



**Count  
me in!**

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**A Guide for LGBTI Workplace Allies**

Thinking about becoming  
an LGBTI\* ally?

Or maybe you don't even  
have to think about it,  
maybe you just are.

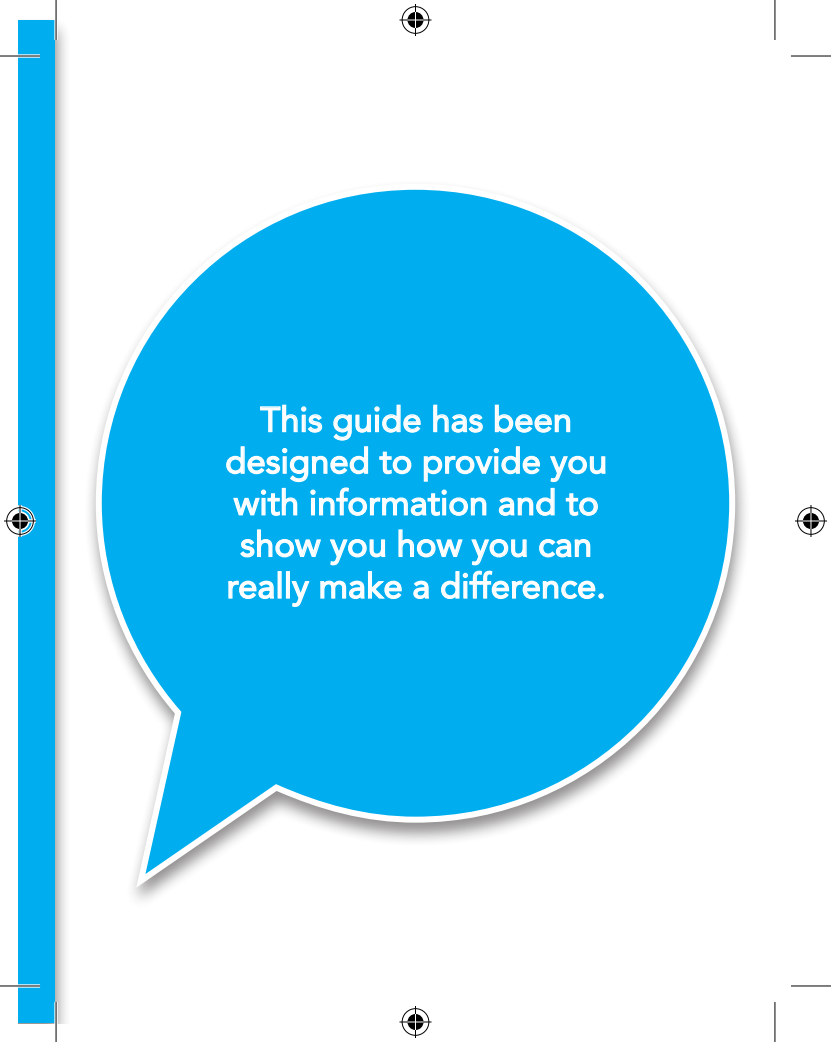
\*lesbian, gay, bisexual,  
transgender, intersex

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**This guide has been  
designed to provide you  
with information and to  
show you how you can  
really make a difference.**



# Why do people become allies?

People become LGBTI workplace allies for all sorts of reasons. It may be:

- A belief in social justice, inclusion and essential human rights. In understanding some of the challenges that are often faced by LGBTI people, some allies see their involvement in LGBTI employee networks as a great way to actively make a difference
- Some have family, friends and colleagues that identify as LGBTI and this is their way to show their support for people they care about
- Understanding the LGBTI culture and challenges faced is another reason why people may want to become involved
- Some see this as simply a way to build networks, friends and meet others who are different to themselves.



## Why are allies so important?

LGBTI allies are essential to LGBTI employee networks. LGBTI allies:

- Extend employee networks allowing for a greater voice within the workplace
- Assist by calling inappropriate behaviour and slurs when LGBTI people are not around
- Lend support to other employees who may have family and/or friends that are LGBTI
- Support LGBTI employees by sharing factual information with their colleagues, helping to breakdown negative stereotypes and destructive myths
- Promote ally involvement within the network just by being there, and being visible.



# What do LGBTI allies do?

Your level of involvement as an ally is completely up to you. You can be involved as little or as much as you like.

You may choose to:

- Be on your LGBTI employee network's mailing list
- Participate in LGBTI employee network events
- Encourage other employees to become involved
- Promote yourself as an ally, or allow your workplace to promote you as an ally
- Be a contact point for other LGBTI allies
- Keep up to date with LGBTI issues
- Attend an LGBTI awareness course
- Speak up against negative language, assumptions, inappropriate jokes or slurs
- Participate as an ally in training that supports LGBTI inclusion or awareness building.

# 1

## Be informed

As an ally, it is important that you are aware of some of the challenges faced by LGBTI people and of some of the destructive myths that are often held. This will enable you to actively correct false assumptions and normalise LGBTI culture.

