



LGBTQ+ SPORT INTEGRITY GUIDELINE



WARNING: SENSITIVE CONTENT

This Guideline includes specific examples and case studies of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in sports. Some of the language and scenarios presented may be explicit and confronting to some readers.

All case studies referenced in this document are hypothetical and should not be viewed as a reflection of the sport named. No inference is to be drawn to types of conduct that occur in the mentioned sport.

The acronym LGBTQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning, plus all other diverse gender identities and sexual orientations.

We acknowledge that engaging with this content can be difficult, and we encourage you to reach out for support and assistance if needed. Please refer to the support services listed below for guidance and help:

PRIDE IN SPORT

Support for LGBTQ+ inclusion in sports.
prideinsport.com.au

SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA

Assistance with reporting and managing complaints.
(1800 161 361)
Tell us about a concern or issue.
sportintegrity.gov.au/contact-us/reporting

PRIDE COUNSELLING

Confidential counselling for LGBTQ+ individuals in NSW.
(02) 9206 2000
acon.org.au/support-services/pride-counselling

QLIFE

National LGBTI peer support and referral service.
(3pm – midnight 1800 184 527)
qlife.org.au

LIFELINE

Crisis support and suicide prevention.
(13 11 14)
lifeline.org.au

BEYOND BLUE

Support for anxiety, depression, and mental health.
(1300 22 4636)
beyondblue.org.au

BLAQ

Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQ+ communities.
<https://blaq.org.au>

Your well-being is important, and these services are here to provide the necessary support.

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 Owners and Custodians of the land and waters on which we play. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging and extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who have inspired and continue to inspire us through participation, team work, courage and leadership in sport.



Artwork by Chern'ee Sutton

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUR ELDERS

We pay our respects to those within lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans and gender diverse communities who have worked to improve opportunities and outcomes for their peers, children, families and friends in sport across many generations. Our work builds on the courage and resilience of those who have come before us.

COPYRIGHT

© 2025 Sport Integrity Australia & Pride in Sport

This Guideline has been developed by Pride in Sport and Sport Integrity Australia. The information contained in this Guideline is intended for the specific use of Australian sporting organisation governing bodies. All guidance provided within this Guideline are based on an evidence informed and best practice approach, as guided by the Pride in Sport Index.

SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA & PRIDE IN SPORT WELCOME

We are pleased to present the **LGBTQ+ Sport Integrity Guideline**, a vital document developed to support Member Protection Information Officers, Complaint Managers and Decision Makers (including Judicial Hearing Panellists) in addressing LGBTQ+ related disciplinary matters within the sporting community.

This Guideline is a collaborative effort between Pride in Sport and Sport Integrity Australia and supports our aim to foster inclusive and respectful environments across Australian sports.

The LGBTQ+ Sport Integrity Guideline provides comprehensive guidance on identifying, managing, and resolving incidents of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. By equipping stakeholders with practical tools and recommendations, this Guideline helps to support fair and informed decision-making processes. It highlights the importance of initial and ongoing education to create safe and welcoming spaces for all athletes.

Key components include detailed examples and indicators of discriminatory and other unacceptable behaviours, an outline of the roles and responsibilities of National Sporting Organisations and National Sporting Organisations for People with Disability and Sport Integrity Australia. The Guideline also emphasises the importance of LGBTQ+ inclusion education for decision makers and as a sanction, promoting understanding and preventing future incidents.


By addressing these issues, we can move closer to eliminating unacceptable behaviours in sport and promote a culture of respect and equality. We thank you for your commitment to fostering an inclusive sporting environment and for your dedication to upholding the values of integrity and fairness. We hope this Guideline serves as a valuable guide in your efforts to support all members of the sporting community.

Together, we can make a difference.

Yours in sport,



Dr Sarah Benson
Chief Executive Officer
Sport Integrity Australia



Beau Newell
National Program Manager
Pride in Sport

The acronym LGBTQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning, plus all other diverse gender identities and sexual orientations.



CONTENTS

SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA & PRIDE IN SPORT WELCOME	1
SECTION 1: IMPORTANCE OF LGBTQ+ INCLUSION IN SPORT	2
Impact on individuals	3
Impact on team dynamics	3
Creating a positive environment	3
SECTION 2: HOW TO IDENTIFY HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA & TRANSPHOBIA IN SPORT ...	4
Verbal abuse	5
Physical abuse	5
Bullying	5
Exclusion	5
Discrimination	6
Vilification	6
Harassment (including sexual harassment)	6
Stereotyping	6
Online Abuse	6
Which policy clause should I use?	7
SECTION 3: WHO MANAGES COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHOBIC-BEHAVIOUR IN SPORT?	8
Responsibility and jurisdiction of sports and Sport Integrity Australia when managing complaints	8
The National Sports Tribunal	11
Explanation of 'Affected Party', 'Witness' and 'Complainant'	14
How are phobic-matters sanctioned?	15
Where to look for guidance if an incident doesn't fit Sport Integrity Australia's jurisdiction	15
Dealing with online abuse	15
SECTION 4: EDUCATION FOR DECISION MAKERS	17
Mandatory education	17
Education content	18
SECTION 5: INCLUSION OF LGBTQ+ EXPERTS IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES	19
Inclusion of lived experience	19
Engaging LGBTQ+ community members	20
Role of experts	23
SECTION 6: LGBTQ+ INCLUSION EDUCATION AS A SANCTION	26
Recommendation for education	26
Benefits of education	27
SECTION 7: IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE	28
Implementation plan	28
Monitoring and compliance	28
SECTION 8: SUPPORT AND RESOURCES	29
Additional resources	29
Contact Information	29
APPENDICES	30
Appendix A: Implementation checklist	31
Appendix B: Examples of prohibited conduct and sanctions	33
Endnotes	36

SECTION 1:

IMPORTANCE OF LGBTQ+ INCLUSION IN SPORT

Addressing homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in sports is crucial for creating inclusive and safe environments for everyone. The presence of these negative behaviours not only harms individuals but also undermines team dynamics and the overall integrity of sports. Recent research highlights the significant impact of discrimination and other harmful behaviours towards LGBTQ+ individuals in the sporting world.

According to the [2024 Pride in Sport Index \(PSI\) National Survey \[PDF 356kB\]](#), 53% of respondents have witnessed homophobia, biphobia, or vilification based on identity, and 40% have personally experienced it. This prevalence of discrimination highlights the urgent need for targeted efforts to foster inclusivity and respect within sports.

