



LGBTQIA+ workforce snapshot

In 2023 VAADA received nearly 400 responses in its biennial Victorian Alcohol and other Drugs Workforce Development survey. A detailed report was produced exploring the high-level findings and offering a handful of recommendations on workforce capacity, capability and wellbeing. This is document forms part of a series of snapshots which focus exclusively on a segment of that data.

Demographics

94 workers identified as belonging to a diverse gender and/or sexual identity, this included identifying as gay, bisexual, lesbian, asexual, transgender, queer, non-binary and/or gender diverse.

- The LGBTQIA+ workforce represents around **24% of the total workforce**.
- When exploring service location and delivery settings, **34%** of those that work for **metro-based services** identified as LGBTQIA+. Of those working for regional/remote services, 18% identified as LGBTQIA+.
- The survey found a relationship between the **lived and living experience (LLE) workforce** and the LGBTQIA+ workforce, with **31%** of those with **previous or current experience with alcohol and other drugs (AOD)** also identifying as LGBTQIA+. Of those with no lived experience, 15% identified as LGBTQIA+.
- Results also showed a relationship between **living with a long-term health condition, impairment or disability**, with **38%** of this cohort also identifying as LGBTQIA+.
- Examining **sector leadership** shows that around **21%** of leaders identified as LGBTQIA+.

Capacity

- In observing differences on **workforce capacity** measures against the broader workforce, the **LGBTQIA+ workforce** was **more likely to agree** that they “(had) experienced challenges or barriers accessing AOD professional development activities”
- When asked **why professionals might leave the AOD sector**, the LGBTQIA+ workforce was more likely to say that it was to **work in related fields, such as Mental Health**. Around 20% of the LGBTQIA+ workforce chose this as one of their top reasons.

Capability

- Scores measuring **workforce capability**, where workers self-assessed their capabilities, showed that the LGBTQIA+ did not present any lower scores when compared to the broader workforces.
- Instead, **LGBTQIA+ workforces** had **higher mean scores** on several capability measures, including:
 - “using **culturally appropriate communication** to create a welcoming, safe and supporting environment”
 - “**consulting with Lived and Living Experience workers** to inform and strengthen practice”
 - “applying an **intersectional lens** in their practice”
 - “a strong understanding of the **impact of historical and ongoing colonisation** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities”
 - “**working effectively** with clients from **culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTQIA+ communities and clients living with disabilities**”

Wellbeing

- In order to understand the overall wellbeing of the workforce, participants were asked to rate their general physical health, mental health and quality of life.
- Results from the survey showed that the **LGBTQIA+ workforce** had **lower mean scores** against all three metrics of wellbeing (**physical health, mental health and quality of life**), when compared to the broader workforce.
- **22% of the LGBTQIA+ workforce** rated their **overall quality of life** as “poor” or “fair,” whereas only 10% of the broader workforce did the same.