We recommend that you:

- Attend LGBTI awareness training so that you understand the terminology often used, and feel more comfortable educating others
- Talk to your LGBTI family, friends and colleagues, understand their experiences, views and concerns (with consent)
- Ask questions. If there is a term you do not know or something you do not understand, ask the question
- Read LGBTI related publications, blogs and view informative video resources to familiarise yourself with current LGBTI issues and how to support the community.

## 2

# Be mindful

Language is incredibly powerful. Many LGBTI people can find fairly normal, everyday questions quite intrusive (ie. Are you married? Do you have a husband? wife? etc)

In a work setting, this can potentially put someone in an awkward situation.

Consider:

- Using the word partner instead of husband/wife
- Not assuming that everyone by default is heterosexual or in a relationship
- Questioning your own assumptions and beliefs about LGBTI culture by listening to others and asking questions of your network members and friends.



# 3

## Be visible

One of the greatest things you can do to support your LGBTI employee network is to be visible as an ally.

This requires a strong sense of self, and strong understanding of why you're an ally, as it may mean that you get subjected to jokes, comments or people questioning your identity.

Strong confident ally support sends a very strong message of inclusion in the workplace and with active participation can make an enormous difference to workplace culture.

Consider:

- "Outing" yourself as an ally
- Allowing your network to promote you as an ally on their intranet page or in their communications
- Having an item or two promoting LGBTI inclusion at your workstation, or worn in the workplace, such as a sign or lapel pin.

# 4

## Be heard

Change and inclusion is an ongoing process, whether it be socially, or within the workplace culture.

As an ally, you can be a powerful advocate for equality. For some people, your opinion as an ally may carry more weight than an LGBTI person speaking for their own rights.

Consider:

- Being part of the greater LGBTI inclusion effort within your workplace
- Taking an active role in inclusion training from an ally perspective
- Standing up against inequality or exclusion when you see it
- Being a voice for equality outside of the workplace.

# 5

## Be involved

Participation in LGBTI network events not only shows your support of the network but enables you to mix and engage with other LGBTI employees and allies, extending your personal network.

Consider:

- Being an active participant in LGBTI events
- Building your LGBTI employee and ally network both within the workplace and externally
- Attending LGBTI external events
- Promoting your involvement in the network to other allies within the workplace
- Talking about the events you have attended openly with your colleagues
- Proudly promoting yourself as an ally
- Taking a stand against any negativity you hear, or behaviour you see.

# 6

## Be part of the solution

You can really make a difference. Not only in the workplace but externally as well. Support LGBTI inclusion by being a voice of reason and by helping to stamp out some of the destructive myths, assumptions and harmful slurs that negatively impact LGBTI people.

Make a difference by:

- Normalising language such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
- Engaging with people in honest, open conversations about what you have learnt
- Taking a stand against homophobic, biphobic or transphobic slurs, jokes or negative comments
- Not allowing children to use destructive terminology like “that’s so gay”
- Participating in key community events such as International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (17 May) and Pride Festivals.



## Useful Links

### **Pride in Diversity**

Employer Support Program for LGBTI Inclusion

Phone: (02) 9206 2139

Website: [www.prideindiversity.com.au](http://www.prideindiversity.com.au)

Facebook: [/prideindiversity](https://www.facebook.com/prideindiversity)

Twitter: [/pridediversity](https://twitter.com/pridediversity)

### **Pride in Sport**

Support Program for LGBTI Inclusion in Australian sport

Phone: (02) 9206 2139

Website: [www.prideindiversity.com.au/prideinsport](http://www.prideindiversity.com.au/prideinsport)

Facebook: [/prideinsport](https://www.facebook.com/prideinsport)

Twitter: [/prideinsportAU](https://twitter.com/prideinsportAU)

### **ACON**

ACON is a New South Wales based health promotion organisation specialising in HIV prevention, HIV support and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) health.

Website: [www.acon.org.au](http://www.acon.org.au)

### **PFLAG**

Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays. A non-profit voluntary organisation whose members have a common goal of keeping families together. PFLAG provides help, support and information to families, friends of all gay people.

Website: [www.pflagaustralia.org.au/](http://www.pflagaustralia.org.au/)



## Useful Statistics

- 17% of young people (18-24) would not report bullying/harassment about being LGBTI in the workplace.
- 21.5% of LGBTI respondents advised they could not comfortably be themselves within their workplace.
- 16% of LGBTI respondents indicated that they had witnessed or been made aware of negative commentary or jokes regarding sexuality, gender identity or intersex.
- Most respondents who had not been bullied claimed that they would report bullying, less than one-third reported when it actually happened.
- One-third of LGB participants who were not out at work, or only to a little extent, claimed that they expend a lot of energy hiding their sexual orientation.
- Two-thirds of LGBTI respondents indicated that an organisation's track record in diversity would influence their decision to join that organisation.

Source: 2016 Australian Workplace Equality Index Employee Survey, Pride in Diversity.



# Workplace Contacts

If you have any questions or need some more assistance being an LGBTI ally within the workplace, we recommend that you:

- Contact a member of your LGBTI employee network, or set up a meeting to go through any questions that you may have or to discuss ways in which you can be involved

Name of your employee network:

Contact Name/s and phone details

Pride in Diversity is Australia's first and only national not-for-profit employer support program for all aspects of LGBTI workplace inclusion.

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