



LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Position Statement

Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC) proudly affirms that LGBTQIA+ identities are valid and deeply rooted in lived experiences across all cultural and religious communities. We recognise that LGBTQIA+ people from multicultural and multifaith backgrounds often face unique challenges in reconciling their sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression with cultural expectations and religious beliefs. These experiences are not contradictions, they are powerful expressions of intersectional identity.

We understand that intersectionality is not just a concept but a lived reality. Many LGBTQIA+ individuals navigate multiple layers of marginalisation, including racism, religious discrimination, gendered violence, ableism, and economic hardship. There is significant evidence suggesting that LGBTQI people experience anxiety and depression at higher rates than heterosexual cisgender people, and are at greater risk of suicide and self-harm¹. Our work is grounded in the belief that inclusion must be holistic, addressing the full spectrum of identities and experiences that shape a person's life.

In Victoria, most LGBTQIA+ services, events, and support networks are concentrated in the CBD and inner southern suburbs. This centralisation creates significant access barriers for LGBTQIA+ people living in Melbourne's north. Public transport limitations, financial constraints, lack of representation and cultural safety concerns further compound these challenges.

WCC is committed to bridging this gap and supporting the expansion of LGBTQIA+ services to Melbourne's outer northern suburbs. We uphold our positive duty under the Equal Opportunity Act, which prohibits any discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. We prioritise culturally responsive practices, multilingual resources, and partnerships with community leaders to ensure our work is accessible and affirming.

We believe that every LGBTQIA+ person deserves to feel seen, safe, and supported. Our commitment to inclusion is an ongoing journey, one we are actively working to embed in our governance, service delivery, advocacy, and community engagement.

¹ Hill, A., Bourne, A., McNair, R., Carman, M., & Lyons, A. (2020). *PRIVATE LIVES 3 The Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ People in Australia*. <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/arcshs/documents/arcshs-research-publications/Private-Lives-3.pdf>

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