

June 2022 - December 2025

LGBTIQA+ ACTION PLAN

A proud initiative of Cafs
Rainbow Action Group



cafs 
WE
CARE

Acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation we give deepest respect to Australia's First Nations Peoples. Their histories, their stories, their resilience. Their connection to culture and land. The wisdom of their Elders past, present and emerging.

Child & Family Services (Cafs) acknowledge the Wadawurrung, Djab Wurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung people as Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and live. They are First Nations people of the Kulin nation. They have cared for the land and each other for generations, and continue this care today.

As a result of historical and ongoing violence, colonisation, assimilation, racism, discrimination, embedded structural disadvantage and a dominating Eurocentric culture in Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have suffered many losses including family, land, culture and language. The impact of this dispossession has resulted in significant social, political, economic and health inequities between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians today. In spite of this adversity the strength of First Nations Peoples is seen in their ongoing fight for justice, self-determination, recognition, land, language and culture. We also acknowledge that our own past organisational policies and practices contributed to the irreparable breaking up of families through the Stolen Generation, especially in Ballarat and surrounding areas where a number of Aboriginal children were placed in children's homes.



INTRODUCTION

Cafs is committed to providing a culturally safe, mentally healthy and inclusive workplace for everyone, where diversity is not only welcomed, but celebrated. Our values of respect, integrity, collaboration, kindness and innovation enhance and promote a mindset of equality and diversity and are embedded in policy, procedures, practice frameworks and action plans developed with clients and communities.

This is Cafs second iteration of our LGBTIQ+ Action Plan, with the first version being called simply an LGBTI Action Plan.

At the time of writing our first Plan we were aspiring to achieve Rainbow Tick accreditation through Quality Innovation Performance (QIP). QIP accreditation certifies against the Human Services Quality Framework (HSQF) and ISO 9001:2015.

After a lengthy process of self-audits, consultations, site visits, data collection and reporting, Cafs were proud to obtain Rainbow Tick accreditation in November 2019. Being QIP accredited means that Cafs staff, Board members and service users know that we are an organisation committed to providing quality, safe and welcoming work environments and service provision.

We are now proudly working towards being a Rainbow Tick re-accredited organisation in November 2022.

Cafs supports an ongoing 'Rainbow Action Group' membership who, in turn, drive the actions in the plan and their positive outcomes.

This refreshed Plan is an overview of our achievements and a summary of actions outstanding from our previous Plan. Additional goals and actions have been added to increase Cafs opportunities for learning and development in this space.



A message from the CEO

I am delighted to present Cafs LGBTIQ+ Action Plan 2022-2025.

In supporting and implementing this plan, Cafs is building on the existing formal and informal practices, and committing to align our processes with our vision of Wellbeing, Respect and Safety for everyone.

Including LGBTIQ+ people means taking action. Inclusion, equality and appreciation are important for our LGBTIQ+ community. The Plan considers the unique needs and challenges of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or gender diverse, intersex, queer (or questioning) and asexual employees and clients, both individually and collectively. It also acknowledges that this community often intersects with other diverse communities such as First Nations Peoples, cultural and linguistically diverse people, those with a disability, youth and the elderly.

The Plan sets out clear and measurable targets on how Cafs will work towards achieving and sustaining an equitable and LGBTIQ+ inclusive culture. Cafs recent highlights include:

- First Rainbow Tick accreditation (2019)
- IDAHOBIT street 'chalk bomb' community mural (2020)
- Annual raising of Transgender and Rainbow Flags
- Introduction of Pronouns to staff email signatures (2020)
- Ongoing memberships with National LGBTIQ+ Health Alliance; and Switchboard Victoria
- 'Captain Moonlite Rides Again – Visual Stories of Ballarat Pride' projection art installation (2021)
- Diversity Council of Australia membership and re-accreditation 2021
- Sponsorship of community IDAHOBIT event "A Plate at the Table" (2021 & 2022)
- 'Drive in Pride' community Film Night IDAHOBIT 2022
- Winner 2021 AHRI – CEO Diversity Champion Award (Wendy Sturgess)
- Winner 2021 AHRI – HR Diversity Champion Award (Liz Hardiman)
- Winner 2021 AHRI – Michael Kirby LGBTIQ Inclusion Award (Cafs)
- Pending Rainbow Tick re-accreditation - November 2022

There is a place for everyone at Cafs. We are committed to ensuring that all people:

- are treated with dignity and respect
- have equitable access to employment opportunities and outcomes
- have the ability to participate in all aspects of work life
- enjoy access to our services that is unencumbered and non-discriminatory
- can achieve their full potential

We look forward to further strengthening Cafs LGBTIQ+-inclusive practises through this Plan, so that our genuine intentions and commitment are reflected across each and every Cafs program that we deliver, for the benefit of our families and community.

