

HEALTH & WELLBEING

TRANS & GENDER DIVERSE INCLUSION IN SPORT

Respect all
Fear none

Population And Mental Health

Trans and gender diverse people live, work and play sport in every town and city in Australia. Although community understanding and attitudes toward trans people have improved, research tells us that not only is sport still seen as a hostile and unwelcoming place, inclusive policies do make a significant and positive difference to the culture of sports clubs and to those who participate within them.^{i ii}

Trans inclusion is important because trans people shoulder some of the heaviest burdens of poor mental health, including:

- Between **0.5-4.5% of the adult population are trans** and gender diverse (hereafter 'trans')^{iv}
- Trans people over 18 are **11 times more likely to attempt suicide**ⁱⁱⁱ
- Trans people over 18 are **18 times more likely to have thoughts of suicide**ⁱⁱⁱ
- Trans people are **6.5 times more likely to self-harm**ⁱⁱⁱ
- Trans people over 25 are **10 times more likely to be diagnosed with depression**ⁱⁱⁱ
- Trans people over 25 are **10-13 times more likely to be diagnosed with anxiety**ⁱⁱⁱ

High quality empirical evidence and data (such as from a Census) about the size of the Australian trans population are limited. However, a systematic review of studies published internationally from 2009-2019 found estimates ranged from 0.5 to 4.5% among adults. These data suggest there could be more than one million adults in Australia whose gender is different to that presumed for them at birth.^{iv}

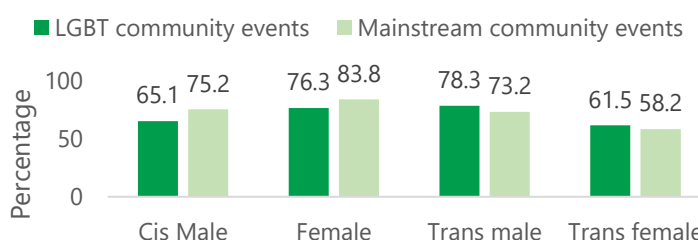
Women's Sport

Women's sport, and increasing the participation of all women in sport, is essential, important and should be protected. The inclusion of trans women in women's sport doesn't challenge this and there is no evidence that suggests the participation of cis women declines when a trans woman is part of the team.

Trans women have been competing openly in the Olympics since 2004 and women's sport continues to grow and thrive. Trans women make up a very small portion of the Australian population, with a tiny fraction ever having participated in elite sport. Participation improves when sports are more inclusive.

Many sports organisations in Australia already have governance in place that address the inclusion of trans people.

Trans women have the lowest participation rates in LGBTQ or mainstream community events compared to the rest of the LGBTQ community^v

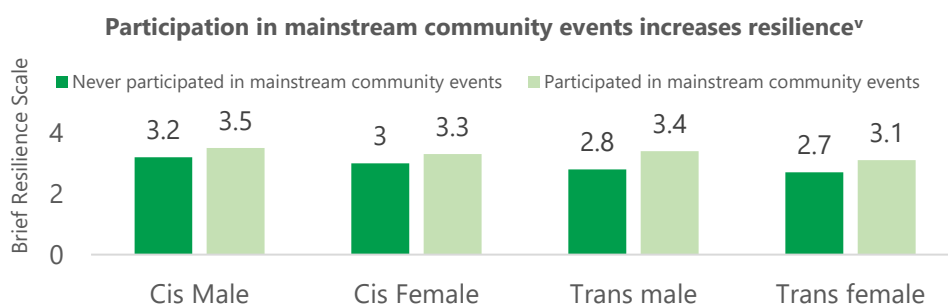


Why Trans Inclusion in Sport is Important

THE GOOD:

We know that participating in sport makes a profound difference to those who play and compete.

- 27% of trans youth who play sport say they receive mostly A's [higher grades in school], compared to 19% for those who don't play sport.ⁱⁱⁱ
- LGBTQ youth who participate in sports have more self-esteem, compared to their LGBTQ peers.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Using a young person's chosen name at work, at school, with friends, and at home:
 - Reduces depression symptoms by 71%
 - Reduces thoughts of suicide by 34%, and
 - Reduces suicide attempts by 65%
- Participation in mainstream (non-LGBTQ specific) community events was associated with increased resilience for all sexual and gender identity groups.^v
- Increased visibility and social inclusion are vital to improving the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTQ people. This involves: Ensuring that trans people are valued and active participants in all areas of social life including work, education, sport and recreation, politics, art and culture".^v



THE OPPORTUNITIES:

- Traditional male sports were seen as unwelcome and toxic spaces for young trans and gender diverse people.^{vi}
- Trans young people in particular found sport and exercise activities discriminatory as they were often excluded from participating as themselves – that is, as their affirmed gender.^v
- Clubs and sporting environments that reinforce gender binaries, or don't allow for mixed competitions and gender neutral facilities, were frightening for trans young people.^v
- Organisational and sports practices and environments framed within binary gender were problematic for trans and gender diverse young people (e.g. lack of mixed gender teams; separate male/female toilets, rather than gender neutral toilets; lack of adequate change-rooms).^v
- Young people do not perceive sport as a safe and welcoming environment, and many have been subjected to transphobia.^v
- Experiences of transphobia resulted in 13.6% of participants dropping out of sport or extra-curricular activities altogether.^v

There is no direct or consistent research that suggests trans women, trans men or non-binary people have any athletic advantage at any stage of gender affirmation.^{vii}

If you would like further guidance or support, please email Pride in Sport – info@prideinsport.com.au

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ⁱ Jones BA, Arcelus J, Bouman WP, Haycraft E. Sport and transgender people: a systematic review of the literature relating to sport participation and competitive sport policies. *Sports Med.* 2017; 47:701–16.

ⁱⁱ Drummond, M., Elliott, S., Drummond, C., Lewis, L., Prichard, I., Bevan, N., & Pennes, J.-L. (2019). Inclusive Sport Practices: "You don't include people by excluding other people". Flinders University. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.10700.26244>

ⁱⁱⁱ The Trevor Project. (2020). 2020 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health. New York, New York: The Trevor Project.

^{iv} Zhang, Q., Goodman, M., Adams, N., Corneli, T., Hashemi, L., & Kreukels, B. et al. (2020). Epidemiological considerations in transgender health: A systematic review with focus on higher quality data. *International Journal Of Transgender Health*, 1-13.

^v Leonard, W., Lyons, A., & Bariola, E. (2015). A closer look at Private Lives 2: Addressing the mental health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Australians. Monograph Series No. 103. The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University: Melbourne

^{vi} Storr, R., Robinson, K., Davies, C., Nicholas, L., Collison, A. (2020). Game to Play?: Exploring the experiences and attitudes towards sport, exercise and physical activity amongst same sex attracted and gender diverse young people. Western Sydney University

^{vii} Alliance. (2022). Transgender Women Athletes and Elite Sport: A Scientific Review. Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport.