

DRAFT

LGBTIQ_A⁺ Strategy & Action Plan 2022–2026

Acknowledgement of Country

Maribyrnong Council is proud to represent a municipality with such an important Indigenous history and active community. Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land, the Kulin nation, and appreciates the rich culture and contributions Indigenous Australians have made and continue to make to this City.

“Each person reflected in those letters has a different experience. And each can also be Aboriginal, or a person of colour, or disabled, or have faith, or have faced other experiences that form part of their identity. Intersectionality doesn’t fit neatly into a box. For many of us, our intersectional identities add up to who we are. Intersectionality is how we live our lives.”

Todd Fernando
Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities

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There are many LGBTQ Pride flags that embody different aspects of the LGBTQ+ community. Throughout this document, you will find eight different LGBTIQ+ flags and its meaning, which are reflected in the beautiful artwork of colour blends in each section.



Lesbian: a woman romantically and/or sexually attracted to other women.

At a glance



Vision

LGBTIQA+ people in the City of Maribyrnong are safe and healthy, and their diverse identities are celebrated.

LGBTIQA+ people are visible, connected and welcomed, and can fully participate in the Maribyrnong community at all stages of life.

Council promotes equality and addresses inequality for LGBTIQA+ people through clear leadership and principled action.

Principles

Building on Council’s commitment to the key human rights and social justice values of freedom, respect, equity and dignity outlined in its Human Rights Framework, the LGBTIQA+ Strategy and Action Plan is underpinned by the following human rights-based principles:

First Nations First

Council recognises First Peoples’ right to self-determination as a foundation for equity and fairness and promotes the visibility and protection of their culture heritage and gender and sexual diversity.

Participation

Council promotes safe, accessible services and public spaces that ensure LGBTIQA+ people are included and supported to reach their potential.

Accountability

Council actively communicates a culture of human rights in the organisation and local community underpinned by authoritative leadership and good governance.

Non-discrimination and equity

Council applies an intersectional lens to improve LGBTIQA+ health and wellbeing in the municipality and work to end the structural causes of discrimination and disadvantage.

Empowered communities

Council works with local LGBTIQA+ people and families to promote increased visibility, enhance diverse representation and ensure they have a voice in processes and decisions that impact their lives.

Uphold human rights standards

Council promotes and protects the rights contained in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities consistent with the objectives of its Human Rights and Social Justice Framework.

Objectives

1. Build social capital

Celebrate the vibrancy, strength and diversity of LGBTIQA+ people, families and communities and work to ensure their participation, inclusion, and health and wellbeing

2. Facilitate community capital

Recognise and support LGBTIQA+ intersections with the broader community; foster a welcoming, safe and cohesive community for all who live, work and socialise in the City of Maribyrnong

3. Grow economic capital

Ensure access to resources, services, infrastructure, and shared opportunities so the benefits of economic development are enjoyed by LGBTIQA+ people and families as our community continues to thrive and grow

4. Develop Council’s ethical leadership

Proactively develop our practice and influence our key partners through a shared culture of learning, innovation and reflection, transparent decision-making, collaboration, and community engagement

Part 1: Introduction

Purpose

The City of Maribyrnong has a proud history and strong commitment to inclusion, equality, and pride in the diversity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and asexual (LGBTIQ+) people, families and communities.¹

We are equally proud to build upon this legacy by presenting the inaugural Maribyrnong LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2026.

The Strategy and Action Plan identifies tangible actions to strengthen social and economic inclusion for LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities, and reduce barriers to their participation in the City.

Through the Strategy and Action Plan we will work with communities, local services, business, clubs and other local networks to raise the profile of the LGBTIQ+ community in the City of Maribyrnong and promote opportunities for community engagement, support, advocacy and partnerships.

Approach

In order to achieve the broad aims of the LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan, we will work collaboratively to foster and grow community strengths and resources, promote resilience, and work to address existing community needs, gaps and limitations.

This means building **social capital** by celebrating the vibrancy, strength and diversity of LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities and working to ensure their participation, inclusion, and health and wellbeing.

It means facilitating **community capital** that recognises and supports LGBTIQ+ intersections with the rich diversity and cultural expression of our other many communities, and working to foster a welcoming, safe and cohesive community for all who live, work and socialise in the City of Maribyrnong.

It means growing **economic capital** to ensure equitable access to resources, services and infrastructure so the benefits of economic development are enjoyed by all people, including those who are LGBTIQ+, as our community continues to thrive and grow.

Finally, it means developing **ethical leadership** by focussing on Council systems, processes, knowledge and people, to ensure we are proactively working to develop our own practice as well as influencing the practice of our key partners.

The Strategy and Action Plan have been developed through extensive community consultation and research. The outcomes documents a compelling narrative of community need and how gaps might be better responded to.

The Strategy and Action Plan is underpinned by human rights principles that include a focus on self-determination, participation and inclusion; Council's accountability to the community; and a focus on equity and empowerment to overcome the impacts of historical and ongoing discrimination and disadvantage.

Council's role is to support the planning and delivery of many actions and initiatives outlined in the Strategy and Action Plan. We recognise our role is often to facilitate, enable and advocate for action by others, including LGBTIQ+ people and communities themselves, as well as other partners.

To this end, the Strategy and Action Plan includes measures to support the active involvement of community members and stakeholders in the design, delivery and evaluation of programs and projects that impact upon them, including through the establishment of an LGBTIQ+ Community Advisory Group.

Developing ethical leadership by focussing on Council systems, processes, knowledge, and people to ensure we are proactively working to develop our own practice as well as the influencing the practice of our key partners.

The role of the group is to advise Council on the needs and lived experience of LGBTIQ+ communities in Maribyrnong, and work with Council to identify the strategic actions for the proposed Action Plan over the next 4 years.

The role of the group is to advise Council on the needs and lived experience of the LGBTIQ+ communities in Maribyrnong, and work with Council to identify the strategic actions for the proposed Action Plan over the next 4 years.

Links with Council plans and strategies

The LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan is developed and delivered within the broader strategic framework of Maribyrnong City Council, particularly the Council Plan 2021- 2025 and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan incorporated within it.

The Council Plan 2021 – 2025 outlines Council's vision for the municipality as "an inclusive, flourishing, progressive city that cares for its residents and its environments".

The Council Plan identifies the priorities and aspirations to strengthen inclusion and cohesion within the community by removing barriers to participation in all aspects of community life.

The development of the LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan is a key priority within the Council Plan.

Key elements of the Council Plan directly relevant to the LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan include:

Objective 3. A Place for All

- 3.2 Strengthen inclusion and cohesion by removing barriers to participation in all aspects of community life;
- 3.6 Take action to reduce family violence, respond to the needs of victims and promote gender equality.

Objective 5. Ethical Leadership

- 5.1 Uphold our obligations to promote and protect human rights by demonstrating strong social responsibility across Council's operations
- 5.2 Ensure breadth and depth of community engagement and active civic participation
- 5.3 Build and model a safer, healthier, diverse and more equitable organisation.