WENDY STURGESS she/her
Chief Executive Officer

Messages from the community

Safe spaces are vital for the LGBTIQ+ community, as they are primarily a place of refuge, but they also provide an environment that is welcoming and supportive.

A safe space can display to staff, clients and community that they are seen and heard, and that this space is free of Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexphobia and Transphobia. A safe space is a sign of respect and understanding, and it could make all the difference to a person's wellbeing.

Alexander Bravo he/him
Community Member

Having spaces that are safe for people to feel comfortable in their identities is so important and valuable to the community.

It allows each person to access the support and assistance they require for their personal circumstances in a way that is authentic for them and enriches the community at large.

Markus Middling he/him



OUR BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITIES WE WORK IN

Cafs is a community service organisation that provides a range of programs across the Central Highlands of Victoria to children, young people and families who are vulnerable or in need of support. Our areas of service currently fall within the traditional boundaries of the Kulin Nation, with the Wadawurrung, Djab Wurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung people being the Traditional Owners. It is worth noting however, that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Ballarat and surrounds is largely comprised of persons whose traditional lands are outside Wadawurrung, Djab Wurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung country.

Our goal is to give every individual the optimal opportunity to live in, and be part of a safe and nurturing family. To maximise their potential and ability to participate within the communities of their choice.

At the time of writing this plan Cafs employs approximately 260 staff, engages with approximately 180 carers & volunteers, and provides help and support to more than 6,800 individuals and families each year. We have offices in Ballarat, Ararat, Daylesford and Bacchus Marsh. In addition, we run several youth residential houses and an Early Childhood Parenting Centre in Ballarat.

Based on a March 2022 Culture and Engagement Survey administered to all staff (146 respondents, or a 61% response rate), 9% of Cafs staff identified as being LGBTIQ+ (3% 'preferred not to say'). This statistic is slightly lower than the Australian workforce LGBTIQ+ representation of 11% (Diversity Council of Australia benchmark 2021 Index), but only slightly lower than the Ballarat regional demographic of 9.6% LGBTIQ+ representation (2016 Census).



9% of Cafs staff identified as being LGBTIQ+

11% is the Australian workforce LGBTIQ+ representation

CAFS VISION

Wellbeing, respect and safety for everyone.

CAFS MISSION

To deliver quality services with positive outcomes and experiences for the communities we serve.

CAFS VALUES

Respect

We treat all people, including ourselves, with dignity. We have genuine compassion for our colleagues and the individuals, families and communities we serve.

Integrity

We act ethically and do what is right – even if it's uncomfortable.

Collaboration

We embrace collaboration. We celebrate inclusiveness and work together with the individuals and families we serve to make a difference in their lives.

Kindness

We genuinely care about people and actively look for ways to offer a helping hand to those in need.

Innovation

We encourage and explore different ways of working and fresh ideas to improve our practice and outcomes for those we serve.

'WORD CLOUD' ENQUIRY; SINGLE WORDS USED TO DESCRIBE CAFS CULTURE

Cafs Culture

Through Cafs March 22 Culture and Engagement Survey, 96 people took the time to respond to the question "If you had only one word to describe your experience of Cafs culture as a workplace, what would that one word be". Of these 96 descriptors, 56 (65%) of the words used were positive, 15 (17.5%) were neutral and 15 (17.5%) were not so positive.

As this word cloud shows, the most frequently used words to describe Cafs culture were



In relation to the entire organisation, the most commonly words used are represented in the word cloud graphic:



People at Cafs

Of the 9% of respondents who identified as LGBTIQ+, (13 people), the words used to describe Cafs culture were:



1 The idea of the word cloud, is that it visually depicts the frequency of words used. The frequency that a word is used, correlates with the size of the font of that word. In other words, the more frequent a word is used, the bigger the font in the word cloud: the least frequently a word is used, the smaller the font will be.

When comparing other key culture and engagement indicators from the overall organisational results to the LGBTIQ+ specific survey results, it would appear that staff identifying as LGBTIQ+ reported a good engagement score; and that the manager and employee relationships for this workforce cohort rates higher than the broader organisation index scores.

