



Issues Paper

February 2018

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex (LGBTI) children and young people

What is meant by LGBTI?

LGBTI refers collectively to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and/or intersex, and is the most commonly used way to refer to people who have a diverse gender identity or sexual orientation, or who are intersex.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People understands there are a range of terms and definitions that people use to define their gender or sexuality. The Commissioner's office will use the broad term LGBTI to inclusively refer to all people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex, as well as to represent other members of the community that use different terms to describe their diverse sexuality and/or gender.

LGBTI people exist across all countries, cultures, and communities, and evidence of their existence has been noted throughout history, from early human civilisation to the modern day.¹ Many cultures and societies have traditionally accepted and recognised diverse gender and sexuality expressions and identities.²

Data collection relating to the population of LGBTI people in Australia is very limited, and collected inconsistently, making it difficult to provide accurate population estimates, however some estimates place the prevalence of LGBTI people in Australia anywhere between 3 to 11 per cent^{3 4} of the Australian population.

¹ UN Free and Equal n.d., *Fact Sheet: LGBT Rights: Frequently Asked Questions*. United Nations Human Rights Office. Retrieved from <https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/LGBT-Rights-FAQs.pdf>

² UN Free and Equal n.d., *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Throughout History*. United Nations Human Rights Office. Retrieved from <https://www.unfe.org/sexual-orientation-gender-identity-nothing-new/>

³ Richters J et al. 2014, 'Sexual identity, sexual attraction and sexual experience: the Second Australian Study of Health and Relationships', *Sexual Health*, Vol. 11, pp. 451 – 460.

⁴ Department of Health and Ageing 2012, *National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Ageing and Aged Care Strategy*, Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from https://agedcare.health.gov.au/sites/g/files/net1426/f/documents/08_2014/national_ageing_and_aged_care_strategy_lgbti_print_version.pdf

Understanding gender identity and sexuality can be complex, however the following concepts provide guidance.

Gender identity: This refers to the way that a person defines their internal sense of gender. While many people's gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth (i.e. male or female), for some people this is not the case. People who do not identify as the sex they were assigned at birth may identify as transgender, trans, non-binary or a variety of other terms that reflect their gender identity.⁵

Sexual orientation: This refers to a person's physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction towards other people. People who identify as heterosexual are attracted to people of the opposite sex, whereas gay men and lesbian women are attracted to individuals of the same sex, and bisexual people are attracted to both men and women. Some people may have other sexual orientations, including being pansexual or omnisexual (i.e. attracted to all genders, including non-binary genders), as well as asexual (i.e. does not experience any form of sexual attraction but may experience emotional attraction).⁶ A person's sexual orientation is distinctly different to their gender identity.

Intersex: This refers to people who are born with sexual anatomy, reproductive organs and/or chromosomes that are inconsistent with the typical definitions of male or female. There are a range of different intersex variations, and the specific health needs or other experiences of intersex children and young people vary greatly depending on their particular condition or intersex variation. Some intersex variations, including atypical external genitalia, may be apparent at birth, whilst others, such as chromosomal or internal gonad variations, may not become known until later in life. Intersex people experience the same range of diversity in relation to their gender identities and sexual orientation, and may identify as male, female or another gender variation.

Why do we need a specific focus on LGBTI children and young people?

Most LGBTI people live happy, successful and fulfilling lives, have developed strength and resilience as a result of their life experiences and have positive hopes and aspirations for their futures. Many LGBTI people are passionate about creating positive changes for the LGBTI community, by translating their own experiences to pursue social justice and advocacy for LGBTI rights and equality.

⁵ UN Free and Equal n.d., *Fact Sheet: LGBT Rights: Frequently Asked Questions*. United Nations Human Rights Office. Retrieved from <https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/LGBT-Rights-FAQs.pdf>

⁶ Ibid.

LGBTI people are not a homogenous group. As well as individual differences between people, the needs and experiences of people who are trans, intersex or gender diverse in other ways are likely to be very different to those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or of other sexual orientations. Regardless of the differences between individual members of the LGBTI community, there is a range of factors and common issues that impact on their health, safety and wellbeing, or prevent them from being recognised and respected for who they are, treated equally, or from having the same opportunities as other members of the community.

The issues that affect LGBTI people largely stem from social and cultural beliefs and assumptions about gender and sexuality, including systemic discrimination at an individual, social, political and legal level. Dominant social views tend to assume or believe that most people are heterosexual⁷ and that people should partner with a person of the opposite sex. These beliefs often affect people in same-sex or other relationships through explicit stigmatisation or discrimination, or by failing to recognise their relationships or its legitimacy. Examples of this include assuming a person is heterosexual, or not recognising a same-sex or other partner as being next of kin.

