



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy domestic and family violence consultation report for Queensland

Consultation report for Changing with pride: A national framework to prevent violence against LGBTIQ+ people



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Queensland
LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy Health and Wellbeing



Rainbow
Health
Australia

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of Country across these lands, oceans and waterways now known as Queensland. The sovereignty of these lands was never ceded. For us to do our work with integrity, Traditional Custodians, ancestors and Elders, and the ways of knowing, being and doing, must be central to how we work, live, walk and play.

This report was prepared by 2Spirits and Jackson Fairchild for Rainbow Health Australia and Our Watch.

About 2Spirits, Rainbow Health Australia and Our Watch

2Spirits is an LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy community-controlled organisation grounded in cultural authority, strong community relationships, and accountability to the communities who have shared their knowledge and experiences in this report.

We promote the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities in Queensland through education, support and advocacy. We are committed to helping every member of our diverse communities feel safe, valued, represented and supported. 2Spirits is committed to developing pathways to walk and work together in partnership with agencies to grow health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people across Queensland.

Rainbow Health Australia (RHA) supports LGBTIQA+ health and wellbeing nationally through research and knowledge translation, training, resources, policy advice and service accreditation through the Rainbow Tick. RHA is a program of the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) at La Trobe University. Through evidence and capability building and sector coordination, RHA is a national leader in the prevention of violence against LGBTIQA+ people. An integral part of RHA's work is building partnerships with government, researchers, community, organisations and service providers to create equity and inclusion.

Our Watch is Australia's national organisation for the primary prevention of gender-based violence. We work to embed gender equality and prevent violence where Australians live, learn, work and socialise. Our Watch provides the national leadership, evidence, implementation capability, workforce development, public reach, and coordination needed to embed prevention across systems, institutions, communities, and individuals. We convene governments, researchers, practitioners, peak bodies, community leaders and specialist sectors to strengthen the connections between policy, evidence and implementation.

We sincerely thank everyone who took part in these consultations. Your insights and support have been invaluable to the development of *Changing with pride: A national framework to prevent violence against LGBTIQA+ people*.

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Executive summary

This report summarises the findings of a consultation process led by 2Spirits with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer, asexual and aromantic (LGBTIQ+), Sistergirl and Brotherboy community members, leaders, Elders and organisations in Queensland.

This work is part of a national consultation aimed at shaping *Changing with pride: A national framework to prevent violence against LGBTIQ+ people*. The development of this framework has been led in partnership by Rainbow Health Australia and Our Watch.

Rainbow Health Australia and Our Watch have partnered with 2Spirits to ensure that consultation in Queensland was led, owned and governed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities and aligned with community priorities, protocols and decision-making. 2Spirits' accountability to community extends beyond the consultation itself and includes responsibility for how findings are interpreted, represented and used.

Consultation took place in November 2025. This report is shared to demonstrate accountability to participants and the communities they serve. It is also published as a community-owned resource to support ongoing advocacy and policy reform at local and state levels, and to guide culturally safe and effective practice for practitioners and sector leaders.

This report is intended to be read alongside the *National consultation report for Changing with pride*, while also standing on its own as a Queensland-specific account of what was heard and what needs to change.

This report is one of 2 reports focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities. A report focused on findings from consultation in the Northern Territory has been developed separately, in recognition of the unique experiences and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities in each region. The Northern Territory and national consultation reports can be found on the [Our Watch website](#).

Key findings of this report include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy community-controlled organisations are best placed to lead culturally safe violence prevention, early intervention, response and healing programs in Queensland. These organisations hold the necessary cultural authority, trusted community relationships, and deep expertise in how colonisation, racism, rigid gender norms and stigma shape violence.
- This leadership is constrained by commissioning models that route funding through larger organisations that are not trusted and not culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people.
- Existing family violence and first response systems often fail Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people, and can cause further harm. This is especially true in regional and remote areas.
- There is an urgent need for culturally safe, community-led service pathways that provide genuine choice. Achieving this will require workforce capacity-building and resourcing through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy-led organisations to provide services.
- Allies from non-Indigenous and non-LGBTIQ+ communities have an important role in working alongside our communities to challenge racism, homophobia and transphobia.

Principles for consultation

CONSULTATION WAS GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

Self-determination

Community-led design, decisions and validation of outcomes

Cultural safety and inclusion

Respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and LGBTIQ+ identities

Do no harm

Trauma-informed, healing-focused approach ensuring emotional safety

Respect and confidentiality

Privacy, consent and anonymity upheld at all times

Indigenous data sovereignty

Community owns and controls data and stories shared

Intersectionality

Recognition of overlapping impacts of culture, gender, sexuality, disability, class and location

Consultation approach

The goal of this consultation was to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy community members, leaders, Elders and organisations in culturally safe and inclusive ways to:

- understand lived experiences of domestic, family and intimate partner violence and what drives it
- identify gaps and barriers in services, systems and community responses
- understand what culturally safe, inclusive support, healing and justice should look like
- co-design culturally grounded solutions, recommendations and pathways for change
- develop community-led recommendations for policy, funding and service reform.

