

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We recognise the rich contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make to Australian sport and celebrate the power of sport to bring people together and to promote reconciliation and equality.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians and Owners of the land and waters on which we play.

We pay respect to Elders past and present, and extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who have inspired and continue to inspire us through their pride, courage, team work and leadership in sport.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUR ELDERS

We pay respect to the forerunners within lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, and queer communities who have worked to improve opportunities and outcomes for their team mates and communities in sport across many generations.

Our work builds on the courage and resilience of those who have come before us.

FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Australian Pride in Sport Festival has received grant funding from the Australian Government managed by the Australian Sports Commission, the City of Sydney, Government of Victoria and the Estate of the Late James Simpson Love.









Estate Late
James Simpson Love

COPYRIGHT

© 2025 Pride in Sport

Any content extracted from this publication must be done so only with the prior consent of Pride in Sport and must be referenced accordingly.

COVER IMAGE: 2025 Pride Regatta





ABOUT PRIDE IN SPORT

Pride in Sport is a national not-for-profit sporting inclusion program specifically designed to assist sporting organisations at all levels with the inclusion of employees, athletes, volunteers and spectators with diverse genders and sexualities.

The program has three core pillars in commitment (as Pride in Sport Members), measurement (via the Pride in Sport Index), and recognition (celebrated at the Australian Pride in Sport Awards).

The **Pride in Sport membership program** is designed to:

- Assist Australian sporting organisations with all aspects of LGBTQ+ inclusion as it pertains to their sport and those working within the sporting organisation;
- Work with members to achieve best practice as benchmarked by the Pride in Sport Index (PSI);
- Create better health outcomes for LGBTQ+ players, coaches, fans and others by creating inclusive spaces through the reduction of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, stigma and discrimination.

The <u>Pride in Sport Index</u> is an initiative of the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Australian Sports Commission and a legacy of the Bingham Cup, Sydney.

The Pride in Sport Index™ (PSI) a world-leading benchmarking instrument specifically designed to assess the inclusion of people with diverse sexualities and genders within Australian sport and sporting organisations. Participating in the index will allows Australian sporting organisations to assess their own practice and benchmark their initiatives against an external measure, and other sporting organisations.

The <u>Pride in Sport Awards</u> recognise the achievements and results of sporting organisations, groups, initiatives and individuals across several various categories.

Each year several of the awards are based on results from the Pride in Sport Index [PSI] (as per above), along with several community based awards where the general public can nominate their champions in different categories.

CONTENTS

Welcome	6
Know the numbers: Key statistics	7
What does LGBTQ+ mean?	9
Everybody wins: The 'why'	10
Inclusive sport is the goal: The 'how'	12
Starting the conversation	13
Connecting with community	15
Building awareness	18
Models of engagement:	
Pride Rounds	21
Play together	22
Come-and-try	24
Parade (or picnic) with pride	25
The power of storytelling	26
Integrity in sport	28
Common questions	29
Ready to lead? The Pride in Sport Index	30
Pride in Sport Community Clubs Membership	32



KNOW THE NUMBERS



82% of participants have witnessed homophobia or transphobia in the past year.

(Research into sporting environments)
OutSports, 2019



LGBTQ+ young people are twice as likely to quit sport by age 16.

(Research into sporting environments)
Free to Exist, 2024



Between 2020 and 2022, the proportion of Gen Z Australians identifying as LGBTQ+ increased from 16% to 29%.

(General population data) SMH, 2024



LGBTQ+ participants score lower in measures of wellness, mental health, safety and productivity.

(Research into sporting environments)
Pride in Sport National Survey, 2025



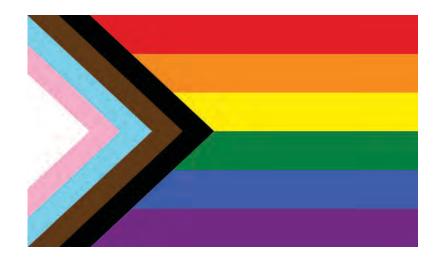
WHAT DOES LGBTQ+ MEAN?

LGBTQ+ is an acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning. The plus sign (+) includes other identities, like non-binary, intersex, asexual, pansexual, and more. It's a way of recognising the wide diversity in how people experience gender and sexuality.