The [Free to Exist \[PDF 21.8 MB\] research report from 2024](#) further supports these findings, revealing that LGBTQ+ youth face significant challenges in feeling accepted in sports settings. While participation rates in some sports are high, feelings of acceptance remain only moderate, with acceptance scores of 4.86 and 4.53 out of 7, respectively. This indicates that despite being active in sports, many young LGBTQ+ athletes still struggle with acceptance and belonging.

It's important to note the intersectionality of discrimination across multiple protected characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation and race. LGBTQ+ First Nations individuals are at more risk to some form of mental health compared to non First Nations individuals as indicated by [this survey](#)¹.

Inclusion efforts not only benefit individuals but also enhance the sporting community as a whole. The [2023 PSI National Survey \[PDF 543 kB\]](#) found that 83.9% of respondents believe their organisation is genuinely committed to LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusion, an increase from previous years. When organisations actively promote diversity and inclusion, they create environments where athletes can thrive, free from fear of discrimination and other harmful behaviours.

Furthermore, creating an inclusive environment in sports leads to better mental health outcomes. The [2025 PSI National Survey \[PDF 281 kB\]](#) reports that respondents who are out about their sexuality or open about their diverse gender experience higher levels of engagement and performance. By fostering a culture of acceptance, sports organisations can ensure that all participants feel valued and respected, enhancing both individual well-being and team success.

Addressing homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in sports is essential for promoting equality and respect.

Impact on individuals

Experiencing homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in sports can have significant [negative effects on individuals](#), affecting their mental health, self-esteem, and overall wellbeing². These behaviours can lead to:



- **Mental health issues:** individuals may experience increased anxiety, depression, and stress due to constant fear of judgement or harassment.
- **Reduced participation:** fear of discrimination can discourage LGBTQ+ individuals from participating in sports, leading to decreased physical activity and social isolation.
- **Lower self-esteem:** continuous exposure to negative behaviours can erode self-confidence and a sense of belonging.
- **Fear of disclosure:** athletes may feel compelled to hide their true identity, preventing them from being open and authentic.

Impact on team dynamics

The presence of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia within a team can disrupt harmony and negatively [impact overall team performance](#). These behaviours can result in:



- **Decreased team cohesion:** when individuals feel excluded or targeted, it can create divisions within the team, reducing trust and cooperation.
- **Ineffective communication:** fear of judgement may lead individuals to withhold their thoughts or feelings, resulting in misunderstandings and lack of collaboration.
- **Lower morale:** a hostile environment can lower team spirit and motivation, affecting performance and enjoyment of the sport.
- **Talent loss:** teams may lose valuable players who leave the sport due to discrimination or lack of acceptance.
- **Poor performance:** constant stress and anxiety from a hostile environment can distract athletes, leading to decreased focus and reduced performance during games and training.

Creating a positive environment

Addressing these behaviours and fostering an inclusive environment [benefits everyone involved \(2024 PSI National Survey \[PDF 356kB\]\)](#):



- **Promotes equality:** ensuring all team members are treated with respect and fairness enhances mutual understanding and support.
- **Enhances performance:** a supportive and inclusive atmosphere encourages individuals to perform at their best, contributing to overall team success.
- **Builds stronger teams:** emphasising inclusivity strengthens team bonds, improving communication and cooperation.
- **Encourages participation:** when individuals feel safe and accepted, they are more likely to participate and remain engaged in sports.

Creating a safe and inclusive environment not only benefits LGBTQ+ individuals but also enhances the experience for the entire team, promoting a culture of respect and equality in sports.

SECTION 2:

HOW TO IDENTIFY HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA & TRANSPHOBIA IN SPORT

Understanding and addressing homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia is crucial for creating inclusive and supportive environments in [sport and beyond](#) [PDF 975 kB]³.

These negative behaviours manifest in various forms, including verbal abuse, discrimination, bullying and exclusion, all of which have harmful impacts on individuals and communities.

To be able to effectively manage a complaint, it is important for complaint managers in sport to be able to identify forms of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia and then understand which policies cover these types of behaviours.

Here's a short list detailing homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in their simplest forms:

- ① **Verbal abuse:** using derogatory language or slurs related to a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- ② **Physical abuse:** acts of violence based on someone's sexuality or gender expression.
- ③ **Bullying:** intimidation or repeated abuse and/or harassment that targets someone because of their sexuality or gender identity.
- ④ **Exclusion:** deliberately excluding individuals from social or professional groups due to their LGBTQ+ identity.
- ⑤ **Discrimination:** unfair treatment in schools, clubs, workplaces, or other settings based on someone's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- ⑥ **Vilification:** behaviour which encourages through speech, writing or other communication, the hatred or ridicule of LGBTQ+ communities.
- ⑦ **Harassment (including sexual harassment):** unwanted and offensive behaviour including questions and/or comments about genitalia, inappropriate or offensive jokes, intrusive questions.
- ⑧ **Stereotyping:** making generalised statements or assumptions about someone's abilities, desires, or personalities based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- ⑨ **Online abuse:** Using digital technology to threaten, intimidate, menace, bully, harass, humiliate or offend someone based on their LGBTQ+ status. Any of the behaviours above (except physical abuse) can occur online and may also be considered online abuse.

In sport and recreational activities, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia can manifest in many ways, affecting the well-being and participation [of LGBTQ+ individuals](#). Understanding how these behaviours appear in sports settings is essential for identifying and addressing them effectively. Below are specific examples and indicators of such behaviours and how they can be recognised:

1 Verbal abuse

- a. **Example:** a teammate calls another player derogatory names like "fag" or "dyke" and makes comments such as "You're too gay to play football" during practice sessions.
- b. **Indicator:** look for patterns of language that target or demean someone's sexual orientation or gender identity, such as using slurs or derogatory remarks, creating a hostile or uncomfortable environment.

Note: instances of verbal abuse may fall under the definition of 'abuse' or 'harassment' within a sport's Member Protection Policy. A sporting organisation could also consider if an instance of verbal abuse would be a breach of their Code of Conduct.

2 Physical abuse

- a. **Example:** a player is shoved or hit by another athlete after sharing that they are transgender, accompanied by comments like, "We don't want your kind here."
- b. **Indicator:** be aware of any acts of aggression or violence that are motivated by someone's sexual orientation or gender identity, such as physical attacks or threats.

