



November 2018

Final report: Commissioner for Children and Young People's 2018 Advisory Committees

Background

The Commissioner for Children and Young People annually appoints two groups of children and young people as Advisory Committees to hear the views of different children and young people from regional and metropolitan locations on issues that concern them. These views influence the focus and direction of the Commissioner's advocacy work, directly informing a wide range of research, policy and advocacy initiatives.

2018 Focus - LGBTI children and young people

In 2018 the Commissioner appointed two Advisory Committees to inform the office's work on the wellbeing needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and/or intersex (LGBTI)¹ children and young people in Western Australia. The Commissioner acknowledges the right for all LGBTI children and young people to be recognised for their gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex status, and to feel safe and respected wherever they are.

The Commissioner partnered with the Freedom Centre to facilitate the Perth LGBTI Advisory Committee. After an expression of interest process, 14 young people aged between 14 and 20 were appointed to the Perth committee.

The office approached a range of regional organisations and schools to identify a regional committee. The Commissioner selected Bunbury Senior High School to establish the regional committee, based on the existing Diversity Club program in the school which brings together LGBTI and non-LGBTI students who are interested in supporting and promoting diversity. The club provides a safe space for students to come together to talk about issues, as well as plan activities to promote diversity in the school community. Bunbury Senior High School had an expression of interest process within their school, which resulted in appointing 16 students to the committee, including LGBTI young people as well as non-LGBTI peers.

¹ 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 uses 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 identity.

Process overview

The role of the committees was to identify and explore the key issues affecting LGBTI children and young people, identify possible opportunities or solutions to improve these issues, and undertake activities to address some of these issues. Six meetings were held in both locations over the course of the year, with additional smaller group meetings held in between to progress some of the key activities.

Both committees worked to prioritise the key issues that they wanted to focus on, came up with a range of project options that could be undertaken, and then voted and prioritised on which of the projects and activities they wanted to achieve as a group throughout the year. They were then supported to plan and progress their ideas and activities, and contributed their views and opinions on a number of other issues.

This document provides a summary of the feedback that young people provided about the key issues impacting them, and the actions and activities they took as a committee to address some of the key issues.

An overview of the meetings held can be found by visiting <https://www.cyp.wa.gov.au/about-us/advisory-committees/>



Commissioner Colin Pettit with the Bunbury Senior High School Advisory Committee

Summary of feedback and activities of the Advisory Committees

Summary of key priority issues affecting LGBTI children and young people as identified by committee members:

- **Schools and education systems** are not always safe, supportive and inclusive environments for children and young people, and teachers and students lacked understanding about the diverse needs of LGBTI people.
- There are gaps in the **legal protections and recognition** for LGBTI children and young people.
- **Supports for LGBTI children and young people, particularly trans and gender diverse children and young people are lacking**, and the supports that are available are often difficult or confusing to navigate and access.
- There is a **lack of activities and events for LGBTI children and young people** to come together, experience a sense of belonging, and make new friends in the community.
- **Bullying, harassment and discrimination** is experienced by many LGBTI children and young people and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and mental health.

Summary of committee activities on these issues

- The Bunbury Senior High School committee hosted a **seminar on supporting LGBTI students**, attended by 80 people.
- The Perth LGBTI committee **hosted a seminar on supporting trans and gender diverse students**, attended by 140 people.
- The **development of video resources** to be used as educational tools.
- The Bunbury committee installed a **Question and Answer box** at the school, to address student questions about LGBTI diversity.
- The Perth committee **met with Pride WA** to discuss the need for events and activities for LGBTI children and young people.
- The committees informed the development **a range of advocacy submissions and correspondence** that highlighted issues for LGBTI children and young people, including submissions to the *Review of Western Australian legislation in relation to the recognition of a person's sex, change of sex or intersex status*, the Religious Freedom Review and LGBTI Health Strategy, and wrote to a range of stakeholders about the need to improve anti-discrimination protections for LGBTI people.
- Committee members **spoke on RTRFM and ABC South West** radio about the committees' work and issues affecting LGBTI children and young people.



