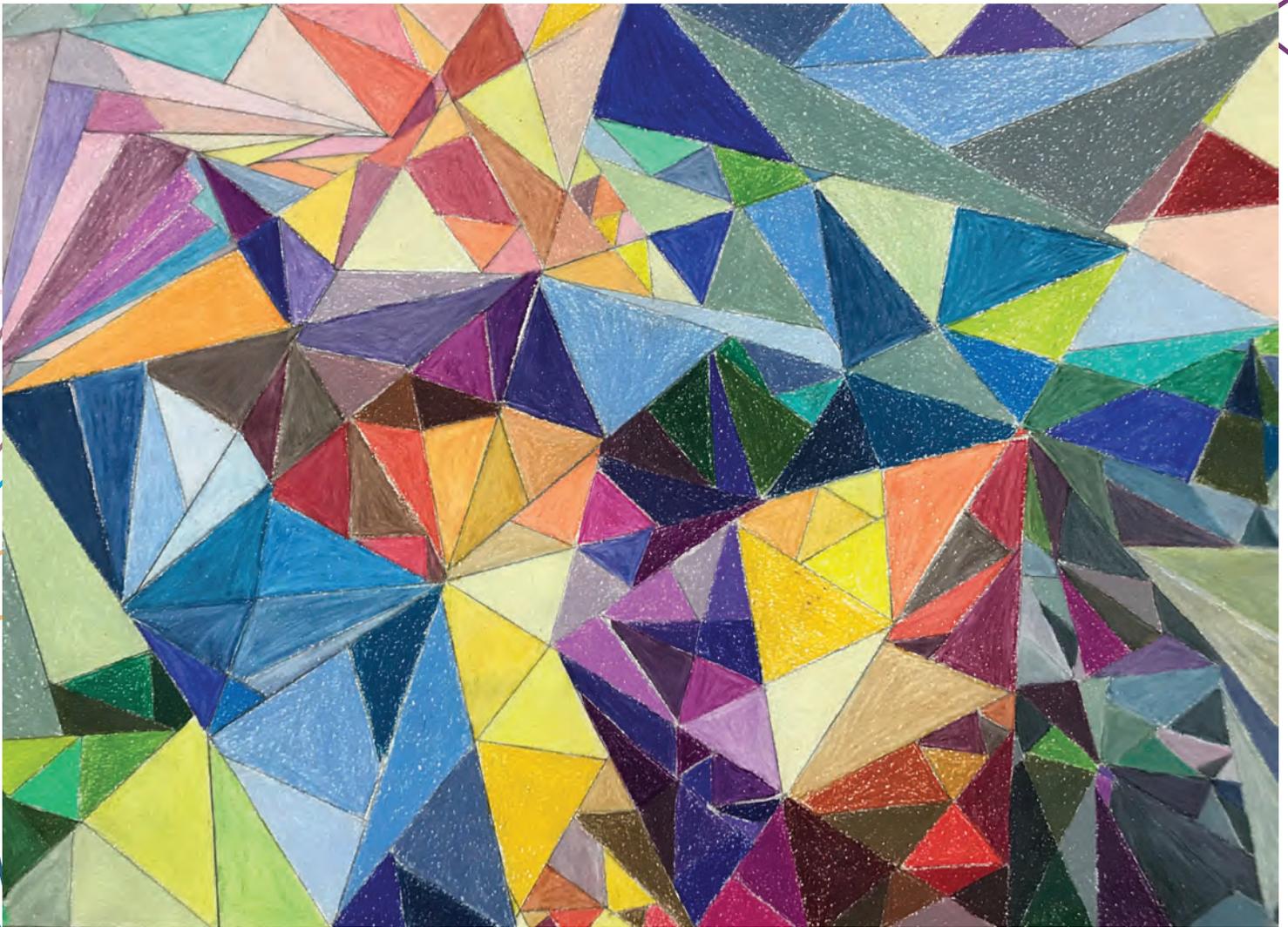




Office of the Public Advocate

LGBTIQ Inclusion Plan

2019-2022



Message from the Public Advocate



The Office of the Public Advocate is a human rights organisation that promotes the diversity and inclusion of all people. This is reflected in its mission for a just and inclusive society that respects and promotes the dignity and human rights of all people. To enable that vision to be actioned, our staff and volunteers support people with disability and mental illness and promote and protect their rights. Our values of respect and compassion, integrity, rights and independence reflect and underpin our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

We respect the diverse range of life experiences, skills, abilities, cultural backgrounds and knowledge that staff, volunteers and clients bring to their interactions with us and understand that one size does not fit all. A diverse environment supports flexibility and adaptability.

