

**Building a  
Respectful  
Community  
Position Statement  
Endorsement  
Toolkit:  
Trans and Gender Diverse  
Inclusion**

**BUILDING A  
RESPECTFUL  
COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIP**



**WOMEN'S HEALTH  
IN THE NORTH**  
voice • choice • power

## Acknowledgement of Country

Women's Health In the North acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we provide our services – the Wurundjeri Woivurrung people of the Kulin nation – and pay our respect to their Elders past and present. WHIN acknowledges that Aboriginal sovereignty was never given up and that we stand on stolen land. We are committed to Aboriginal self-determination and to supporting Treaty and truth-telling processes.

We recognise the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community on gender equality and the health, safety and wellbeing of women and gender-diverse people. As First Peoples, Aboriginal Victorians are best placed to determine a culturally appropriate path to these in their communities.

## Acknowledgements

This toolkit supports the position paper that was developed by members of the *Building a Respectful Community Partnership* and reflects our shared commitment to the *Allyship in Action* priorities.

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## Acronyms

<b>BRC</b>	Building a Respectful Community
<b>LGBTIQ+</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and other people of diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics
<b>NMR</b>	Northern metropolitan region
<b>WHIN</b>	Women's Health In the North

## Purpose of Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to support *Building a Respectful Community* (BRC) partner organisations to endorse and communicate the *BRC Trans and Gender-Diverse Inclusion Position Statement*. Templates, suggested messaging and practical guidance for internal engagement are included in this guide to support organisations build inclusive practices, by ensuring that all trans and gender-diverse perspectives and experiences are actively included in all aspects of our gender equity and violence prevention work.

## Summary Briefing Document

### **PURPOSE OF THE STATEMENT**

To affirm BRC partner organisations' commitment to trans inclusive gender equity and prevention of gender-based violence practice, to their staff, communities and key stakeholders.

### **BACKGROUND**

The statement was prepared by the BRC Allyship in Action Working Group, following recommendations from the [Allyship in Action forum](#), hosted by WHIN and Zoe Belle Gender Collective in April 2024.

This action is the first in a series of actions WHIN will facilitate, in partnership with the working group, to embed a trans inclusive approach to individual and collective prevention work across the BRC.



## WHY IT MATTERS

Trans and gender-diverse people experience high rates of violence and discrimination based on their gender identity. Including their needs and perspectives strengthens all gender equity work. Transphobia and transmisogyny impacts communities of people beyond the trans and gender-diverse community, and can also drive violence against TGD people's partners, family members, work colleagues, health and human service providers and other allies. Transphobia and transmisogyny are increasingly being used as tools by those opposed to gender equity to reinforce rigid gender norms and stereotypes that are harmful to all people.

## LEGAL AND ETHICAL ALIGNMENT

Trans inclusion as part of gender equity and prevention of gender-based violence work is reflected in our obligations under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) and the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) (where applicable). It also aligns with accreditation frameworks like Rainbow Tick, and efforts to embed workplace LGBTIQ+ equality as part of prevention of gender-based violence efforts.

## BENEFITS AND IMPACT

Endorsing the statement will have both organisational and sector-wide impacts including:

1. Affirming a clear, inclusive values framework that strengthens organisational integrity between the values of inclusive gender equality and practice action
2. Serves as a template for guiding and strengthening internal and external policy and practice that is trans inclusive, ensuring that gender equity and prevention strategies do not exclude or harm trans and gender-diverse people
3. Improves staff confidence and accountability and can strengthen legitimacy among partner organisations as a leader in this space
4. Fosters a culture where inclusion of trans and gender-diverse people is a standard, not an exception
5. Creates a basis for coordinated action, opening doors for collaborative campaigns, shared learning and resource development
6. At a time when trans rights are under attack, this kind of statement can act as a counterweight to harmful misinformation, particularly from anti-trans "gender-critical" movements that claim to speak for women's rights.



## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

BRC partners are asked to seek leadership endorsement from your organisation, (e.g CEO) for the Statement. The position statement will be included in the next BRC regional strategy and endorsement is required, as part of ongoing commitment for all BRC partner organisations.

Endorsement steps include:

1. Circulate the position statement to all internal GE and PGBV groups (e.g GEAP working group, LGBTQIA+ and Gender Equity Advisory Committees), to build internal support and momentum.
2. Highlight the relevant legislative alignment with the Statement and your organisation's obligations under Gender Equality Act, Equal Opportunity Act, Sex Discrimination Act and Victorian Human Rights and Responsibilities Act.
3. Include the Statement in your organisation's discussions on days of significance, such as 16 Days of Activism, Trans Day of Visibility, Trans Awareness Week and International Women's Day).