Here's a simple breakdown:

- **Lesbian** a woman who is attracted to other women.
- **Gay** a man who is attracted to other men (though some women also use "gay").
- **Bisexual** someone who is attracted to more than one gender.
- **Transgender** someone whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.
- Queer/Questioning "Queer" is an umbrella term some people use proudly. "Questioning" means someone is still exploring their identity.
- + this includes other identities not listed above, so the acronym stays inclusive and respectful of everyone.

You don't need to be an expert in all of these terms. Just being open, respectful, and willing to learn goes a long way in making your club feel safe and welcoming for everyone.



THE PROGRESS PRIDE FLAG

The main section of the flag (background) includes the 1978 Rainbow Pride flag, originally designed by Gilbert Baker. The transgender flag stripes (pink, white and blue) and marginalized community stripes (black and brown) are shown in a chevron shape. The arrow points to the right to show forward movement, while being along the hoist edge shows that progress still needs to be made.

EVERYBODY WINS

When people feel welcome at a club, they're more likely to show up, play their best, and stick around.

That's what inclusion is all about—making sure everyone, including LGBTQ+ people, feels they belong.

For LGBTQ+ players, feeling safe and supported makes a big difference. It helps build confidence, improves mental health, and makes sport more enjoyable. Many LGBTQ+ people say they've left sport because they didn't feel accepted. That's a loss—not just for them, but for the whole club.

Inclusive clubs benefit too. When a club is known as a welcoming place, more people want to be involved. That means more players, more families, and more volunteers. Clubs with inclusive values also tend to attract sponsors and partners who want to support fairness and community connection.

And it's not just about the people on the field. When clubs value inclusion, it helps bring the whole community together. It creates spaces where everyone—no matter their background—can feel like they're part of something. That connection matters, especially for people who've felt excluded in the past.

Still, we know some people face barriers. There are young people who've never played because they weren't sure it would be safe. There are parents who worry their child might be bullied. By showing up and saying "you're welcome here," your club can help change that.

Inclusion isn't hard. A few simple actions—using respectful language, celebrating people's differences, or getting involved in local Pride events—can go a long way.

When sport is inclusive, everyone benefits. Clubs grow stronger. Individuals thrive. And communities become kinder, safer, and more connected.

More information:

La Trobe University (2020): Australian Journal of Sports Science and Medicine Sport Australia: Benefits of Inclusion in Sport

Frontiers in Psychology (2021): Inclusion and belonging in sport

Swinburne University (2024): Discrimination in community sport



INCLUSIVE SPORT IS THE GOAL

WHAT'S GETTING IN THE WAY?

Club Culture

Sometimes jokes or casual language can feel offensive. It can also be disheartening if people don't see any LGBTQ+ members in leadership roles or on teams.

Facilities & Uniforms

Gendered change rooms or uniforms can make some people feel uncomfortable or excluded.

Club Policies

Many clubs don't have a clear stance on inclusion. Volunteers and coaches often aren't sure how to show support.

Visibility

If there's nothing visible that shows LGBTQ+ people are welcome, it can be hard to know it's a safe space. Some people also worry they'll be the only one or feel out of place.

WHAT HELPS PEOPLE FEEL WELCOME?

Leaders Setting the Tone

When a coach or committee member says, "Everyone's welcome here," it sets a strong example.

Local Connections

Partnering with LGBTQ+ groups or getting involved in community events helps build real relationships.

Showing Up and Speaking Up

Using inclusive language and images in newsletters and social posts shows your club is serious about inclusion. Sharing stories or profiles of LGBTQ+ members and allies makes a big difference.

Learning More

Taking time to learn about different experiences and celebrating awareness days like Pride helps everyone feel seen.

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Every journey begins with a first step – and inclusion starts with a conversation. But, it can be an intimidating topic to raise.

Start with shared values.

Most people believe in fairness, safety, and kindness. Begin there. "I know we all want the club to be welcoming and safe for everyone."

Focus on sport, not politics.

This isn't about being "woke." It's about good club culture. You can say: "When people feel welcome, they're more likely to join, stay, and enjoy their sport."

Bring it back to integrity.

Inclusion is part of official sporting rules and standards. The National Integrity Framework makes it clear: discrimination isn't acceptable.

Be ready to listen.

If someone's unsure or uncomfortable, ask questions. "Can I ask what concerns you?" Often, just having space to talk helps.

Offer small, practical steps.