Specific outcomes in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan relevant to the LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan include:

Healthy and active

- Advocate and partner to prevent violence against women

Fair and inclusive

- Deliver initiatives, both internally and externally, to promote gender equality
- Promote social and economic inclusion
- Facilitate opportunities for civic participation and volunteering
- Consider the needs of our diverse community in infrastructure, service and program planning

While the initiatives and activities within the LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan are most closely aligned with the Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021–2025, they also complement the delivery of actions within a much broader range of Council plans and strategies.

These include within the areas of gender equity, arts and culture, precinct and facility planning, economic development, sport and recreation, workforce planning, and more.

The LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action vision and objectives closely align with Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022-32 released during our consultation process.²

Together with the Victorian strategy, our local Strategy and Action Plan will play an important role in strengthening the participation, inclusion, vibrancy and health and wellbeing of diverse LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities within the community of Maribyrnong.



Gay men: a person romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of the same sex and/or gender as themselves.

Part 2: Context

The Maribyrnong community^{3,4}

The Maribyrnong community is rapidly growing and changing. In 2020, the estimated resident population of the City of Maribyrnong was 94,982 people. The population is growing almost twice as fast as for Australia as a whole (2.8% annually).

Overall, the Maribyrnong community is also younger and more culturally diverse than for Victoria and Australia as a whole. There is a larger proportion of people aged 25–39 in the municipality compared to Greater Melbourne, which is also the fastest growing age group.

The City of Maribyrnong has fewer couples with children compared to Greater Melbourne although couple households with young children in particular are growing, and there is a higher rate of lone person households in some parts of the city (particularly West Footscray, Kingsville and Footscray).

The municipality is the second most ethnically diverse community in Victoria. Its residents are more likely to have been born overseas and to speak a language other than English at home – especially in areas such as Braybrook, Maidstone and Maribyrnong. Residents come from more than 135 different countries and speak over 80 languages. The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population in the City of Maribyrnong is the same as for Greater Melbourne (0.5%).

Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Greek and Italian were the most common languages other than English spoken at home in 2016, with Vietnamese, Mandarin, Nepali and Telugu being the fastest growing languages other than English.

Maribyrnong households are far more likely to be renting and slightly less likely to own their own homes when compared with Greater Melbourne. Rent prices about the same as for Melbourne, and mortgages are slightly higher. Affordability is still an issue for many people in the City of Maribyrnong.

Maribyrnong is a city with socioeconomic disparities. Median weekly incomes and other measures of disadvantage are split across the municipality. Median incomes are significantly lower in Braybrook, Footscray, Maidstone and West Footscray compared to Greater Melbourne, and higher in Kingsville, Maribyrnong, Yarraville and Seddon.

City of Maribyrnong residents are more likely to be attending university or hold university qualifications in all parts of the municipality compared to Greater Melbourne, with the exception of Braybrook.

Unemployment rates in 2016 were lower in Yarraville, Seddon and Kingsville than for other Melbournians and higher in Maribyrnong, Maidstone, West Footscray, Footscray and Braybrook.

Residents of Braybrook, Footscray and West Footscray were also more likely to be receiving the JobSeeker subsidy in March 2020 compared to Greater Melbourne and Victoria, and this proportion grew to September 2021. Residents of other parts of the city were less likely to be receiving JobSeeker when compared to Greater Melbourne.

City of Maribyrnong residents were slightly less likely to be providing unpaid care to a person with a disability, long term illness or old age in 2016 compared to Greater Melbourne, and also slightly less likely to participate in voluntary work.

According to the Victorian Population Health Survey (2017), feelings of trust were similar in the City of Maribyrnong when compared to Victorian residents generally, however the proportion of residents who feel most people can always be trusted has been declining over recent years.

By contrast the same surveys (2011, 2014, and 2017) show that acceptance of diversity among Maribyrnong residents is higher compared to the Victorian population. A higher proportion of local residents believe multiculturalism definitely makes life better in their area, and acceptance of diversity has been increasing.

While the Maribyrnong community self-identifies as accepting of difference and diversity, consultations with LGBTIQ+ community members point to perceptions of acceptance and safety concerns as both being features of their local experience.



In 2016, same-sex couples accounted for 1% of all Victorian couples, and 15% of these reported having children, including one in four female couples.

The LGBTIQ+ community in Maribyrnong

LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities often remain hidden within mainstream community settings. This is particularly common in outer metropolitan, rural and regional areas. Research has shown that LGBTIQ+ people living more than 10km from the city experience higher levels of discrimination, social isolation and street-based harassment.⁵

Local data about perceptions of safety for LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities, or wider community attitudes towards people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities is not readily available. While the Maribyrnong community self-identifies as accepting of difference and diversity, LGBTIQ+ community members identify feelings of acceptance and safety concerns as both being features of their local experience.

Recent research into experiences of public safety for women and gender-diverse people for example has shown that LGBTIQ+ and gender non-conforming people are markedly more likely than other community members to record the behaviour of others as a problem as well as be sensitive to bad stories circulating around a location.⁶

Around 2% of Maribyrnong participants in this research identified as ‘non-binary/non-gender conforming’ and 13% identified as LGBTI+. Participants were slightly more likely to identify locations in Maribyrnong as being unsafe when compared to Victorian results, with walking in local streets and trails being the most identified activity and locations.⁷

VicHealth research from 2015 found that LGB and other non-heterosexual Victorians felt less trusting in, and less connected to, their local communities than heterosexual Victorians. Regional LGB Victorians for example were less likely to agree that “people around here can be trusted” and that “people around here are willing to help their neighbours”.

The research found that LGB Victorians who felt connected to their community reported higher resilience, subjective wellbeing and life satisfaction.⁸

One indicator of LGBTIQ+ acceptance is the results from the 2017 Australian marriage law postal survey. Enrolled voters in the federal seat of Maribyrnong participated in the survey at the same rate as national voters but at slightly lower rates compared to Victorian voters. While overwhelmingly supportive of the change, participating voters were slightly less supportive when compared to both Victorian and national voters.⁹

Little reliable data exists about the demographic profile of LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities in Maribyrnong related to age, ethnicity,

family structure, socioeconomic status, economic participation, and health and wellbeing. Anecdotally, the local LGBTIQ+ community has been growing and becoming increasingly visible in recent years.

Only very limited data is captured in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) national census, and until recently, data was not available through other key datasets such as the Victorian Population Health Survey. At an organisational level, funded programs are also not required (and often do not) collect service utilization and outcome data inclusive of LGBTIQ+ identities.

Generally, it is accepted that people of diverse sexual orientations, sex and gender identity account for around 11% of the population¹⁰, while in 2020 the ABS estimated that 8.4 percent of the population identify as non-heterosexual. This means that at least 10,500 LGBTIQ+ people may be residing in Maribyrnong.

In 2016, same-sex couples accounted for 1 percent of all Victorian couples, and 15 percent of these reported having children, including one in four female couples¹¹. Over 1000 people identified they were living in a same-sex couple (married or de facto partners) in the City of Maribyrnong in 2016 (590 in male couples, 414 in female couples), which was 1.2 percent of the total population.

