



Our Respects

We acknowledge that we are producing this document on Aboriginal Land. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

LGBTIQA+ Koorie Resource Guide

**This document
will grow.**

This is an evolving document. If you have suggestions or shareable resources, please contact us:

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.
vaeai@vaeai.org.au

VAEAI



Key messages

- 01** Koorie LGBTIQ+ people have rich histories, languages, and cultural practices that have endured over time. Koorie LGBTIQ+ people are experts in their own lives and are the best people to tell their own stories.
- 02** By using a strengths-based approach underpinned by self-determination, we can show it is okay for Koorie youth to identify as whatever sexual orientation and gender they want – it is their decision.
- 03** It can be challenging for Koorie LGBTIQ+ young people to connect their multiple identities, especially for those experiencing racism in the LGBTIQ+ community and those experiencing homophobia or transphobia in their family or cultural community.
- 04** This can cause Koorie LGBTIQ+ students to feel unhappy at school, and affects attendance and performance.
- 05** Teachers can show their support for the LGBTIQ+ community and the Koorie community with visual cues, such as wearing rainbow lanyards, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag lanyards
- 06** It is important to acknowledge the diversity within the Koorie and LGBTIQ+ community and treat each student as an individual. Listening to the student is the foremost way to know how that student can be supported in their identity.
- 07** Koorie LGBTIQ+ students may experience bullying from a number of sources. There needs to be a sense of accountability for this behaviour to ensure students feel protected when this happens.
 - This can result in feelings of loss, isolation, invalidation, and invisibility, causing harm to the student's overall wellbeing.
 - This stress can have a significant and long-lasting impact on mental health, especially when the young person is already dealing with the repercussions of colonisation and dispossession on many levels.
- 08** Being Koorie and LGBTIQ+ means that a student's identity exists in the overlap of these communities, giving them unique experiences of discrimination and marginalisation. It is important that we understand this unique experience and that these identities are interconnected, not separate.
- 09** We should also note that many Koorie LGBTIQ+ students may be at different stages of their journey and as such may not always be 'out' – or may just be looking to explore. It is important to let these students work through their own journey and not to 'out' them to staff or community.



It is important to let Koorie LGBTIQ+ young people assign their own label, to describe their own sexuality and gender identity

Terminology

We often talk about the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer and questioning (LGBTIQ+) community. But not everyone with a diverse sexuality or gender identity, or who has an intersex variation, identifies with the LGBTIQ+ acronym. Other cultures have different words for people in sexual relationships with people of the same gender. They might also have words for people whose gender does not align with their sex assigned at birth, or whose gender expression is different to what is expected.



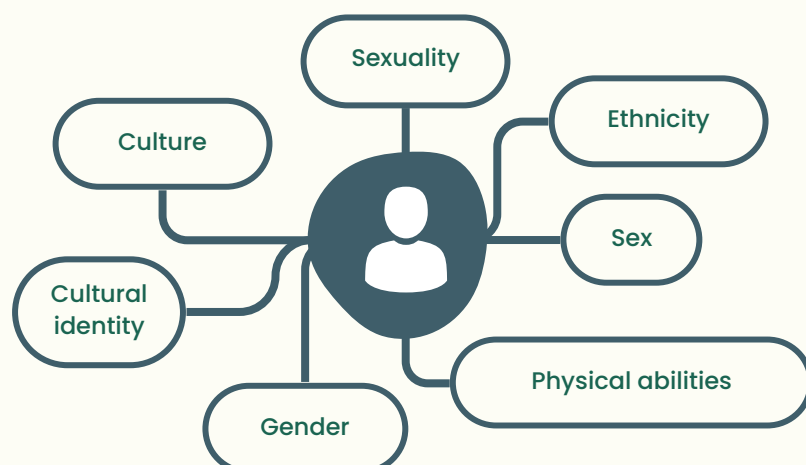
Sistagirl and Brothaboy

Koorie people who are trans or gender diverse might identify with the words 'Sistagirl' or 'Brothaboy'. 'Sistagirl' can be used by Koorie people to describe Koorie people assigned male at birth but who identify or live as women. 'Brothaboy' can be used as a self-identifier for those who were assigned female at birth but who identify or live as men.

In many Koorie communities, the words 'Sistagirl' and 'Brothaboy' are used as terms of endearment for women and men without any meaning of gender diversity.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality describes the unique experience of those who belong to one or more groups of marginalised people. Being a part of one or more of these groups subjects people to overlapping systems of discrimination and disadvantage.