You're not asking them to run a Pride parade—just to support actions that make others feel safe. Even using welcoming language helps.

Use community examples.

"Other local clubs have run Pride Rounds or come-and-try nights with great success. We can start small and learn from them."

Stand firm on respect.

You can listen and be kind—but also be clear: "We can't allow behaviour that excludes or harms others. That goes against our values and sporting rules."



CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY

Before diving into specific activities, there are a few foundational steps that apply to every inclusion initiative your club runs.

Whether you're hosting a Pride Round, marching in Mardi Gras, or running a Come-and-Try, these elements will help you create something meaningful—not just performative.

1. KNOW YOUR "WHY"

Inclusion isn't a marketing trend. It's a long-term commitment to making sport safer, more welcoming and more equitable for LGBTQ+ people.

Before planning any event, get clear on:

- What your club wants to achieve (e.g. visibility, education, recruitment, connection)
- Who you're doing it for—and with
- · What change you hope to see beyond the event

Ask yourselves: How will LGBTQ+ people benefit from this?



Be proactive!

Reconnecting with LGBTQ+ communities may require you to explore new activities and new locations.

2. LISTEN FIRST, THEN LEAD

Sport has historically excluded or harmed LGBTQ+ people, so trust needs to be built. Many queer folks are understandably skeptical of sporting clubs.

Take time to:

- Consult local LGBTQ+ people, groups or staff within councils/universities
- Listen to their feedback—even if it challenges you
- Co-create, don't just invite after the fact

This work is about building relationships, not just holding events.

3. REPRESENTATION MATTERS

Ensure LGBTQ+ people are visible and included in planning and delivery:

- Don't just rely on straight allies
- Give LGBTQ+ members the option (not pressure) to lead or speak
- Consider who is front and centre in your photos, promos, or signage

LGBTQ+ people should see themselves reflected in your club not just at Pride.

4. PLAN A BUDGET-EVEN A SMALL ONE

Inclusion doesn't have to be expensive, but it shouldn't be an afterthought either.

Budget for:

- Venue hire/event logistics
- Speaker or facilitator fees (pay LGBTQ+ people for their time)
- Promotional materials (flyers, social tiles, signs)
- Inclusive gear (e.g. rainbow laces, pronoun badges, Pride bibs)

Look for grants from local councils, sporting bodies, or LGBTQ+ health organisations. Some councils offer microgrants for community inclusion projects.

5. BUILD REAL NETWORKS

No club can do this work alone. Build connections with:

- Local LGBTQ+ groups (e.g. Minus18, ACON, Working It Out)
- Council diversity officers or Pride committees
- Uni student unions or queer departments
- State sport inclusion contacts or Pride networks

It may take time. Be consistent, respectful, and curious—not transactional.



BUILDING AWARENESS

Being inclusive starts with understanding. When club members, coaches, and volunteers take the time to learn about LGBTQ+ experiences, it builds empathy and confidence. It also helps people feel safer, respected, and valued.

Education doesn't have to be complicated. A short talk at a team meeting, sharing an article, or inviting a local speaker can start great conversations. Even simple awareness—like knowing what terms are respectful or what issues people face—can shift a club's culture for the better.

Of course, if you're keen to lead, Pride in Sport offers a range of workshops tailored to key stakeholders like athletes, coaches, integrity staff and club leaders. <u>Visit our website</u> for more information!

Learning together as a club helps create a more welcoming environment for everyone, not just LGBTQ+ people. It also helps leaders feel more confident to speak up, set the right tone, and support others.

If your club is just getting started, try one small step. Share a short video. Chat about what inclusion means. Include it as part of your coach induction. These small efforts can make a big difference.

STOP AND CHECK!

Before launching any initiative, ask:

- ☐ Have we involved LGBTQ+ voices in planning?
- ☐ Do we know our "why"?
- ☐ Is the event safe, accessible, and welcoming?
- ☐ Have we planned for follow-up—not just the day itself?
- ☐ Are we backing this up with policy, training, or structural change?

Inclusion doesn't happen by accident. But with intention, planning and community, it absolutely can happen in your club.



Lost for words?

Check out the Pride in Sport Inclusive Language Guide!





PRIDE ROUNDS

A whole-of-club celebration held during your regular season.