We are absolutely committed to being inclusive and ensuring that everyone we interact with feels valued, respected and heard. We strive to empower all people to contribute and participate.

The Office's Diversity and Inclusion framework 2018-2022 (the Framework) sets out how over the next four years, we will demonstrate our commitment to supporting our staff, volunteers and clients in an inclusive way. The Framework consists of five plans that seek to address the barriers that prevent some people who may face multiple disadvantages, from accessing our services, or contributing to the organisation as staff or volunteers.

These plans are:

- The Cultural Diversity Plan
- The Disability Action Plan
- The Koori Inclusion Action Plan
- The LGBTIQ Inclusion Plan
- Gender Equity Plan.

Each plan will contain four key strategies to facilitate a common focus and direction. These strategies are:

- Systemic inclusion
- Data and service improvement
- Employment and economic participation
- Community education and partnerships.

We strive to be a 'best practice' organisation by creating a welcoming and inclusive culture. The strategies, goals and actions outlined in this Framework ensure that the Office's work and culture is inclusive of all members of the Victorian community that it serves, in line with its human rights vision.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen Pearce".

Colleen Pearce
Public Advocate

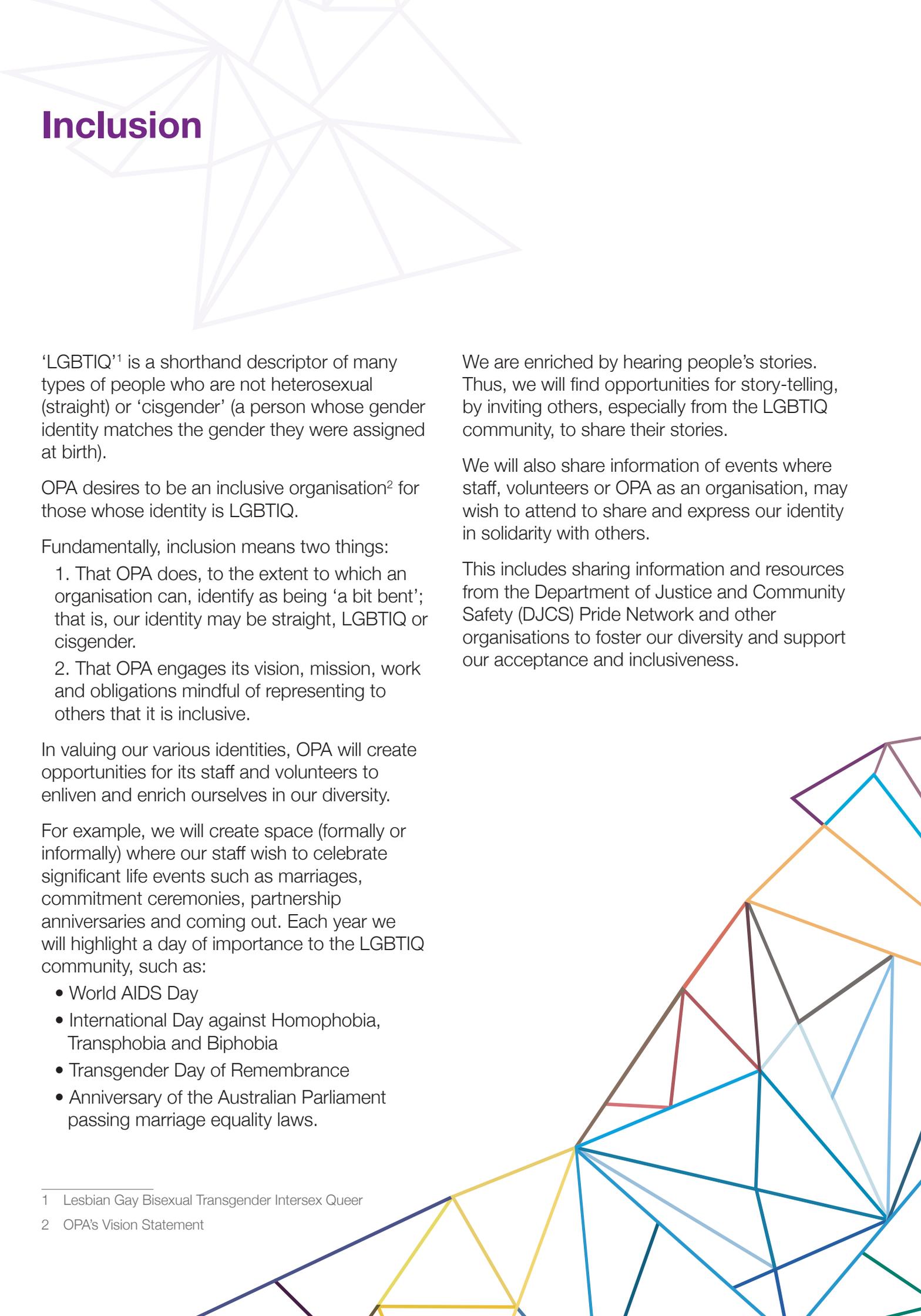
Cover image

Fractured Colour by Helen Butcher 2018

Pencil on paper

Purchased by the Office of the Public Advocate and used with permission of the artist.

Inclusion



‘LGBTIQ’¹ is a shorthand descriptor of many types of people who are not heterosexual (straight) or ‘cisgender’ (a person whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth).

OPA desires to be an inclusive organisation² for those whose identity is LGBTIQ.

Fundamentally, inclusion means two things:

1. That OPA does, to the extent to which an organisation can, identify as being ‘a bit bent’; that is, our identity may be straight, LGBTIQ or cisgender.
2. That OPA engages its vision, mission, work and obligations mindful of representing to others that it is inclusive.

In valuing our various identities, OPA will create opportunities for its staff and volunteers to enliven and enrich ourselves in our diversity.

For example, we will create space (formally or informally) where our staff wish to celebrate significant life events such as marriages, commitment ceremonies, partnership anniversaries and coming out. Each year we will highlight a day of importance to the LGBTIQ community, such as:

- World AIDS Day
- International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia
- Transgender Day of Remembrance
- Anniversary of the Australian Parliament passing marriage equality laws.

We are enriched by hearing people’s stories. Thus, we will find opportunities for story-telling, by inviting others, especially from the LGBTIQ community, to share their stories.

We will also share information of events where staff, volunteers or OPA as an organisation, may wish to attend to share and express our identity in solidarity with others.

This includes sharing information and resources from the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) Pride Network and other organisations to foster our diversity and support our acceptance and inclusiveness.

¹ Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex Queer

² OPA’s Vision Statement

Systemic Inclusion

What will we do?	What will success look like?	Responsibility	Timeline
Raise awareness of LGBTIQ issues across the organisation.	Awareness raising events to mark significant days, for example, International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, Transgender Day of Remembrance, World AIDS day	LGBTIQ Committee	One annual event
	Regular items of interest in the all staff email, for example: promotion of DJCS Pride Network events, training and resources and information about LGBTIQ organisations and groups	LGBTIQ Committee Communications Unit	Ongoing
	Issues Forum dedicated to LGBTIQ issues, with guest speakers where appropriate	LGBTIQ Committee Education and Training Committee	One annual event
	Providing staff with an optional alternative email signature block that reflects OPA's non-binary and diverse identity in the workforce	Leadership Team Communications Unit	By mid-2020
The LGBTIQ Committee is connected and engaged in government and community networks	An OPA representative from the LGBTIQ Committee participates in a relevant external network	LGBTIQ Committee Education and Engagement Officer	By mid-2020
Promote the rainbow colours and other LGBTIQ identifiable symbols across the organisation	Visible promotional items in the workforce, for example, a rainbow flag, rainbow lanyards, t-shirts, posters	Leadership Team Communications Unit	By end of 2019
	Visible presence on OPA's website, either a rainbow flag or statement	Leadership Team Communications Unit	By mid-2020