Based on these figures, there may be at least 75-100 same-sex parented families with children residing in the City (an inner west LGBTQI parenting group on Facebook has 282 members).

Other 2016 census data suggests that people in same-sex relationships were far more likely to have no religion, have a university degree, be employed, and have higher personal incomes compared to partners in opposite sex relationships.

The 2016 census gathered basic data for the first time on sex and gender diversity. Repeated in 2020, this pilot data collection relied on users knowing about and engaging with a separate mechanism to record their sex as anything other than ‘male’ or ‘female’. As a result, only 1,260 sex and/or gender diverse people were counted, revealing little about these people nationally, let alone at a local government level.¹²

These data sources are likely to underestimate true numbers of LGBTIQ+ people because they rely on self-reporting and only count people cohabiting on census night. The data sets also don’t account for variations within LGBTIQ+ communities.

The Victorian Population Health Survey captured information about sexual orientation and gender identity for the first time in 2017. The survey provides comparative data on many important health measures, including discrimination, social capital, socioeconomic status, mental health, physical health and health screening behaviours for people reporting a range of identities including being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse, queer, pansexual, asexual, having an intersex variation, or ‘other’.

The 2017 survey found Maribyrnong had an estimated LGBTIQ+ population of 6.2%, with a further estimate range of between 4.1–9.4 percent of the population.¹³ Survey data and results confirm findings from other research that LGBTIQ+ people experience significant health inequalities.

Council support for LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities

Through its diverse services and programs, the City of Maribyrnong has engaged with and supported LGBTIQ+ people, communities and families over many years. This Strategy and Action Plan builds on an already solid foundation.

Community service programs provide support and build LGBTIQ+ awareness and capacity through many of its services such as youth services, support to LGBTIQ+ groups within local high schools, library services, maternal and child health programs, and rainbow family playgroups offered through some of its community centres.

Local arts and cultural development programs, galleries, events and settings enable expressions of diversity, gender identity and pride to flourish in the municipality. Council has participated in and supported the GoWest Festival, Midsumma and Pride festivals, LGBTIQ+ programming as part of Fringe Festival, Midsumma Westside, and through the Together Apart Rapid Relief Fund for COVID19.

Other local arts organisations have also delivered LGBTIQ+ programming, including for example the Trocadero Arts Space, Snuff Puppets, Women’s Circus and Footscray Community Arts which partners with the Human Rights Arts and Film Festival and the tilde Film Festival.

Local communities have initiated and organised their own opportunities for connection, including for example through online social groups for rainbow families, general LGBTIQ+ community forums, and residents interested in promoting LGBTIQ+ equality in Maribyrnong.

Local businesses are responding to community expectations and interest through the establishment of rainbow friendly local bars, social venues and LGBTIQ+ inclusive nights and events.

Council recognises that safety in public spaces is often a concern for women and gender-diverse people, with significant impacts on health and well-being.¹⁴ Council continues to partner on a social research initiative to ensure places where women, LGBTIQ+ people and other groups exercise, play and connect play are safe and inclusive.

Councils supports local sport and recreation clubs, several of which are working to actively increase the participation and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people. Prior to COVID19 the Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre delivered its first trans and gender diverse-targeted swim night prior with plans for further sessions in the future.

In March 2022 the City of Maribyrnong convened a LGBTIQ+ Community Advisory Group whose role includes to:

- **Inform Council on the emerging needs, issues and barriers facing LGBTIQ+ people in Maribyrnong;**
- **consider and provide advice to Council on key initiatives, programs and best practice options on culturally safe and inclusive actions that address the needs of LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities;**
- **work directly with Council to develop, implement and review the LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan 2021–2025; and**
- **support Council’s commitment in promoting and advocating for equality, inclusion, diversity and human rights of the LGBTIQ+ people within the wider context of the Maribyrnong community.**

Part 3: Rationale

LGBTIQA+ health and wellbeing needs

The participation, health and wellbeing needs and experiences of LGBTIQA+ people, families and communities have been well documented through many years of research.

While we recognise the richness and vibrancy of LGBTIQA+ people, families and communities, their unique capacities and perspectives, and their resilience, the research shows us that overall, LGBTIQA+ people have poorer health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes than others in the community. These include for example:

- higher than average rates of violence, harassment and discrimination;
- poorer mental health such as anxiety, depression, psychological distress, self-harm and risk of suicide;
- higher rates of isolation and rejection, reduced social participation and engagement;
- poorer life outcomes in terms of drug and alcohol use, homelessness, and early school leaving; and
- avoidance or delay in help seeking behaviours because of real or feared prejudice within service settings.¹⁵

The Victorian Population Health Survey¹⁶ found that self-identified LGBTIQ+ people were more likely to:

- have been born in Australia;
- be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander;
- have never married;
- have a total annual household income lower than \$40,000;
- be unable to raise \$2,000 within two days in an emergency; and
- have experienced food insecurity in the previous year.

The same cohort were less likely to have private health insurance or have a total annual household income over \$100,000.

Across social capital measures, LGBTIQ+ adults were more likely to never or not often feel valued by society, but were also more likely to be members of community groups, feel multiculturalism made life in their area better, and be in contact with 1–4 people in the previous day.

They were less likely to get help from family or neighbours when needed, get a relative or friend to care for them or their children in an emergency, be members of a sports group, or to have lived for 10 years or more in their current neighbourhood.

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System found LGBTIQ+ people experienced a range of poorer mental health outcomes, including higher risk of mental illness, self-harm and suicide compared to heterosexual and cisgender populations. LGBTIQ+ people were recognised as being among a range of groups facing additional barriers that compound their experience, including for example discrimination and poorer access to services and supports responsive to their needs.¹⁷

Recent research has also highlighted the unique and disproportionate impacts of COVID19 on LGBTIQA+ people, families and communities. The impacts of COVID19 were widely reported as disproportionately impacting (for example) young people, women, culturally diverse communities, and people in low paid and precarious employments.

Additionally, impacts were also reported for LGBTIQA+ people within and beyond these communities.

Services working with LGBTIQA+ people reported high levels of distress, increases in clients reporting suicidal behaviours and thoughts, concerns about support and safety in their homes, concerns about job loss, anxiety about potential interactions with police enforcing restrictions, and distress due to decreased access to medical affirmation for trans and gender diverse people.¹⁸

Not all LGBTIQA+ people experience the range of issues outlined above, or equally, with some people being more vulnerable than others to poorer health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes.

Factors influencing LGBTIQA+ health and wellbeing may include age (younger and older people), gender, cultural and religious background, living circumstance (city/rural/ regional, homelessness), existence of a disability or coexisting mental health issue, and the presence or absence of supportive and accepting relationships.¹⁹

The Victorian Population Health Survey found statistically significant differences in the experience of discrimination in the 12 months prior to the survey, being reported by 56.1 percent of trans and gender diverse adults, 39.9 percent of gay or lesbian and 31.5 percent of bisexual, queer or pansexual respondents compared with 15.6 percent of non-LGBTIQ+ adults.