Commissioner Colin Pettit with members of the Perth LGBTI Advisory committee

Overview of priority issues affecting LGBTI children and young people and possible solutions to these issues

The priority issues identified by committee members are detailed below, but additional key issues discussed such as mental health, housing and employment can be found in Appendix One.

Schools and education

Overwhelmingly, committee members spoke about the importance of schools being supportive and inclusive of LGBTI children and young people, and creating safe and supportive school communities.

Overview of issues

Many members spoke about not feeling safe or comfortable to be open about their gender identity or sexuality at school, as it could lead to experiences of bullying by peers, or discrimination from other students and staff. The young people felt that there was a general lack of understanding, awareness or consideration of the needs or experiences of LGBTI students amongst school staff and their peers, and that schools often did not recognise they had LGBTI students attending, or didn't see the experiences and needs of LGBTI students as being relevant in the school context.

Young people also discussed a lack of consistency across schools in the way that they implemented policies or processes to support LGBTI inclusion. Students spoke of some of the policy and process challenges for LGBTI students at schools, including:

- Strict uniform requirements which did not allow for sufficient options for trans or gender diverse students.
- Lack of policies in schools regarding bathroom or changing room use for trans or gender diverse students.
- The use of gender separation (e.g. male and female) for specific classes, activities, or single-sex schools, which exclude or make it difficult for non-binary, gender diverse or trans students.
- School formal and school ball policies which did not permit students to bring a same-sex partner as their date.
- Requirements for schools to use legal names on formal school documentation (e.g. reports, administration processes), resulting in formal records being written which were not reflective of a student's gender identity.

As well as variation across different schools in their approaches to supporting LGBTI students, committee members discussed variation in terms of the level of inclusiveness and support that they received from individual teachers, staff members and peers, as well as the visibility of LGBTI people at the school. Some of these issues included:

- An assumption by teachers and schools that there are no LGBTI students in the class or at the school.
- Lack of acknowledgement or visibility of LGBTI people in the school community and the curriculum, for example, sex education not reflecting the experiences of LGBTI people, students not being open about their identity, lack of visible cues (e.g. posters etc) to show that the school is aware of LGBTI diversity and committed to being inclusive.
- Difficulty for LGBTI children and young people in having their gender identity recognised and affirmed by staff and teachers (e.g. teachers using incorrect pronouns and names, being questioned by teachers).
- Lack of safe spaces for LGBTI children and young people at schools.

Possible solutions to these issues

Committee members thought there were a range of things schools could be doing to address support and inclusion of LGBTI students at schools. Their ideas were:

- Having clear expectations and protocols to help guide best practice for teachers in recognising and support LGBTI diversity.
- Professional development for teachers and schools on best practice in supporting LGBTI inclusion and diversity.
- Ensuring that school policies and processes are inclusive and consider the needs and experiences of LGBTI children and young people.
- Establishing processes and protocols to support trans and gender diverse students to have their gender identity recognised at school (e.g. reflecting students' preferred names and pronouns).

- Ensuring facilities are accessible for trans and gender diverse students (e.g. having gender neutral bathroom options).
- Raising awareness and understanding of LGBTI children and young people's experiences in school, for example through talks for students and staff, having young people who are "out" at school to be ambassadors or mentors to other students, resources for classrooms to discuss LGBTI inclusion.
- Establishing safe spaces for students in the school, for example an LGBTI/ally student group, Diversity Clubs, or having nominated staff members that LGBTI students can speak to.
- Creating visibility at the school by having LGBTI posters, flags or other resources displayed that promote inclusion.
- Ensuring that the experiences of LGBTI people are reflected in the curriculum that is taught, for example, teaching about LGBTI history and having LGBTI relevant content in health classes or sex education.
- Ensuring that resources, information and supports are available to LGBTI students.
- Creating systems to be able to review or audit how LGBTI-inclusive schools are and having this information publicly available, for example, having a website which provides this information on different schools.

