

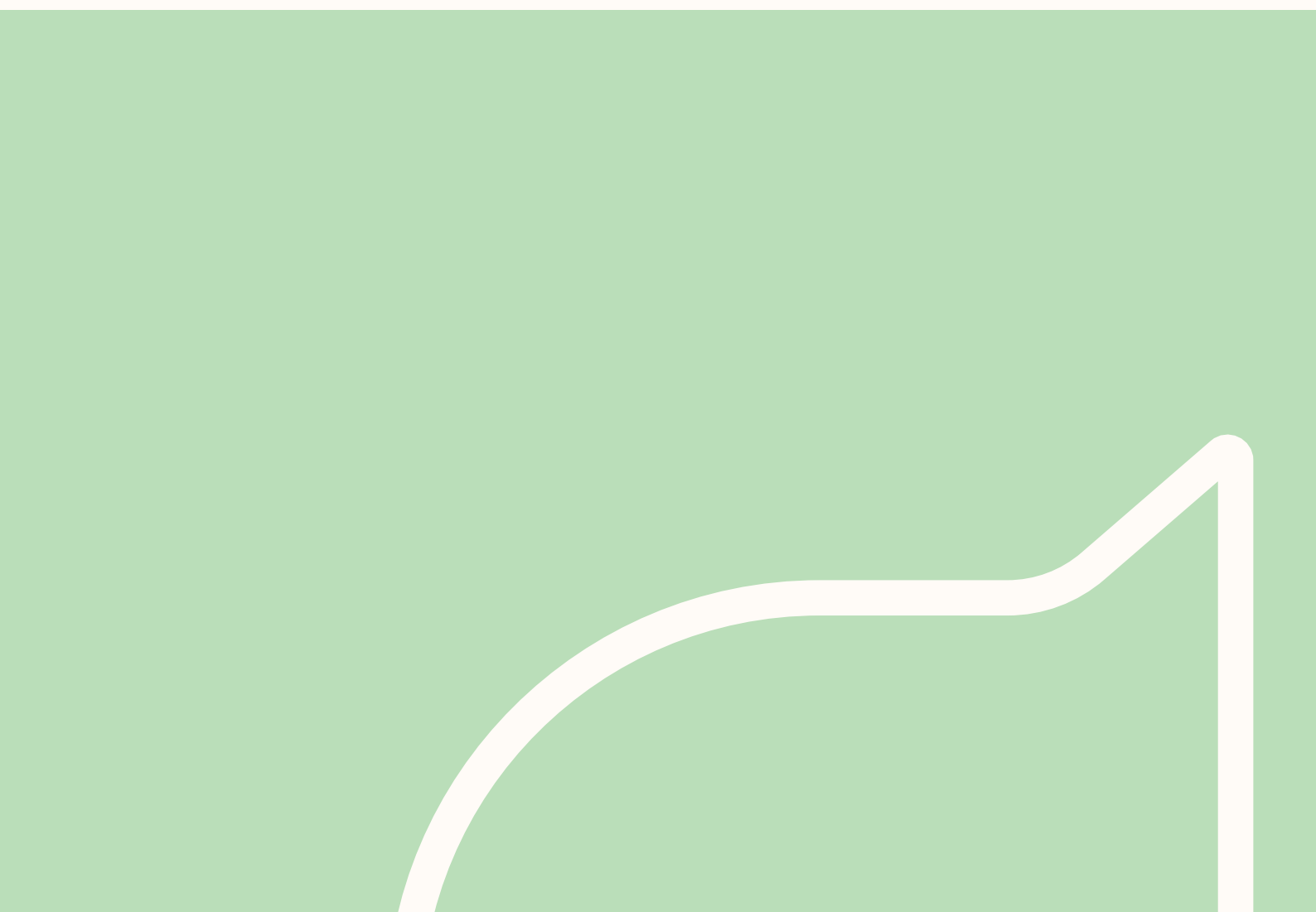
6 AUGUST 2026



GROUP SESSION 2

LGBTIQA+SB communities

Second Action Plan consultation report



Purpose of the session

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSVM) Commission convened this online consultation for LGBTIQ+SB organisations to inform the development of the Second Action Plan under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*. The session's agenda was shaped in partnership with LGBTQ Health Australia (LHA), drawing on LHA's network of community organisations to bring participants together.

Discussion questions included:

- What are the most significant opportunities to strengthen the inclusion and safety of LGBTIQ+SB communities within the Second Action Plan, and in broader efforts to prevent and respond to DFSVM?
- What practical actions should be prioritised over the next five years to achieve the greatest impact in preventing and responding to DFSVM affecting LGBTIQ+SB communities?

This online consultation was the second session focused on LGBTIQ+SB communities and formed part of the DFSVM Commission's broader consultation program to inform development of the Second Action Plan.