Similarly, gender and sex are typically viewed in a binary and fixed manner (i.e. male or female), which does not recognise people whose identity lies outside of this (e.g. people who identify as non-binary or who are trans) or people who are intersex. This can lead to explicit discrimination towards people who do not present as stereotypically male or female in their appearance, characteristics or behaviours, or through a failure to acknowledge genders other than male or female (for example, survey forms that only provide gender options as male or female, exclusively male and female facilities such as bathrooms and change rooms, or single-sex competitive sporting activities).

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the principles of equality and non-discrimination apply equally to all people, making it unlawful to discriminate against a person based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or if they are intersex.⁸ Despite this, the United Nations has expressed significant concern about violence and discrimination against LGBTI people.

LGBTI people, both internationally and in Australia, often face issues such as social exclusion; violence, abuse and discrimination; a lack of support from their families and communities; and barriers to accessing appropriate support services.^{9 10} These

⁷ Levay S et al n.d., *Discovering Human Sexuality: Glossary*. Retrieved from <https://discoveringhumansexuality3e.sinauer.com/glossary.html>

⁸ UN Free and Equal n.d., *Fact Sheet: International Human Rights Law and Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*, United Nations Human Rights Office. Retrieved from http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Discrimination/LGBT/FactSheets/unfe-11-UN_Fact_Sheets_GenderIdentity_English.pdf

⁹ Ibid.

experiences of discrimination and social exclusion negatively impact the health and wellbeing of LGBTI people, particularly their mental health, resulting in higher rates of mental health issues, including rates of suicide.¹¹

Some LGBTI people may also experience pressure to change their sexuality or gender identity, in order to conform to certain social beliefs or assumptions, including those previously mentioned, such as that sex and gender are binary and fixed, and that heterosexual relationships are paramount. These attempts to change sexuality or gender identity can have harmful psychological or physical impacts on the individual, and fail to recognise their differences as normal variations in sexuality and gender identity.¹² Many international human rights and mental health organisations have called for a ban on any intervention aimed at changing an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity, under the premise they are often in direct violation of human rights conventions, and are not based on evidence.^{13 14} This call includes a ban on 'conversion' interventions, or other coercive treatments on LGBTI children, young people or adults which attempt to change their sexuality and gender identity.

There is often limited attention or knowledge about the specific needs of intersex people. As mentioned previously, the needs and experiences of intersex people vary significantly depending on their specific intersex variation, and some intersex people may not actually consider themselves to be members of the LGBTI community.

There are a range of concerns about the possible long-term implications and adverse consequences of surgeries that are performed on intersex infants and

¹⁰ Hillier, L., et al. 2010, *Writing Themselves in 3: The third national study on the sexual health and wellbeing of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people*, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University.

¹¹ Suicide Prevention Australia 2009, *Position Statement: Suicide and self-harm among Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender communities*, Suicide Prevention Australia. Retrieved from [https://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/sites/default/files/resources/2016/SPA-GayLesbian-PositionStatement\[1\].pdf](https://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/sites/default/files/resources/2016/SPA-GayLesbian-PositionStatement[1].pdf)

¹² UN Free and Equal n.d., *Fact Sheet: LGBT Rights: Frequently Asked Questions*, United Nations Human Rights Office. Retrieved from <https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/LGBT-Rights-FAQs.pdf>

¹³ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner 2016, *"Pathologisation – being lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or trans is not an illness" For International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia*, Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=19956&LangID=E>

¹³ Schroeder M & Shidlo A 2002, 'Ethical issues in sexual orientation conversion therapies: An empirical study of consumers', *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy*, Vol. 5 No 3-4.

¹⁴ Australian Psychological Society 2015, *APS Position Statement on the use of psychological practices that attempt to change sexual orientation*, Melbourne: APS. Retrieved from <https://www.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/APS%20Position%20Statement%20on%20Psychological%20Practices%20that%20attempt%20to%20change%20Sexual%20Orientation%20Members.pdf>

children where there is not an urgent medical need to do so. These concerns include that some surgeries are undertaken to “normalise” the aesthetic appearance or function of the infant or child’s genitalia, and that they occur without the infant or child’s consent and prior to the child having an opportunity to express their gender identity. Some national and international advocacy organisations, and an Australian Senate Inquiry,¹⁵ have called for medical procedures (including surgeries or sterilisations) on intersex infants and children to be restricted to situations where there is an urgent medical need for this to occur. As there are a broad range of conditions that intersex children and young people experience, decision making about treatment and support must be undertaken by highly specialised and multidisciplinary teams.

