

Statement of Intent

Supporting people who are LGBTIQ+ and with diverse SOGIESC at WaterAid Australia

WaterAid fosters a safe and empowering environment, where people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) are supported as staff, volunteers and partners, and have equal access to and benefit from WaterAid's water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programs.

An important note on language

We acknowledge the importance of language to be empowering and respectful. In Australia, we mostly use the term 'LGBTIQ+'. LGBTIQ+ stands for: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer and Questioning. The plus aims to include people whose identity is not represented in the LGBTIQ acronym.

WaterAid also uses the term 'diverse SOGIESC' to describe people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics. As an International organisation, we recognise this is an inclusive term, which is not limited to cultures or places. It aligns with anti-discrimination and human rights law. We value local knowledge and the importance of rights-based terminology in fostering an empowering environment.

WaterAid's values and mission aims to empower people with diverse SOGIESC

WaterAid's vision is a world where everyone, everywhere has safe water, sanitation and hygiene. We recognise that people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics often experience discrimination, exclusion and human rights violations in their daily lives.

In our mission to transform the lives of people experiencing marginalisation, we want to ensure that people with diverse SOGIESC can fulfill their human rights to WASH.

At WaterAid, everything we do is shaped by six values: Accountability; Collaboration; Courage; Innovation; Integrity and Respect. We believe that our values of accountability, collaboration and respect should guide how we support LGBTIQ+ staff, volunteers and partners, and ensure WaterAid programs are inclusive of people who are diverse SOGIESC:

- **Accountability:** We uphold our commitment to be a safe and inclusive organisation, which strives to fulfill human rights, commit no harm and leave no one behind.
- **Collaboration:** We foster meaningful partnerships with diverse SOGIESC rights groups; and work to ensure diverse SOGIESC inclusion is a core part of our inclusive and empowering WASH efforts.
- **Respect:** We listen to and build our understanding of the unique experiences of people with diverse SOGIESC, to better address their unique rights and needs and to build off their strengths.

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Our commitment

Our approach and commitment to progressing gender equality and other human rights includes the rights of people with diverse SOGIESC. Our journey is underpinned by actions to understand, assess and avoid harm. We build off our learning of other inequality areas such as gender equality and disability rights, to ensure our organisation and programs reflect the diversity of our communities.

Over the next two years, WaterAid will prioritise the following:

1. **Build awareness through internal learning and reflective practice** to understand and address inequalities experienced by people with diverse SOGIESC. We will do this through our gender equality working groups; and gender audit action plans; and through our people and culture practices to ensure a safe and empowering workplace for LGBTIQ+ staff, partners and volunteers
2. **Strengthen organisational policy, processes and communications** to ensure they are representative and uphold the rights of LGBTIQ+ staff, partners and volunteers. We will use positive, diverse and empowering language.
3. **Increase collaboration and partnership with diverse SOGIESC rights groups** in Timor-Leste, Cambodia and Papua New Guinea to improve inclusive WASH outcomes;
4. **Develop monitoring, evaluation and learning to better include people with diverse SOGIESC in WASH solutions** by testing safe, appropriate and innovative tools and methods.

[WaterAid's vision is a world where everyone, everywhere has safe water, sanitation and hygiene.](#)

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