBTIQA+ visibility at school ■ Education for students ■ Other

Case Study 1 – Inclusive Youth Ambassadors

Eight students from Years 9-12 participated in the *Inclusive Youth Ambassadors* program at their local secondary school. Several members of the group identified as same sex-attracted or gender diverse, and were motivated to join the program because it supported students to *"feel more comfortable with who they are at school"* and empowered them to be at the forefront of challenging discrimination.

Inclusive Youth Ambassadors provided participants with the opportunity to identify barriers to safety and inclusion for LGBTIQA+ students at school, and then develop projects to address key issues.

One of the issues identified by young people was that the literature at their school was not representative of LGBTIQA+ people, and those that were inclusive weren't easily identifiable. Students mobilised library staff to order more books with LGBTIQA+ characters and themes, marked these books with rainbow stickers, and created signs to promote them.

Another barrier identified by students was that their school had only male and female toilets. Participants understood that this could be extremely isolating for transgender and non-binary students, and so they worked to transform two single-stall bathrooms into gender neutral toilets. In addition to these projects, students designed a collection of posters to increase understanding and inclusion at school.

Case Study 2 – Inclusive Youth Ambassadors

Twenty students from Years 10-12 participated in the Inclusive Youth Ambassador program at their local secondary school. Many participants had friends or peers who were part of the LGBTIQA+ community and wanted to be part of the program so that they could develop the leadership skills needed to raise awareness and help ensure that everyone feels safe at school.

Students identified bullying and discrimination as a significant challenge for LGBTIQA+ students at their school. They'd observed frequent use of homophobic slurs (e.g. "that's so gay") among their peers. Participants recognised that the negative connotations associated with the word 'gay' can have a harmful impact on same sex attracted people and hinder their sense of safety at school. Considering this, students designed four posters featuring statements that challenge the use of homophobic slurs and promote understanding and inclusion of LGBTIQA+ people. These were displayed throughout the school to raise awareness.

In addition, students developed a resource for the school intranet, outlining a range of organisations that LGBTIQA+ young people can access for information and support. They also advocated for the expansion of their school library's collection of books with LGBTIQ+ characters and themes, marked these books with rainbow stickers, and created displays to promote them.

> *"Inclusive Youth Ambassadors has given our school a stronger understanding of student voice and its importance in building an inclusive school culture"*
> *– School Wellbeing Coordinator*

Recommendations for Secondary Schools

1. **Build staff capacity to create inclusive learning environments**
   - Develop and implement an annual survey to learn students' preferred name and pronouns – promoting student safety by determining how they want to be addressed at school, and how to address students when communicating with their family.
   - Encourage staff to include pronouns in their email signatures, and introduce their pronouns at the beginning of class – to normalise and build understanding.
   - Encourage staff to wear pronoun badges and rainbow pins / lanyards to show support.
   - Ensure that health curriculum is representative and inclusive when discussing relationships, gender and sexuality.
   - Incorporate LGBTIQA+ topics in schooling outside of health class, including greater representation in learning materials (e.g. English textbooks)

2. **Increase visible signs of support for the LGBTIQA+ community**
   - Raise a rainbow flag at prominent sites around school.
   - Display posters with messages of support.
   - Include a support statement and/or rainbow flag on school website to show that all students and families are welcome.

3. **Create safer school systems and physical environments**
   - Develop and review School Commitment Statement and policy.
   - Mobilise an LGBTIQA+ working group, comprising of both staff and students, to ensure that youth voice is at the forefront of decision-making.
   - Develop a safe space or 'queer lounge' for LGBTIQA+ students.
   - Ensure access to gender neutral toilets for both staff and students.

4. **Increase student awareness and build inclusive social norms**
   - Celebrate and promote dates of acknowledgement such as Pride Month, IDAHOBIT and Wear It Purple – using these as platforms for meaningful discussion and learning.
   - Educate students about heteronormativity and teach alternatives that you can use instead of heteronormative language (e.g. posters to promote inclusive language)
   - Teach students about the harmful impact of slurs and encourage upstander action.
   - Increase accountability of school staff to ensure role modelling and enforcement of the school commitment statement and guidelines, particularly with regards to 'calling out' slurs.
   - Engage Youth and Family Services to support student capacity building and empowerment through the delivery of programs such as Inclusive Youth Ambassadors.

5. **Strengthen information sharing and promotion of support services**
   - Promote school wellbeing and counselling services through announcements at school assemblies, posters, information on school intranet and social media platforms.
   - Display posters with information about LGBTIQA+ programs and support services.
   - Invite local services to present information, display resources, or have a presence during LGBTIQA+ awareness days.

Conclusion

This benchmarking report provides a summary of the practices and approaches utilised to promote LGBTIQA+ safety and inclusion within schools in the Greater Dandenong area. The findings show a strong commitment from schools to have forms of LGBTIQA+ visibility and support for young people. Most schools either have, or are in the process of creating, a school commitment to LGBTIQA+ staff and students.