All of these issues affecting LGBTI people or communities apply equally to, and impact significantly on, children and young people.

Children and young people often develop an awareness of their sexuality or gender identity at a young age or prior to adolescence^{16 17} and may experience a range of additional challenges relating to their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status. These include issues relating to understanding and making sense of their identity, “coming out” to family and friends, being bullied or excluded at school, a lack of support from friends and families, reliance on parental consent and support to access services or change identity, and all of the other stresses that children and young people face in relation to managing school and education, relationships, puberty, body image and independence.¹⁸

For trans and intersex children and young people, puberty can also be a time of distress in regards to changes and developments of their bodies, and in terms of navigating gendered environments and activities, such as school camps, toilets, school uniforms and sporting teams.

The school environment can be a particularly challenging experience for children and young people. High levels of bullying, violence and discrimination that can occur

¹⁵ Senate Community Affairs Committee Secretariat 2013, *Involuntary or coerced sterilisation of intersex people in Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Involuntary_Sterilisation/Sec_Report/~media/Committees/Senate/committee/clac_ctte/involuntary_sterilisation/second_report/report.ashx](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Involuntary_Sterilisation/Sec_Report/~/media/Committees/Senate/committee/clac_ctte/involuntary_sterilisation/second_report/report.ashx)

¹⁶ Q Life 2016, *Young People: Q Life Tip Sheet*, Q Life. Retrieved from <https://qlife.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/19-Young-People-for-web.pdf>

¹⁷ Strauss P et al, 2017, *Trans Pathways: the mental health experiences and care pathways of trans young people. Summary of results*, Telethon Kids Institute, Perth, Australia.

¹⁸ Response Ability 2014, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex*, Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from http://www.responseability.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/11703/Lesbian,-Gay,-Bisexual,-Transgender-and-Intersex-LGBTI.pdf

within school and education settings¹⁹ have a significant impact on the education, employment and health and wellbeing of LGBTI children and young people.²⁰ Children and young people may also experience challenges in other education or training settings such as completing work experience or employment training programs, or as they transition into adult education such as universities or TAFEs.

There are a range of other challenges that LGBTI young people may also face. Trans and gender diverse people often face higher rates of unemployment,²¹ and LGBTI people more broadly may also feel they need to hide their sexuality or gender identity in the workplace out of a real or perceived threat of discrimination or bullying.²² LGBTI young people may also be at a higher risk of experiencing homelessness, particularly where they have experienced family rejection or a lack of support. There may be further challenges for trans or gender diverse young people who could experience barriers in accessing suitable crisis accommodation or homelessness services due to feeling unsafe, or the staff, facilities and administrative processes not being inclusive of trans or gender diverse people.²³

The challenges faced by LGBTI children and young people may be further exacerbated for those who have other distinct identities or experiences, including children and young people who are Aboriginal, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, have a disability, are asylum seekers or refugees, are from a religious faith community, or from regional or remote locations.^{24 25} The experiences

¹⁹ Hillier L et al. 2010, *Writing Themselves in 3: The third national study on the sexual health and wellbeing of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people*, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society: La Trobe University.

²⁰ United Nations 2016, *Living Free & Equal: What States are doing to tackle violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people*, United Nations. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/LivingFreeAndEqual.pdf>

²¹ James S et al. 2016, *The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*, Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality.

²² Leonard W et al. 2012, *Private Lives 2: The second national survey of the health and wellbeing of GLBT Australians*, Monograph Series Number 86. Melbourne: The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University.

²³ McNair R et al. 2017, *LGBTW Homelessness: Risks, Resilience and Access to Services in Victoria*, Gay and Lesbian Foundation Australia. Retrieved from <http://www.lgbtihomeless.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/LGBTI-Homelessness-project-Final-report-September-2017.pdf>

²⁴ United Nations 2016, *Living Free & Equal: What States are doing to tackle violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people*, United Nations. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/LivingFreeAndEqual.pdf>

²⁵ Morris S 2016, *Snapshot of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Statistics for LGBTI People and Communities*, National LGBTI Health Alliance, Sydney, Australia. Retrieved from <http://lgbtihealth.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SNAPSHOT-Mental-Health-and-Suicide-Prevention-Outcomes-for-LGBTI-people-and-communities.pdf>

of these LGBTI children and young people may be very different to others, and these circumstances may impact a child or young person's willingness to "come out" to family and friends, the level of support they receive from their peers, families, or the wider community, as well as their experience of other forms of discrimination.²⁶