The consultation engaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy community members, leaders, Elders and organisations through yarning circles (group dialogue) and one-on-one private yarns. Participants were given the choice based on what felt safest and most appropriate given the importance of safety, confidentiality and risk management in small or close-knit communities.

Cultural protocols were embedded throughout the consultation. Each session included an Acknowledgement of Country and an acknowledgement of the Sistergirl and Brotherboy community, and was co-facilitated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander facilitators with LGBTIQ+ awareness and an external consultant. Wellbeing support was available during and after sessions, with optional debriefs and quiet spaces to support participants to step out, regroup or seek additional support if needed.

Care was taken to acknowledge and mitigate the cultural load and fatigue experienced by LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy leaders and facilitators through wraparound support from 2Spirits leadership.

Participants provided verbal or written consent. Information was captured through note-taking, or audio-recording where permission was given. Data ownership remained with the community, with 2Spirits holding authority over how stories and knowledge are recorded, used and shared.

Risk and safety management integrated throughout the consultation supported participant wellbeing and minimised harm. Measures included onsite wellbeing workers or counsellors, culturally safe and trauma-informed facilitation, and the establishment of clear crisis referral pathways for participants needing immediate support – including helplines, counselling, and safe housing options. Confidentiality agreements were also used to protect privacy and reduce the risk of unwanted disclosure.

The consultation was also guided by the understanding that, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities, violence prevention cannot be neatly separated from early intervention, response, recovery and healing. Instead, these are addressed alongside each other, and are connected and shaped by lived experience, cultural context and local priorities. As a result, this report brings together findings across prevention, early intervention, response, and healing and recovery.

Process for report writing

All facilitators who attended the consultations kept their own notes, and these notes informed the content of this report. Following the consultations, an initial workshop was held to agree on the key themes and overall approach to writing, with space for the voices and perspectives of everyone involved to be heard and reflected. Where needed, additional input was sought from 2Spirits team members to check that the findings aligned with community perspectives. 2Spirits held final decision-making authority over what was included in the report. This was essential in ensuring accountability to the community, and alignment with our principles of self-determination and Indigenous data sovereignty.