Goals: Visibility, education, allyship, internal culture change

Key Steps:

- Choose a meaningful round: Align with Pride Month, IDAHOBIT, or local LGBTQ+ awareness days.
- Get buy-in early: Notify your league, communicate with teams and supporters, and work to get local council or community recognition.
- Involve your whole club: From junior teams to volunteers, create opportunities for everyone to participate in meaningful ways.
- Plan visible actions: Paint the field lines rainbow, offer rainbow bibs, use inclusive signage and MC scripts.
- Run an education session: Host a guest speaker or use a short video to build understanding within your club.
- Celebrate stories: Share profiles of LGBTQ+ players, volunteers, or allies in your club via social media and newsletters.
- Collect feedback: Ask attendees and participants how the event felt—and use that to inform future rounds.

PLANNING CHECKLIST

The league/association has been notified and supports the initiative.
All teams and club members have been informed and invited to participate.
There are visible elements planned (e.g. rainbow bibs, signage, field art).
An education component is included (speaker, video, podcast, conversation).
Social media and club communications highlight LGBTQ+voices or stories.
Roles have been assigned for setup, promotion, delivery and follow-up.
Feedback tools (e.g. survey, informal chat) are ready to go post-event.
Budget or donations have been secured for materials and promotion.
Safety and inclusion have been considered for all LGBTQ+participants (think intersectional!).

PLAY TOGETHER

A skills-based session designed in collaboration with a local LGBTQ+ group.

Goals: Education, relationship-building, culture, recruitment

Key Steps:

- Start by reaching out respectfully: Explain your intentions clearly, be open to advice, and ask how you can support their work too.
- Plan together: Co-design the session with LGBTQ+ partners to ensure it's inclusive and safe for everyone.
- Choose a relaxed, social format: Keep things informal and welcoming. Consider mixed drills, warmups, or fun challenges.
- Centre LGBTQ+ voices: Invite guest facilitators or speakers from the community to lead parts of the session or share their stories.
- Create a safe environment: Offer pronoun badges, name tags, and a designated safe person for support.
- Follow up: Ask how your club can support attendees who want to join or stay involved. Thank your partner publicly and privately.

٧

PLANNING CHECKLIST

We've respectfully reached out to an LGBTQ+ organisation or contact.
The session has been co-designed to reflect both sport and inclusion.
LGBTQ+ community members are involved as facilitators or speakers.
The tone is relaxed, friendly, and open to all skill levels.
We are using pronoun badges and name tags to support inclusion.
The session includes time for social connection and conversation.
A plan is in place to follow up with attendees.
We've publicly acknowledged and thanked our partner organisation.
Facilitators or speakers are compensated or appreciated meaningfully.
We've taken steps to make it a safe space (venue, messaging, signage).



COME-AND-TRY

A casual, low-barrier event to welcome new people into sport.

Goals: Recruitment, welcome, visibility, safe first steps

Key Steps:

- Pick a low-pressure format: Offer games, basic drills, or modified versions of your sport to reduce barriers.
- Make it free and friendly: Ensure no equipment or prior knowledge is needed, and provide a chill-out zone.
- Promote it in the right places: Share it in LGBTQ+ Facebook groups, uni queer collectives, and local community boards.
- Use inclusive language: Say explicitly that LGBTQ+ people are welcome—not just "everyone".
- Have a diverse team on-site: Ensure coaches, greeters and volunteers reflect diverse gender and sexual identities.
- Create a fun, social vibe: Offer snacks, music, and a postsession hangout to help people connect.
- Follow up with info packs: Provide info on how to join the club, what the next steps are, and who to contact.

PLANNING CHECKLIST

	The event is free or very low cost to attend.
	Promotion has been targeted to LGBTQ+ spaces (online and in person).
	Event language clearly states LGBTQ+ people are welcome.
	A low-pressure format is planned (simple drills, games, fun stations).
	No experience or equipment is required for participation.
	Greeters and coaches reflect a range of identities and backgrounds.
	A chill-out zone or quiet area is available if needed.
	Snacks, music or social activities are included.
	A take-home info sheet or contact list is ready.
	There's a plan for staying in touch with attendees after the session for a follow-up.

PARADE (OR PICNIC) WITH PRIDE

Join an existing LGBTQ+ community celebration with purpose.