Note: instances of physical abuse may fall under the definition of 'abuse' within a sport's Member Protection Policy. A sporting organisation could also consider if an instance of physical abuse would be a breach of their Code of Conduct. Any form of physical abuse may also need to be reported to police.

3 Bullying

- a. **Example:** an athlete is constantly mocked for their appearance, with peers or coaches making statements like "You don't look manly enough to be on this team" or "Why do you dress like a girl?"
- b. **Indicator:** notice repeated, targeted actions such as teasing, mocking, or mimicking someone's mannerisms, which seek to humiliate or intimidate someone based on their identity, leading to distress or withdrawal from activities.

Note: bullying is covered by a sport's Member Protection Policy. A sporting organisation could also consider if the bullying behaviour would be a breach of their Code of Conduct.

4 Exclusion

- a. **Example:** LGBTQ+ athletes are deliberately not invited to team events or gatherings, with remarks like, "We just don't think you'd fit in."
- b. **Indicator:** recognise deliberate actions that prevent certain individuals from fully participating or engaging with the group, such as not sharing information about team activities or intentionally leaving someone out.

Note: instances of exclusion may fall under the definition of 'bullying' within a sport's Member Protection Policy. A sporting organisation could also consider if an instance of exclusion would be a breach of their Code of Conduct.

5 Discrimination

- a. **Example:** a sports team denies an athlete the right to compete with their club because they are in a same-sex relationship.
- b. **Indicator:** watch for policies or decisions that unfairly disadvantage or exclude individuals due to their sexual orientation or other personal characteristics, such as restrictive eligibility criteria or exclusion from certain competitions.

Note: discrimination is covered by a sport's Member Protection Policy.

6 Vilification

- a. **Example:** an athlete posts a public status on Facebook prior to a game which encourages spectators to come to the game and make fun of persons from the LGBTQ+ community.
- b. **Indicator:** consider if verbal statements or other forms of communication, such as social media interactions encourage hatred or ridicule of LGBTQ+ communities. Vilification can include repeated or serious verbal or physical abuse, and property damage.

Note: vilification is covered by a sport's Member Protection Policy. A sporting organisation could also consider if the behaviour would be a breach of their Code of Conduct or Social Media Policy depending on the context of the matter.

7 Harassment (including sexual harassment)

- a. **Example:** after a female athlete discloses that they are in a same-sex relationship, another male teammate continuously asks questions and makes comments, even after being told to stop. Things like "what happens if you get married?", "who will walk down the aisle?", "it's probably a phase", "I bet I could turn you back".
- b. **Indicator:** consider if inappropriate comments are being passed off as a 'joke' or played down as though individuals shouldn't be offended by them. Be mindful of one-off comments or instances that offend or build up over time and make individuals feel uncomfortable.

Note: harassment is covered by a sport's Member Protection Policy. Harassment-like behaviours may also be covered under other policies such as the Code of Conduct.

8 Stereotyping

- a. **Example:** a coach assumes a bisexual athlete is indecisive and comments, "You need to pick a side if you want to succeed," affecting their opportunities for leadership positions on the team.
- b. **Indicator:** look for biases that lead to unfounded assumptions about an individual's abilities or character based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, such as questioning their commitment or capability.

Note: instances of stereotyping may fall under the definition of 'bullying' or 'harassment' within a sport's Member Protection Policy. A sporting organisation could also consider if an instance of stereotyping would be a breach of their Code of Conduct

9 Online Abuse

- a. **Example:** after publicly coming out as LGBTQ+, an athlete receives online messages saying, "You should quit sports" or "You're an embarrassment to the team."
- b. **Indicator:** identify patterns of abusive or threatening messages that target individuals based on their identity in digital spaces, such as repeated negative comments or doxing attempts.

Note: instances of online abuse may fall under the definition of 'bullying', 'abuse', 'harassment' or 'discrimination' within a sport's Member Protection Policy. A sporting organisation could also consider if inappropriate social media behaviour would be a breach of their Code of Conduct and/or Social Media Policy.

Which policy clause should I use?

If you are a complaint manager and receive a complaint about a phobic incident that has occurred in your sport, the first step is to read and understand the complaint and talk to the affected party and other relevant persons so that you can identify what behaviour has been alleged. You can use the examples above to determine which policy definition the alleged behaviour best fits under. It is likely that the alleged behaviour may overlap several of the above definitions. This is not a concern. You should select the definition that best describes the alleged behaviour.

If your sport is operating under the National Integrity Framework (NIF) and the matter is best defined as discrimination or involves victims under the age of 18 (any type of prohibited conduct), the matter can be reported to Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) in the first instance (see Section 3).

.....

CASE STUDY:

IDENTIFYING A HOMOPHOBIC INCIDENT

This case study relates to an incident that could not be managed by SIA as the sport was not operating under the NIF and the conduct was defined as verbal abuse and not discrimination.

During a local football match, player Casey allegedly shouted, "You're a faggot!" at opponent Sam. The referee's report confirms hearing Casey use the slur. A spectator's complaint also mentions Casey making derogatory comments like, "Go back to the closet."

The sporting organisation's complaint manager reviews the referee's report and witness statements, guided by the Member Protection Information Officer. The alleged incident is identified as homophobic and could be defined as verbal abuse and disrespectful language which violates the league's code of conduct.

Now that the incident is identified to include a form of homophobia which breaches the sport's policies, the sporting organisation determines that the matter will be managed through an internal hearing tribunal and can use this Guideline to ensure they manage the judicial process effectively and with a person-centred approach for LGBTQ+ people (start at Section 4).

This example also highlights the importance of clear reporting and the role of officials and bystanders in recognising homophobic language and unacceptable behaviour.



SECTION 3:

WHO MANAGES COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHOBIC-BEHAVIOUR IN SPORT?

Responsibility and jurisdiction of sports and Sport Integrity Australia when managing complaints

There are a number of possibilities regarding the management of complaints about phobic behaviours in sport:

- Some will be best managed by the club
- Some will be best managed by the State Sporting Organisation (SSO), National Sporting Organisation (NSO) or National Sporting Organisations for People with a Disability (NSODs)
- Some will be best managed by Sport Integrity Australia (SIA)

Which avenue is best will depend on a range of factors, including the context surrounding the incident and the jurisdiction for certain bodies to consider what's happened. Member Protection Information Officers (MPIOs) do not manage complaints themselves, but can help provide advice about where to submit complaints.