Trans and gender diverse adults also had a significantly higher prevalence of food insecurity, psychological distress and diagnoses of anxiety or depression.

While there are a range of factors that can contribute to a reduced quality of life for some LGBTIQA+ people at different times in their lives, there are also many protective factors that ensure most LGBTIQA+ people can enjoy happy, healthy and well-connected lives.



Transgender: a person whose gender does not exclusively align with the one they were assigned at birth.



The Victorian Government is actively raising awareness, building capacity and influencing the relevant policy settings to ensure LGBTIQ+ communities are supported to drive meaningful change over the next decade.

These include for example through strong relationships with each other, from their families and peers, within LGBTIQ+ and wider communities, and through affirming, safe and welcoming environments in schools, workplaces and other community settings.

Requirements of government

Development of the LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan is an important commitment by Maribyrnong City Council that will help it meet its legal and regulatory requirements as well as deliver on key strategies to promote community health, wellbeing and inclusion.

Several Victorian and federal laws are relevant to local councils when responding to the needs of their LGBTIQ+ communities. These include for example:

- **Human rights laws:** According to the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, local councils must act compatibly with human rights including by considering human rights when making decisions, and making, interpreting and applying laws;
- **Equal opportunity laws:** Councils have a duty to prevent discrimination on the basis of sex, marital and relationship status, sexual orientation or preference, gender identity and intersex status within various laws including the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010, the Fair Work Act 2009 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1984;
- **Local government laws:** The Victorian Local Government Act 2020 is the main law outlining the role and function of local councils in Victoria. The Act was recently reviewed to strengthen community voice in local planning processes, and to

strengthen councils' requirements to consider the diverse needs of all parts of their communities;

- **Public health laws:** The Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 aims to deliver high standards of public health and wellbeing by preventing disease, promoting healthy conditions and addressing health inequalities by targeting efforts according to greatest need; and
- **Gender equality laws:** The Gender Equality Act 2020 is a new law that requires local councils to develop and report on gender equality plans that promote gender equality for people of all genders in the community, including through an intersectional lens that explicitly recognises gender inequality can be compounded by other forms of discrimination and disadvantage a person may experience.
- **Child safety laws:** Supported by a regulatory framework established under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, local councils are required to have policies, procedures and practices aligned to the Victorian Child Safe Standards. From July 2022, Standard 5 includes the requirement to consider the needs of LGBTI children and young people

In early 2022 the Victorian Government released a new strategy, Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2022–32. Through the Strategy the Victorian Government is actively raising awareness, building capacity and influencing the relevant policy settings to ensure LGBTIQ+ communities are supported to drive meaningful change over the next decade. The Strategy will be influential in how local councils respond to the needs of their LGBTIQ+ residents, visitors and businesses.²⁰

Expectations of local government

A community survey undertaken by the Victorian Local Governance Association and Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby in 2016 outlined a range of expectations that LGBTIQ+ communities have of local councils. These included that councils advocate for and publicly support LGBTIQ+ residents, provide inclusive health and community services, and consult community members on the issues that affect them.²¹

In 2020, the Victorian Pride Lobby proposed local government election priorities which included Rainbow Tick accreditation of council-run services; establishment of LGBTIQ+ advisory committees; development of LGBTIQ+ action plans; recognition of days of significance for LGBTIQ+ communities, including by flying appropriate flags from council buildings; and participation in LGBTIQ+ arts and cultural events such as Midsumma, Pride and Carnival.²²

These priorities recognise the direct relationship to the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people and families living in local municipalities and provide a platform for local government engagement and response to the needs of LGBTIQ+ communities

VicHealth for example has found that LGBTIQ+ Victorians who feel connected to their community report higher resilience, subjective wellbeing and life satisfaction, but that major disparities remain – only 6 in 10 regional LGB Victorians agree that 'people around here can be trusted' compared to 8 in 10 regional heterosexual Victorians; only two thirds of LGBTIQ+ Victorians agree 'people around here are willing to help their neighbours' compared to three quarters of non-LGBTIQ+ Victorians.²³

In recent years demographic changes have seen a steady increase in Maribyrnong residents who identify as LGBTIQ+ moving to the inner west for its housing affordability and proximity to the CBD. Many new residents to Maribyrnong bring with them expectations for culturally safe and inclusive environments.

Recent consultations with LGBTIQ+ communities in Maribyrnong indicate residents are seeking culturally safe and gender appropriate services, and venues and facilities for LGBTIQ+ community close to where they live and work. Creating safe and inclusive events and spaces remains a commitment of Council.

Compliance with COVID19 lockdown restrictions amplified the need for easily accessible LGBTIQ+ services and settings within a 5km radius of LGBTIQ+ residents' homes. During this time, Council has received specific requests for mental health support and social connection from LGBTIQ+ community members to address the emerging impacts and risk factors associated with COVID19, lockdowns, and their enduring effects.

Since 2010 Maribyrnong Council has participated on the LGBTIQ+ Western Regions Councils Working Group. A 2015 community forum identified a number of recommended areas for action in the West of Melbourne, including in the City of Maribyrnong. These included that participating councils work to:

- **Recognise layers of GLBTIQ identity:** For decision makers, service providers and the broader community to see beyond the traditional view of GLBTIQ people in the West to acknowledge and work with their multiple identities: CALD communities, refugees, religious groups & leaders, disability and older GLBTIQ people.
- **Promote safe spaces:** For western region councils and service providers to partner with GLBTIQ communities to address homophobic and transphobic harassment and violence, foster specific GLBTIQ safe spaces and community facilities and promote safety in public spaces.
- **Advocate for better access to health care:** For western region councils and service providers to work together to advocate for and provide inclusive, non-judgmental and responsive health care in the West that local GLBTIQ feel safe and able to access.

- **Embed what's been started:** For western region councils to ensure that GLBTIQ-inclusion is given further resources, embedded within Council's policy and practice. Further there is more inclusive practice, more consultation, training and GLBTIQ-inclusion at "other council events".
- **Foster GLBTIQ role models and visibility:** For western region councils, service providers and the broader community to foster and promote GLBTIQ community leadership, role models and their visibility. Further, for councils and service providers to work with local GLBTIQ people to foster a strong GLBTIQ identity in the West.
- **Support local schools:** For western region councils and service providers to work together to expand on GLBTIQ work done in schools, going beyond just signing up to the Safe Schools Coalition and working with teachers in particular.
- **Encourage GLBTIQ networking:** To increase opportunities for local government, service providers, GLBTIQ community groups, GLBTIQ people and their allies to spend time with one another, share and learn.²⁴



Part 4: Consultation and engagement

The themes and initiatives in this Strategy and Action Plan were informed by extensive consultation with local community members, service providers and other key Council partners.

Consultations were designed to gather as diverse a range of community perspectives as possible within available resources. Input was sought through a range of focus groups, online surveys, direct interviews, and receipt of written submissions.