Measure / Indicator	Organisational results	LGBTIQ+ Specific results
Engagement Index	76.9%	76.5%
Quality Manager Index	78%	83%
Overall satisfaction with Manager relationship	85%	91.7%

We also learned, however, that some LGBTIQ+ staff:

- Didn't feel like they have the opportunity to do what they do best every day (25% of survey respondents)
- Didn't feel they could say what they needed to say without worrying about their career or reputation (42%)
- Do not think there is sufficient time for important conversations, nor listened to without interruptions (55%)
- Are actively looking for work elsewhere (33%)
- Mentioned a disconnect between executive team and their staff
- Thought that Cafs culture is not consolidated across the organisation

We thank all people who participated in Cafs Culture and Engagement Survey. It is important to acknowledge that not all feedback was positive. We invite, respect and learn from this commentary. These voices have been heard and through this plan we hope to address these concerns. Staff have taken the time to share their valuable thoughts (both negative and positive) and all feedback will contribute to a positive Cafs culture.

OUR ACTION PLAN

Through this Plan we acknowledge Cafs responsibility in the development and implementation of inclusive policies and plans that recognise, respect and value diversity.

We are committed to taking practical actions to support LGBTIQ+ community members - to be able to participate fully in life and to feel safe, welcome, visible and included.

Inclusion is vital to good health. As a known and reputable provider of social services for children, families and individuals at risk, Cafs have a real opportunity to facilitate tangible change by challenging discrimination, and championing increasingly inclusive attitudes and practices that support and celebrate LGBTIQ+ people.

This action plan addresses the 5 action areas to promote and sustain an LGBTIQ+ inclusive organisation.

1. Leadership & Commitment
2. Organisational Culture
3. Corporate Policies & Procedures
4. Programs & Services
5. Governance & Tracking Progress



This action plan should be considered in conjunction with the suite of Cafs other Inclusion and Diversity action plans, because we recognise the intersectional nature of marginalisation and discrimination. These are:



Legislative Context

There are a number of legislative requirements, regulations and policies that guide organisations in relation to matters of LGBTIQ+ inclusion, equal opportunity and discrimination. Any review or updating of this LGBTIQ+ Action Plan will ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and regulations, and demonstrate Cafs' commitment to the protection of the rights of Cafs stakeholders.

ACTION PLAN

Action 1

Leadership & Commitment

Deliverables	Responsibility
Maintain our commitment to LGBTIQ+ staff and communities through our values, and external accreditations like Rainbow Tick	Cafs Executive Management People & Engagement Team LGBTIQ+ Action Group
Ensure LGBTIQ+ inclusive practice standards are reflected in the our vision statement, values, position descriptions, service contracts, performance management system, service models and quality management plan	Executive Managers
Promote Cafs presence with leading Networking and Stakeholder agencies such as the Centre For Excellence Child & Family Welfare, Rainbow Tick Network and the City of Ballarat's LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee	Marketing & Communications Team; LGBTIQ+ Action Group
Maintain corporate memberships with Switchboard, National LGBTIQ+ Health Alliance and the Diversity Council Australia	Manager Brand Development; LGBTIQ+ Action Group
Use our privileged position and profile as an employer of choice across the Central Highlands region, to ensure that our people always have a voice, and feel supported to challenge un-inclusive systems, structures and biases	All of organisation

ACTION PLAN

Action 2

Organisational Culture

Deliverables	Responsibility
<p>Understand better why some LGBTIQ+ staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't feel like they have the opportunity to do what they do best every day (25%)• Don't feel they can say what they need to say without worrying about their career of reputation (42%)• Don't think there is sufficient time for important conversations, nor listened to without interruptions (55%)• Are actively looking for work elsewhere (33%)	<p>People & Engagement Team; Executive Team</p>
<p>Deliver and/or participate in 3 local LGBTIQ+ events annually. e.g. IDAHOBIT, Wear It Purple, Transgender Day of Visibility</p>	<p>Marketing & Communications Team; LGBTIQ+ Action Group</p>
<p>Invite new staff to participate in the LGBTIQ+ Action Group during the Corporate Induction session</p>	<p>Inclusion & Diversity Lead</p>
<p>Collaborate with LGBTIQ+ specific community organisations with a view to better understand local community, and the issues or barriers to services that they face</p>	<p>Marketing & Communications Team; LGBTIQ+ Action Group; People & Engagement Team</p>

ACTION PLAN

Action 3

Corporate Policies and Procedures

Deliverables	Responsibility
Develop and offer best practice training resources for Cafs staff, including a mandatory LGBTIQ+ induction online cultural awareness module	Learning & Development Lead; LGBTIQ+ Action Group
Ensure our communication and educational materials use inclusive language and images, and LGBTIQ+ specific information where relevant	Manager Brand Development
Keep up to date of any changes to LGBTIQ+ legislation and Child Safety Standards	Manager Quality & Child Safeguarding
Have systems in place for securely collecting, storing, using and sharing LGBTIQ+ staff and client personal information, including their sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status and have strategies to ensure that staff respond respectfully when consumers, other staff or volunteers disclose	Manager Quality & Child Safeguarding; People and Engagement Team
Cafs will formalise an integrated LGBTIQ+ service user feedback system that ensures continuous quality improvement and planning through the application and utilisation of client management system 'Family Journey'	Exec Manager Client Outcomes
We will formalise a process to identify and mitigate any risk posed to LGBTIQ+ service users through the integration of Risk Man into Family Journey	Exec Manager Client Outcomes
Develop and promote a Cafs staff document describing rights and responsibilities demonstrating LGBTIQ-inclusive practice in information collection, storage, use and disclosure.	Inclusion & Diversity Lead

