



LGBTQ+ ENGAGEMENT GUIDE



OPEN4ALL

Tennis is committed to embracing diversity by making our sport and events welcoming, safe and inclusive for everyone. Everyone should have the opportunity to be included and engaged through tennis in a way that is positive and meaningful for them, regardless of their sex, sexuality, gender identity or any other defining characteristics. Inclusion is about providing choice for people to participate in sport in a way that they feel comfortable. As well as mainstream tennis opportunities, there are a variety of LGBTQ+ specific initiatives that people can choose to participate in.

According to “Game On” research by Dr Ryan Storr, 2020, “For those LGBTQ+ people outside of major cities and metropolitan areas, being socially and physically isolated was a key barrier. For many LGBTQ+ people, if they cannot access a LGBTQ+ specific club, or inclusive and LGBTQ+ friendly tennis club, then they are unlikely to play.”

The purpose of this guide is to equip you with the foundational knowledge and confidence to help your club and coaches connect with a key segment of the community – those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTQ+). In this guide you will find:

- Information on the leading research around LGBTQ+ inclusion in sport and why it is important
- Tips on how you can be more inclusive
- Case studies from LGBTQ+ champions
- Contact information for organisations who can provide support to your club

A few small changes at your club can make huge differences that will ensure local community members feel it is a place they feel welcome, safe and included.

“TENNIS AUSTRALIA PROUDLY LIVE THE VALUES OF EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY”

– Craig Tiley, CEO Tennis Australia

GROW YOUR CLUB



APPROXIMATELY 15% OF AUSTRALIANS IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+

The LGBTQ+ community reflects a range of races, ethnicities and ages, proving that Australia is truly a diverse country. By being inclusive of all people particularly those who identify as LGBTQ+ we invite a large section of our community to participate in our sport.

Role models who have participated in tennis at elite levels such as Billie Jean King, Casey Dellacqua and Renee Richards have inspired many people with their stories of courage, bravery and pride to be themselves through tennis.

Local tennis clubs, such as Loton Park Tennis Club in Perth, Western Australia, are examples of how to open doors to be inclusive of people who identify as LGBTQ+. You can read about their story in this guide and share the benefits of their approach.

Clubs can create their own inclusive story through opening their doors to all participants including the LGBTQ+ community.

GAME ON:

LGBTQ+ inclusion in Australian Tennis

BACKGROUND

Tennis Australia together with Western Sydney University researchers explored the positive benefits of playing tennis for LGBTQ+ communities, and explore how to ensure LGBTQ+ people feel welcome, safe and included in tennis environments across Australia. The research methodology included:

3 Focus Groups

44 in-depth interviews

50+ hours observation at tennis events across Australia

WHAT WE FOUND



Overall, LGBTQ+ people had positive experiences of playing tennis in Australia, in both mainstream and LGBTQ+ specific clubs and tournaments.



LGBTQ+ people have a strong desire to be included in Tennis clubs, to feel a sense of belonging and be socially connected to other people within their communities.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PROMOTE LGBTQ+ INCLUSION IN TENNIS?



Create and promote welcoming, inclusive and supportive Tennis environments (safe spaces), which celebrate and encourage LGBTQ+ people to be their authentic selves.



Zero tolerance approach to homophobia/ biphobia, and transphobia, where LGBTQ+ people can play tennis free from discrimination.



Increase visibility of LGBTQ+ inclusion, tennis pathways, symbols and events e.g. rainbow flags, celebrating Wear it Purple day.

TAKE A STAND!

Some people who identify as LGBTQ+ do not feel safe participating in sport due to the fear of discrimination and exclusion. This is where clubs can be part of the solution, so that people who identify as LGBTQ+ can participate in tennis without discrimination.

It is important to offer choices for participants as well as create welcoming, safe and inclusive sporting opportunities in tennis clubs across Australia.

Tennis Australia is a proud partner of the Gay and Lesbian Tennis Alliance and VicTennis, supporting the annual Glam Slam event during the Australian Open. Over 175 participants who identify as LGBTQ+ from 30 countries participate in this tournament. The Glam Slam finals were first held in Melbourne Park on the last day of Australian Open 2019.

Tennis is one of the most popular sports at the Gay Games, a global sporting event held every four years and attended by 10,000 participants from around the world.