Data and Service Improvement

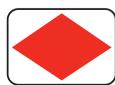
What will we do?	What will success look like?	Responsibility	Timeline
Raise awareness and understanding of the use of appropriate language that reflects LGBTIQ diversity	<p>Provide LGBTIQ education for staff and volunteers by engaging appropriate external educators</p> <p>Forms – Client forms/files reflect diversity in gender identity</p> <p>A dedicated page on OPA intranet for LGBTIQ resources</p> <p>LGBTIQ issues embedded in volunteer training</p>	<p>LGBTIQ Committee Education and Training Committee Safeguarding, Inclusion and Volunteer programs</p> <p>Leadership Team All managers</p> <p>LGBTIQ Committee Communications Unit</p> <p>Safeguarding, Inclusion and Volunteer Programs</p>	<p>One annual event</p> <p>By 2020</p> <p>By 2020</p> <p>By 2020 - 2021</p>
Improve the collection of data that can inform initiatives to improve service delivery	<p>Consider appropriateness of data collection of LGBTIQ issues such as gender identity</p> <p>LGBTIQ questions included in OPA well-being survey</p>	<p>Leadership Team IT</p> <p>LGBTIQ Committee Manager Quality and Audit Communications Unit</p>	<p>By 2020</p> <p>Annually</p>
Promote best practice in service delivery for LGBTIQ clients/communities	Seek out benchmarking tools/ accreditation processes to assess, measure and improve inclusive practices, for example, Rainbow tick through Rainbow Health Victoria, the Health and Wellbeing Equality Index by ACON, a NSW organisation specialising in LGBTIQ health	LGBTIQ Committee Leadership Team Education and Engagement Officer	Ongoing

Employment and Economic Participation

What will we do?	What will success look like?	Responsibility	Timeline
Promote, encourage and support a diverse workforce	A statement that reflects OPA's commitment to a diverse workforce is included in all recruitment advertising and position descriptions, including our volunteer workforce	Manager Corporate Services Leadership Team	By 2020
	The LGBTIQ committee is promoted and embedded in staff orientation and LGBTIQ allies are identified	LGBTIQ Committee Manager Quality and Audit	By 2020
	LGBTIQ staff are aware of specialist employee assistance support services where appropriate	Manager Corporate Services Contact Officers Manager Quality and Audit	Ongoing
	Corporate services are informed of relevant employment entitlements for LGBTIQ staff and informed of Equal Opportunity legislation	Manager Corporate Services Leadership Team LGBTIQ Committee Contact Officers	Ongoing

Community Engagement and Partnerships

What will we do?	What will success look like?	Responsibility	Timeline
Develop and maintain a working relationship with LGBTIQ service providers and communities	Form partnerships with relevant organisations, for example: Transgender Victoria, Rainbow Health Victoria, Val's Café, Rainbow Rights, National LGBTI Health Alliance, and seek their expertise and input where appropriate	LGBTIQ Committee Education and Engagement Officer Advice and Education Team	By end of 2020
	Participate in relevant networks, forums and awareness-raising activities	LGBTIQ Committee Education and Engagement Officer Advice and Education Team	Ongoing
Deliver education sessions and other appropriate educational activities for the LGBTIQ communities/sector	Tailored education on substitute and supported decision making is provided to LGBTIQ communities, groups, organisations and people with a disability	Education and Engagement Officer Advice and Education Team Legal Officer	Ongoing
Promote the use of appropriate resources developed specifically for the LGBTIQ community	Promotion and use of Transgender Victoria's and COTA's resource <i>Safeguarding the Rainbow</i>	Education and Engagement Officer Advice and Education Team	Ongoing
	Produce an advance care plan resource tailored for the LGBTIQ community	Legal Officer Education and Engagement Officer	By end of 2020



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