LGBTI people are more likely to experience poor mental health than the general population, and the rates of mental health issues among LGBTI children and young people – including depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicidal thought – warrant urgent attention.²⁷

These mental health issues are particularly high for trans young people, with an Australian research report finding that:

- around 70 to 75 per cent of trans young people have a clinical diagnosis of depression and/or anxiety
- almost 80 per cent have self-harmed
- close to 50 per cent having attempted suicide at one point in their life.²⁸

The period of highest risk of suicide for LGBTI children and young people is where they have acknowledged their sexuality or gender identity, but have not told anyone else.²⁹

Having a diverse sexual orientation, diverse gender identity, or being intersex are not in themselves risk factors for poor mental health, rather it is the social exclusion and discrimination that LGBTI children and young people face which has a negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing. There is a distinct link between children and young people's experiences of homophobic or transphobic discrimination and abuse with poor mental health outcomes, self-harm, suicide attempts and drug use.³⁰

³¹

²⁶ Hillier L et al. 2010, *Writing Themselves in 3: The third national study on the sexual health and wellbeing of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people*, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society: La Trobe University.

²⁷ Morris S 2016, *Snapshot of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Statistics for LGBTI People and Communities*, National LGBTI Health Alliance, Sydney, Australia. Retrieved from <http://lgbtihealth.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SNAPSHOT-Mental-Health-and-Suicide-Prevention-Outcomes-for-LGBTI-people-and-communities.pdf>

²⁸ Strauss P et al 2017, *Trans Pathways: the mental health experiences and care pathways of trans young people. Summary of results*, Telethon Kids Institute, Perth, Australia.

²⁹ Q Life 2016, *Young People: Q Life Tip Sheet*, Q Life. Retrieved from. <https://qlife.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/19-Young-People-for-web.pdf>

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Hillier L et al. 2010, *Writing Themselves in 3: The third national study on the sexual health and wellbeing of same sex attracted and gender questioning young people*, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society: La Trobe University.

Therefore, any interventions aimed at supporting LGBTI children and young people must address the social and political attitudes, beliefs and environments which stigmatise and discriminate against LGBTI people.

What is already being done to support LGBTI children and young people?

Direct service provision to LGBTI children and young people

There are a small number of dedicated direct services available to support LGBTI children and young people in WA, however these services typically operate on limited funding and there is limited service provision in regional areas of the State.

The services that exist include:

- a specialist gender diversity service that provides support, consultation and intervention for trans or gender diverse children and young people
- peer-support services for LGBTI young people
- educational and inclusion support programs for school settings
- other services to provide education and information sessions on LGBTI issues, and telephone counselling.

Whilst there are some dedicated services available, it is difficult to get a comprehensive picture of what is occurring across the State, given that many local services are led by community or volunteer-run organisations. There is variance in the accessibility of mainstream services for LGBTI children and young people, and also possible gaps and challenges for children and young people who are transitioning from child or youth health services into adult services.

Protections for LGBTI people in Western Australia

The *WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984* makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of their sexual orientation (specifically, heterosexuality, homosexuality, lesbianism and bisexuality) in certain areas of public life, as well as discrimination based on gender history against a person who has undergone gender affirming surgery (or gender reassignment as it is written in the Act) and been issued with a gender reassignment certificate.

Those who believe they have been discriminated against on these grounds are able to lodge a complaint with the Equal Opportunity Commission, who will assess the complaint and, if accepted, work to investigate and conciliate the complaint. Where conciliation is not successful, or where the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome, a referral can be made to have the matter addressed by the State Administrative Tribunal.

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* does not provide protections for those individuals who are in the process of transitioning, or who are unable to meet the formal gender reassignment requirements. This has an impact on trans children and young people who are in the process of transitioning, as well as those who may not choose to undergo the requirements to achieve formal gender reassignment. These protections are provided at a federal level under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* after the Act was amended in 2013.

The *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status under federal law. This Act includes more inclusive definitions and addresses gaps that exist at a state or territory level. People are able to complain to the Australian Human Rights Commission if they believe they have been discriminated on the grounds of their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.