The focus groups comprised a mix of open invitation and targeted sessions and included sessions with First Nations communities, rainbow families, younger and older people, business, sport and recreation, arts and culture, Council staff and other local services, and local LGBTIQ+ community groups and networks.

Over 250 people shared their experiences and views through the consultation and engagement phase. The level and quality of participation in this process was high and the majority of the views contributed by participants were positive and affirming of the strategic directions Council is taking.

What was said: Main consultation themes

Consultation participants demonstrated a great deal of pride in their local community and the strength and resilience of LGBTIQ+ communities. They welcomed the efforts of Council and other local organisations and businesses to help foster a safe, inclusive and vibrant community for all people in Maribyrnong.

Participants were invited to identify current community strengths and assets that contribute to a supportive environment for LGBTIQ+ people and families in Maribyrnong.

The most commonly identified community strengths included that the City of Maribyrnong is a diverse, welcoming and inclusive community that celebrates difference and where LGBTIQ+ community members are increasingly visible.

Maribyrnong has a vibrant night economy which includes venues, pubs and clubs that are LGBTIQ+ owned or businesses that are supportive and inclusive of rainbow communities. There is also a growing number of locally accessible groups, clubs, online networks, social justice support groups and accessible health services that are inclusive of LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities. Local art, culture, sport and recreation programs and opportunities are commonly highlighted as local strengths.

Participants were invited to identify current gaps, barriers and limitations impacting the health, wellbeing and social and economic inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities in Maribyrnong.

Notwithstanding the local community strengths, participants noted that many LGBTIQ+ people remain disconnected, isolated and invisible within the local community and that discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ+ people persist.

Services, groups, networks and information specifically targeted to the needs of LGBTIQ+ people and families are often hard to find or don't exist locally. Universal services intended for the whole community are often hetero- and cis-normative (see glossary), and fail to recognise or are insensitive towards the needs and experiences of LGBTIQ+ people. As a consequence, many LGBTIQ+ people report experiencing minority stress and having to deploy mental labour to ask for or educate about the need for accessible services and supports widely available to others.

Many participants identified that LGBTIQ+ people had been disproportionately impacted by COVID19 and that the resulting social isolation and mental health impacts necessitated the need for safe and welcoming physical spaces and social infrastructure locally.

While Council's work to support and acknowledge LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities was recognised, many participants also indicated that Council's leadership role and commitment to LGBTIQ+ was not well promoted, clearly understood or universally applied.

Participants recognised that the issues identified are not experienced by LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities equally, and that an intersectional lens is important for understanding the diversity of LGBTIQ+ experience and need in a range of settings (see glossary). Groups identified as being at particular risk of exclusion in Maribyrnong included:

- First Nations young people
- LGBTIQ+ people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, especially refugees and recent migrants
- Younger LGBTIQ+ people
- Older LGBTIQ+ people
- Trans, gender diverse and non-binary people
- LGBTIQ+ people with a disability, mental health and alcohol and drug issues
- LGBTIQ+ people experiencing poverty and/or homelessness.



Intersex: a person with an intersex variation is a person born with atypical natural variations to physical or biological sex characteristics.

50%

of participants believe Council should support LGBTIQ+ community visibility and inclusion.

32%

believe Council should support LGBTIQ+ people and families to identify and secure safe venues and spaces to meet.

42%

believe Council should deliver services and programs to LGBTIQ+ people and their families.

35%

believe Council should work in partnership with LGBTIQ+ communities.

Q

Do you support the Vision, Principles and Objectives in the draft LGBTIQ+ Strategy?

Vision	83.3%
Principles	82.5%
Objectives	85.9%
Intersectionality	87%

Part 5: LGBTIQA+ Strategy

Vision

LGBTIQA+ people in the City of Maribyrnong are safe and healthy, and their diverse identities are celebrated.

LGBTIQA+ people are visible, connected and welcomed, and can fully participate in the Maribyrnong community at all stages of life.

Council promotes equality and addresses inequality for LGBTIQA+ people through clear leadership and principled action.



Queer is often used as an umbrella term that includes a range of gender identities and sexual orientations.

Principles

Building on Council’s commitment to the key human rights and social justice values of freedom, respect, equity and dignity outlined in its Human Rights Framework, the LGBTIQA+ Strategy and Action Plan is underpinned by the following human rights-based principles:

First Nations First: Council recognises First Peoples’ right to self-determination as a foundation for equity and fairness and promotes the visibility and protection of their cultural heritage and gender and sexual diversity.

Participation: Council promotes safe, accessible services and public spaces that ensure LGBTIQA+ people are included and supported to reach their potential.

Accountability: Council actively communicates a culture of human rights in the organisation and local community underpinned by authoritative leadership and good governance.

Non-discrimination and equity: Council applies an intersectional lens to improve LGBTIQA+ health and wellbeing in the municipality and work to end the structural causes of discrimination and disadvantage.

Empowered communities: Council works with local LGBTIQA+ people and families to promote increased visibility, enhance diverse representation and ensure they have a voice in processes and decisions that impact their lives.

Uphold human rights standards: Council promotes and protects the rights contained in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities consistent with the objectives of its Human Rights and Social Justice Framework.

Objectives

1. Building social capital

Celebrate the vibrancy, strength and diversity of LGBTIQA+ people, families and communities and work to ensure their participation, inclusion, and health and wellbeing.

2. Facilitate community capital

Recognise and support LGBTIQA+ intersections with the broader community; foster a welcoming, safe and cohesive community for all who live, work and socialise in the City of Maribyrnong.

3. Grow economic capital

Ensure access to resources, services, infrastructure, and shared opportunities so the benefits of economic development are enjoyed by LGBTIQA+ people and families as our community continues to thrive and grow.

4 Develop Council’s ethical leadership

Proactively develop our practice and influence our key partners through a shared culture of learning, innovation and reflection, transparent decision-making, collaboration, and community engagement.



Part 6: Review and evaluation

The LGBTQIA+ Strategy and Action Plan makes provision for an evaluation plan to measure and report on its success (Action 4.4.2). Annual progress reports are also required to be submitted to Council by October each year under the Council Plan 2021-2025.

The evaluation plan will align with Council Plan strategic indicators under:

Objective 3. A Place for All

- Evaluation process developed and implemented to verify inclusive and accessible features of Council programs.
- Evaluation of Council activities and programs, to measure participation diversity.
- Increased culture of challenging gender inequalities, across all settings and life stages.

Objective 5. Ethical Leadership

- Progress against workplace gender equality indicators.
- Increased participation and community involvement in decision-making.
- Increased satisfaction demonstrated in the Annual Community Satisfaction Survey in relation to engagement and involvement in decision-making.
- Towards Gender Equity 2030 Strategy workplace gender equality indicators.

In addition to requirements under the Council Plan, a mid-cycle impact evaluation and final evaluation report will be completed in consultation with LGBTQIA+ community members.