The complexity arises from several factors:

- **Contextual nuances:** the impact and perception of these incidents can vary greatly depending on the situation, the individuals involved, and the environment in which they occur.
- **Subjectivity:** what one person perceives as harmless banter, another may experience as deeply offensive or discriminatory, making it challenging to standardise responses.
- **Legal and ethical considerations:** different jurisdictions may operate under varying laws, definitions and ethical standards regarding discrimination, affecting how incidents are handled.
- **Balancing roles:** there are some matters that SIA has no jurisdiction to manage (which are detailed further on their website), and the responsibilities can sometimes blur between clubs, State Sporting Organisations (SSOs), National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) and National Sporting Organisations for People with Disability (NSODs). Careful assessment of each matter is needed to determine the appropriate course of action.
- **Discrimination based on multiple protected characteristics:** During LGBTQ+ complaints, other protected characteristics may be involved including Race, Disability and Religion. These factors are important and should be considered to identify what discrimination policies and/or laws will be utilised.

The phrase "it depends" aptly captures the complexity of managing these incidents, as each case requires a nuanced approach to ensure fairness and uphold the integrity of the sporting environment.

A SPORT-BY-SPORT APPROACH

One of the biggest factors that influences how phobic matters will be managed is which sport the incident occurred in.

If the behaviour occurs in a club associated with one of the following NSOs/NSODs, the matter will be managed within that sport:

- Australian Football League
- National Rugby League
- Football Australia
- Basketball Australia
- Rugby Australia
- Surf Life Saving Australia
- Netball Australia
- Cricket Australia
- Tennis Australia

In all other sports, the issue could be managed by either SIA or the sport, depending on which policy may have been breached.

SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA JURISDICTION

SIA has jurisdiction in 87 sports to manage:

- A. Any phobic incidents involving children (under 18), and
- B. Any phobic incidents involving adults that would be considered discrimination based on a personal characteristic (such as age, race, sex, gender identity, religion, disability and sexual orientation).

A. Matters involving children and young people – Sport Integrity Australia jurisdiction

Important note: SIA is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of young athletes across all sports. If your sporting organisation has adopted the National Integrity Framework (NIF), SIA can consider complaints about incidents involving a child or young person that may constitute a breach of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. This includes all forms of abuse, bullying, harassment and discrimination.

- **Child-Related phobic incidents:** if your sport has adopted the NIF, all incidents of homophobia, biphobia, or transphobia against minors should be reported to SIA in the first instance, as they are considered child safeguarding issues. You should also advise the appropriate person in your sporting organisation that you have reported the incident to SIA.
- As part of evaluating the complaint, SIA will determine if the matter can be handled by them under the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. If it can't be, or the matter is better handled by the sport under a different policy, SIA will advise you of this and how to contact your sporting organisation.

B. Matters involving adults – Sport Integrity Australia jurisdiction

SIA is bound by a specific legal remit, and because of this, incidents involving adults are less clear-cut and require careful consideration. Under the Member Protection Policy, SIA can manage complaints about discrimination that occurred based on a personal characteristic.

As per the examples earlier in this guide, discrimination under the NIF Member Protection Policy is defined as someone being treated differently or denied opportunities based on a personal characteristic, which includes their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Discrimination includes both direct and indirect discrimination (either in-person or online) which have the following meaning:

- 'Direct discrimination' occurs where, because a person has a protected characteristic, they are treated less favourably than a person without that characteristic would be treated in the same or similar circumstances.
- 'Indirect discrimination' occurs where a practice, rule, requirement or condition that applies to everyone disadvantages people with a protected characteristic and the practice, rule, requirement or condition is not reasonable in the circumstances.

For sports operating under the NIF, any form of discrimination involving adults, including around sexual orientation or gender identity, should be reported to SIA for evaluation.

The definition of discrimination that SIA operates under is derived from international conventions which provide for such definition. Importantly, for SIA to manage a phobic matter as discrimination, SIA must be satisfied to an objective legal standard, that the behaviour impaired or nullified the person's ability to participate in sport (a fundamental human right).

Generally, in the context of participation in a sporting activity, discrimination would involve systemic and repeated failure to protect the safety of a sport member, whereby no reasonable person would consider that it would be safe for the person to participate in, or enjoy participating in, the sporting activity.

To substantiate a breach of discrimination, there are specific elements that need to be proved to the required evidentiary standard, being the balance of probabilities. In some cases, the alleged conduct may be more appropriately managed under a different policy clause, where a breach may be more likely able to be proved.

As part of evaluating the complaint, SIA will determine if the alleged behaviour meets this legal definition of discrimination or may most appropriately fit under a different definition (such as vilification/bullying/harassment) and is better handled by the sport. SIA will advise the affected party of this and support them to contact the complaint manager at their sporting organisation.

SIA has developed sanction guidance which holds all forms of prohibited conduct that relate to a protected characteristic to the same standard, that is, whether an incident could be defined as discrimination, or is more appropriately defined as another form of prohibited conduct (such as vilification) from a sanction standpoint, those breaches should be viewed as the same level of severity by the sporting organisation when making the sanction decision. SIA does not have jurisdiction to recommend, impose or enforce a sanction. All sanction decisions are made by the sport, and the sport is required to impose that sanction.

If you are unsure, you can contact SIA or your sporting organisation for guidance.

Sport Integrity Australia's Safe Sport Hotline: 1800 161 361. Email: contactus@sportintegrity.gov.au.

SPORT JURISDICTION

If the incident occurred in a club under one of the 9 NSO/NSODs (listed on page 9), then any phobic-related matter will be managed by the sport, regardless of the age of the complainant or the policy breached.

If the incident occurred in a different sport than those 9 NSO/NSODs, then the sport will manage any adult related phobic matter that doesn't fall within the description of discrimination above.

That includes verbal abuse, physical abuse, harassment, bullying, exclusion and online abuse.

WHY AREN'T ISSUES MANAGED THE SAME WAY FOR ALL SPORTS?

In March 2021, SIA launched the NIF, which provides a consistent set of rules that all members of sport need to follow when it comes to their behaviour and conduct in sport. By adopting the NIF, a NSO/NSOD gives SIA the authority to manage complaints that relate to safeguarding children and young people and discrimination issues on behalf of that sport.

Not all sports are able to adopt the NIF or choose not to and are instead supported by their own integrity frameworks and policies which are endorsed by SIA. SIA supports sports that are not operating under the NIF to manage complaints but cannot manage complaints on their behalf.

