

LGBTQI+ Pride Month

Every June, Australia celebrates the diversity and achievements of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex community. It's a time to reflect on how far civil rights for these communities have improved over half a century, and an opportunity to protest continued discrimination and violence. The Australian LGBTQI+ community is leading the way toward greater equality, but there is still more to do.

Pride Month is often referred to as Gay Pride, but Pride is for everyone in the LGBTQI+ community. LGBTQI+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and extends towards many other groups in the community.

PRIDE: IT'S NOT JUST A PARTY

The origins of June as Pride Month started in Manhattan on the morning of June 28th, 1969, when members of the LGBTQI+ community rioted against police discrimination following a raid at the Stonewall Inn. The 'Stonewall Riots', as they were later known, were a watershed moment for the movement and helped ignite many protests around the world.

In 1978, members of the gay and lesbian community in Sydney organised a day of events on the anniversary of the Stonewall riots to express solidarity and draw attention to the discrimination

they frequently received. This was the first 'Mardi Gras', and was not without controversy: it ended with violence, with 53 members of the community brutally arrested, many of whom were beaten.

Despite these difficult beginnings, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras has continued to great success each year and is now one of the biggest Pride celebrations in the world. There are countless festivals and community events held every June to celebrate Pride milestones, including the passing of the Marriage Equality Act in December 2017.

NO PRIDE WITHOUT CHANGE

Pride is a time for celebration, but it's also a time to raise and acknowledge the issues members of the community continue to face.

While **approximately 11% of the Australian population (click)** identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex, many have experienced gender and sexuality-based discrimination in their lifetime. It's estimated that non-heterosexual people face up to twice the amount of violence (physical, mental, sexual, or emotional) than their heterosexual peers.

- **6 in 10 non-heterosexual people have experienced homophobic abuse in the workplace, and 2 in 10 have faced physical violence (click)**
- 61% of young non-heterosexual people have experienced bullying and verbal abuse at school or work, and 18% have experienced physical abuse
- A 2007 survey of Australian transgender people found that 90% of respondents experienced some form of stigma, including verbal abuse, physical violence, and social exclusion.

FIND OUT MORE

PRIDE IN THE WORKPLACE

Although we've come a long way in establishing LGBTQI+ rights and inclusion, we still have a long way to go to abolish ignorance, harassment and discrimination in society. The workplace is a place we spend most of our adult lives and, as a result, it plays a key role in creating equality and a more inclusive world for LGBTQI+ people.

Here are a few ways employees can create a safe and inclusive during Pride and beyond:

1. If you are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with this world, educate yourself on the LGBTQI+ population, rather than leaning on what you've learnt from bathroom jokes, religious condemnations or media stereotypes.
2. Raise awareness among employees that June is LGBTQI+ Pride Month by displaying posters, sending memos or making announcements.
3. Be sensitive and respectful of all gender orientations and identities and don't make assumptions. It's easy and commonplace to assume a coworker or a client is your same sexual orientation, marital status or religious persuasion. For example, if asking a female colleague: "Who will drive you home?" And the answer is: "my partner", don't assume the partner is a "he" by asking "What's his name?" This common assumption continues to be made by people in the workplace and puts LGBTQI+ clients and workers in the awkward position of having to correct you for your assumption, and making you feel bad for making the assumption.
4. Gender pronouns (such as 'he/him/his' or 'she/her/hers') are the way that we constantly refer to one another's gender identity – except we often do not think a whole lot about them. However, our inference as to that person's gender identity may not be correct. Everyone deserves to have their chosen name and pronouns respected in the workplace. Some employees may opt to use gender-expansive pronouns such as 'they', 'them' and 'theirs' instead of, or as well as, 'he', 'him' and 'his' or 'she', 'her' and 'hers'. Although you may feel

it personally unnecessary to do so, and it may even make you feel a little uncomfortable at first, sharing your pronouns helps raise awareness and acceptance of different gender identities, including non-binary.

FIND OUT MORE