Wherever possible the impact evaluation will take into account measures linked to the Maribyrnong Gender Equity Plan and the Human Rights and Social Justice Framework or equivalent.

The Maribyrnong LGBTQIA+ Community Advisory Group will play an important role in assisting Council with monitoring progress on actions in the Plan.



We will work collaboratively to foster and grow community strengths and resources, as well as work to address existing community needs, gaps and limitations.



Asexual: a person who does not experience sexual attraction, but may experience romantic attraction towards others.


Appendix 1:

Glossary

The LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan contains several terms, not all of which may be familiar to every reader.

While the Strategy and Action plan refer throughout to LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities, Council recognises the overlap but also differences in experience between people of different sexual orientations (lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, heterosexual), gender identities (transgender, gender diverse, non-binary, cisgender) and sex characteristics (intersex, endosex).

Some of the terms used in this document are defined below, but it is also recommended that for a detailed description of these terms and others, that readers refer to the Victorian LGBTIQ+ inclusive language guide.²⁵



Non-binary: someone whose gender is not exclusively female or male; while a person who is agender has no gender.

Gender: many people understand their gender as being female or male. Some people understand their gender as a combination of these or neither. Gender can be expressed in different ways, such as through behaviour or physical appearance. A person’s gender does not necessarily mean they have particular sex characteristics or a particular sexuality, or vice versa.

Sex: refers to a person’s biological sex characteristics. This has historically been understood as either female or male. However, we now know that some people are born with natural variations to sex characteristics.

Sexuality or sexual orientation: describes a person’s romantic and/or sexual attraction to others.

Asexual: a person who does not experience sexual attraction, but may experience romantic attraction towards others.

Bisexual: a person romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of their own gender and other genders. The term ‘bi+’ is also sometimes used to describe the multiplicity of bisexualities. The term Multi-gender attraction (MGA) may also be used for those who experience attraction to more than one gender over a lifetime, regardless of self-identity or labels.

Cisgender: a person whose gender aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. A cisgender or ‘cis’ person is someone who isn’t trans or gender diverse.

Cisnormative / cisnormativity: the social structures (attitudes, beliefs and assumptions) that present cisgender ideals and experiences as universal, assumes everyone holds a cisgender identity and privileges cisgender identities over other forms of gender identity.

Heteronormative / heteronormativity: the social structures (attitudes, beliefs and assumptions) that present heterosexual ideals and experiences as universal, assumes everyone is heterosexual and privileges heterosexuality over other sexualities or sexual orientations.

Gay: a person romantically and/or sexually attracted to people of the same sex and/or gender as themselves. This term is often used to describe men who are attracted to other men, but some women and gender diverse people may describe themselves as gay.

Gender diverse: generally refers to a range of genders expressed in different ways. There are many terms used by gender diverse people to describe themselves. Language in this space is dynamic, particularly among young people, who are more likely to describe themselves as non-binary.

Intersectionality: Many people within LGBTIQ+ communities live with other forms of inequality or discrimination (such as sexism, racism, ableism and classism). How these overlapping and interconnecting forms of oppression (and privilege) link to other aspects of identity is often called ‘intersectionality’.

Intersex: a person with an intersex variation is a person born with atypical natural variations to physical or biological sex characteristics. These may include variations in chromosomes, hormones or anatomy. Intersex traits are a natural part of human bodily diversity. Not all people with intersex variations use the term intersex to describe themselves. A person whose innate sex characteristics fit normative medical or social ideas for female or male bodies may be described as ‘endosex’.

Lesbian: a woman romantically and/or sexually attracted to other women.

Non-binary: someone whose gender is not exclusively female or male; while a person who is agender has no gender.

Queer: often used as an umbrella term for diverse genders or sexualities. Some people use queer to describe their own gender and/or sexuality if other terms do not fit. For some people, especially older LGBTIQ people, ‘queer’ has negative connotations, because in the past it was used as a discriminatory term.

Questioning The ‘Q’ in LGBTIQ+ is sometimes also used to refer to ‘questioning’. Rather than be locked in to a certainty, some people are still exploring or questioning their gender or sexual orientation. People may not wish to have one of the other labels applied to them yet, for a variety of reasons, but may still wish to be clear, for example, that they are non-binary or non-heterosexual. It is important these individuals feel welcome and included in the acronym and community spaces.

Transgender: a person whose gender does not exclusively align with the one they were assigned at birth. Transgender or trans is an umbrella term with people choosing to describe themselves in many different ways. It is important to use the terms someone uses to describe themselves.

Engagement and consultation materials

First phase consultations: Focus groups and survey

Focus group discussion 1: Vision for LGBTIQ+ people in Maribyrnong

Thinking about LGBTIQ+ people and their families who live, work, study and recreate in Maribyrnong. They are thriving, healthy and happy...

- Q. What are their lives like?
- Q. What do they see/hear/feel experience?

Focus group discussion 2: Current gaps, barriers and limitations

Thinking about the factors that prevent or limit this vision...

- Q. What are the current issues for LGBTIQ+ people and their families in Maribyrnong?
- Q. What barriers do these communities face?
- Q. How have communities been impacted by COVID-19?

Focus group discussion 3: Opportunities for a stronger future

Thinking about opportunities to bridge where we are and where we want to get to...

- Q. What steps can be taken to ensure LGBTIQ+ people and families in Maribyrnong are thriving?
- Q. What do you think Council could or should do?
- Q. What role should LGBTIQ+ communities and others play?

Survey questions

- Q. Can you name three positive things about Maribyrnong that support LGBTIQ+ people and their families?
- Q. What are three less positive things about Maribyrnong that could be improved to better support LGBTIQ+ people and their families?
- Q. What role can Council play to positively influence LGBTIQ+ safety, participation and inclusion, health and wellbeing in Maribyrnong?
- Q. Can you identify any specific actions Council could take?

Second phase consultations: Test and refine workshop and survey

Test and refine workshop discussion 1: Vision

- Q. Do you support the Vision statements for the Maribyrnong LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025?
- Q. What suggestions do you have for how the Vision statements could be improved?

Test and refine workshop discussion 2: Principles

- Q. How clearly do you think each Principle is described?
- Q. What suggestions do you have for how the Principles could be improved?

Test and refine workshop discussion 3: Objectives

- Q. Do issues of interest and concern to you have a "home" in the Objectives and Key Focus Areas?
- Q. What suggestions do you have for how the Objectives and Key Focus Areas could be improved?

Survey questions: Vision

- Q. How do you feel about the three proposed vision statements - which is what we hope to achieve. These statements broadly align with the new Victorian LGBTIQ+ Strategy Pride in our future.
- Q. Please share any thoughts or suggestions on how the Vision statements could be improved?

Survey questions: Principles

- Q. Do you support the principles in the draft strategy and framework?
- Q. Please share any thoughts or suggestions on how the Principles could be improved?
- Q. If there a principle that should be incorporated but isn't please tell us.