The responsibility for managing complaints sits with the sporting organisations themselves, however all NSO/NSODs have their integrity policies approved by SIA, so you can be assured that the conduct outlined in this Guideline is still against the rules of an NSO/NSOD even if they are not operating under the NIF policies.

You can find out if your sporting organisation has adopted the NIF here: [Sports Signed to The National Integrity Framework \(sportintegrity.gov.au\)](https://sportintegrity.gov.au).

The National Sports Tribunal

The National Sports Tribunal (NST) has been established under the *National Sports Tribunal Act 2019 (Cth)* to provide an effective, efficient, independent, transparent and specialist tribunal for the fair hearing and resolution of sporting disputes.

There are rules around who can apply to have a case heard by the NST and what types of matters can be heard which you can read more about this on the [NST website](https://www.nst.gov.au).

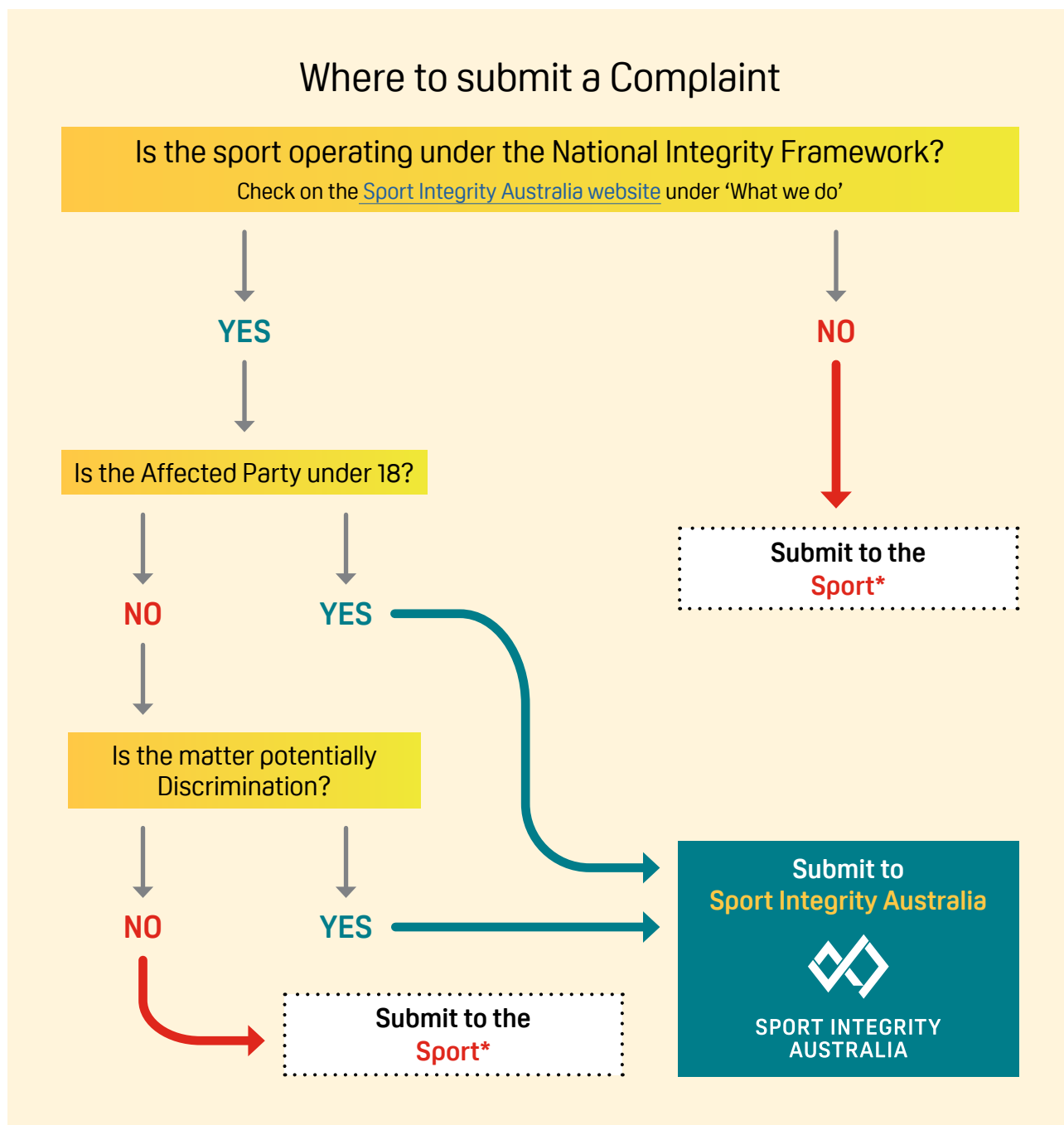
The NST can deal with certain types of disputes and appeals which include disciplinary matters arising from integrity policies such as the:

- Member Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Competition Manipulation and Sports Gambling Policy
- Improper Use of Drugs and Medicine Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Social Media Policy

The NST can also support Alternate Dispute Resolution methods such as mediation and case conciliation.

In making an application to the NST, applicants must pay the relevant application fee which can range from \$250 to \$1500.

Individuals who would like to refer a dispute to the NST should first check with their sporting body to see if it will be possible. Individuals can also contact the NST Registry directly at enquiries@nationalsportstribunal.gov.au or on 02 6289 3877 or by [visiting the NST website](#).



*The NST has rules around who can make an application to it and what types of matters can be heard by it. If you are a complaints manager and wish to refer the complaint to the NST, this usually occurs through your NSO/NSOD.

[Click here for a text alternative for the complaint submission flow chart on page 36.](#)

CASE STUDIES:

DOES THIS FIT INTO SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA'S REMIT?

The captain of an adult team repeatedly and intentionally misgenders an opposition player from a separate club who is transgender. The affected athlete's club calls out the behaviour and supports the athlete in making a complaint. The sport has adopted the NIF so SIA has jurisdiction for matters relating to children, or adult matters relating to discrimination.

This incident is clearly transphobic, but let's consider the most appropriate policy breach to consider this incident under.

Discrimination may include conduct such as abuse, bullying or harassment, but only to the extent that it involves a distinction, exclusion or restriction made against a person on the basis of a protected characteristic they hold. The behaviour must be proved to an objective legal standard to have nullified or impaired the equal enjoyment of that [person's right to participate in sport](#).