Legal protection and recognition

Overview of issues

Committee members discussed a range of systemic issues in the way that LGBTI children and young people are protected by, and recognised, through the law. These issues included:

- Many LGBTI people experience harassment in their day-to-day lives, for example, verbal abuse or threats, but there is little opportunity to pursue any kind of recourse for this.
- The religious exemptions that exist within the Western Australian *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* mean students can be expelled from a school or denied the right to access a particular school based on their gender identity or sexuality, or denied the ability to access some services provided by religious organisations.
- Existing protections on the grounds of sexual orientation under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* are limited to people who identify their sexual orientation as being something other than heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian or bisexual, and does not provide protection for people with other diverse sexual orientation (e.g. people who are pansexual, asexual).
- The existing protections on the grounds of gender history under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* provide limited protection to people with diverse gender

identities (e.g. for people who identify as non-binary or gender fluid) or who have not received a Gender Reassignment Certificate.

- That some LGBTI children and young people are exposed to “conversion therapy”, which seeks to change their sexual orientation or gender identity and is harmful to their wellbeing.
- The process for people to legally change their gender identity, sex markers, or names, is challenging and confusing for children and young people to navigate, and can be expensive.
- There is a lack of specialist support for LGBTI people who are seeking legal representation or advice, for example to deal with issues relating to discrimination or harassment.
- There are gaps in the justice system in terms of the supports and protections for prisoners who are gender diverse, trans or transitioning in prison.
- Some LGBTI people, including transgender people, are not allowed to donate blood.

Possible solutions to these issues

Committee members discussed a range of opportunities to improve these issues, including:

- Strengthening the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* to ensure it provides protection for all people with diverse gender identities and sexualities.
- Removing religious exemptions from the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* to prevent LGBTI people from being discriminated against based on their identity by schools.
- Banning the practice of “conversion therapy”.
- Simplifying and improving the process and systems to legally change gender, sex markers or names for trans and gender diverse children and young people.
- Establishing a hotline for LGBTI people who have experienced discrimination
- Addressing the restrictions on donating blood for LGBTI people.
- Ensure that trans or gender diverse people in the criminal justice system are protected and supported.

Supports for trans and gender diverse children and young people

Overview of issues

Committee members raised a range of concerns in terms of trans and gender diverse children and young people being able to access support and services to assist them. The issues discussed by the committees included the following:

- The medical processes for trans or gender diverse children and young people to transition or affirm their identity are difficult to access for under 18’s.

- There are lengthy waits to access medical transition and hormonal treatment, due to testing required, the need for second opinions, wait length between appointments, and the capacity of the service. This comes often at a period where there is time-critical pressure to take action before the effects of puberty are fully established. Trans and gender diverse children and young people in regional areas are required to travel for appointments, and can only get their hormones administered in Perth, meaning a lot of travel is required, which can be very disruptive for their schooling and families.
- That for some young people, the requirement to diagnose a person with “gender dysphoria” in order to start them on hormonal or other treatments can feel stigmatising.
- Trans and gender diverse children and young people and their families often lack information about the services and pathway options available to support them.
- There are no clear referral pathways or networks to guide and support professionals who are working with trans and gender diverse young people.
- There is limited access to specialist mental health support for trans or gender diverse children and young people.
- It is difficult to get access to resources such as chest binders or other resources.
- Many trans and gender diverse children and young people experience difficulty in having their identity, needs and experiences recognised by schools.
- Menstrual and reproductive health products and services are very gendered, making them difficult to access or purchase for trans and gender diverse people.

Possible solutions to these issues

- Professional development and training on best practice on supporting trans and gender diverse patients for health professionals, such as general practitioners, hospital and health service staff.
- Education and training programs for community members, parents, and teachers are needed to improve understanding about trans and gender diverse children and young people as well as supports and pathways available.
- Establish clear referral pathways for trans and gender diverse children and young people.
- Improving access to, and awareness of, trans and gender diverse health care.
- Ensure information and resources are made available for professionals and the general community.
- Making supplies and resources more readily available and affordable for children and young people.

