

# LGBTIQA+ inclusion in the ACTPS

## Introduction

Inclusion and diversity involve recognising the value of individual differences and integrating these into the workplace, including characteristics such as sex, gender, language, ethnicity, cultural background, age, religious belief, sexual orientation and family responsibilities, and other ways in which people are different from each other.

LGBTIQA+ inclusion also aligns with the Government priority of an inclusive, progressive and sustainable Canberra for all Canberrans. LGBTIQA+ is an acronym usually used to refer to people with diverse sex, sexualities, gender identities and bodies; that is, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual, and aromantic communities, as well as people who might use other terms.

A person's bodily diversity, sexual orientation, and gender identity are simply ways in which people are different from each other, and another aspect of diversity in the workplace. A person's gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation may be fluid and may change over time. Rather than viewing concepts of sex and gender identity as 'one or the other', or categorising people into binary or rigid definitions, it can be useful to think of sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity as concepts with a range of possibilities.

*For more information and guidance on inclusive language, please refer to the [ACT Government Inclusive Communication Guide](#). This guide supports the ACT Public Service in meeting our human rights obligations by encouraging equitable and inclusive communication practices.*

## LGBTIQA+ inclusion is essential for the ACTPS

The ACT is a human rights jurisdiction, as legislated under the Human Rights Act 2004. This legislation provides a framework for the protection of human rights in the ACT, which includes protected attributes such as gender, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics. Creating positive work cultures where diversity is the means by which we generate new ideas and improve upon previous efforts is essential in meeting this goal.

In addition, LGBTIQA+ inclusion simply makes good business sense. In the case of the ACTPS, building a workforce that is truly reflective of the diverse community in which we serve will enable us to deliver an improved service to the diverse ACT community. Furthermore, with an increasing number of organisations committing to LGBTIQA+ inclusion, there's less and less need for people to work for organisations that are not inclusive. Promoting the ACTPS as a diverse and inclusive workforce is one way in which the ACTPS can improve its ability to attract and retain people from a wider pool of talent.

Studies have also shown that staff who feel they can be open about their identity are far more likely to enjoy going to work, feel free to be themselves, form honest relationships with their colleagues, be more confident and ultimately, more engaged and more productive<sup>1</sup>. Numerous studies show that a diverse workforce is also a more productive and innovative one. For example, a recent study found that diversity practices within organisations have a direct positive impact on levels of engagement for all employees, not just those employees that belong to a minority group<sup>2</sup>. This highlights the benefits of an inclusive culture for all ACTPS employees, not just those who are LGBTIQ+.

---

<sup>1</sup> A Manager's Guide to LGBTI Workplace Inclusion. Pride in Diversity. P.14

<sup>2</sup> Downey, S., van der Werff, L., Thomas, K. and Plaut, V. (2015). The role of diversity practices and inclusion in promoting trust and employee engagement. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 45, pp.35-44.