“My Club opened my eyes to the fact that you don’t have to fit a certain box, you can be whoever you want to be, and you’re still in the club, and you’re still loved and accepted. And tennis to me was the area where I got that awareness that I didn’t have to change, I could just be me.”

- RESEARCH PARTICIPANT



HOW WILL MY CLUB BENEFIT?

- *Help improve attitudes of community members towards your club, as well as set a positive example to your sporting peers.*
- *Enhance your understanding and experience of diversity by being open and inclusive. This will also help boost your club membership.*
- *Grow you club's programs by engaging with the LGBTQ+ community which makes up approximately 15% OF THE population. The more people you have, the better range of volunteers and skills to call on.*
- *Strengthen your relationship with local councils, businesses and potential sponsors.*
- *Increase your Club's popularity in your community.*



TOP 10 TIPS ON HOW TO BE INCLUSIVE

1

Add a welcoming, safe and inclusive club statement to your website and promotional materials.

2

Welcome new members with a smile. It is important to provide a friendly first experience for new participants.

3

Find out about the participant's needs and what they are hoping to get out of tennis.

4

Reach out to communities that assist LGBTQ+ groups to increase networks that can support your club.

5

Educate your club members about being inclusive of all participants, including appropriate and non-discriminating language.

6

It is encouraged that your club restrooms are accessible for all. This means including signage to indicate the restroom is "All Gendered". Doing this provides a safe environment for everyone.

7

Respect that people do not transition to gain a competitive advantage in sport. People transition to live a life as their true and authentic selves.

8

Be informed of Tennis Australia's Membership Protection Policy and your state's anti-discrimination legislation. For more information contact inclusion@tennis.com.au

9

Share positive stories about your club's successes and achievements as an inclusive community.

10

Why not add some decorative rainbow bunting and flags!

LGBTQ+ CHAMPIONS



PRIDE IN TENNIS – TRARALGON TENNIS CLUB

While Pride Cup has grown in popularity with AFL and netball across the country, Traralgon Tennis Club was the first to stage this event for tennis in 2018. The event included guest speaker Jelena Dokic and local LGBTQ+ ambassadors providing support to the cause.

This event was also an opportunity for the tennis club to educate the community and demonstrate their commitment to providing a welcoming and inclusive space for everyone throughout the Traralgon community.

“As an ally of the LGBTQ+ community, it’s so important to send out the message that everyone is welcome to play tennis, have lessons or volunteer. It is also the right thing to do.”

– Susie Grumley, Traralgon Tennis Club

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Partner with Tennis Victoria
- Register with Pride Cup to host the event
- Increase awareness of event throughout the local community by advertising in local papers and promoting through social media and events
- Provide LGBTQ+ awareness training to coaches and local community

LGBTQ+ CHAMPIONS



LOTON PARK TENNIS CLUB

Award-winning Loton Park Tennis Club, based in Perth, Western Australia, openly welcomes all participants who identify as LGBTQ+. Its motto is “Diversity is our advantage”. Club members have the opportunity to participate in league competitions, social plays, Come and Try Days and many other events.

Loton Park Tennis Club have strong relationships with other sports organisations, sharing resources and events.

“Embracing and respecting the diversity of players, visitors and members to your tennis club is advantageous. Everyone is welcomed and educating members and visitors on what inclusiveness means, more and more members of the community will want to attend, join and contribute to the fun. But most of all they will feel that they belong and feel happy to be their true self whilst enjoying the sport.”

– Tony Boutoubia, former President, Loton Park Tennis Club

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Partnered with Tennis West
- Connected with local sports groups
- Promoted events through social media, LGBTQ+ community and general public
- Recruited members who identify as LGBTQ+ to be involved with the committee and volunteer

LGBTQ+ CHAMPIONS



GLAM SLAM

The Glam Slam, an international tennis event sanctioned by the Gay and Lesbian Tennis Alliance (GLTA) is held in Melbourne during the Australian Open. The Glam Slam attracts 200 participants from over 30 countries across the globe. Participants and visitors also have the opportunity to take part in other LGBTQ+ inclusive social events during the Australian Open.

The Glam Slam is the world's first LGBTQ+ tournament that is integrated into a Grand Slam event.

“Players participating at the Glam Slam brings a sense of achievement. For others it’s to connect and make new friends. For some it brings stability in their lives. We all crave belonging and we want people to feel that they belong at the highest levels of our sport.”