Survey questions: Objectives

- Q. How well do you feel the Objectives and Key Focus Areas will support Council to respond to the issues, need and concerns of LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities in Maribyrnong?
- Q. If you have disagreed or strongly disagreed with a focus area please tell us why?

Survey questions: Other

- Q. During our initial engagement you told us that you would like to see Council growing relationships with the LGBTIQ+ community. Which of the listed options support your thinking on ways we could do that?
- Q. Do you see the community also has a role in supporting LGBTIQ+ community visibility and inclusion?
- Q. Do you see Council has a role in supporting LGBTIQ+ community visibility and inclusion?
- Q. Are there specific groups within the LGBTIQ+ community that should be explicitly considered by Council to support a safe, equitable, inclusive municipality?
- Q. Do you understand what intersectionality or intersectional lens mean?
- Q. Do you have any other areas you would like us to focus on?

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LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan 2022–2026

VISION	PRINCIPLES
<p>LGBTIQ+ people in the City of Maribyrnong are safe and healthy, and their diverse identities are celebrated.</p> <p>LGBTIQ+ people are visible, connected and welcomed, and can fully participate in the Maribyrnong community at all stages of life.</p> <p>Council promotes equality and addresses inequality for LGBTIQ+ people through clear leadership and principled action.</p>	<p>Building on Council’s commitment to the key human rights and social justice values of freedom, respect, equity and dignity outlined in its Human Rights Framework, the LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan is underpinned by the following human rights-based principles:</p> <p>First Nations First</p> <p>Council recognises First Peoples’ right to self-determination as a foundation for equity and fairness, and promotes the visibility and protection of their cultural heritage and gender and sexual diversity</p> <p>Participation</p> <p>Council promotes safe, accessible services and public spaces that ensure LGBTIQ+ people are included and supported to reach their potential</p> <p>Accountability</p> <p>Council actively communicates a culture of human rights in the organisation and local community underpinned by authoritative leadership and good governance</p> <p>Non-discrimination and equity</p> <p>Council applies an intersectional lens to improve LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing in the municipality and work to end the structural causes of discrimination and disadvantage Empowered communities</p> <p>Council works with local LGBTIQ+ people and families to promote increased visibility, enhance diverse representation and ensure they have a voice in processes and decisions that impact their lives.</p> <p>Uphold human rights standards</p> <p>Council promotes and protects the rights contained in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities consistent with the objectives of its Human Rights and Social Justice Framework</p>

OBJECTIVES, KEY FOCUS AREAS AND ACTIONS

1. Build social capital

Celebrate the vibrancy, strength and diversity of LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities and work to ensure their participation, inclusion, and health and wellbeing

1.1 Facilitate opportunities for civic participation, social engagement and volunteering.

1.1.1 Provide low-or-no cost access to Council-produced events and programming to support LGBTIQ+ peer and community connections, including within Council libraries, community centres and other facilities such as Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre (MAC), RecWest Footscray and Braybrook.

1.1.2 Gather data about the contribution and participation of LGBTIQ+ communities / groups in formal and informal volunteering to identify gaps and opportunities.

1.1.3 Support inclusion and participation by specific LGBTIQ+ communities including people from First Nations, culturally and linguistically diverse and refugee backgrounds; rainbow families; LGBTIQ+ people who are older and who have a disability; and trans and gender diverse people, by:

- undertaking a needs analysis to understand their lived experience, needs and interests; and
- working with local service providers and LGBTIQ+ communities to advocate for culturally safe service improvements to better met their needs.

1.2 Support and promote community-led activities, programs, festivals and events.

1.2.1 Promote and target available grants (Council and others) to assist local LGBTIQ+ groups and organisations deliver community-led programs and events, including through small seeding grants to support their establishment.

1.2.2 Use Council's available communication channels to promote local LGBTIQ+ events and activities supported by Council that are taking place in the City of Maribyrnong and delivered by other businesses, clubs, groups, and organisations.

1.2.3 Actively partner with local businesses and organisations, and LGBTIQ+ organisations outside of Maribyrnong, to grow the range of activity, program and event opportunities available to LGBTIQ+ people and families in the municipality.

1.3 Improve LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing outcomes health prevention, promotion and response initiatives, including those that address the ongoing impacts of COVID19.

1.3.1 Partner with local services and LGBTIQ+ specialist providers to advocate for local service and resource improvements especially:

- inclusive primary, sexual and mental health services for all LGBTIQ+ people including young, transgender and non-binary people
- safe and affordable housing options for older LGBTI* people, trans and gender diverse people of all ages and those experiencing homelessness
- supports for LGBTIQ+ carers and people with a disability
- respectful and inclusive support for family violence and/or intimate partner violence
- culturally appropriate and safe services for LGBTIQ+ CALD, newly arrived and refugees and asylum seekers
- parenting, antenatal, Maternal and Child Health, playgroup and other early years activities for rainbow families
- LGBTIQ+ and family inclusive sport and recreation opportunities.

1.3.2 Partner to develop a rainbow map resource for the West to promote LGBTIQ+ inclusive, friendly, welcoming and specialist services and businesses.

1.3.3 Support LGBTIQ+ inclusive peer-based social and economic recovery projects including for example food relief, social support, and community connection.

1.3.4 Continue to work with service and community partners to identify and address the continuing impacts of COVID19 on LGBTIQ+ physical and mental health and social inclusion.

1.4 Strengthen LGBTIQ+ voice, representation and leadership.

1.4.1 Deliver the Maribyrnong LGBTIQ+ Community Advisory Group and identify other engagement mechanisms to enable LGBTIQ+ participation in the codesign of policy, programs and services.

1.4.2 Explore development of a LGBTIQ+ leadership and mentoring program to encourage and support diverse participation on Council, other local governance structures, and within the local community.

1.4.3 Include opportunities to gauge LGBTIQ+ experience in Maribyrnong through Council's annual community survey.

OBJECTIVES, KEY FOCUS AREAS AND ACTIONS

2 Facilitate community capital

Recognise and support LGBTIQ+ intersections with the broader community; foster a welcoming, safe and cohesive community for all who live, work and socialise in the City of Maribyrnong

2.1 Advocate and partner to prevent violence and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities.

2.1.1 Through a standing agenda item of the Maribyrnong Community Safety Committee promote, co-design and advocate for community safety initiatives to:

- monitor, prevent and respond to LGBTIQ+ experiences of violence and discrimination; and
- address LGBTIQ+ perceptions of safety and fear of crime.

2.1.2 Build on existing initiatives and research (such as Your Ground) to raise awareness of LGBTIQ+ public safety and integrate gender safety principles in the design of public spaces, streets and parks.

2.1.3 Through Council's Towards Gender Equity 2030, advocate for improved responses to LGBTIQ+ intimate partner violence, elder abuse, and other forms of gender-based violence.

2.2 Facilitate community cohesion and understanding about LGBTIQ+ issues, needs and lived experience.

2.2.1 In partnership with local organisations, service providers, schools, LGBTIQ+ sector, State and Federal Governments, support ongoing awareness and education initiatives to improve perceptions, knowledge and understanding of LGBTIQ+ people and experience among the broader Maribyrnong community.