The Equal Opportunity Commission in WA has previously undertaken some work to highlight the issues facing LGBTI people in WA and provide some guidance towards addressing their needs. This has focused on developing a set of guidelines for supporting sexual and gender diversity in schools and addressing bullying and discrimination,³² as well as running an annual lecture series focusing on the rights of trans and intersex people in WA. However, the Commission's remit is very broad and has experienced capacity constraints under funding changes.

The Australian Human Rights Commission has a broad responsibility to promote and protect human rights in Australia. They have undertaken a number of major projects to better understand and promote community understanding about the issues affecting LGBTI people in Australia, as well as advocacy to improve federal laws and policies to protect the rights of LGBTI people.³³

What needs to be done to promote better inclusion of LGBTI children and young people and better outcomes?

In early 2018, the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People established Advisory Committees which focused specifically on the needs of LGBTI children and young people in Western Australia. One of these groups includes LGBTI young people living in the Perth metropolitan area, who identified a range of

³² Equal Opportunity Commission of WA 2013, *Guidelines for supporting sexual and gender diversity in schools: Sexuality discrimination and homophobic bullying*, Equal Opportunity Commission, Perth, Western Australia. Retrieved from <http://vivid.blob.core.windows.net/eoc-sitefinity/publications/gender-diversity-guidelines-in-schools.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

³³ Australian Human Rights Commission 2015, *Resilient individuals: sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex rights*, Australian Human Rights Commission.

areas that they would like to see addressed for LGBTI children and young people in Western Australia, including:

- Improving the experiences of LGBTI children and young people in school and educational settings, through inclusive policies, practices and professional development for staff.
- Reducing the experience of harassment and discrimination for LGBTI children and young people.
- Improving access to safe spaces, support, events and activities for LGBTI children and young people.
- Improving community awareness and public representation of LGBTI people.
- Enhancing the support and processes available for children and young people who are undergoing gender transition.
- Ensuring support, advocacy and protection for LGBTI people involved in the justice system or requiring legal advice.
- Ensuring LGBTI people have access to mental health support services.
- Enhancing employment opportunities for LGBTI children and young people.
- Improving access to safe accommodation for LGBTI children and young people.

While a number of initiatives exist to address the needs of LGBTI children and young people, there is a lack of clear direction and oversight at a more systemic level. There is no clear responsibility across the WA State government to ensure the rights and protections of LGBTI children and young people, with no specific minister or director general holding this responsibility or portfolio.

This means change and progress often occurs in an ad-hoc manner and government departments respond or develop their own processes, policies and strategies in isolation. Whole-of-government plans or strategies for LGBTI inclusion, such as the strategy in South Australia,³⁴ or Victoria's introduction of an Equality Branch of the Department for Premier and Cabinet and appointment of a Commissioner for Gender and Sexuality, provide important platforms to improve outcomes and inclusion for LGBTI people.

There are a very limited number of services to provide support for LGBTI children and young people, and often those that do are under-resourced, at capacity or do not provide services outside the metropolitan area.

The current gender diversity service in Western Australia was established in 2015, and provides multidisciplinary assessment, care, and treatment for children and young people who identify as trans or gender diverse. Concerns have been raised

³⁴ Department for Communities and Social Inclusion 2014, *South Australian Strategy for the Inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer People 2014 – 2016*, Government of South Australia, Adelaide. Retrieved from <https://publicsector.sa.gov.au/wp-content/.../20140501-DCSI-LGBTIQ-Strategy.pdf>

about the inadequacy of funding and staff resourcing available for the clinic to be able to meet the needs of the children and young people accessing it. Of particular concern is the impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people waiting to access services, who may experience deterioration of mental health, or undergo unwanted physical changes (for example, the onset of puberty) whilst awaiting appointments.

Further gaps exist in the provision of services for intersex children and young people and their families. There are no specialist clinics to support intersex children or young people, no long-term social workers or psychological support for these children and their families, and limited funding and capacity to access a second opinion in relation to the treatment and care of intersex children and young people.

Given the mental health issues affecting many LGBTI children and young people, and the importance of accessing appropriate and timely support, it is important that services are expanded and resourced to support the demand.

The wellbeing of LGBTI children and young people will only improve when there is improved understanding, awareness and acceptance of LGBTI people within the community. It is critical that the broader community, as well as mainstream organisations and services, are equipped with the knowledge and information that they need to ensure greater respect, inclusion and acceptance of LGBTI people.