Executive summary

Participants emphasised the need for a stronger and more visible focus on the experiences of LGBTIQ+SB communities. A consistent message throughout the consultation was that heteronormative, cisnormative and binary assumptions continue to shape policy, prevention and response systems, limiting their ability to recognise and respond to the diverse forms of domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSVM) experienced by LGBTIQ+SB people. Participants called for LGBTIQ+SB communities to be embedded throughout the Second Action Plan through dedicated actions, accountability measures, ongoing engagement and community-led approaches.

Participants also highlighted significant gaps in data, research and evidence, particularly relating to drivers of violence, perpetration, sexual violence and the experiences of specific LGBTIQ+SB cohorts. There was strong support for investment in both inclusive mainstream services and specialist LGBTIQ+SB responses, alongside measures to address discrimination across service systems, workplaces and institutions. Participants stressed that responses must reflect the diversity of LGBTIQ+SB experiences, including family-of-origin violence, violence affecting trans and gender-diverse people, older people, people with disability and sex workers. Overall, participants viewed the safety and inclusion of LGBTIQ+SB communities as integral to achieving the goals of the National Plan and strengthening Australia's broader efforts to end violence against women and children.

What we heard

Overarching themes

- Participants argued that the National Plan and broader DFSV policy settings are shaped by heteronormative, cisnormative and binary assumptions about gender, relationships and violence. These assumptions can render LGBTIQ+SB experiences invisible and limit the effectiveness of prevention, early intervention and response efforts.
- Participants called for a shift from consultation-based engagement to genuine partnership, leadership and shared decision-making. They emphasised that LGBTIQ+SB communities should be embedded in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Second Action Plan and broader government responses.
- Participants consistently identified evidence gaps as a significant barrier to effective policy and service responses. They called for sustained investment in research, improved national data collection and stronger evidence regarding both victimisation and perpetration within and against LGBTIQ+SB communities.
- Participants consistently emphasised the need to improve mainstream service responses while also expanding investment in specialist LGBTIQ+SB services. They argued that people impacted by DFSV should be able to choose between safe, inclusive mainstream services and appropriately funded specialist community-controlled supports.
- Participants reported that discrimination affects both people seeking support and those working within the DFSV sector. Experiences of homophobia, transphobia, exclusion and broader anti-LGBTIQ+SB backlash were described as significant barriers to safety, help-seeking and workforce participation.

Heteronormative, cisnormative and binary approaches limit understanding and responses to DFSV experienced by LGBTIQ+SB communities

What participants told us

Participants consistently highlighted that many DFSV frameworks, policies and service models are based on assumptions that violence occurs within heterosexual, cisgender intimate relationships. They noted that this can obscure the experiences of LGBTIQ+SB people, particularly where violence occurs in family-of-origin relationships, non-monogamous relationships, among older people, or in contexts that do not fit traditional understandings of people experiencing violence and people using violence. Participants argued that the language and framing used throughout government policy and service systems often reinforce these assumptions.

Several participants suggested that heteronormativity and cisnormativity are embedded throughout the National Plan in ways that can be difficult to identify because they have become normalised. Participants argued that more inclusive language, broader definitions of violence and relationships, and greater recognition of diverse experiences would improve both inclusion and effectiveness. Some participants noted that challenging binary approaches would not only better support LGBTIQ+SB communities but could strengthen broader efforts to address the gendered drivers of violence.

What participants said needs to change

- Develop the Second Action Plan and associated policies to identify and remove heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions.
- Use more inclusive language that extends beyond binary concepts of gender and relationships.
- Recognise family-of-origin violence alongside intimate partner violence, particularly for young LGBTIQ+SB people.
- Ensure prevention frameworks explicitly address homophobia, transphobia, and other drivers of violence experienced by LGBTIQ+SB communities.
- Better recognise diverse relationship structures, including polyamorous and non-monogamous relationships.
- Strengthen education and messaging about healthy, positive and respectful relationships within LGBTIQ+SB communities.
- Ensure policy frameworks explicitly consider the experiences of trans, gender-diverse and intersex people.

Community-led governance, accountability and decision-making are needed to support meaningful inclusion

What participants told us

Participants expressed concern that LGBTIQ+SB communities are frequently recognised as a priority population but not meaningfully incorporated into policy development, governance structures or implementation processes. They want to be recognised as a group that is distinct but not separate. Some described current approaches as treating LGBTIQ+SB communities as an afterthought rather than recognising their long-standing contribution to violence prevention and response work. Participants emphasised that occasional consultation processes are insufficient to support meaningful inclusion.

Many participants argued that government should invest in permanent structures that support community leadership and accountability. Suggestions included dedicated outcomes and actions within the Second Action Plan, advisory or governance mechanisms, a national LGBTIQ+SB safety alliance, and ongoing funding for community-controlled organisations. Several participants also proposed the development of a dedicated national plan or strategy focused on violence against LGBTIQ+SB communities.