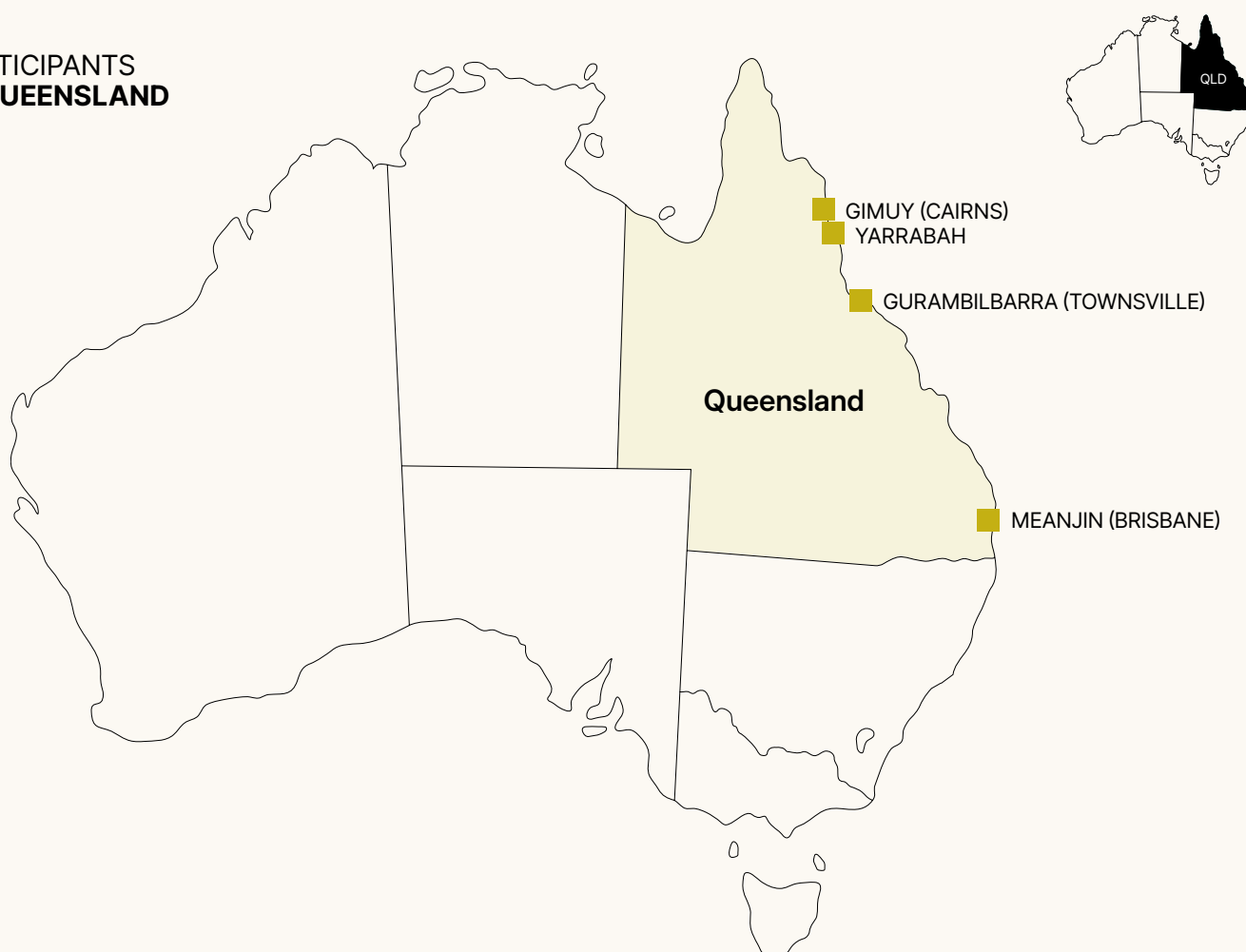
Participants

A total of 34 people participated in the consultation from Gimuy (Cairns), Yarrabah, Gurambilbarra (Townsville) and Meanjin (Brisbane).

Participants were invited based on the following criteria:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQA+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people (urban, regional, remote)
- Elders, cultural leaders and respected community members
- peer workers and lived experience advocates
- Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs)
- LGBTIQA+ organisations, and domestic and family violence services
- health, justice, housing, child protection and youth services.

PARTICIPANTS IN QUEENSLAND



Key findings

Community-led knowledge and expertise

All participants from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities demonstrated a deep understanding of the structural issues that drive the high rates of violence they experience, and shared nuanced perspectives on what needs to happen to better prevent and respond to it.

There was also universal agreement that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy community-controlled organisations and their staff are best positioned to lead culturally safe violence prevention and response in Queensland. This means going beyond playing an advisory or consultative role to ensure decision-making power is held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities themselves. This capability reflects long-standing practice in community-led health promotion, advocacy, education and healing work, and a clear understanding of how structural forces such as colonisation, racism, inequality and rigid gender norms shape violence and the systems that are meant to prevent it. They also have the cultural authority, lived and living experience, and trusted relationships necessary to do this work effectively and safely. As one participant said,

‘We get to see the parts that other people don’t. This report is a chance to see and reflect that.’

At the same time, participants said their ability to prevent, respond and heal from violence is hindered by practical barriers – particularly insufficient funding and support to participate in policy and prevention work, run programs, sustain relationships with the community, and care for staff.

Strong concerns were raised about funding models that direct money through larger organisations that are not trusted and not culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people. Participants said these arrangements often position Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy organisations as junior partners or delivery agents rather than leaders, despite their cultural authority, community trust and expertise.

This approach to commissioning ignores the principles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination, and prevents Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations from leading work on their own terms, with decisions, priorities and accountability held in community. It also reproduces the same power imbalances violence prevention work is trying to change by keeping decision-making and accountability outside community, and pushes people towards service pathways that are not trusted or culturally safe, increasing the risk of exclusion and further harm.

Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026–2036 works with the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032.

The first thread is 'Centring voice, self-determination and agency':

Thread 1 will place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, self-determination and agency at the heart of service systems and decision-making. This means moving beyond consultation to genuine community-led and place-based solutions, supported through shared decision-making and the transfer of service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations. It also means ensuring that services and institutions create culturally safe and responsive systems where women and children are supported to have real influence and control in the decisions that affect their lives.

'Policy and programs that centre the voices of people with lived and living experience, and are designed with community, will always deliver stronger outcomes. Our people know what works for us. Governments and services must listen, respect and partner with us to build solutions.'

– PUBLIC SUBMISSION

What drives violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people?

Participants were consulted about what they saw as driving violence towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people. At a structural level, the majority pointed to the ongoing impacts of colonisation, intergenerational trauma and racism. All felt racism had increased in recent times. Many linked this to the impact of the 'No' vote in the Voice to Parliament referendum, and some noted a noticeable rise in visible Nazi activity in public spaces across Queensland.

