



Australia Awards



# Australia Awards Myanmar

Gender Equality, Disability  
and Social Inclusion  
Fact Sheet



# Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion



Gender equality, disability equity and social inclusion are essential to achieving strong, secure and inclusive societies. Applying a gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) lens is essential for achieving peaceful, prosperous, and cohesive communities; no country can meet its development potential without ensuring all women and men, people with disabilities and people from marginalised groups have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

The Australian Government is committed to advancing GEDSI in its overseas aid programs. This commitment is outlined in the following policies and strategies:

- *Australia's International Development Policy (2023)*
- *Australia's International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy (2024)*
- *Australia's International Gender Equality Strategy: For A Safer, More Prosperous Indo-Pacific and World (2025)*

## Gender equality

Gender equality relates to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, and girls and boys.<sup>1</sup> Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights and responsibilities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality takes into consideration the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men.<sup>2</sup> Gender equality is not a women's issue and should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is a human rights issue and a precondition for sustainable people-centred development.

## Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a concept which recognises that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression as a result of the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as gender, disability, sexual orientation, race and class. This means that an individual might experience multiple types of discrimination, such as sexism, racism and ableism. For example, a person who is discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity may also be discriminated against due to their gender, sexual orientation and/or age. Such discrimination can, and often does, create cumulative disadvantage.<sup>3</sup> Intersectionality is important for gender equality as it helps to understand how different forms of discrimination interact and exacerbate inequality.<sup>4</sup>

1 DFAT, *Australia's International Gender Equality Strategy*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2025.

2 UN Women, *Concepts and definitions*, United Nations, 2001, accessed 14 June 2024.

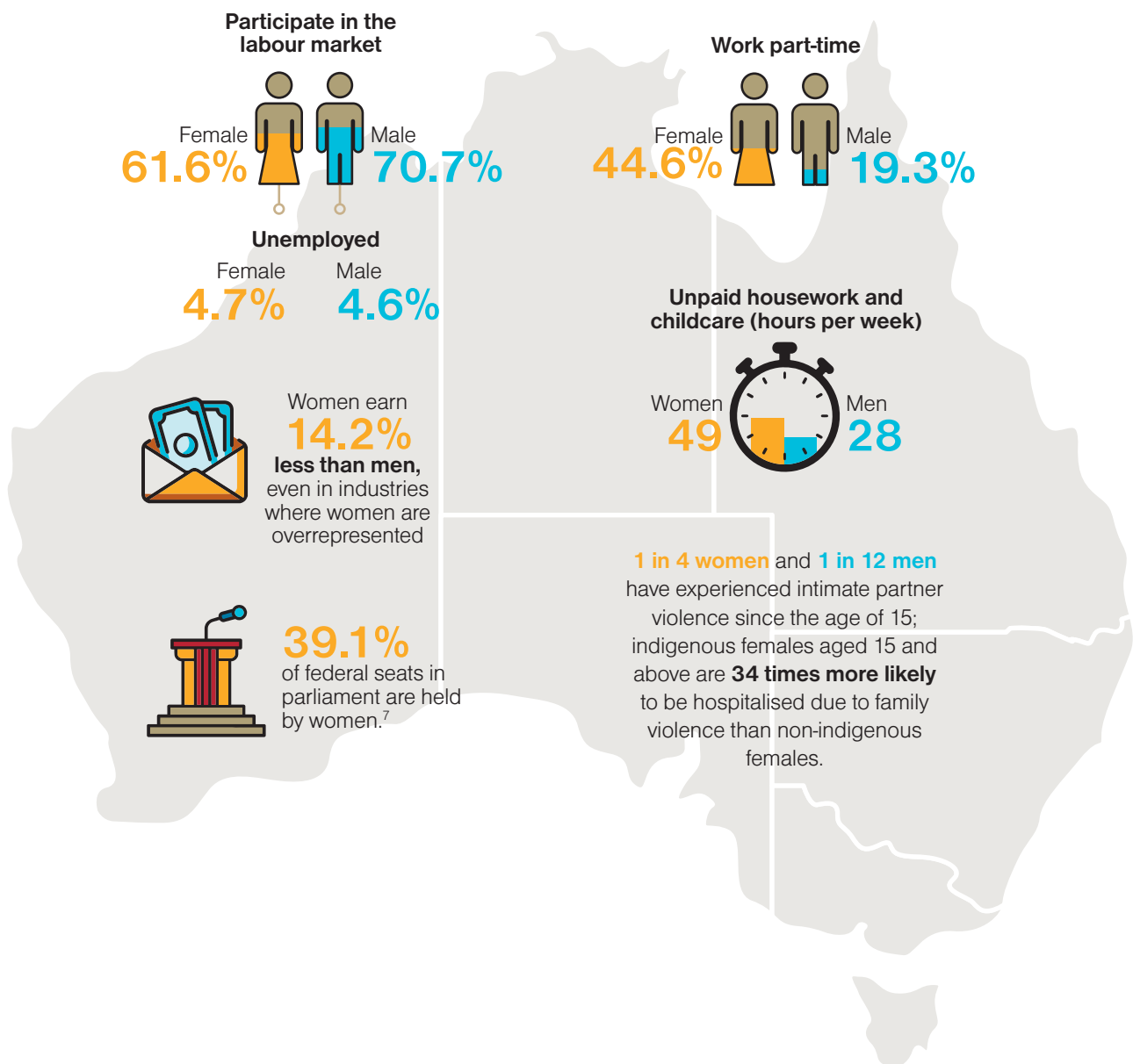
3 Council of Europe, *Intersectionality and Multiple Discrimination*, Council of Europe, n.d., accessed 14 June 2024.