While the above matter may be defined as discrimination as it undoubtedly could impair the athlete's enjoyment of participating in the sport, this incident would be more appropriately defined as vilification, which includes behaviour which encourages through speech, writing or other communication, the hatred or ridicule of LGBTQ+ communities, and harassment, which includes making derogatory comments or taunts about someone's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

This is because the comment was made by an opposition player, and the affected athlete's club supported them to make a complaint, so it may be that the person was comfortable to then continue participating in sport.

Regardless of whether this incident could be defined as discrimination, vilification or harassment, the fact that the conduct is motivated by a protected characteristic would be an aggravating factor to consider in the sanction decision.

This incident could be submitted to your sporting organisation to manage as alleged vilification and/or harassment under the Member Protection Policy.

If the incident was reported to SIA, they would consider whether the incident could be defined as discrimination or is more appropriately defined as another form of prohibited conduct under the Member Protection Policy. If this is the case, SIA will support the affected party to refer the matter to their sporting organisation.



An adult teammate of a transgender athlete repeatedly and intentionally misgenders the athlete. The athlete approaches their club to raise their concern and is told to 'toughen up'. The sport has adopted the NIF so SIA has jurisdiction for matters relating to children, or adult matters relating to discrimination.

This example is similar, but slightly different to the example above.

In this example the athlete experiences attacks on their identity within their own team and this has failed to have been addressed by the club. This indicates there may be a systemic issue and it may be determined that a reasonable person's enjoyment of their right to participation in sport would be nullified or impaired in this instance due to the behaviour from both their teammate, and their club.

This matter should be reported to SIA as alleged discrimination as a person in a position of power is impacting the athlete's ability to participate in the sport due to their personal characteristic (gender identity).



Explanation of 'Affected Party', 'Witness' and 'Complainant'



Affected Party



Witness



Complainant

In any incident, it is important to differentiate between the roles of victim, observer, and complainant:

- **Affected Party:** the individual directly affected by the incident, experiencing harmful behaviour (victim).
- **Witness:** a person who witnesses the incident but is not directly harmed (observer).
- **Complainant/Reporter:** the individual who formally reports the incident, which could be the Affected Party or a Witness.

Note: under the NIF complaints policy, a Complainant must be the Affected Party or their parent/guardian. Complaints submitted by third parties (Witnesses) are considered 'Reports'. SIA and sporting organisations place the wellbeing of the Affected Party at the forefront of the complaints process. The wishes of the Affected Party to participate in the Complaints Process is fully considered before any decision to progress a third-party report through the Complaints Process is made.

How are phobic-matters sanctioned?

Regardless of whether SIA or the sport manages a complaint, it is the role of the sporting organisation to make the sanction decision. SIA developed a document called [Guidance for Complaint Management and Sanctions](#) [PDF 2.6 MB] which provides sporting organisation with guidance about appropriate sanctions for different types of behaviours.

The next sections of this Guideline provide guidance to decision makers on this sanctioning process.

Where to look for guidance if an incident doesn't fit Sport Integrity Australia's jurisdiction

If an incident around homophobia, biphobia, or transphobia does not fall under SIA's jurisdiction, individuals should refer to:

- **Member Protection Policies:** outlines prohibited behaviours in sport such as bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- **Relevant Complaints Policies:** outlines processes available when members of sport engage in unacceptable behaviours.
- **Codes of Conduct:** specific to each sport, detailing acceptable behaviour and consequences for breaches.

Contact SIA or your sporting organisation for help.

Sport Integrity Australia's Safe Sport Hotline: 1800 161 361. Email: contactus@sportintegrity.gov.au

Sport organisation contacts: [Lodging a complaint with a sport \(sportintegrity.gov.au\)](#)

Dealing with online abuse

Phobic behaviour occurs online and can occur through social media, email, text or other technology.

Those responsible can be a sport member, or a non-member or someone unknown.

When a member is responsible, phobic behaviour can be managed under a range of different policies. If it involves a child, it may be managed by SIA or the sport under their child safeguarding policy. It could also be managed by the sport under harassment, abuse or bullying within a Member Protection Policy, a Code of Conduct, or a Social Media Policy.

When non-members or unknown sources are responsible, sport policies may not apply, but it's very important to support the targeted member.

There are unique steps to dealing with online abuse.

Firstly, you may need to act quickly as online abuse can spread quickly and be viewed widely. Depending on what the targeted person would like to do, steps can include:

1. **Collecting evidence** – take screen shots and record what happened. This will be particularly important if you want to proceed with a complaint in sport.
2. **Having the content removed.** Depending on situation, you may:
 - Delete it yourself, if on a personal account

- Ask the person responsible to remove the content – if they are known and you are comfortable doing so
- Report to the platform or online service
- Report to eSafety for serious online abuse

3. Review security and privacy settings – to mute or block an account for example.

The eSafety Commissioner provides detailed guidance on dealing with online abuse in sport, including guidelines on collecting evidence.

Visit the eSafety Commissioner's [Sports hub Dealing with online abuse](#) page.



SECTION 4:

EDUCATION FOR DECISION MAKERS

Education is critical in ensuring that complaint managers and decision makers operate with fairness and integrity, especially when handling LGBTQ+ related matters. Comprehensive education equips those within relevant roles with the knowledge and skills needed to understand the complexities of these issues, recognise and address biases, and make informed decisions that uphold justice and equality⁴.

Mandatory education

Ideally, all individuals making decisions as part of judicial processes should complete LGBTQ+ related education and training. It is recommended that this education is mandatory for panel members/decision makers who participate in cases identified as involving LGBTQ+ issues. Here are some recommended steps to ensure proper training:

- **Pre-appointment education:** encourage individuals to complete LGBTQ+ education before being appointed to a complaint management role or a hearing panel. This proactive approach ensures they are prepared to handle such cases from the outset.
- **Pre-hearing education:** if pre-appointment education is not complete, you should look to ensure panel members and decision makers undergo training before participating in a judicial process. This ensures they have the necessary understanding and sensitivity to effectively address LGBTQ+ related incidents.
- **Ongoing education:** encourage continuous learning and development to stay informed about evolving LGBTQ+ issues and best practices in adjudication and complaint management. You can do this by promoting education opportunities in your newsletters and social media posts to members.