Many participants also highlighted class discrimination, poverty and broader economic exclusion. They described housing overcrowding as a significant issue that is both caused by and contributes to high rates of violence. This was linked to the legacy of religious missions, dispossession, and high rates of family rejection.

Participants spoke about how rigid binary gender roles were imposed and sustained through colonial norms, leading to widespread homophobia and transphobic stigma – both from within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and from outside. This stigma has worsened in recent times due to a growing resurgence of homophobic and transphobic backlash. This disproportionately impacts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, black and brown LGBTIQ+ people, and trans and gender diverse people, particularly trans women and Sistergirls.

Together, these factors drive violence by diminishing the humanity and dignity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people. They isolate people from culture and support, limit their autonomy, and create conditions where abuse is minimised, excused and encouraged.

What does domestic, family or intimate partner violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people look like?

Participants described Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people experiencing similar patterns of family violence as other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, such as physical violence and coercive control.

They also described added dynamics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people, such as control of access to gender-affirming hormones and self-expression, and threats of being outed by partners or family members.

Sistergirls were described as experiencing high rates of severe sexual violence from cisgender heterosexual men, driven by fetishisation of their gender identity, as well as heightened vulnerability to sexual exploitation in the context of housing insecurity. This violence is often not reported due to fears they will not be taken seriously or will experience further discrimination or abuse from police (see 'What barriers stop Sistergirls, Brotherboys and LGBTIQ+ mob from seeking help?' for further discussion on this point).

Several participants described hook-up and dating apps as increasingly unsafe due to their anonymous nature, with racist, dehumanising and fetishising behaviour becoming more common. For example, gay, bisexual and queer men, Sistergirls and Brotherboys described feeling pressured to conform to cisgender white men's fantasies, both in person and online.

These forms of violence are often invisible to mainstream risk assessment tools, which contributes to misidentification and serious harm for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people.

High rates of strangulation were described as a broader trend in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, linked to the normalisation of sexual violence in porn, with risks sometimes missed in hospital triage leading to brain injury. One participant also noted that sex-negative attitudes in the community and services can block harm minimisation conversations about choking and consent.

Sex workers were described as being targeted with sexual violence, linked to stigma around sex work. Participants emphasised the need for LGBTIQ+ and sex worker voices being included in future discussions, so that their lived experience, needs and expertise are appropriately included in violence prevention work.

Lateral violence within community, as well as violence from family of origin, was described by participants as common, including gossip and name-calling. This violence can target a person's gender or sexuality, or their experience as a victim-survivor, with the person then being blamed as 'the problem'. Many participants spoke about persistent myths that rainbow mob spreads disease or 'recruits' people; verbal abuse directed at anyone breaking gender norms, and the use of religious or conservative beliefs to justify rejection or vilification. Several participants said that this was particularly common for gay men and Sistergirls, and is linked to pressure on 'boys' to conform to colonial gender expectations.

In many instances, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people are forced to leave their families and communities. This can lead to disconnection from culture, kinship and Country; reduce access to protective supports and belonging; and cause spiritual harm through being cut off from cultural practices, identity, and connection to Elders and community. Some participants noted long-term economic impacts for those from the Torres Strait who lose access to critical housing options if they move to the mainland.

Violence is also common outside of family and intimate relationships. Several participants working with the community noted a concerning spike in violent attacks against gay men and Sistergirls across Queensland, including Toowoomba, the Sunshine Coast and Central Queensland. This violence was linked to broader targeting of gay and bisexual men, and trans and gender diverse people, and the emboldening of racism after the 'No' vote. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy leaders and practitioners have also been increasingly targeted with homophobia and transphobia, including threats of violence.

What helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people feel safe?

Participants described coming out as a pathway to safety and wellbeing, especially when people can access support from LGBTIQ+ community-led organisations. However, visibility can also bring heightened risk of social stigma and physical violence. This is especially true in remote communities where support is limited, which can lead people to delay coming out, with flow-on impacts on wellbeing and safety.

It is also important to note that safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people is often partial, negotiated and contextual, rather than absolute.

Many participants said that many rainbow mob hold culture, religion and identity in careful balance. Cultural ceremony was described as an important source of meaning and strength. At the same time, some participants said it can be experienced as strongly binary and excluding gender diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly younger trans and gender diverse mob who more often identify as nonbinary. Religious faith is also a source of strength for many, but religious doctrine is frequently weaponised to drive stigma, transphobia and homophobia. Sistergirls talked about having to hide or suppress who they are to access faith spaces.

Those using hook-up or dating apps talked about the importance of harm minimisation strategies, such as learning to spot the early signs of disrespect and fetishising behaviour, doing a 'sense check' with trusted friends, safety planning ahead of hook-ups or dates, and location sharing.