ACTION PLAN

Action 4

Programs and Services

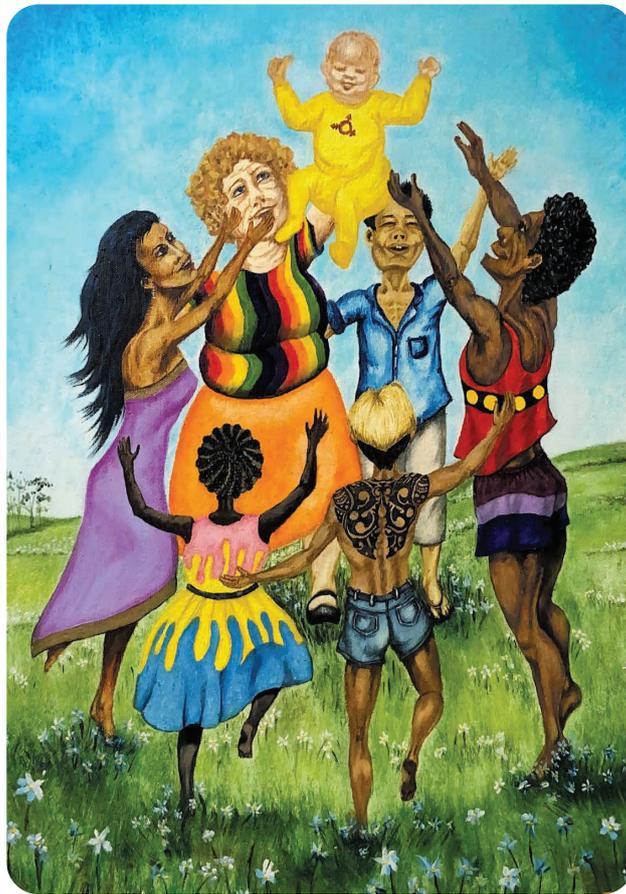
Deliverables	Responsibility
Research and better understand what the barriers to employment at Cafs are for LGBTIQ+ people in our community.	People & Engagement Team;
Develop targeted employment strategies to increase Cafs LGBTIQ+ workforce through pre-employment (including student placements) and other employment processes at Cafs	LGBTIQ+ Action Group
Contribute LGBTIQ+ specific content for communications through Cafs Inclusion & Diversity e-newsletter	LGBTIQ+ Action Group; Marketing & Communications Team
Maintain and promote Cafs Inclusive Service Directory and Annual Cafs Calendar of events	Marketing & Communications Team; Client Engagement; LGBTIQ+ Action Group

ACTION PLAN

Action 5

Governance and Tracking Progress

Deliverables	Responsibility
Publish Cafs LGBTIQA+ Action Plan on the Cafs website	Marketing & Communications Team
Publicly report our Action Plan and Rainbow Tick achievements, challenges and learnings on Cafs intranet and website. Ensure that progress and achievements are accessible on Cafs intranet, Envisio and our website	Marketing & Communications Team; LGBTIQA+ Action Group
Ensure the Rainbow Tick accreditation gap analysis is incorporated into the Annual Internal Audit Schedule	Manager Quality & Child Safeguarding



Inclusion and diversity

I have used the Cafs company colours, green, blue and orange prominently.

You will notice that figures all stand on their left foot while lifting the right. This is to show that we follow our Policies and Procedures.

You will also notice that their heads are proportionally larger. This is to show that we remain continually mindful of our values, duty of care to our clients and of their rights.

The long grass depicts our company's continued commitment to growth and improvement. The daisies are a reminder to see the beauty that is always there when you choose to look for it.

The little girl's dress is in the colours of the pansexual flag.

The mother figure is of Indian descent and the young man of Asian descent.

The boy in the front has used a Maori tattoo to camouflage his spinal curvature and torso deformity.

The Nanna figure is gay.

The father figure is Aboriginal and bisexual.

The baby is transgender.

Lastly, we work together as a team, with diversity being our strength and inclusion being our culture.

Statement from the artist,
DENISE SWAN, Cafs Residential Carer 2020

Cafs is all about support.



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