Intersex

An intersex person is born with atypical natural variations to physical or biological sex characteristics, such as variations in chromosomes, hormones, or anatomy. People with intersex traits may experience discrimination and harm.

There are many intersex variations presenting unique needs, and a variety of terms used by intersex people, such as being intersex, having an intersex variation or condition, having an innate variation of sex characteristics, or the naming of specific traits. If you are unsure of terms to use, it is always best to ask the individual.



Aretha Brown,
Gumbaynggirr artist and activist

“[Pride] within the Aboriginal community and the LGBTIQ+ community I feel are two different things, but also two very similar things. Both communities have been ostracised and told we’re not allowed to have pride in who we are.

Being Aboriginal and also being gay, it’s something for me that doubles up. Sometimes pride can be twice as hard but, at the same time, it can be twice as empowering.”

“For me, ... performing in general and being an Indigenous queen on stage where there’s not that many, is so hopefully young Indigenous queers can be like, ‘Oh, that’s for me as well,’ or ‘I can be in this community, I’m accepted’.

Just being able to see people like you out in the world and telling you it’s okay for you to be out in the world like who you are, as a person - it’s necessary and it’s needed.”



Stone Motherless Cold,
An Arrernte drag performer

Actions we can take to create safe environments

It's important for LGBTIQ+ young people to feel safe to attend school and express themselves without judgement.

In this section, we'll break down ways to show your support and celebrate their culture and identity.

Create safe spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ young people.

Changes to physical environment

- Display a [calendar](#) for significant Koorie dates for celebration.
- Display [posters](#) celebrating LGBTIQ+ people and First Nations culture.
- Order free copies of the [OMG I'm QTPOC booklet](#).
- Wear rainbow lanyards including black and brown stripes for First Nations people and people of colour. [Contact Safe Schools](#) to request
- [Acknowledge Country](#) and Traditional Owners at LGBTIQ+ events and Stand Out Group meetings.
- Display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, as well as the Pride Progress Flag.



Development opportunities

- The Victorian Department of Education's [Safe Schools](#) program helps Victorian schools foster a safe environment that is supportive and inclusive of LGBTIQ+ students. [Contact Safe Schools](#) to book professional learning for staff or request [further support](#).
- [Complete Community Understanding and Safety Training \(CUST\)](#) with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association ([VAEAI](#)).
- Contact your [regional Koorie Engagement Support Officer \(KESO\)](#) to collaborate on how to create a safer space in your school.
- Partner with [Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups \(LAECGs\)](#) to seek support from Elders/community members who are LGBTIQ+ or allies. Contact VAEAI to connect with the LAECGs in your area.
- Seek out and share success stories from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ young people.
 - [Aretha Brown](#) (Minus18 interview)
 - [Kai Clancy](#) (Minus18 interview)
 - [Indigenous LGBTQ Reflections for NAIDOC 2020](#) (ACON)
- Join anti-racism campaigns with LGBTIQ+ inclusion work.

Sharing

- Work with your Stand out Group to create an inclusive environment for Koorie students who identify as LGBTIQA+. Facilitate student partnership/leadership in these environments.
- Show your Stand Out Group the [Trans 101: Trans People of Colour](#) video and facilitate a discussion.
- Involve your Stand Out Group in acknowledging significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dates and events



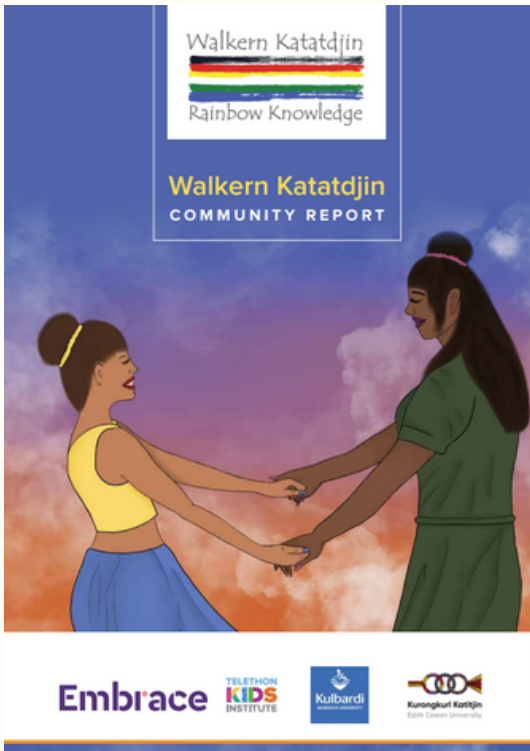
Poster by Elizabeth Morgan House

Seek out, listen to, and amplify the voices and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQA+ young people