All BRC partner organisations are encouraged to consider additional endorsement activities. These optional activities include:

1. Share the statement with staff, via internal staff updates and forums, etc.
2. Share statement with external stakeholders or partner organisations
3. Publish statement on website
4. Post on organisation social media.



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **Q. WHY DO WE NEED A STATEMENT?**

The Statement makes our values and commitments clear — to staff, community and partners. It shows leadership, creates accountability, and helps prevent harm. It also ensures we are not silent in the face of rising transphobia and backlash. Silence can be interpreted as indifference or complicity. The Statement is a practical way to affirm that our gender equality work aims to be inclusive, respectful, and evidence-based. Trans and gender-diverse rights and women's rights are interconnected and aligned. Both of our communities are impacted by some of the same drivers of violence including rigid gender norms and dominant forms of masculinity. A collaborative approach creates a stronger and more robust movement.

### **Q. WHAT DOES ENDORSEMENT OF THE STATEMENT INVOLVE?**

Endorsement of the Statement is a simple process. All BRC partners are demonstrating endorsement through ongoing commitment to the BRC Strategy. There are a range of recommended actions outlined in this toolkit that organisations may also consider implementing to embed the Statement commitment at a local level.

### **Q: DOES ENDORSEMENT REQUIRE CHANGES TO OUR EXISTING PROGRAMS?**

Endorsement signals intent and commitment. We encourage partners to reflect on how inclusion is currently addressed and identify opportunities for improvement. Support will be provided by WHIN and other BRC organisations where possible.

### **Q: IS THIS POLITICAL?**

No. This is a values-based and evidence-informed position aligned with existing legal and ethical standards.

### **Q: WHAT IF OUR ORGANISATION IS AT AN EARLY STAGE OF INCLUSION WORK?**

That's okay. Endorsement is a first step. The BRC will continue to support all partners to progress inclusion at a pace appropriate to their context.

### **Q: WHY DO WE NOT CARE ABOUT CISGENDER WOMEN ANYMORE?**

We absolutely still care about cisgender women. In fact, this work *strengthens* our commitment to gender equality for women and girls. Our work has historically focused on the barriers women face — and continues to do so — while also recognising that trans and gender-diverse people experience many of the same structural inequalities, as well as unique forms of discrimination. This is not about replacing one group with another but expanding our inclusion and impact.

**Q. GENDER EQUALITY FOR CISGENDER WOMEN HAS NOT BEEN ACHIEVED YET — WHY ARE WE STOPPING OUR ADVOCACY?**

We are not stopping our advocacy — we are deepening it. A truly effective gender equality movement must address the full spectrum of gendered experiences. Recognising trans, non-binary and gender-diverse people in our gender equality work doesn't take away from women — it helps ensure that our policies, services and programs are more inclusive, more precise, and ultimately, more effective. Gender equality for all strengthens gender equality for women.

**Q. WHY ARE THE INTERSEX COMMUNITY NOT REFERRED TO IN THE STATEMENT?**

The purpose of this paper was to recognise the experience and perspectives of trans and gender-diverse people, in relation to gender equity and violence prevention work. So, this paper does not refer to intersex community members, as it was outside the focus of this paper. However we acknowledge that some members of the intersex community also identify as trans and gender-diverse. We also recognise the importance to also acknowledge the lived experience of intersex community members, in relation to gender-based violence, and are committed to exploring future opportunities and potential partnership to specifically focus on this community.

**Q. WHAT ABOUT MEN?**

Gender equality benefits everyone — including men and boys. Rigid gender norms and stereotypes negatively impact men's health, relationships and wellbeing too. Our work challenges these harmful norms for all people. Importantly, promoting equity for women, trans, non-binary and gender-diverse people is not about disadvantaging men — it's about dismantling systems that limit everyone.

**Q. HOW DOES THIS HELP US MEET OUR LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY RESPONSIBILITIES?**

This approach aligns with numerous federal and state-based regulation such as the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), which protect people from discrimination based on gender identity. For government agencies, this approach aligns with obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic), which requires public sector organisations to take proactive and intersectional approaches to gender equality. Being inclusive is not just the right thing to do — it is also required by law.

**Q. WE'RE SO BUSY WITH OTHER PRIORITIES, WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO DO ANYTHING ELSE...**

The BRC understands how stretched leaders and their organisations are. The good news is that creating inclusive, safe workplaces and services doesn't have to mean more work — it's often about doing things slightly differently and embedding inclusion into what we already do. Signing this Statement is one simple but powerful step in that direction.