- Rowen D’Souza, Glam Slam Coordinator

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Partnered with Tennis Australia and Tennis Victoria
- Promoted event through networks, including the Gay Lesbian Tennis Alliance
- Connected with grassroots LGBTQ+ sports groups and community to generate word of mouth
- Increased leverage of the Glam Slam through social media, festivals and LGBTQ+ events

LGBTQ+ CHAMPIONS

BE A SUPPORTER!

Welcoming a new member to your club and ensuring their comfort is important. This was the case when a tennis club in Perth had no hesitation in welcoming Allison, a new player, who informed the club she was an intersex trans female participant. While the club sought formal confirmation from Tennis West that there would be no issue with her participating in their upcoming summer competitions, the club's interaction with Allison was focused solely on discovering what Allison's tennis interests were from a social and competitive tennis perspective.

Based on her interest, the club was able to recommend to Allison that she participate in their internal Tuesday night social competition where she is now playing in addition to Tennis West's Saturday ladies competition.

"Tennis is my outlet. My emotions can get too much for me to handle and that's why I love tennis so much because it converts my emotion into power, letting me release them in a positive rather than a negative manner. Finding an accepting place to let me play is hard, but I've found one."

- Allison

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The club treated Allison like they would any other new participant
- The focus was on finding out player's interest so that the club could support her to participate in Tennis in a way that meets her interest
- Consulted with Tennis West for clarification to ensure participant can compete without barriers
- Participant is now playing on a regular basis in both social and competitive opportunities at the club

GET STARTED WITH AN LGBTQ+ EVENT!

Why not reach out to your local LGBTQ+ group and celebrate an event? Below are LGBTQ+ events that happen throughout the year:

Transgender Day of Visibility
31 MARCH

Lesbian Day of Visibility
26 APRIL

**IDAHOBIT (International Day
Against Homophobia, Biphobia,
Interphobia and Transphobia)**
17 MAY

**Pan (Pansexual and Panromantic)
Visibility Day**
24 MAY

Pride Month
1-30 JUNE

**International Non-Binary
Peoples Day**
14 JULY

Wear it Purple Day
LAST FRIDAY IN AUGUST

Celebrate Bisexuality Day
23 SEPTEMBER

Bisexual Awareness Week
**WEEK SURROUNDING
23 SEPTEMBER**

International Lesbian Day
8 OCTOBER

International Pronouns Day
THIRD WEDNESDAY IN OCTOBER

Intersex Awareness Day
26 OCTOBER

Asexual Awareness Week
LAST WEEK IN OCTOBER

Intersex Solidarity Day
8 NOVEMBER

Transgender Day of Remembrance
20 NOVEMBER

World AIDS Day
1 DECEMBER

PARTNER UP!

There are some great organisations out there who are willing to help your club become more inclusive of LGBTQ+ people.

Pride in Sport Australia

www.prideinsport.com.au

Sport Australia

www.sportaus.gov.au

Australian Human Rights Commission

www.humanrights.gov.au

Proud 2 Play

www.proud2play.org.au

Pride Cup

www.pridecup.org.au

The Gay and Lesbian Tennis Alliance (GLTA)

www.glta.net

Tennis ACT

www.tennis.com.au/act

Tennis NSW

www.tennis.com.au/nsw

Tennis NT

www.tennis.com.au/nt

Tennis QLD

www.tennis.com.au/qld

Tennis SA

www.tennis.com.au/sa

Tennis TAS

www.tennis.com.au/tas

Tennis VIC

www.tennis.com.au/vic

Tennis West

www.tennis.com.au/wa



Tennis Australia

www.tennis.com.au



GLOSSARY OF DEFINITIONS

Tennis Australia acknowledges that language and terminology can have an impact (positively and/or negatively) on people who play our sport. According to Pride in Sport Australia, there are four key aspects we must consider when understanding how people identify, these include:

- Sex (biology)
- Gender identity (brain)
- Gender expression (culture)
- Sexuality (orientation)

Society has historically viewed these characteristics as being neatly segregated into male and female characteristics, also known as 'hetero-normative'. It is important to note that these characteristics exist on a spectrum and are not binary.