Many participants who were victim-survivors said they rely almost entirely on chosen family and community care for emotional and practical support, especially when formal options are limited or unsafe. This included staying in each other's homes when no other safe space was available, and using group chats and group events to stay connected.

What barriers stop Sistergirls, Brotherboys and LGBTIQ+ mob from seeking help?

Participants described help-seeking as difficult and often unsafe for Sistergirls, Brotherboys and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ mob, who frequently feel unseen, disbelieved or actively excluded by the very systems meant to support them.

The majority of participants said that victim-survivors from within their communities were often reluctant to disclose experiences of violence to others, particularly police. Many feared that once they spoke up, they would lose control over what would happen next. Reporting can lead to deeper involvement with police or child protection systems that already heavily surveil Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This is especially true for Sistergirls and Brotherboys who are parents, carers or part of extended kinship networks, as they are more likely to be stigmatised and targeted for discrimination, and targeted for forced removal of children.

Some participants feared further violence, or the criminalisation or incarceration of loved ones. Others raised the risk of being 'outed'. In small communities, where confidentiality in services is often lacking, and information spreads quickly, being identified as Sistergirl, Brotherboy, LGBTIQ+ or a victim-survivor of violence can lead to gossip, social fallout and, in some cases, suicide.

As one participant said:

'In our communities, there's a silence. For a lot of mob, silence isn't about condoning the action. It's about protecting the whole community from systems that come in and rip families apart. So if we give communities a way to talk about it and respond in a culturally secure way, the silence starts to disappear, and hopefully so does the violence.'

Participants frequently described violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people as normalised, minimised or treated as less serious by police, services and the broader community. Both family violence workers and community members said police were less likely to respond, and more likely to downplay or ignore violence, when the victim-survivor was already known to them or when the abuse was ongoing.

A recurring barrier is the risk of discrimination across mainstream systems such as family violence services, sexual assault services, policing, health care, housing and sexual health. Participants repeatedly raised gendered eligibility rules, such as women's services that only accept 'women' who meet a rigid definition of 'women'. As a result, many Sistergirls are deemed ineligible if they are not seen to 'pass' as a woman, and are then assessed on a case-by-case basis or denied outright. This is especially true for sexual assault services and refuge services, which leaves many victim-survivors alone without a safe place to go when they need to flee and hide from violence.

Geography adds further strain to help-seeking. The majority of services are located on the east coast, and across large inland areas of Queensland there are no services available at all. There are also very limited services available on the Cape York Peninsula, and participants noted Sistergirls often have to travel to Gimuy (Cairns) for support. This displaces people from their Country and creates additional cost, stress and safety issues for them.

Multiple times during the consultation participants raised the narrow framing of family and gender-based violence that is used by the majority of family violence services. The idea that rigid gender norms drive violence is not new, having been around for decades. However, a narrow definition of gender-based violence is being taught and accepted that excludes LGBTIQ+, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural communities. This narrow language overlooks cultural

context, kinship structures, and the diversity of queer and trans relationships. As a result, many people do not see themselves reflected in awareness campaigns, prevention messaging or service materials. This invisibility can reinforce exclusion, limit access to support, and undermine trust in systems that are meant to provide help.

These narrow framings also contribute to poor risk management practices, such as misidentification of the predominant aggressor by police, courts and services, which is already common for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In a small community, this can mean that victim-survivors are blocked from support permanently if their partner accesses a service first and claims to be the victim-survivor. Additional tools and training are needed to help address this. Organisations that support only a narrow band of victim-survivors also tend to produce training and resources that focus exclusively on that same narrow band, further entrenching the problem.

Attempts to advocate for more inclusive framings are often met with resistance from established institutions, despite their stated commitments to intersectionality. Leaders noted that reform tends to stall when community-led approaches challenge dominant ways of thinking. In some cases, long-established services treat emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led responses as competition rather than partners, especially when those approaches challenge the authority, funding models or frameworks of the mainstream sector.

Several participants also pointed to systemic ableism that leaves mob with disabilities sidelined or unsupported. Victim-survivors face discrimination linked to mental health; alcohol and other drug use; and disability, particularly cognitive impairment. They can often have their case treated as 'too hard'. Participants noted language barriers were also a concern, as English is often a second or third language in many remote communities. These dynamics feed into a broader pattern where services favour those who most closely match the 'perfect victim' stereotype of white, cisgender, straight and female.

Workforce limitations compound all these barriers. Women's services were described as being under extreme pressure and under-resourced, making it hard for them to broaden eligibility or support intersectional practice. While LGBTIQ+ people are listed as a priority population in funding agreements, participants noted there has been almost no investment to support meaningful inclusion. Many organisations rely on one or 2 internal advocates, with most staff lacking even basic LGBTIQ+ training and many staff feeling afraid of saying the wrong thing.