Acknowledgement Days and in-school counselling were the most common internal deliverables, with secondary focus on professional development for staff, programs and workshops for students, and support for parents and families. Positively, schools are expanding their pride working groups to include young people, ensuring a youth voice at the forefront of decision-making.

There is a wide range of external referrals and supports offered to LGBTQIA+ students. However, information and referrals were largely limited to mental health and medical support, and greater consideration should be given to the promotion of psychosocial supports and advocacy programs.

The application of a cultural lens to provide individualised and appropriate LGBTIQA+ support was identified by most schools. This generally was referred to as indicative from the diverse population of the student body and the existing cultural framework, and lesser so an intersectional approach to LGBTIQA+ students.

Young people highlighted a call for greater teacher intervention that promotes LGBTIQA+ education in a visible way at their school. Schools should consider further investment in professional development opportunities, to increase awareness and empower staff to be supportive LGBTIQA+ allies. While young people appreciated existing supports, there was a marked response for more inclusions of programs, safe spaces and promotion to expand LGBTIQA+ awareness to the entire school cohort.

Youth and Family Services is committed to working with secondary schools and community organisations to implement the recommendations outlined in this report. Anyone interested in working collaboratively is encouraged to phone 9793 2155 or email youthservices@cgd.vic.gov.au

1. **Does your school have a commitment statement to LGBTIQA+ students?**
☑ Yes

   If yes, can you please provide a brief summary or link to this statement?
☑ No
☑ Unsure

2. **In what ways does your school currently support LGBTIQA+ inclusion for students? (please select all that apply)**
☑ School policy
☑ Individual support/counselling
☑ Information and referrals
☑ School-based LGBTIQA+ alliances/support groups
☑ Acknowledgement/celebration of days of awareness (e.g., IDAHOBIT, Wear it Purple Day)
☑ Professional development for staff
☑ Support for parents and families
☑ Other (please specify)

3. **What external services/supports do you currently refer LGBTIQA+ students to?**

4. **How does your school support culturally diverse LGBTIQA+ students? Does your school use a cultural lens in how you provide support?**
☑ Yes (please provide further detail)
☑ No

5. **Does your school require support to address the nuanced needs of culturally diverse LGBTIQA+ students?**

6. **How can Youth and Family Services assist your school to support the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ students?**

7. **Do you require a follow up call to discuss the support we can provide?**

1. **Does your school have a statement or policy that commits to supporting LGBTIQA+ students and teachers?**
   ☑ Yes
   ☑ No
   ☑ Unsure

2. **What do you think can be done to improve this?**

3. **Do you have days at school that celebrate LGBTIQA+ students and teachers - like IDAHOBIT Day or Wear it Purple Day?**
   ☑ Yes
   ☑ No
   ☑ Unsure

4. **What do you think can be done to improve this?**

5. **Does your school run workshops that educate students and teachers about the LGBTIQA+ community?**
   ☑ Yes
   ☑ No
   ☑ Unsure

6. **What do you think can be done to improve this?**

7. **Does your school teach you about the LGBTQIA+ community in the classroom?**
   ☑ Yes
   ☑ No
   ☑ Unsure

8. **What do you think can be done to improve this?**

9. **Does your school offer students** or teachers support outside of the classroom - like Safe Spaces or counselling?
   ☑ Yes
   ☑ No
   ☑ Unsure

10. **What do you think can be done to improve this?**

11. **Does your school support LGBTIQA+ students in a culturally appropriate way?**

APPENDIX 3

List of schools who participated in the school personnel LGBTIQA+ Benchmarking Survey

#	Secondary School
1	Cornish College
2	Killester College
3	Dandenong High School
4	Carwatha P-12 College
5	Minaret College
6	St Johns Regional College
7	Keysborough College
8	Mt Hira College
9	Emerson School

END NOTES

[i] Department of Education, 2020, 'LGBTIQ Student Support', www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/lgbtiq-student-support/policy

[ii] Ullman, J, Western Sydney University, 2021, 'Free2Be.. Yet?: The Second National Study of Australian High School Students Who Identify as Gender and Sexuality Diverse', researchdirect.westernsydney.edu.au/islandora/object/uws:59222

[iii] Hill A O, Lyons A, Jones J, McGowan I, Carman M, Parsons M, Power J and Bourne A, 2021, 'Writing Themselves In 4: The health and wellbeing of LGBTQA+ young people in Australia', *Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University,* *www.latrobe.edu.au/arcshs/publications/writing-themselves-in-publications*

[iv] Department of Health and Aged Care, 2015, 'The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents', www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/the-mental-health-of-children-and-adolescents

[v] Victorian Government, 2022, 'Safe Schools' www.vic.gov.au/safe-schools