Activities and events for LGBTI children and young people

Committee members discussed the need for events for LGBTI children and young people as way to provide opportunity for children and young people come together, experience a sense of belonging, make new friends in the community, and address the isolation that some children and young people experience when they are not “out” to other people in their lives yet, or when they are still coming to understand their own identity.

Overview of issues

Committee members expressed that there was a lack of events and activities for LGBTI children and young people under the age of 18. These included:

- Events and activities tend to be centred around nightclubs and licensed venues, making them inaccessible for young people under the age of 18, families, and for young people who are not interested in this type of activity.
- Some of the big events during PrideFEST that aimed at people of all ages were not accessible for children and young people, for example, where they had a cost associated for them, or where they were held at night and might not be safe for children and young people without their parents, carers or an adult.
- Whilst there are some organisations that provide supports for young people (e.g. Freedom Centre) these are often restricted in terms of the nature of the programs they’re funded for, their hours of operations and the locations where they operate.
- Regional areas are even more limited in the availability of events and activities for LGBTI children and young people.
- There can be issues for LGBTI young people attending their school formals or balls, including not being able to bring their same-sex partner, or not feeling safe or comfortable to attend in the attire of their choice.

Possible solutions to these issues

- Host events and activities for LGBTI children and young people to provide a safe space for them to make new connections, build support networks amongst peers and improve their sense of connection.
- Establish a mentoring program for LGBTI children and young people to be mentored or supported by an older LGBTI person, which could help children and young people to understand their identity and be supported as they become more open about this.
- Ensure Pride WA include events for children, young people and families.

- Host an LGBTI ball for young people who may not have had the opportunity to attend their own.

Bullying, harassment and discrimination

Committee members discussed the issues of bullying, discrimination and harassment facing LGBTI children and young people, and the impact this has on their mental health, wellbeing and feelings of safety.

Overview of issues

- LGBTI people can experience bullying based on their identity (either face to face, online, behind people's backs).
- LGBTI people can experience harassment on the street and be made to feel unsafe, for example, people yelling derogatory terms at same-sex couples, people who are gender diverse or trans.
- The use of homophobic and transphobic language, slurs and insults directed at LGBTI people within the community.
- Casual homophobia such as the use of the word "gay" as a derogatory term, which happens commonly, particularly in school settings.
- Discrimination can also exist within the LGBTI community, for example, against people who are bisexual or pansexual, or people with diverse gender identities.

Possible solutions to these issues

- Develop a public campaign to stop harassment towards LGBTI people, addressing discrimination towards same-sex couples, trans and gender diverse people and promote respect, acceptance and support for all members of the LGBTI community.
- Address issues related to online bullying and being able to report this.
- Develop a hotline or legal advice for LGBTI people who've experienced discrimination or harassment.
- Address safety for LGBTI people on public transport.
- Give LGBTI people support and safety tips on dealing with harassment
- Develop an app to support people to report harassment and discrimination.

Actions taken by Advisory Committees to address issues

The committee members came up with a range of potential projects or actions that they could undertake in order to address some of the issues that they had prioritised. These actions were then prioritised and considered in terms of what impact they would have, the feasibility of achieving them within the year, and also considering what other organisations or groups were doing. A description of the actions taken by the committees follows.

Seminar - *Supporting LGBTI children and young people in schools* (Bunbury Senior High School)

One of the key actions taken by Bunbury Senior High School Advisory Committee was to run a seminar on the topic of *Supporting LGBTI children and young people in schools*. The committee members planned and provided input into all aspects of the seminar, including the topics that would be covered in the session, the way it would be run, who would present, and the target audience for the seminar.

The aim of this seminar was to improve understanding and awareness about the needs and experiences of LGBTI children and young people in schools, and look at some of the practical strategies that schools could implement to support inclusion and celebrate LGBTI diversity. The committee felt this seminar would address some of the issues around education and schooling for LGBTI children and young people, and provide a framework for schools to address some of the harassment, discrimination and bullying that takes place in schools.