Education content

The education for decision makers should cover several key content areas to ensure comprehensive understanding and effective decision-making. Pride in Sport recommends including the following topics:

- **Understanding LGBTQ+ issues:**
 - Introduction to LGBTQ+ terminology and identities.
 - Exploration of the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in sports.
- **Bias recognition:**
 - Identification and addressing of conscious and unconscious biases.
 - Strategies to mitigate bias in decision-making processes.
- **Fair adjudication:**
 - Best practices for conducting impartial and fair hearings.
 - Ensuring that all parties are treated with respect and dignity throughout the process.
- **Legal and ethical considerations:**
 - Overview of relevant anti-discrimination laws and policies.
 - Ethical responsibilities of panel members and decision makers in upholding fairness and equality.
- **Case studies and scenarios:**
 - Analysis of real-world examples to apply learning in practical contexts.
 - Discussions on appropriate resolutions and outcomes for LGBTQ+ related cases.

By ensuring that panel members and decision makers are well-educated and informed, sports organisations can uphold integrity and promote a culture of inclusion and respect.

GET HELP WITH EDUCATION

Sports organisations can seek training and educational materials from various sources, including Sport Integrity Australia, Pride in Sport, the Australian Sports Commission, and Play by the Rules. For specialised LGBTQ+ support, organisations may wish to engage with Pride in Sport to access tailored education programs.

SECTION 5:

INCLUSION OF LGBTQ+ EXPERTS IN DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

Inclusion of lived experience

Incorporating people with lived LGBTQ+ experience or subject matter expertise into hearing tribunal or judicial panels (where one is convened), or other decision-making processes, brings invaluable insights and perspectives. These individuals enhance the decision maker's understanding and ability to navigate complex issues related to LGBTQ+ matters, ensuring fair and informed decision-making.

People with lived experience:

- Individuals with lived experience provide a unique perspective, having personally faced the challenges and biases that may arise in LGBTQ+ related cases.
- **Example:** a transgender athlete who has navigated sports inclusion policies can offer firsthand insights into the hurdles and discrimination they have faced, helping the panel/decision maker understand the nuances of such incidents.

Subject matter experts:

- Subject matter experts have in-depth knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues, including legal, social, and cultural aspects. They offer objective, well-informed viewpoints that guide the panel/decision maker's deliberations.
- **Example:** an LGBTQ+ rights lawyer or an academic researcher in gender studies can provide evidence-based insights and clarify legal obligations related to discrimination and inclusion.

Key considerations for inclusion:

- **Connect with inclusion networks:** engage with the organisation's LGBTQ+ inclusion network, if available, to identify suitable individuals with the necessary expertise.
- **Appropriate support channels:** avoid inappropriate methods such as public calls on social media. Instead, seek referrals through trusted networks or professional organisations like Pride in Sport.
- **Leverage Pride in Sport membership:** utilise resources available through Pride in Sport membership to access qualified experts who can contribute meaningfully to decision making processes.
- **Compensation for time and expertise:** ensure that individuals, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are adequately compensated for their time and contributions. This consideration is crucial as LGBTQ+ community members often face systemic barriers and are disproportionately affected by homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia.

Engaging LGBTQ+ community members

When involving LGBTQ+ individuals in panel discussions or hearings, care should be taken to acknowledge the systemic challenges they face. Historically, LGBTQ+ people have been taken advantage of, and it is important to recognise their expertise and time with fair compensation.

Consider compensation: while compensation is important for all panel members, it is particularly crucial for LGBTQ+ individuals who have historically been undervalued. This ensures equity and acknowledges their valuable contributions.

Ethical considerations: compensation should not influence the decision-making process of the panel. Normal ethical guidelines and conflict of interest considerations should be applied to all individuals involved, ensuring impartiality and integrity.

Conflict of interest: as always, be mindful of any personal relationships or potential conflicts of interest between panel members and individuals involved in the hearings. Transparency and accountability are key to maintaining trust in the process.

By taking these factors into account, sports organisations can ensure a fair, inclusive, and effective process when handling LGBTQ+ related incidents.



CASE STUDY:

HANDLING A TRANSPHOBIC INCIDENT IN A SPORTS TEAM**INCIDENT OVERVIEW**

During a regional netball tournament, a transgender player, Alex, is repeatedly subject to transphobic comments from several teammates and the coach, including statements such as, "You don't belong in the women's team." The comments escalate to exclusion from team discussions and social events. Alex's Club tells Alex to 'ignore them, and don't worry about it'. Alex reports the incident to Netball Australia, seeking resolution and an inclusive team environment.

Comparison 1: lack of education and expertise**Complaints process**

The complaint is investigated under the relevant complaints policy.

The investigating officer has a limited understanding of LGBTQ+ issues, relying primarily on their existing knowledge and perceptions.





The process continues without any specific education or involvement of LGBTQ+ experts.

The investigating officer validates stereotypes and assumptions, questions Alex's eligibility and expresses personal biases, such as concerns about "fairness" in women's sports.

Netball Australia establishes a panel to determine a sanction, such as a verbal warning to the teammates, without addressing the underlying issues of discrimination.

The matter is appealed, and the appeal process finds the investigator was biased in their assessment of the relevant evidence and finds that the respondents were not afforded fair process and the findings are overturned for this reason.

Outcome

-  Alex feels unsupported and marginalised by the panel's handling of the incident.
-  The team dynamic remains tense, with no meaningful resolution or learning opportunity for the players involved.
-  The lack of appropriate measures fails to prevent future incidents, leaving the club vulnerable to further complaints.
-  Lack of trust in the complaints process which further discourages people to come forward with concerns.



Comparison 2: inclusion of education and expertise

Complaint process

It is determined that the best way to manage the complaint is to establish a hearing tribunal.

Prior to the hearing, all decision makers/panel members undergo mandatory LGBTQ+ sensitivity education, focusing on understanding transgender issues and addressing biases.

An LGBTQ+ expert is invited to participate in the panel, offering insights into the social and psychological impacts of transphobia.

During the hearing, the expert explains the importance of inclusivity and the harm caused by exclusionary language and behaviours.

The panel issues a comprehensive sanction, including mandatory LGBTQ+ inclusion education for all team members, and implements a supportive inclusion policy for the club.

Outcome



Alex feels heard and supported by the panel's understanding and proactive approach.



The team environment improves as players gain awareness and respect for diversity, leading to greater cohesion and collaboration.