Many participants said that police, too, lack an appropriate understanding of family violence as it affects LGBTIQ+ communities, and have little awareness of diverse relationships and identities. Sistergirls reported being misgendered and stereotyped as perpetrators, rather than being seen and supported as victim-survivors.

At the community level, participants noted a general lack of awareness about family violence in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, which makes it difficult for victim-survivors to recognise their experience as abuse and to seek and receive support for it. However, this is beginning to shift, with social media helping to raise awareness and promote more victim-centred conversations. Still, participants described a tension between speaking openly about violence, and the fear that any admission of harm could be used against their communities. This creates pressure to appear 'perfect' to avoid further stigma. There is also a broad resistance within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to talking about sex, which makes it hard to have important conversations about consent, porn and sexual health.

What needs to happen to address these drivers

Community and cultural responses

There was broad agreement among participants that strengthening culture, language, identity and community pride is not only essential for cultural renewal but also plays an active role in preventing violence and supporting healing. They described these cultural foundations as protective factors that build belonging, resilience and self-worth, especially in the face of ongoing discrimination and marginalisation. In this way, community and cultural action were framed as both a form of prevention and a pathway to safety and recovery.

Participants called for safe spaces specifically for Sistergirl and Brotherboy connection and healing, where people can yarn, debrief and rebuild confidence without fear of judgement. Another consistent theme was the need to challenge racism, homophobia and transphobia within communities in ways that are led by and for the community, with the right cultural authority and protocols.

Participants strongly emphasised the importance of engaging boys, acknowledging how colonisation has reshaped relationships between men and boys, and the pressure on boys to 'harden up' as they enter puberty. They were also concerned about boys being targeted and dehumanised online by the 'manosphere', and wanted prevention responses that encourage critical thinking, belonging, and care for others.

Participants described the need for prevention and early intervention to start early, including work with children and families, and for clear, explicit messaging that promotes respectful relationships and raises awareness of family

and sexual violence. They wanted community capacity built so that people can recognise violence, respond with confidence, and interrupt patterns that have become normalised.

They also called for broad community education on the dangers of strangulation, noting that the training delivered to police and services is not reaching community.

Finally, participants agreed that targeted, co-designed education is essential. Each community has its own context to unpack, and this work needs to be held through conversations led by those communities.

Systems, policy and legislation

Policy and legislation can improve safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities, but they can also cause harm when decisions are made without community input. Participants said that avoiding inadvertent harm starts with doing consultation properly, early, and with the right people in the room. They stressed the need for culturally safe, properly resourced consultation that gives Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities a genuine seat at the table, and provides time and space for community-led deliberation. They also emphasised that both government and the sector need to consult in ways that recognise cultural load; avoid treating people as an on-demand source of advice; and ensure there is real choice to opt in or out without damaging relationships. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy organisations have a critical role here, not just as service providers but as system shapers and experts in consultation, governance and system reform.

Several senior leaders cited the federal social media ban for children aged 16 and under as an example of how well-intentioned policy reform can inadvertently cause harm. They described social media as a key source of connection and support for young LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy mob, particularly those isolated in remote communities. Rather than blanket restrictions, they called for harm minimisation approaches that build young people's capacity to use online spaces safely, alongside stronger accountability for online harassment and targeting.

More broadly, participants said the current pace of reform is itself a barrier to meaningful participation in policy reform. The state and federal policy environment is moving quickly, with LGBTIQ+ domestic and family violence becoming a much more visible and urgent public conversation in a relatively short period. The shift has brought new concepts, laws and systems, often faster than communities can reasonably absorb and respond. Participants noted that LGBTIQ+ organisations (particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations) have been excluded from earlier domestic, family and sexual violence policy conversations, and have not been given the time or resourcing necessary to develop their capacity to provide specialist policy advice.

There was also a very strong call to change the way programs and services are commissioned, so that they better align with principles of self-determination and create the conditions for genuine, community-led success. Without these shifts, efforts to prevent and respond to violence risk being ineffective or causing further harm to the very communities they aim to support.

A recurring theme was the need for family violence prevention strategies to openly acknowledge the role of colonisation and structural inequality in driving violence. This must be matched with a genuine commitment to long-term structural change, not short-term fixes.

Participants consistently emphasised that prevention, response and healing work must be place-based and led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy community organisations. Approaches need to be grounded in local knowledge, relationships and context, rather than copied from elsewhere. They also stressed the importance of Indigenous data sovereignty, so communities retain control over what data is collected, how it is interpreted, and how it is used.

Senior leaders repeatedly called for long-term, flexible funding arrangements to support community-led healing and prevention, warning that short-term or rushed program cycles often ignore cultural protocols and the time needed for relational work. These pressures can

undermine trust and safety. They stressed that funding must allow communities to set the pace, allowing time for building relationships, observing protocol, and pausing for sorry business without penalty.