The seminar was held on 6 September, and attended by 80 people, including teachers and school staff, parents and students from primary schools and high schools in the South West region, as well as other interested professionals and organisations working with and supporting children and young people. The seminar included presentations and a question and answer panel discussion involving students Jess/Oxten, Emma, Vasiliki and Danni, Inclusive Education WA, and teachers from Bunbury SHS. The student's presentation topics included the work of the committee, practical strategies to being a good ally to LGBTI people, and the lived experiences of LGBTI students at school. The topics covered by Inclusive Education WA and school staff focused on the practical strategies and ways that schools and teachers can create inclusive environments for LGBTI students.



Bunbury committee members and staff who presented at the Bunbury seminar

Question and Answer box for students (Bunbury Senior High School)

Committee members developed a number of Question and Answer boxes to display around the school, so that students could anonymously submit a question that they had about LGBTI diversity or on the topic of diverse gender identity, sexuality or intersex experiences. A number of the questions from the Question and Answer boxes were addressed at the Bunbury seminar.

Seminar – *Supporting trans and gender diverse children and young people in schools* (Perth)

A small group of Perth committee members worked together to plan and host a seminar on the topic of *Supporting trans and gender diverse children and young people in schools*. Committee members worked together with Inclusive Education WA to plan the seminar, including the priority topics that would be covered in the session, the way it would be facilitated, who would present, and who should be invited to the seminar.

The seminar was held at the State Library of WA on 25 October 2018, and was attended by 140 people, including teachers, school staff, parents, students and professionals working with children and young people. The seminar educated attendees about the needs and experiences of trans and gender diverse students in schools, and the ways that schools and communities can create safe, supportive and inclusive environments for trans and gender diverse children and young people. The audience heard from committee members Benji, Hannah and Fred who shared their personal experiences and advice for schools and teachers, as well as Inclusive Education WA. A panel discussion was also held involving the presenters, committee member Kit, and a school representative from Ellenbrook Secondary College.



Perth committee members and presenters at the seminar

Video resources

A small group of the Perth and Bunbury committee members worked to plan and develop video education tools about LGBTI diversity, which aimed to be used by schools in classrooms, or as professional development resources for teachers and school staff, or other organisations working with children and young people. The group felt the development of these videos was an important way of addressing some of the committee's priority areas around schools and education, as well as improving understanding and awareness about LGBTI children and young people to address and hopefully decrease the discrimination, bullying and harassment that many face. All aspects of the video were decided on by the committee members, including the content of the videos, their style, who was to be interviewed on camera, the video's target audiences and filming locations. Committee members were interviewed for the videos, as well as staff from Bunbury Senior High School and the Freedom Centre.



**Filming with
Perth
committee
members**

The following four videos were developed, and can be found online at <https://www.cyp.wa.gov.au/about-us/advisory-committees/lgbti-advisory-committee-resources/>

- *What people should know about LGBTI children and young people:*
This video hears directly from LGBTI children and young people about their experiences, addresses misconceptions and stereotypes and talks about the importance of celebrating LGBTI diversity.
- *How to be a good ally to LGBTI children and young people*
This video involves young people providing practical tips and strategies to non-LGBTI people on what they can do to ensure that they are inclusive and considerate to the diverse needs of LGBTI people.

- *Messages of hope for LGBTI children and young people*
This video showcases young people sharing their messages of hope and inspiration to other LGBTI children and young people.
- *How schools and teachers can support LGBTI children and young people*
This video provides an overview of why it is so important for schools to be inclusive and supportive of LGBTI children and young people, as well as strategies that schools and teachers can implement to be more inclusive. This video is aimed to be used as a professional development resource for school staff and educational settings.