What participants said needs to change

- Establish dedicated LGBTIQ+SB outcomes, actions and accountability measures within the Second Action Plan.
- Create permanent mechanisms for LGBTIQ+SB communities to inform policy development and implementation.
- Invest in community-led and community-controlled prevention and response initiatives.
- Establish a national LGBTIQ+SB safety alliance or equivalent representative mechanism.
- Include clear responsibilities, timelines and reporting requirements for LGBTIQ+SB-related actions.
- Ensure funding is available for policy development, advocacy and lived-experience leadership.
- Involve LGBTIQ+SB communities in monitoring and evaluating implementation progress.
- Explore the value of a standalone national strategy or action plan focused on violence affecting LGBTIQ+SB communities.

Evidence gaps limit understanding of violence, perpetration and effective responses

What participants told us

Participants noted major limitations in existing data systems, including inconsistent collection of data on sexuality, gender and sex characteristics across surveys, services, police systems and health settings. They expressed concern that governments often rely on incomplete evidence when designing policy responses and that some groups, including older LGBTIQ+ people, remain particularly invisible within data collections.

There were calls for research across the full spectrum of prevention, response and recovery. Participants highlighted the need to better understand the drivers of violence, perpetration dynamics, sexual violence, technology-facilitated abuse, forensic evidence collection processes and the experiences of specific cohorts. Several participants noted that different forms of violence affecting LGBTIQ+ communities may require different prevention and intervention approaches.

What participants said needs to change

- Develop nationally consistent approaches to collecting sexuality, gender and sex characteristic data.
- Improve reporting of LGBTIQ+SB-related DFSV data across jurisdictions and sectors.
- Invest in dedicated research on drivers of violence affecting LGBTIQ+SB communities.
- Build evidence on perpetration, including violence occurring both within and from outside LGBTIQ+SB communities.
- Strengthen research into sexual violence and pathways for people experiencing it.
- Improve understanding of technology-facilitated abuse affecting LGBTIQ+SB communities.
- Prioritise research focused on underrepresented cohorts, including older people, people with disability and young people.
- Establish advisory mechanisms to guide culturally appropriate and community-informed data collection.

Both mainstream and specialist service systems must be accessible, inclusive and adequately funded

What participants told us

Participants described significant barriers to accessing services across housing, health, legal assistance, policing, justice and crisis support systems. Many reported that mainstream services remain ill-equipped to respond effectively to LGBTIQ+SB people experiencing DFSV, while specialist services are often underfunded, geographically limited and reliant on short-term funding. Participants stressed that both systems have important but distinct roles.

A recurring concern was that narrow program eligibility criteria can exclude LGBTIQ+SB people from receiving support, particularly where violence occurs outside conventional intimate partner contexts. Participants also highlighted the importance of integrated responses, peer-led supports, community connection, legal and non-legal assistance, and specialist services for populations whose needs are not being met by mainstream systems.

What participants said needs to change

- Establish long-term funding for specialist LGBTIQ+SB community-controlled services.
- Improve the inclusiveness and safety of mainstream DFSV services.
- Introduce nationally consistent inclusion standards for funded services.
- Expand access to safe housing, crisis accommodation and transitional housing.
- Remove restrictive eligibility criteria that exclude people experiencing family-of-origin violence.
- Improve police, health, legal and court responses to LGBTIQ+SB people who have experienced DFSV.
- Support peer-led programs and initiatives that strengthen community connection.
- Expand specialist responses for cohorts including sex workers, older people, Sistergirls and Brotherboys, and people with disability.

Discrimination, exclusion and institutional bias create ongoing barriers for LGBTIQ+SB people experiencing violence and workers

What participants told us

Participants shared experiences of discrimination across service systems, including policing, health care, courts and mainstream DFSV services. Some reported that LGBTIQ+SB people who have experienced violence avoid seeking support because they do not expect to be treated safely or respectfully, while others described situations where services actively excluded or failed to understand LGBTIQ+SB experiences. Participants noted that these experiences can compound existing trauma and reduce trust in institutions.

Participants also highlighted discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ+SB workers within the broader DFSV workforce. They described both overt and subtle forms of exclusion, as well as challenges associated with working in highly gendered service systems. Several participants linked these experiences to broader community and political backlash against LGBTIQ+SB inclusion and argued that stronger leadership is required to address it.

What participants said needs to change

- Require funded services to demonstrate inclusive policies, practices and organisational cultures.
- Introduce ongoing training and capability-building rather than one-off awareness programs.
- Implement independent monitoring, complaints mechanisms and accountability measures.
- Improve responses to homophobia, transphobia and discrimination within policing, health and justice systems.
- Address barriers that prevent trans and gender-diverse people from accessing services safely.
- Develop workforce initiatives that support recruitment, retention and progression of LGBTIQ+SB workers.
- Recognise and address discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ+SB workers within the DFSV sector.
- Strengthen public messaging and education to counter backlash and promote solidarity between gender equality and LGBTIQ+SB inclusion efforts.

We sincerely thank everyone who generously shared their time and insights with us.