4 S Nedera, *What is intersectionality? And why is it important for gender equality?*, UNDP, 2023, accessed 14 June 2024.

## Gender equality in Australia

Australia is ranked 26 out of 146 countries on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2023, an improvement from 50<sup>th</sup> rank in 2021.<sup>5</sup> The Global Gender Gap Index provides an annual benchmark of gender parity across

four key dimensions: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. A snapshot of gender equality in Australia<sup>6</sup> shows that:



<sup>5</sup> World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2023*, World Economic Forum, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Snapshot of gender equality in Australia*, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2021, accessed 14 June 2024.

<sup>7</sup> The Treasury, *Representation in Parliament*, The Treasury, 2023, accessed 14 June 2024.

## Disability inclusion

The Australian Government is committed to advancing disability equity and rights as an integral part of its international engagement.<sup>8</sup> In alignment with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Australia’s approach is grounded in equity, recognising that different people need different settings in place to thrive. This approach requires a change in systems and processes so people with disability can meaningfully contribute to decision making about their future. By removing barriers, people with disability can fully and equitably participate in and contribute to society.

The Australian Government focuses on five strategic priorities to realise a more equitable world in which people with disability have equal rights and the support needed to achieve equal outcomes: investing in partnerships and movements; addressing discrimination and exclusion; promoting the preconditions for inclusion; supporting equity in humanitarian assistance and climate action; and strengthening the evidence base for disability equity and rights.

### Disability in Australia<sup>10</sup>

**17.7%**  
of the population  
have a disability<sup>9</sup>  
(Approx. 1 in 6 people)



Female **17.8%**  
Male **17.6%**

**65+** **49.6%**  
aged 65 and  
over



Female **50.7%**  
Male **56.1%**



Female **40.9%**  
Male **36.6%**

- **37.9%** of Australians with disability aged 15–64 years said their main source of personal income was a government allowance.
  - **47.8%** of people with disability are employed, compared to 80.3% of people without disability.
- **16%** of people with disability experienced discrimination because of their disability.
  - **44%** of people with disability avoided situations because of their disability.

8 DFAT, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/australias-international-disability-equity-and-rights-strategy.pdf> DFAT, 2024

9 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *People with disability in Australia*, AIHW, 2024, accessed 14 June 2024.