## Support for Internal Advocacy

- BRC representatives are encouraged to think strategically and creatively about how to go about raising this issue with their leaders to maximise engagement and minimise resistance.
- Where available, bring the statement to internal/external gender equality and LGBTIQ+ groups initially to garner their support and use this mechanism to feed up to leadership.
- You may also like to go through your policy/advocacy team to get their advice on how the statement can be introduced to leadership for endorsement.
- The BRC Allyship in Action working group can assist with internal presentations or stakeholder briefings where necessary.
- The working group is planning to hold an online session inviting leaders to discuss the statement, answer questions and hear from other leaders who have already endorsed the statement.

## Communications Support

Resources have been developed to support organizations when introducing the Position Paper, to guide and inform internal and external messaging:

- Template email to staff/stakeholders sharing the statement
- Social media tiles and messaging
- Monitoring guide for responding to any resistance or backlash.

## Need help?

Please contact WHIN if you need support with internal engagement or additional resources:

Maryanne Clarke, Coordinator, Gender Equity and Prevention of Gender-based Violence, Women's Health in the North (WHIN) [Maryanne.c@whin.org.au](mailto:Maryanne.c@whin.org.au)



# Building a Respectful Community

## Trans and Gender Diverse

### Inclusion Position Statement

The Building a Respectful Community (BRC) is a regional partnership dedicated to the prevention of gender-based violence through coordinated action across local government, community health, tertiary education, women's health, community services and the private sector. Our shared mission is to work together across the northern metropolitan region (NMR) of Melbourne to prevent gender-based violence by embedding gender equity in our strategies, programs, services, and workplace cultures.

Achieving this goal requires a commitment to equitable gender inclusivity. This means acknowledging that gender-based violence is disproportionately experienced by women and girls – including trans women and girls – as well as by other trans and gender-diverse people. Therefore, the perspectives and experiences of trans and gender-diverse people should be actively included in all aspects of our gender equity and violence prevention work.

### Commitment to Inclusion

BRC partners affirm that the prevention of gender-based violence must be inclusive of trans and gender-diverse individuals and communities. Our commitment to inclusion is grounded in the understanding that gender-based violence affects all people impacted by gender inequality and rigid gender norms, and sustainable prevention efforts must address these realities. By embedding trans inclusion into our gender equity and prevention frameworks, we strengthen our capacity to create safer, more just communities for everyone. We recognise that we each have more to learn and do to achieve this, but the commitment is shared.

Furthermore, our commitment to trans inclusion aligns with our legal and ethical obligations under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) and the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic). These laws affirm the right of all people, including trans and gender-diverse individuals, to participate fully and equitably in society. Ensuring compliance with these legislative frameworks not only strengthens our collective accountability but also reinforces our commitment to fostering workplaces, services, built environments and communities that are safe, inclusive, and free from discrimination.



## Why Inclusion Matters

### **1. STRENGTHENING OUR VISION FOR GENDER EQUITY**

The pursuit of gender equity is incomplete without addressing the needs of all marginalised genders. Trans and gender-diverse inclusion enhances gender equity work by challenging restrictive gender norms and advancing a broader vision of fairness and safety for all.

### **2. ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AT ITS ROOTS**

Misogyny, transphobia, and transmisogyny are interconnected forms of oppression that reinforce gender-based violence. By actively rejecting transphobia and transmisogyny, we reinforce our commitment to eliminating all forms of gendered violence.

### **3. BUILDING SAFE AND RESPECTFUL COMMUNITIES FOR ALL**

A gender-equitable society is one where all people—regardless of gender identity—can live free from violence and discrimination. Ensuring that policies, programs, and services explicitly support trans and gender-diverse individuals strengthens our collective impact and advances social cohesion.

### **4. MEETING THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE COMMUNITIES**

As organisations committed to gender equality and organisational social responsibility, we must ensure our programs and services are reflective of and responsive to the communities we serve. Trans and gender-diverse inclusion increases our ability to meet diverse community needs, foster trust, and improve service effectiveness.

The BRC and its partners recognise that gender equity and violence prevention efforts must be inclusive of people of all genders - cisgender women, girls, men and boys, as well as trans and gender-diverse people - to be truly effective. By committing to this approach, we strengthen our shared mission to eliminate gender-based violence and create safer, more equitable communities. Together, we will lead with inclusivity, ensuring that all people—regardless of gender identity—can live with dignity, safety, and opportunity in the northern metropolitan region of Melbourne and beyond.

## Acknowledgements

This position paper was developed by members of the *Building a Respectful Community Partnership* and reflects our shared commitment to the *Allyship in Action* priorities.

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