2.2.2 Support and deliver a range of events and programming opportunities to foster cross-cultural and intergenerational understanding between LGBTIQ+ communities and the broader community.

2.2.3 Increase LGBTIQ+ visibility and inclusion by commissioning appropriate art installations or murals within the municipality (including for example a rainbow crosswalk outside Footscray Station).

2.3 Deliver initiatives that recognise and celebrate LGBTIQ+ community cultures, symbols and histories.

2.3.1 Support events and activities that build upon Council's participation at Midsumma Carnival and Pride March and recognise other key dates of significance.

2.3.2 Convene an annual joint meeting of the LGBTIQ+ Community Advisory Group and First Nations Community Members (or equivalent) to discuss collaboration opportunities based on storytelling about lived experience.

OBJECTIVES, KEY FOCUS AREAS AND ACTIONS

3 Grow economic capital

Ensure access to resources, services, infrastructure, and shared opportunities so the benefits of economic development are enjoyed by LGBTIQ+ people and families as our community continues to thrive and grow

3.1 Increase the availability of local infrastructure that is safe, welcoming and fosters a sense of belonging for LGBTIQ+ people, families, and communities.

3.1.1 Through Council’s Asset Management Plan, and consistent with the principles in the Community Infrastructure Strategy, ensure new and redeveloped Council infrastructure prioritises and delivers accessible and gender-neutral toilets, changerooms, parenting rooms and other facilities as required (such as inclusive access to sanitary disposal facilities).

3.1.2 Ensure Council’s gender impact assessment processes and findings inform Council’s Asset Management Plan and Capital Works Program to expand use of Council infrastructure by LGBTIQ+ groups and programs across the municipality.

3.1.3 Advocate for the establishment of a locally accessible, safe community hub including health services where LGBTIQ+ people, families and community can connect in the West.

3.2 Encourage businesses, services and programs to adopt minimum service standards that meet the diverse needs of LGBTIQ+ people.

3.2.1 Collaborate with local organisations, service providers, LGBTIQ+ sector, and all tiers of government (for example cohealth, Victoria Police, Victoria University, Western Bulldogs, Koori Pride Network, Rainbow Health Australia) to develop and share good practice models for LGBTIQ+ inclusion and safety.

3.2.2 Contribute to revitalising the Qwest network of local councils to support improved regional networking and planning.

3.2.3 Explore LGBTIQ+ inclusion criteria to service provider agreements, contracts, leases and funding guidelines to support quality service improvement outcomes in purchased services and programs, where appropriate.

3.2.4 Develop LGBTIQ+ inclusion resources and support targeted access to LGBTIQ+ training for mainstream services in receipt of Council funding, with a particular focus on small volunteer organisations, sporting clubs and other grant recipients.

3.3 Promote and partner with local business, clubs, organisations and institutions to build capacity for rainbow friendly local economies.

3.3.1 Regularly profile and acknowledge local LGBTIQ+ businesses, leaders, events and spaces in Maribyrnong, including through the creation of targeted community and business awards categories.

- 3.3.2 Develop a rainbow friendly business directory that includes:
- a curated list and digital map of LGBTIQ+ owned, operated and friendly businesses on the Love Your Local campaign website; and
 - rainbow-friendly business collateral linked to the Love Your Local campaign that businesses can display.

OBJECTIVES, KEY FOCUS AREAS AND ACTIONS

4 Develop Council’s ethical leadership

Proactively develop our practice and influence our key partners through a shared culture of learning, innovation and reflection, transparent decision-making, collaboration, and community engagement.

4.1 Uphold Council obligations to promote and protect LGBTIQ+ human rights all areas of Council’s operations.

4.1.1 Use gender impact assessment outcomes to pursue minimum LGBTIQ+ accreditation service standards that are appropriate, applicable and including of local government.

4.1.2 Ensure Council explicitly adopts an intersectional LGBTIQ+ inclusion lens when responding to legislative and quality obligations across Council operations (for example gender impact assessments, gender equality action planning and workforce auditing under the Gender Equality Act 2020; the equity and diversity provisions of Victorian Child Safe Standard 5).

4.2 Ensure Council communications, language, information and data systems are inclusive of LGBTIQ+ people and families.

4.2.1 Develop a Council-wide inclusive language guide in partnership with the community in keeping with emerging LGBTIQ+ community protocols and terminology.

4.2.2 Audit internal information collection processes such as recruitment and payroll forms and systems to ensure they are LGBTIQ+ inclusive.

4.2.3 Promote visibility and support for LGBTIQ+ people, families and communities through increased use of flags on Council buildings, other rainbow collateral (stickers, posters and lanyards), email signatures, communications content and other rainbow assets across the municipality.

4.3 Continue to model a safer, healthier, diverse and more equitable organisation for LGBTIQ+ staff by influencing a positive and inclusive workplace that is affirming of all forms of diversity.

4.3.1 Design, develop or access ongoing LGBTIQ+ inclusion training for Councillors and staff at all levels of the organisations.

4.3.2 Identify opportunities to develop LGBTIQ+ workforce inclusion and equity practice linked to activities under the Gender Equality Act 2020, through the establishment of a LGBTIQ+ staff reference group.

4.4 Identify resources to support delivery and reporting of the Strategy and Action Plan and related initiatives.

4.4.1 Appoint a Project Officer to implement strategies and action plans to support and advise on inclusion and related matters across the organisation.

4.4.2 Develop and deliver an evaluation plan to measure and report against the LGBTIQ+ Strategy and Action Plan, including reports to the local community on successes and challenges.

Footnotes

Part 1: Introduction

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1 This Strategy and Action Plan use the acronym LGBTIQ+ throughout, but recognises that a range of acronyms are used in other contexts. When referring to other documents or research, the acronym used in those works is referenced.

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2 State of Victoria (2022). Pride in our future: Victoria’s LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022-32. (Accessed 10/5/22)

Part 2: Context

Page 7

3 Morandini, J. (et al), ‘Minority Stress and Community Connectedness among Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Australians: A Comparison of Rural and Metropolitan Localities’ (2015) 39(3) Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health 260.

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12 ABS (2018). Sex and gender diversity in the 2016 census. (Accessed 27/1/22)

13 Victorian Agency for Health Information (VAHI). (2020). The health and wellbeing of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer population in Victoria: Findings from the Victorian population health survey 2017. (Accessed 27/1/22)

14 XYX Lab and CrowdSpot (2021). YourGround Victoria report. Melbourne: Monash University XYX Lab. (Accessed 10/5/22)

Part 3: Rationale

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Appendix 1. Glossary

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The original Rainbow flag: Devised by artist Gilbert Baker in 1978, the rainbow flag is a symbol of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer pride and LGBT social movements.



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Council wishes to acknowledge and deeply thank all of those who have trusted us by sharing their hopes and aspirations as we work together towards a more welcoming and inclusive community.

For further information, please visit
www.yourcityyourvoice.com.au/lgbtiqa