10 *Ibid.*

## LGBTQIA+<sup>11</sup>

LGBTQIA+ is an evolving acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual. The 'plus' is used to signify all gender identities and sexual orientations that letters and words cannot yet fully describe.<sup>12</sup>

### LGBTQIA+ terms

A **lesbian** is an individual who identifies as a woman and is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other people who identify as women.

A person who is **gay** identifies as a man and is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other people who identify as men. The term **gay** can also be used in relation to women who are sexually and romantically attracted to other women.

**Bisexuals** are individuals who are sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of the same gender and people of another gender.

**Transgender** is an umbrella term used to refer to people whose assigned sex at birth does not match their gender identity. Trans people may choose to live their lives with or without modifying their body, dress or legal status and with or without medical treatment and surgery.

**Queer** is a term to describe a range of sexual orientations and gender identities. The term encapsulates political ideas of resistance to heteronormativity and homonormativity and is used as an umbrella term to describe the full range of LGBTQIA+ identities.

**Intersex** is an umbrella term that refers to individuals who have anatomical, chromosomal and hormonal characteristics that differ from medical and conventional understanding of male and female bodies.

**Asexual** is a sexual orientation that reflects little to no sexual attraction, either within or outside relationships. People who identify as asexual can still experience romantic attraction across the sexuality continuum.

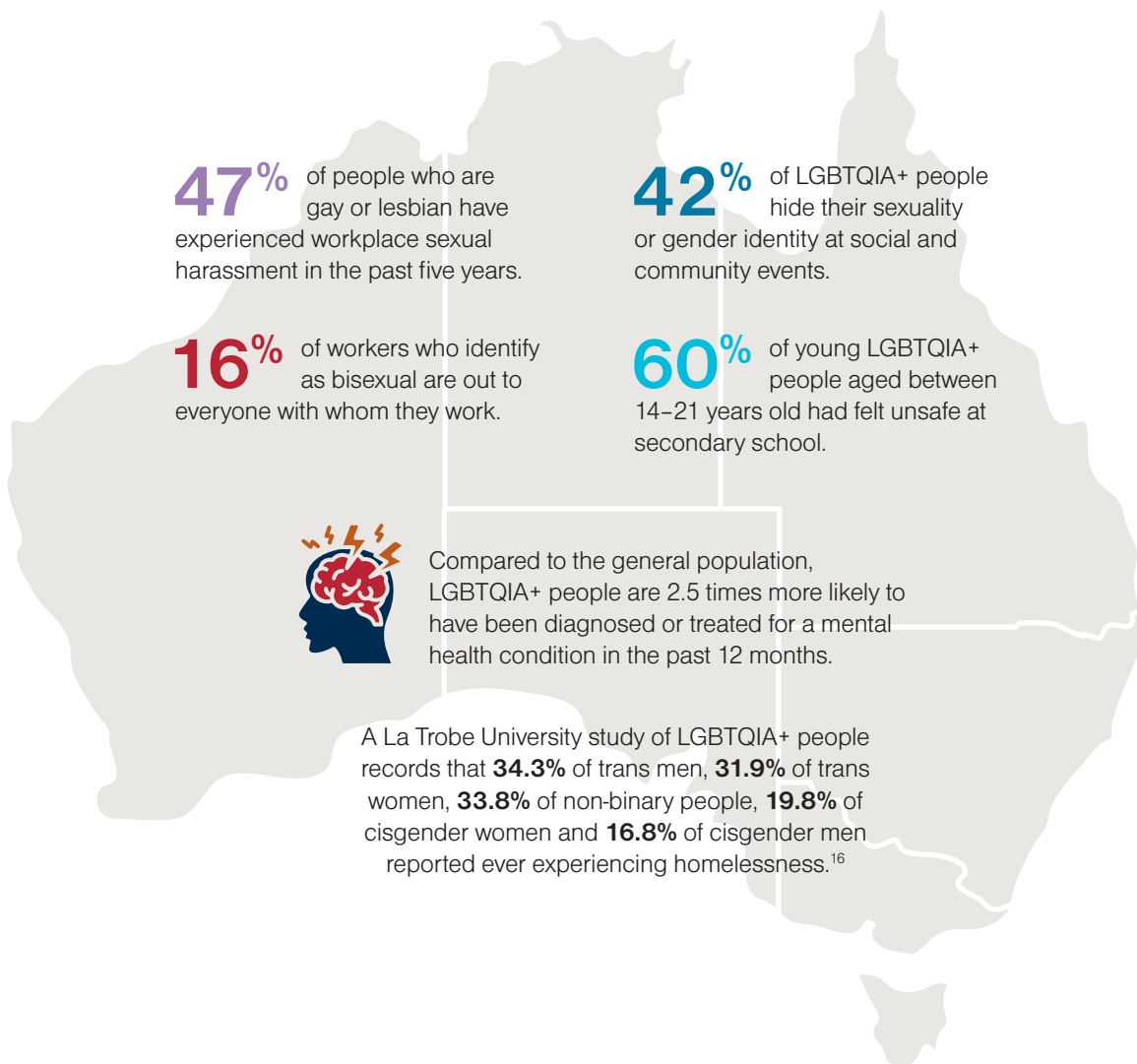
<sup>11</sup> The definitions provided in this section can be found in: Australia Institute of Family Studies, *LGBTQIA+ glossary of common terms*, AIFS, 2022, accessed 14 June 2024.