**Filming at
Bunbury
Senior High
School**

Meeting with Pride WA

A number of the young people in the Perth committee met with a representative from Pride WA to discuss the importance of events, activities and supports for LGBTI children and young people and their families. The group shared ideas about the role Pride WA could take in running child and youth friendly events and activities, for example, during PrideFEST, Youth Week etc, and opportunities for the Pride WA Committee to hear more regularly and directly from children and young people, for example, through having a youth representative on their committee. These ideas and views were also summarised in a letter to the Pride WA Committee.

Advocacy submissions

The committees contributed to a number of submissions made by the Commissioner, highlighting the issues affecting LGBTI children and young people, and the opportunities to improve their outcomes. These submissions are described below, but can also be found on the Commissioner's website at

<https://www.cyp.wa.gov.au/our-work/resources/lgbti-children-and-young-people/>



**Perth
committee
meeting**

Letters to key politicians and stakeholders

The Perth committee provided feedback and input to the office outlining the need to improve anti-discrimination protections for LGBTI children and young people, which was then developed into a letter and sent to key political representatives and stakeholders. Specifically, the letter called on the need to improve protections for LGBTI children and young people in the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* by removing current religious exemptions that allows religious schools and religious organisations to discriminate against people on the basis of their sexuality and/or gender history/ The letter also outlined the need to broaden the definitions used in relation to sexual orientation and gender history so that people of all diverse gender identities and sexualities are protected equally under the legislation. In addition to this, the letter also called on a ban on “conversion therapies” which attempt to change a person’s gender or sexual orientation.

Submission to the Review of Western Australian legislation in relation to the recognition of a person's sex, change of sex or intersex status

Some of the Perth committee members met with the Law Reform Commission to discuss the *Review of Western Australian legislation in relation to the recognition of a person's sex, change of sex or intersex status*, and informed a submission that was made by the Commissioner’s office to this review process. Committee members were supportive of improving and simplifying the processes in which trans, gender diverse and intersex people achieve legal recognition, however a number of issues for consideration by the Law Reform Commission relating to the models they had proposed.

Submission to the Religious Freedom Review

Feedback from committee members was used to inform the Commissioners' submission to the *Religious Freedom Review* that was undertaken by the Federal Government's Expert Panel on Religious Freedom in February 2018. This submission outlined the need to remove religious exemptions from anti-discrimination legislations, to ensure that all LGBTI children and young people were protected from discrimination, including where they were attending or accessing faith-based or religious schools and organisations.

Submission to the LGBTI Health Strategy

Information provided by committees was used by the Commissioner to make a submission to the Western Australian LGBTI Health Strategy, being developed by the Department of Health. This submission drew on feedback from the committees that there needed to be sufficient specialist services and supports for LGBTI children and young people across the State, as well as the need to build the capacity of the health sector to be inclusive and supportive of LGBTI children and young people.

Radio interviews



Three Perth committee members appeared on RTR FM's All Things Queer radio program, discussing the work of the committee, key issues impacting LGBTI children and young people, and the importance of LGBTI children and young people having a voice about the issues affecting them. This radio segment can be restreamed online at <http://rtrfm.com.au/story/lgbti-youth-advisory-committee/>

A committee member and teacher from Bunbury Senior High School spoke on ABC South West's morning show to discuss some of the experiences facing LGBTI children and young people in schools, the experiences of gender diverse students, and to promote the seminar that was held in Bunbury.



Summary

The Advisory Committees in Perth and Bunbury worked passionately throughout the year to try to improve outcomes for LGBTI children and young people in WA. Their commitment and enthusiasm resulted in a number of achievements, such as releasing the video resources, delivering seminars, and potentially impacting the Government's direction in law reforms and strategies aiming to improve outcomes for LGBTI people in the state.

The Commissioner will encourage organisations to use the resources that have been developed, and will use the feedback and work of the committees to further advocate on the needs and experiences of LGBTI children and young people in WA.

The Commissioner thanks all members of both committees for their contributions and their commitment to working to improve the outcomes for LGBTI children and young people in WA and also thanks Bunbury Senior High School staff and the Freedom Centre for supporting the committees. The Commissioner also extends thanks to Inclusive Education WA, parents and other supporters that have helped the committees to achieve these important outcomes.