Finally, there was a consistent call for stronger, sustained partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities. Good partnerships were described as genuine, sustained and place-based. Partnerships must centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, cultural authority and self-determination. They also need clear ways-of-working agreements that outline roles, ownership and goals, and make it explicit that non-Indigenous or mainstream partners are there to support, not to take over. Partnerships also need processes that establish permissions and practical mechanisms for providing feedback and learning from one another. As one senior leader put it,

‘A ways of working agreement provides a clear delineation to say, here’s my roles centred as the Aboriginal woman that’s in the partnership. It is my role to genuinely help you build cultural safety in a way that shares learnings and benefits to the people that we’re serving on the ground. We don’t need people to lead us. We need people to walk with us. We have a cultural responsibility to make sure it’s done in the right way through the right protocols.’

Safe and inclusive services

Many participants spoke at length about the need for culturally safe service pathways where people affected by violence have genuine choice. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people need culturally aware, engaged services that are led by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and that have rainbow mob in key roles. These services should be set up to both respond to family violence and provide holistic care, including yarning and healing, food programs, mental health, and alcohol and other drug support.

Participants wanted the option of support through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy-led organisations, or through an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation (ACCO) that has done the work to be culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people. They emphasised that help must be available regardless of geography,

including to those in regional and remote areas, and that pathways should include confidential reporting options that do not expose people to discrimination, disbelief or retaliation.

ACCOs were recognised as essential to community-controlled health and social services. However, participants said more needs to be done to address homophobia and transphobia within some mainstream ACCOs so they can provide culturally safe care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people. They also highlighted the need to update overarching frameworks, such as Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) and its Declaration Framework and Implementation Plan, noting that these currently do not include the LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities.

A key priority for participants was to strengthen the capacity of existing local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy community-controlled organisations to deliver primary prevention and family violence services in culturally safe ways. This must include workforce development, and senior leaders called for action to strengthen the lived-and-living-experience workforce to better respond to these complex issues. They suggested creating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy-identified lived-and-living-experience roles, particularly for intake, and ensuring staff in community-led organisations have training in first response for family violence and suicide.

Participants also discussed the importance of culturally-safe behaviour change programs for people using violence. As one participant put it:

‘If you talk to people using violence, a lot of them are raised in these colonised structures where they have been taught harmful ideas that have been reinforced throughout their lives. We need to approach them with kindness. They understand harshness. It’s not about letting them off the hook, or not holding them accountable. That’s all part of the healing journey.’

Participants also wanted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy community-controlled organisations to be resourced to build partnerships, and to provide training and secondary consultations that lift whole-of-system capability and confidence. Rather than being a one-off commitment, this support role for the sector

should be ongoing, backed by long-term service contracts, and kept current through regular training and up-to-date resources.

Cultural safety also means looking after staff to ensure the work is safe and sustainable. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy workers spoke about burnout, vicarious trauma, after-hours expectations and the reality that boundaries between professional and personal life can be difficult to maintain, especially in smaller communities. They argued that making the work safe and sustainable requires proper long-term, flexible funding to provide job security, supervision and support.

Participants stressed that healing and recovery matter just as much as prevention and response, and should be considered core rather than as an afterthought. They pointed to past efforts such as the Rainbow Dreaming retreats, which used holistic approaches to help people understand both the structural drivers and the personal impacts of violence. These kinds of spaces can support healing and encourage earlier help-seeking.

Beyond specialist family violence services, participants described gender affirmative care and broader inclusion-focused education as vital, particularly for supporting trans and gender diverse communities. When communities, schools, health services, workplaces and justice systems are all supported to become inclusive, it shifts the wider culture too, making it more likely that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people are respected and safe.

Allies and social change

Allies and broader social change are necessary to shift the conditions that allow violence to persist. Participants called for allyship from non-Indigenous and non-LGBTIQ+ communities that is accountable, informed, and willing to challenge racism, homophobia and transphobia. They emphasised that allies should focus on shifting the systems and institutions they have access to, rather than speaking on behalf of LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities. There was also broad recognition that allies need support too, so they can step forward confidently and effectively.

Across each location participants made repeated calls for programs that educate parents, Elders and the broader community to build respect, love and acceptance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people, and to be better allies in culturally appropriate ways.

The Yarns Heal model was repeatedly cited as an effective, transferable approach. The existing program, which focuses on suicide prevention, is grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. It uses peer-led co-design and activities such as yarning circles and retreats, alongside artworks, campaigns, ambassadors and therapeutic tools to strengthen inclusion, connection, shared responsibility for safety, and community pride. This approach could be readily adapted to help equip Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allies to better prevent and respond to violence within their communities.