<sup>12</sup> The Center, *What is LGBTQIA+?*, The Center, n.d., accessed 14 June 2024.

## LGBTQIA+ in Australia

While population-level data related to LGBTQIA+ is limited in Australia, available data suggests that approximately 3–4% of the Australian population have reported identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual. Among people younger than 25 years, 4% of males and 7% of females identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual.<sup>13</sup> Up to 1% of people identify as transgender or

gender diverse<sup>14</sup>, and 1.7% of the population are intersex or have an intersex variation.<sup>15</sup> On 9 December 2017, the right to marry in Australia was no longer determined by sex or gender, with the *Marriage Act 1961* updated to allow for marriage equality.



<sup>13</sup> M Carman et al., *Research Matters; How many people are LGBTIQ?*, Rainbow Health Victoria, 2020, accessed 14 June 2024.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Intersex Human Rights Australia, *Intersex for allies*, IHRA, n.d., accessed 14 June 2024.

<sup>16</sup> A Hill et al., *Private Lives 3: The Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQ People in Australia*, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, 2020.

## Resources and further information

The organisations listed below provide additional information related to gender equality, disability inclusion and LGBTQIA+ in Australia.

**Workplace Gender Equality Agency** is an Australian Government statutory agency created to promote and improve gender equality in the workplace.

[wgea.gov.au](http://wgea.gov.au)

**1800 RESPECT** is a national domestic family and sexual violence counselling service.

[1800respect.org.au](http://1800respect.org.au)

**Full Stop Australia** is a national organisation that works to end sexual, domestic and family violence through advocacy work, training, information and referrals to other services, and provides a counselling service.

[fullstop.org.au](http://fullstop.org.au)

**People with Disability Australia** is Australia's peak rights and advocacy organisation by and for people with disability. It provides support services, training, information and referral, and individual advocacy for people with disability.

[pwd.org.au](http://pwd.org.au)

**Disability Gateway** provides information and services to help people with disability and their family, friends and carers to find the support they need in Australia.

[disabilitygateway.gov.au](http://disabilitygateway.gov.au)

**LGBTIQ+ Health Australia** is the national peak body for organisations and individuals that provide health-related programs, services and research focused on LGBTQIA+ people.

[lgbtiqhealth.org.au](http://lgbtiqhealth.org.au)

**Rainbow Health Australia** supports LGBTQIA+ health and wellbeing through research and knowledge translation, training, resources and policy advice.

[rainbowhealthaustralia.org.au](http://rainbowhealthaustralia.org.au)

**Equality Australia** is a national organisation dedicated to equality for LGBTQIA+ people. The organisation combines legal, policy and campaigning expertise with thousands of supporters to ensure LGBTQIA+ people are treated with dignity and respect.

[equalityaustralia.org.au](http://equalityaustralia.org.au)





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