Celebrate Koorie LGBTIQA+ people and perspectives by:

- having representation of Koorie LGBTIQA+ leaders, posters, artwork and music.
- encouraging Koorie LGBTIQA+ young people to take on leadership roles.
- acknowledging significant dates on the [Koorie calendar](#).
- attending and promoting LGBTIQA+ events.
- attending and promoting the [VIC NAIDOC Pride Gala](#)
- downloading and promoting the [Elizabeth Morgan House First Nations and LGBTIQA+ Calendar](#)

Additional Resources



Research

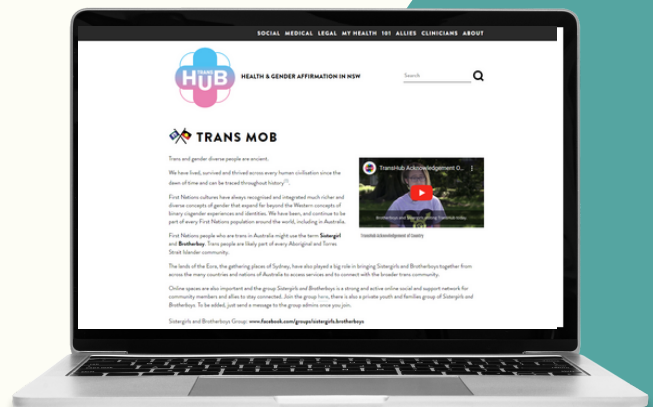
- [Walkern Katatdjijn](#) National research project that aims to understand and promote the mental health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait LGBTIQ+ people.
- [The Conversation, \(June 2021\)](#). New research shows how Indigenous LGBTIQ+ people don't feel fully accepted by either community.
- ['Breaking the Silence'](#). Research project that focuses on the unique experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ people living in Western Australia (2021).

Resources

- [Contact Safe Schools](#) to request resources including rainbow lanyards, pins, and stickers.
- [LGBTQ2IA+ Inclusion Guide, Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW \(June 2020\)](#).
- [Rainbow Knowledge Resources](#).
- [Your legal rights at school](#).
- [Supporting young Aboriginal people who self-harm](#).

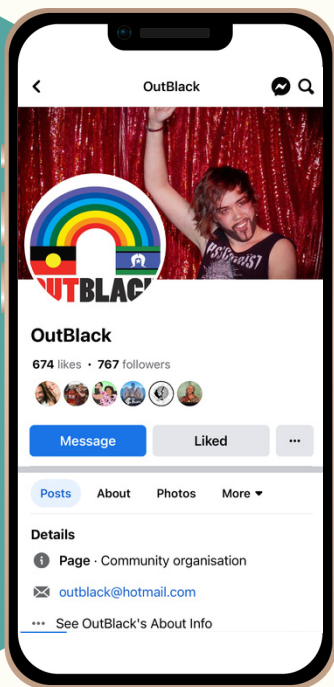
Websites

- [Trans Hub – Trans Mob](#)
- [Intersex Human Rights Australia](#)
- [Headspace Out-Spoken Series](#)
- [Understanding LGBTIQ+ Health](#)
- [Koorie Youth Council](#)



Organisations

- [Blaq Aboriginal Corporation](#)
- [Black Rainbow](#)
- [Koorie Pride Vic](#)
- [Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. \(VAEAI\)](#). For general education inquiries, information on Community Understanding and Safety Training or to contacting your local LAECG.
 - **Phone:** (03) 9481 0800 , **Email:** vaeai@vaeai.org.au



Social Media

- [OutBlack](#)
- [Garbandjeelum](#)
- [Sistergirls and Brotherboys and Gender Diverse Mob Facebook Group](#)



Kai Clancy
WakkaWakka and WulliWulli nations

“To other young trans people, look, stay strong. I can’t really speak for other people, it can just be hard sometimes. I don’t have the right answers, but if you’re ever going through struggles with your gender identity and you need someone to talk to just look out online, at your local health centre and most importantly talk to someone about it.

Talk to a professional, talk to a friend get support networks and get help through your journey now, no matter what.”