Participants also identified key settings where targeted work could have a strong impact:

- **Community campaigns** – participants called for community campaigns that promote respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people, and raise awareness of family, domestic and sexual violence affecting these communities.
- **Schools** – participants repeatedly raised schools as a key site for prevention, early intervention and response. Some participants raised concerns about high rates of violence in schools, including reports of incidents of sexual exploitation among students. Respectful Relationships education was raised as a potential avenue for promoting respect, safety and help-seeking, provided it is culturally safe and inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people and their families. Sexual health promotion was noted as another useful way of encouraging conversations about respect and consent. However, participants said sexual health materials for LGBTIQ+ young people are often not suited to young rainbow mob, and more is needed for them to see themselves in materials.
- **The workplace** – participants described workplaces as powerful drivers of local culture. Areas with high levels of employment in male-dominated industries, such as Gurambilbarra (Townsville), experience a high risk of violence linked to workplace cultures where sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia are normalised.
- **Sport** – participants described sport as a gateway to freedom for young people who find success as athletes. However, participants reported that this can entail intense pressure, as a young person's success can shape outcomes for the entire family. Sporting cultures also reward hypermasculine gender norms such as toughness, stoicism and dominance, while discouraging vulnerability or help-seeking. In this context, some young people experience mental distress and trauma, and may turn to alcohol and other drugs to cope.
- **Faith settings** – participants suggested primary prevention activities in faith settings could help to address stigma by promoting inclusion and increasing the number of LGBTIQ+-affirming faith leaders.

Next steps

We thank all participants for sharing their knowledge, lived experience and expertise through this consultation. Your contributions are helping shape *Changing with pride* and informing future policy and system reform.

This consultation confirms what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities in Queensland have long said. It also confirms what community-led organisations, Elders, leaders, peer workers and informal care networks are already holding across prevention, early intervention, response and healing, often without the funding, workforce support or system recognition needed to sustain it.

The next step is to properly resource and back programs and initiatives that communities already lead, including investment in community-led services and primary prevention programs to address the structural drivers of violence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy people.

Turning these findings into action will require clear commitments from governments, funders, services and partners. It will also require recognising and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy community-controlled organisations as system leaders, not only as consultees or delivery partners.

Shared decision-making should be embedded in policy, legislation and reform processes. Investment must be made in place-based, community-led models. Relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander violence prevention and health and

wellbeing frameworks should be updated to properly include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities. Police and the courts also need targeted reform and accountability to improve safety, trust and responses to violence.

Funders and commissioning bodies should reform commissioning models that route resources through larger mainstream organisations at the expense of community control. Funding should go directly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy-led organisations; it should be long-term and flexible; and it should cover primary prevention, early intervention, response and healing as part of an integrated approach.

Mainstream services, ACCOs and their peak bodies, and other sector partners should take practical steps now to improve safety and access. This includes consulting with community, reviewing eligibility rules, strengthening confidentiality, addressing homophobia and transphobia, improving responses to misidentification of the predominant aggressor, and building workforce capability to provide culturally safe and inclusive support. This work should be resourced by the government. It should be delivered in genuine partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy organisations, with clear agreements about roles, decision-making, resourcing, accountability and cultural governance.

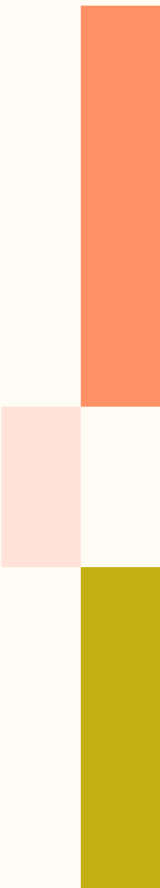


Cover artwork: *'Untitled'* by Baylee O'Grady, a proud Kabi Kabi (Gabbi Gabbi) queer artist.

Artist's description: This artwork explores the two-way exchange of support, love, and knowledge between an individual and their community. It reflects the interconnectedness of individuals, families, and communities, recognising that we are shaped and supported by the relationships around us.

The work speaks to the ways knowledge, care, and strength can move between people—where an individual can both receive from and contribute to the collective. Through these exchanges, connection and healing become possible.

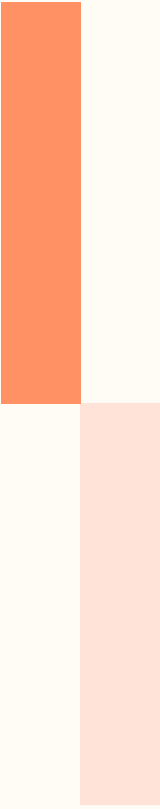
At its heart, the artwork is a reflection on belonging: the understanding that we do not exist in isolation, and that our wellbeing is deeply connected to the people, relationships, and communities we are part of.



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