- **TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE:** These are umbrella terms that describe people who identify their gender as different to what was assigned to them at birth. Some trans people position 'being trans' as a history or experience, rather than an identity, and consider their gender identity as simply being female, male or a non-binary identity. Some connect strongly with their trans experience. The processes of transition may or may not be part of a trans or gender diverse person's life. Terms such as 'cross dresser' and 'transvestite' aren't typically used by trans and gender diverse people to describe their gender experience.
- **NON-BINARY:** This is an umbrella term for any number of gender identities that sit within, outside of, across or between the spectrum of the male and female binary. A non-binary person might identify as gender fluid, trans masculine, trans feminine, agender, bigender etc.
- **TRANSITION/GENDER AFFIRMING:** The personal process or processes a trans or gender diverse person determines is right for them in order to live as their defined gender identity and so that society recognises this. Transition may involve social, medical/surgical and/or legal steps that affirm a person's gender.
 - i. **Social transition** is the process by which a person changes their gender expression to better match their gender identity. This may include changing their name, pronouns, and appearance.

ii. **Medical transition** is the process by which a person changes their physical sex characteristics to align with their gender identity. This may include hormone therapy, surgery or both.

iii. **Legal transition** is the process by which a person changes their identity documents, name, or both, to reflect their gender identity. This may include changing their gender marker on a passport or birth certificate or changing their name on a driver's license or bank card.

- **CISGENDER:** A term used to describe people who identify their gender as the same as what was assigned to them at birth (male or female). 'Cis' is a Latin term meaning 'on the same side as'.
- **GENDER EXPERIENCES:** Trans, transgender, gender diverse, cis and cisgender are all experiences of gender and are distinct from male, female and non-binary gender identities.
- **AFAB/DFAB:** Assigned female at birth/Designated female at birth
- **AMAB/DMAB:** Assigned male at birth/Designated male at birth
- **GENDER DYSPHORIA:** The distress or unease sometimes experienced from being misgendered and/or when someone's gender identity and body personally don't feel connected or congruent. Gender dysphoria does not = being trans or gender diverse, many trans and gender diverse people do not experience gender dysphoria and if they do, it may cease with access to gender affirming healthcare (if medical transition is desired). The trans and gender diverse experience is not a mental illness.
- **LEGAL SEX:** The marker or classification recorded when a child's birth is registered. In NSW, this is either M or F. This marker can be amended to either M, F or X.
- **SEX CHARACTERISTICS:** Physical parts of the body that are related to body development/regulation and reproductive systems. Primary sex characteristics are gonads, chromosomes, genitals and hormones. Secondary sex characteristics emerge at puberty and can include the development of breast tissue, voice pitch, facial and pubic hair etc. 'Sex characteristics' is more accurate than 'biological sex', 'biologically male' or 'biologically female'. Body parts do not have genders.

GLOSSARY OF DEFINITIONS

- **CISGENDERISM/CISSEXISM:** A view that the trans experience doesn't exist or is something to be treated. That gender identity is determined at birth and is fixed based on sex characteristics (or 'biology') and that only binary (male and female) identities are valid and real.
- **INTERSEX STATUS:** 'Intersex status' is a protected attribute under the Act. Under the Act 'intersex status' means the status of having physical, hormonal or genetic features that are:
 - i. neither wholly female nor wholly male
 - ii. a combination of female and male, or
 - iii. neither female nor male.

The term 'intersex' does not describe a person's gender identity (man, woman, neither or both). A person born with a variation in sex characteristics may identify as a man, woman, neither or both.

- **LGBTQI:** 'LGBTQI' (or variations of it) is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning and intersex. It is used to refer collectively to these communities. The 'LGB' refers to sexuality/sexual identity; the 'T' refers to gender identity; and the 'I' refers to people who have an intersex variation. 'Q' can refer to either gender identity or sexuality.
- **PRONOUNS:** 'Pronouns' are a grammatical means of referring to a person or persons. Conventional pronouns are 'she/her/hers' and 'he/him/his'. Some people prefer to use gender neutral pronouns, such as 'they/them/their'. The pronoun a person uses to describe themselves generally reflects their gender identity.

"WHICH PRONOUNS DO YOU USE?"

IDENTITY	PRONOUN	EXAMPLE
Identifying as male	He/Him/His	<i>He</i> won the set
Identifying as female	She/Her/Hers	I play with <i>her</i> in doubles
Identifying as neither	They/Them/Theirs	That is <i>their</i> tennis racquet

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