Goals: Visibility, connection, allyship, external presence

Key Steps:

- Register early: Understand the tone of the event—whether it's a celebration, protest, or community gathering.
- Be respectful guests: Reach out to organisers and ask how your club can participate meaningfully.
- Show up visibly: Wear club kit with Pride touches, carry inclusive signs, and have a clear message about your values.
- Engage with the crowd: Hand out flyers (if allowed), rainbow laces, or have a banner with a QR code to learn more.
- Document your presence: Share photos (with consent), quotes, and behind-the-scenes moments on social media.
- Reflect publicly: Post about why you marched, what you learned, and how it connects to your club's ongoing efforts.

Events happen around Australia throughout the year. <u>Check out this online list</u> to find your nearest!

PLANNING CHECKLIST

☐ We've registered or contacted event organisers with plenty of notice. ☐ We understand the purpose and tone of the event (e.g. celebration, protest). Our signage and club kit reflect support for LGBTQ+ people. We've created a visual presence (flags, posters, etc.). ☐ Club members know why we are attending and how it fits our values. ☐ We've prepared materials to engage the crowd (flyers, laces, OR codes). Content is planned for social media before/during/after the event. Consent is gathered before sharing photos of individuals. We've debriefed and shared a reflection with our broader club community. ☐ We've built relationships with other community groups we met at the event.

THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

Storytelling is one of the most powerful tools for inclusion.

When someone shares their story—whether it's about being LGBTQ+, being an ally, or feeling safe in your club—it helps others feel connected and understood. Real stories build empathy and show people they're not alone.

Social media gives your club a voice. You don't need a big following—just be consistent and positive. Share stories about what inclusion looks like in your club. Introduce your members. Celebrate small wins. Thank allies. Highlight events and actions.

Simple posts can spark big conversations. A photo of your team with rainbow socks. A quote from a volunteer about what inclusion means to them. A "we're proud to be inclusive" message on your Facebook page.

These moments help your club become known as a welcoming space. They also help people who might be on the fence about joining feel that your club is safe, respectful, and for them.

When you celebrate your values publicly, you build a stronger, more supportive community around your club—online and offline.

WHAT ABOUT ONLINE HATE?

Unfortunately, being inclusive online can sometimes attract negative comments. It's important to be ready for this and know how to handle it calmly and professionally.

- Moderate your pages. Delete comments that are hateful or harmful.
- Have a clear policy. Make it known that disrespectful behaviour won't be tolerated.
- Support your volunteers. Let them know they're not alone in dealing with negativity.
- Focus on the positive. Share the good stories and keep your community focused on kindness and belonging.

You can find practical tools and advice at the <u>eSafety Sport</u>
<u>Hub</u>. This includes guides for clubs, volunteers, and athletes on how to manage online abuse, set clear boundaries, and promote respectful online spaces.





INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Inclusion is important—but so is understanding the rules around integrity in sport. Every person involved in a club has a responsibility to uphold safe, fair, and respectful environments.

The <u>National Integrity Framework</u> sets out clear expectations. Discrimination, bullying, harassment, or vilification based on someone's gender or sexuality is not only unacceptable—it's prohibited.

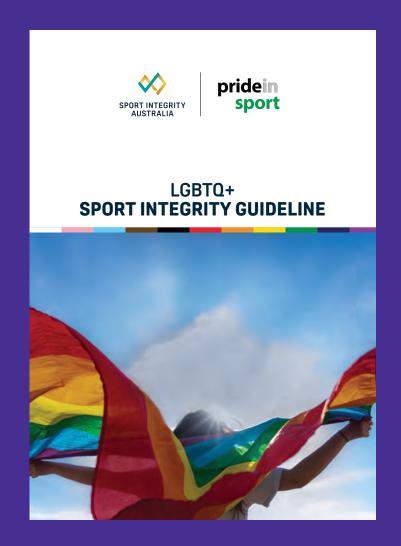
Everyone in your club should be aware of what's not okay.

This includes:

- Making jokes or comments that are homophobic, transphobic, or hurtful
- Targeting someone based on their sexual orientation or gender identity
- Excluding or isolating LGBTQ+ people
- Failing to act when inappropriate behaviour happens

You can find more detail in the <u>Pride in Sport Integrity</u> <u>Guideline</u>. It explains the rules, what conduct is banned, and how to report concerns.

When your club takes integrity seriously, it creates a safer, fairer space for everyone.



COMMON QUESTIONS (AND WHAT TO SAY)

What if someone makes an inappropriate joke or comment?