Appendix One

Additional issues and possible solutions discussed by Advisory Committees

As well as the priority issues outlined earlier in the document, the committees also identified a range of other issues facing LGBTI children and young people, and possible ideas and solutions to address these.



Issues identified by the committees

Community awareness, education and representation of LGBTI people

Overview of issues

- Some parts of the general community lack understanding and awareness about LGBTI people, for example about different types of diversity, and the experiences of LGBTI people.
- This lack of understanding can lead to judgment, LGBTI people not being accepted for who they are, or people being treated as different or not normal.
- This lack of understanding also means that many LGBTI children and young people struggle to understand their own identity, or may feel afraid to be open about it.
- There is a lack of representation of LGBTI people in the community (including through media, print, television) and they don't often have their voices or stories heard.
- There is even further lack of representation or inclusion of people with other kinds of diversity, for example, LGBTI people who are culturally diverse, LGBTI people with a disability.

Possible solutions

- There is a need to better educate people to increase acceptance and understanding.
- Videos could be shown in schools to educate people on diversity.
- Community awareness campaigns on diversity could improve understanding – through social media, online and educational content, television advertisements, podcasts, magazines.
- Community workshops could be hosted to improve community knowledge.
- Collaboration with youth organisations could help raise awareness, and support LGBTI inclusion.
- Improve life for closeted LGBTI teens where they face rejection and backlash from parents.
- Provide more opportunities for LGBTI young people to have their voices heard, for example, have a youth column or more youth content in Out in Perth magazine.

Mental health

Overview of issues

- There is a high rate of mental health issues for LGBTI children and young people, including high suicide rates.
- There needs to be improvements in terms of the types of mental health supports offered for LGBTI young people and the way that young people can access them.
- There aren't enough LGBTI specific supports.

- It can be quite overwhelming and confusing to navigate and find the right information and support services.
- Organisations and professionals lack information about where they can go to get information and advice, or where to refer LGBTI children and young people.

Possible solutions to these issues

- Conduct a state-wide survey to understand the mental health experiences of LGBTI children and young people.
- Establish LGBTI hotlines to support children and young people with mental health issues, or who are considering self-harm and suicide.
- Improve the way that LGBTI young people can independently seek psychological help and advice.
- Promote existing services so LGBTI children and young people can access them more easily, for example online chat spaces with mental health organisations like Beyond Blue, QLife.
- Develop a strategy to lower the rate of mental illness, and especially the suicide rate, of LGBTI children and young people.

Employment

Overview of issues

- It can be difficult for some LGBTI young people to access employment, particularly for trans and gender diverse people where their identification documents (e.g. birth certificates, school records etc) do not match their gender identity and name.

Possible solutions to these issues

- Workplaces need to be educated and informed about LGBTI diversity and how to support this in their workforce.
- Open a café/restaurant providing jobs for LGBTI people.
- Encourage a network for LGBTI friendly employers/youth seeking employment.
- Make more funds and grants available to young people who need financial support and assistance, like the Isabelle Lake Foundation.

Housing

Overview of issues

- Housing and living situations can become very uncomfortable and difficult for LGBTI children and young people if their families are not accepting or supportive of them.

- Homelessness can be an issue for some LGBTI children and young people if their family relationships breakdown after coming out.
- It can be difficult for LGBTI young people to access safe and inclusive emergency housing.
- Some accommodation services provide gender-specific services, which may make them inaccessible for some trans or gender diverse people.

Possible solutions to these issues

- Address discrimination of trans and gender diverse people in emergency accommodation and other housing services and ensuring services are inclusive.

Representation and voice of LGBTI children and young people

The group discussed the importance of LGBTI children and young people having their voices heard and being represented in discussions about the LGBTI community.

Possible solutions to these issues

- Work with government to ensure that LGBTI children and young people have a voice on youth related issues, solutions, legislation etc.
- Develop LGBTI inclusion resources/guidelines for youth organisations.



Bunbury committee meeting