In summary, the following key areas for reform are recommended:

Strategic approaches to promote LGBTI outcomes and inclusion in WA

- Anti-discrimination laws, policies and strategies which offer full protections and promote the rights of all LGBTI children and young people, including strengthening the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* to provide protections for trans or gender diverse children and young people.
- A ban on 'conversion' interventions which are aimed at changing a person's gender identity or sexuality to conform to social expectations or beliefs.
- Rigorous and evidence-based protocols consistently used to guide decision making about surgery on intersex infants and children, with decisions considering immediate medical need as well as the infant or child's right to provide consent.
- Development of a whole-of-government strategy to ensure policies and practices of all government organisations and funded services are inclusive of LGBTI children and young people, including, but not limited to:
 - health
 - education
 - employment
 - housing and accommodation
 - child protection
 - disability
 - sport and recreation
 - justice
 - regional development.
- Establishing clear responsibilities and systems of accountability within government to promote the rights and monitor the wellbeing of LGBTI children and young people.
- Strategic mechanisms to ensure the voices and experiences of LGBTI children and young people are used to inform public policy and decision making.
- Implementing the Safe Schools principles across all WA schools, to ensure there are consistent and robust approaches to LGBTI inclusion and diversity. This includes embedding whole-school approaches to educating students and staff about diversity, ensuring LGBTI inclusive school policies and practices (for including bathroom use, uniforms, same-sex partners being allowed at school formals), providing support to LGBTI students and staff, reducing bullying and discrimination and ensuring the inclusion and representation of LGBTI people across staff and leadership and in the curriculum.

- Building the capacity of professionals to support LGBTI children and young people, in particular the medical and health sector (including GPs, psychologists etc.)³⁵ and the education sector.³⁶
- Reviewing and updating legal gender change processes, to ensure that these processes are accessible and viable options for children and young people.

Recognition and support of LGBTI children and young people as a priority group

- Recognition of LGBTI children and young people as a priority group for mental health interventions and service provision.
- Mapping the current provision and demand for services to LGBTI children and young people, and utilising this to plan for adequate funding and the provision of services to address the wellbeing needs of LGBTI children and young people across WA, including regional and remote communities.
- Increased resourcing to be provided to the Gender Diversity Service to enhance capacity, reduce waitlist, meet demand and provide timely support to trans and gender diverse children and young people.
- Specific strategies to ensure appropriate housing and accommodation for LGBTI young people experiencing homelessness.
- The development and resourcing of a specialist clinic and specific support services for intersex infants, children and young people and their families, as well as resourcing to allow for second opinions for care and treatment pathways.
- Holistic and integrated service provision which is responsive and supportive of individual needs and differences of LGBTI children and young people, for example, those who are Aboriginal, have a disability, from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, or from a religious faith community.
- Ensuring that coordinated transitions occur for young people transitioning from child and youth health services to adult health services.

³⁵ Strauss P et al. 2017, *Trans Pathways: the mental health experiences and care pathways of trans young people. Summary of results*, Telethon Kids Institute, Perth, Australia.

³⁶ United Nations 2016, *Living Free & Equal: What States are doing to tackle violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people*, United Nations. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/LivingFreeAndEqual.pdf>

Improving community understanding and acceptance

- Community awareness and education strategies directed at children and young people, parents, professionals and the general community to improve understanding about LGBTI children and young people, promote inclusion and address discrimination, including age-appropriate sexuality education for children and young people³⁷ and information and support for parents and families.
- More positive representation about LGBTI people, and acknowledgement of their contributions, in the media.

Understanding the needs and experiences of LGBTI children and young people

- Targeted research and consultation to improve understanding about some of the specific needs of LGBTI children and young people across the State.
- Improved data collection processes within service provision and population data studies, to be inclusive of LGBTI status and used to inform public policy and service development.^{38 39}
- Use of genuine consultation processes to ensure that LGBTI children and young people have a voice in decision making that affects them.
- Greater consultation and research undertaken to understand the specific needs and experiences of intersex children and young people.
- Investment into national and international databanks to improve the diagnosis, monitoring, outcomes, and decision making relating to individual intersex conditions.
- Greater consultation and research undertaken to understand the specific needs of LGBTI children and young people who also have other diverse identities, including, children and young people who are Aboriginal, culturally and linguistically diverse, from regional or remote areas, or who have a disability.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ansara G 2016, *Making The Count: Addressing Data Integrity Gaps In Australian Standards For Collecting Sex And Gender Information [White Paper]*, Sydney, National LGBTI Health Alliance

³⁹ United Nations 2016, *Living Free & Equal: What States are doing to tackle violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people, United Nations*. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/LivingFreeAndEqual.pdf>