



# Survey of LGBTQIA+ People with Disability in Australia (2025)

## About the survey

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This national survey was designed by **People with Disability Australia (PWDA)** with advice from people with lived experience as LGBTQIA+ people with disability.

The survey collected responses from LGBTQIA+ people with disability across Australia between April and September 2025.

- ▶ **974 raw responses collected**
- ▶ **72-question survey and Easy Read version**
- ▶ **Responses from every Australian state and territory**
- ▶ **High participation from rural and remote communities**
- ▶ **Strong representation from First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse respondents**

The survey highlights the realities, barriers, strengths and priorities of LGBTQIA+ people with disability across Australia.



**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY  
AUSTRALIA**

## Key themes

Respondents described the constant emotional and practical work involved in navigating systems that rarely understand the intersection of disability, gender, sexuality and variations in sex characteristics.

Many participants reported:

- Hiding parts of themselves to access services safely
- Repeatedly needing to “come out” in healthcare, workplaces and services
- Fear of discrimination before entering healthcare or community spaces
- Feeling forced to prioritise one identity over another
- Exhaustion from managing assumptions and stereotypes

**“People are willing to allow for one but not the other – almost like you’re only allowed to have one identity.”**



## The Impact of the Cost of Living and Housing Crisis

Economic exclusion was one of the strongest themes across the survey.

Respondents described:

- Poverty and financial insecurity
- Inaccessible housing and transport
- Rising healthcare costs
- Reduced access to community participation
- Fear of losing financial supports if relationships are disclosed
- Limited opportunities for safe social connection

**“The hardest part is the economic part. The Disability Support Pension is way too little and is way under the poverty line.”**



## Community-Based Joy and Connection

Alongside experiences of exclusion, respondents strongly emphasised the importance of peer support, friendship, community care and chosen family.

Respondents identified:

- Online communities as critical spaces for connection
- Peer networks as a major source of belonging
- Inclusive support workers and services as life-changing
- Accessible spaces as essential for participation
- Joy, pride and solidarity as powerful forms of resilience

**“When queer events have interpreters, captions, or are held in Deaf-friendly spaces, it makes a huge difference. It tells me I’m welcome.”**





## Healthcare experiences

The survey identified significant barriers in accessing safe, inclusive and intersectional healthcare.

### Key Findings

**71%** said healthcare workers made assumptions that made care harder

**65%** experienced discrimination from healthcare workers, support workers, carers or family members

**64%** said their gender, sexuality or sex characteristics had been ignored or not believed

**56%** tried to access healthcare supporting both LGBTQIA+ and disability needs

**93%** had accessed mental health support

### Respondents described:

- Difficulty finding providers who understand intersectionality
- Long wait times and high costs
- Fear of discrimination in medical settings
- Inaccessible environments and systems
- Constant pressure to explain or defend identities



**“It’s very hard to find a professional who understands all of my identities.”**



## Accessibility and safety

Respondents consistently identified accessibility as a major barrier to inclusion.

### Community Participation

**97%** identified accessibility as a barrier to joining groups or spaces

**54%** described LGBTQIA+ spaces as only “somewhat accessible”

**Most respondents** felt safe in LGBTQIA+ and disability spaces only “sometimes”

### Barriers included:

- Stairs and inaccessible venues
- Sensory overload
- Crowded environments
- Transport and distance
- Lack of COVID-safe practices
- Financial costs
- Social anxiety and fatigue



**Many respondents said online spaces became essential forms of connection.**



## Workplace inclusion

The survey found high levels of workplace discrimination and insecurity.

### Key Findings

**68%** experienced workplace discrimination based on disability and/or LGBTQIA+ identity

**41%** felt safe sharing their identity at work

**56%** tried to access healthcare supporting both LGBTQIA+ and disability needs

**Many respondents** described major gaps between policy and practice

### Respondents reported:

- Misgendering
- Lack of reasonable adjustments
- Fear of disclosure
- Reduced work opportunities
- Pressure to hide disability or LGBTQIA+ identity
- Difficulty accessing flexible work arrangements



**“People have told me to basically just get better. It makes me feel tired, cynical and emotionally exhausted.”**



## Family, cultural safety and belonging

The survey identified ongoing challenges in relation to cultural safety, family support and intersectional inclusion.

### Key Findings

**49%** said their identities affect access to services

**36%** experienced violence or harm because of their identity

Only **33%** felt supported by family as an LGBTQIA+ person with disability

### Respondents described:

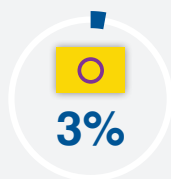
- Tokenistic inclusion practices
- Lack of culturally safe services
- Family rejection and isolation
- Pressure to hide parts of identity
- Experiences of homelessness and exclusion

# Who responded?

## Diversity Across Communities

The survey reflects the broad diversity of LGBTQIA+ people with disability in Australia.

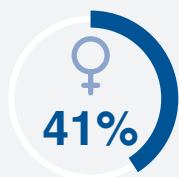
### Identity



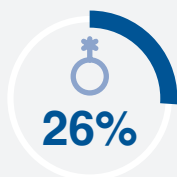
intersex

PWDA acknowledges that intersex respondents may be underrepresented in these findings, as the Easy Read survey used the standard definition of intersex variation rather than an Easy Read adapted definition.

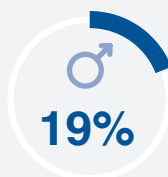
### Gender



woman/female



non-binary



man/male



used another term

### Sexual Orientation

Respondents described a wide range of identities including:



Lesbian



Bisexual



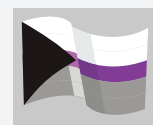
Pansexual



Queer



Asexual



Demisexual



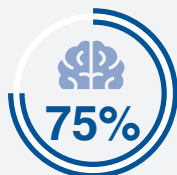
Aromantic

and multi-gender attracted identities

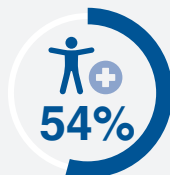
### Disability

Most respondents identified across multiple disability categories.

Most common disability experiences:



neurological or neurodiverse



chronic illness or condition



psychosocial disability

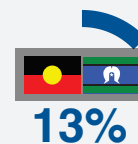
### Intersectionality



live in rural or remote areas



identified as culturally and linguistically diverse



identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

# What needs to change?

Respondents consistently called for:



## Intersectional Services

Services that understand disability, gender, sexuality and culture together — not separately.



## Accessible Community Spaces

Inclusive events, transport, venues, communication and online participation.



## Financial Security

Adequate income support, affordable healthcare, housing stability and reduced cost barriers.



## Workforce Change

Better workplace flexibility, meaningful inclusion and anti-discrimination protections.



## Safer Healthcare

Healthcare workers trained in LGBTQIA+ and disability inclusion.



## Community Investment

Support for peer networks, lived experience leadership and community-led programs.



## Summary

The experiences of LGBTQIA+ people with disability reveal both the failures and possibilities of Australian systems.

Respondents described exclusion, exhaustion and discrimination, but also resilience, creativity, care and community.

The findings demonstrate the urgent need for systems, services and policies that are:

- ▶ **Accessible**
- ▶ **Community-led**
- ▶ **Safe**
- ▶ **Intersectional**
- ▶ **Inclusive**
- ▶ **Financially sustainable**

Designing systems with LGBTQIA+ people with disability, and keeping them at the centre benefits everyone.