It's important to speak up. You don't have to lecture—just let them know it's not okay. Try: "Hey, let's keep it respectful."

Or "That kind of comment doesn't belong here."

How to intervene?

Curiosity can be useful in helping to deescalate tensions. It shouldn't be confrontational and can be done in the form of a clarifying conversation, like:

- What did you mean when you said that?
- What was the point you were trying to make?
- What outcome were you trying to achieve when you said that?

What if parents or players ask why we're doing this?

Keep it simple: "We want everyone to feel safe and welcome at our club. That includes LGBTQ+ people too."

Do we have to get everything right? What if we mess up?

Nobody expects perfection. If you make a mistake, apologise, learn, and keep going. The effort matters more than getting every detail right.

Are we allowed to talk about this if our club has members with strong religious or cultural beliefs?

Yes. Inclusion is about respect. We're not asking people to change beliefs—just to agree that everyone deserves fairness, dignity, and safety in sport.

What if someone refuses to support this?

Remind them of your club's values, the National Integrity Framework, and the importance of respect.

Inclusion isn't a debate—it's part of safe, fair sport.



Need support?

Reach out to Pride in Sport for advice and insights: info@prideinsport.com.au

READY TO LEAD?

The Community Pride in Sport Index (PSI) is your go-to roadmap for actions with impact!

As our communities become increasingly diverse, organisations who understand the value of inclusion stand to benefit across a range of outcomes. Inclusive clubs are stronger, more innovative and resilient—and can be proud of their impact on individual lives.

The Community PSI allows you to develop an LGBTQ+ Action Plan which will deliver results across your club. Each year, submissions are independently assessed—so you can track your progress over time.

Leading clubs are celebrated each year at the annual <u>Pride in Sport Awards</u>.

Participation in the PSI is free!

<u>Submit your EOI today</u> to receive an information pack and templates for your first Action Plan.

Engaging with the PSI is not a once-and-done process—it should form a core part of organisational planning over time.

The Pride in Sport Index National Survey is held annually and is an opportunity for clubs to gather feedback on the behaviours and attitudes of participants within their sporting community and compare these outcomes with state and national results.

The Survey can help clubs identify which initiatives are achieving success and which inclusion areas may be the focus of future work.

Participation in the Pride in Sport Index National Survey is free!

<u>Submit your EOI today</u> to receive an information pack privacy policy and templates for promotion.



Got a question?

Reach out for support, information and advice: PSI@acon.org.au



JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Pride in Sport Community Club Membership

Be part of something bigger.

Pride in Sport is Australia's leading not-for-profit inclusion program for the sport, recreation, and physical activity sectors, with more than 70 member organisations across Australia. We help community clubs create safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ people—on and off the field—and we help them connect, collaborate and share.

Whether you're a local footy club, swim squad, or volunteer-led social sport team, this membership gives you access to expert guidance, practical tools, and a national community committed to equality in sport.

WHY JOIN?

- Build stronger, more inclusive teams
- Boost your reputation and reach
- Equip your volunteers with the tools to lead change
- Access subsidised workshops, training, and resources
- Show your community that everyone is welcome

MEMBER BENEFITS

- PSI Scorecard and 1-on-1 debrief
- · Annual PSI strategy meeting
- Access to benchmarking and survey results
- Gold Tier Statement published online (if achieved)
- Discounted tickets to Awards and Summit
- Quarterly Community Club Inclusion Workshops
- Member discount on fee-for-service training
- Annual LGBTQ+ Action Plan Template
- 1-minute promo video on PIS socials
- Digital PIS membership badge
- Organisation logo listed on PIS website
- Access to member-only eNewsletters
- Discounts on co-branded and custom merchandise



READY TO JOIN?

Sign up now at:

www.prideinsport.com.au/join





Pride in Sport is a part of ACON's Pride Inclusion Programs — a national employer support program for all aspects of LGBTQ+ inclusion. The Pride Inclusion Programs is a social initiative of ACON, Australia's largest health organisation specialising in community health, inclusion, and HIV responses for people of diverse sexualities and genders.

We're here to help make the places where we live, work and play more inclusive of LGBTQ+ people. We do this by working with a range of organisations to help ensure that LGBTQ+ people feel included and supported.

For more information about our programs: www.prideinclusionprograms.com.au