The club establishes itself as a leader in promoting inclusivity, reducing the likelihood of future incidents and enhancing its reputation

Case study summary

This case study highlights the critical role of education and expertise in handling LGBTQ+ related incidents within sports organisations. Complaint managers or panels that lack education and expert input may not be aware of unconscious bias and struggle to address incidents effectively, leading to inadequate resolutions and ongoing issues. In contrast, panels that invest in education and leverage subject matter expertise can foster inclusive environments, ensure fair outcomes, and support the well-being of all participants.



Role of experts

The inclusion of experts with both lived and professional experiences is crucial for providing informed perspectives and enhancing decision-making processes for handling LGBTQ+ related matters. These experts help ensure that decision makers consider the broader social and cultural contexts of incidents, leading to fairer and more empathetic outcomes.

LIVED EXPERIENCE EXPERTS

Individuals with lived experience offer a personal perspective, having directly faced the challenges and biases that LGBTQ+ individuals encounter. Their insights can help complaint managers and decision makers understand the human impact of incidents and foster a more compassionate approach.

Pros of lived experience:

Empathy and understanding:

- Lived experience experts bring a personal connection to the issues, enhancing empathy of those who play a role in the complaints/decision making process.

Real-world insights:

- They provide firsthand knowledge of the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, offering practical insights into the effects of discrimination and exclusion.

Relatability:

- Their presence can make the process feel more inclusive and supportive for those involved in the incident, especially the victims.



CASE STUDY:

IMPACT OF LIVED EXPERIENCE ON PANEL DELIBERATIONS

In a disciplinary hearing involving transphobic comments made during a water polo game, the panel includes Jordan, a transgender athlete with lived experience. Jordan provides insight into the psychological impact of the remarks, explaining how such language affects self-esteem and team cohesion. Their input shifts the panel's focus towards a person-centred approach, highlighting the importance of empathy and understanding. As a result, the panel recommends restorative practices alongside disciplinary actions, ensuring the resolution promotes healing and inclusivity within the team. Jordan's perspective proves invaluable in guiding a fair and compassionate outcome.

Professional experience experts

Professionals with expertise in LGBTQ+ issues, such as lawyers, psychologists, or diversity consultants, bring an academic and evidence-based approach to the panel. They help ensure that decisions are grounded in best practices and legal frameworks.

Pros of professional experience:

- **Evidence-informed insights:**
 - Professionals provide data-driven and research-backed perspectives, ensuring that decisions are informed by current knowledge and standards.
- **Legal and ethical guidance:**
 - They help navigate complex legal and ethical considerations, ensuring compliance with anti-discrimination laws and organisational policies.
- **Objective analysis:**
 - Professionals offer a neutral viewpoint, focusing on facts and context to support balanced decision-making.

Why both perspectives matter:

- **Comprehensive understanding:**
 - Integrating both lived and professional experiences ensures a holistic view of the issues, leading to more informed and empathetic outcomes.
- **Balanced decision-making:**
 - Panels benefit from diverse perspectives, reducing the risk of bias or oversight and enhancing the fairness and integrity of the process.



CASE STUDY:

PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE IN PANEL DELIBERATIONS

During a hearing concerning a homophobic incident at a rugby club, the judicial panel enlists Lisa, a diversity consultant with expertise in LGBTQ+ issues. Lisa provides data-driven insights into the prevalence and impact of homophobic language in sports, drawing on recent studies and best practices. Their input helps the panel understand the legal and ethical implications of the incident, ensuring compliance with anti-discrimination laws. Lisa's objective analysis shifts the panel's focus to implementing educational measures alongside penalties, fostering a more inclusive environment. Their expertise proves crucial in guiding a balanced and evidence-informed decision.

By incorporating experts with both lived and professional experiences, sports organisations can ensure that the judicial process is conducted with integrity, empathy, and a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand.



SECTION 6:

LGBTQ+ INCLUSION EDUCATION

AS A SANCTION

Recommendation for education

To effectively address incidents of homophobia, biphobia, or transphobia, Pride in Sport recommends that any sanctions include mandatory LGBTQ+ inclusion education. This approach promotes understanding, fosters inclusivity, and helps prevent future incidents.

a. Individual vs team/group education

In cases where a phobic slur is used and no one from the team intervenes, it may indicate a systemic issue requiring education for the entire group. This is not always the case but would be a consideration or an avenue to explore when determining the best way to address the conduct/behaviour. Targeting only the perpetrator with education is often ineffective. Therefore, a team or group education session is encouraged, with coaches included. Coaches play a pivotal role as gatekeepers to inclusion in sports and must participate in this education to influence positive change.

b. Education as a broader initiative

Evidence shows that homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia have been persistent issues in sports. Regular, ongoing education is the most effective approach to combating these biases. The [2024 PSI National Survey \[PDF 356kB\]](#) indicates that 53% of respondents have witnessed such incidents, highlighting the need for comprehensive education strategies. Pride in Sport is a recommended resource for developing these initiatives.

c. Recommended duration of education

Consider the optimal duration of the education. Education may not be effectively delivered in a brief 15-minute session⁵. It is important to seek expert advice on the appropriate length of education, considering the severity of the incident and the complexity of the topic. Ideally, a 60-minute session is recommended, with a preference for in-person facilitated sessions to foster engagement and reflection

- E-learning vs face-to-face: while e-learning offers flexibility, face-to-face sessions provide higher levels of interaction and engagement, allowing participants to ask questions and discuss sensitive topics in a supportive environment.

d. Pre-sanction actions for clubs/individuals

Clubs and governing bodies can refer to the sanctioning guidance developed by Sport Integrity Australia or look for public information about similar cases (for example NST outcomes). Sport organisations may also wish to seek guidance from subject matter experts, such as Pride in Sport, before taking action. Public apologies or videos by athletes may seem adequate, but without a broader organisational commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion, such gestures may appear superficial or insincere. Genuine efforts to address the issue require deeper engagement and systemic change.

e. Post-sanction actions for clubs/individuals

Organisations should recognise that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic slurs may reflect systemic issues within their culture. To authentically address these behaviours, teams and organisations should explore additional steps they can take to stamp out unacceptable behaviours and create safe, inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ individuals. Participation in initiatives like the Pride in Sport Index (PSI) can help organisations evaluate and improve their inclusion efforts.

Benefits of education

Incorporating education in disciplinary actions offers numerous benefits⁶.



Increased awareness: helps individuals understand the impact of their words and actions.



Promotes inclusivity: encourages a more welcoming and accepting environment for all.



Prevents recurrence: reduces the likelihood of similar incidents in the future.



Fosters respect: builds a culture of respect and understanding among team members.



Enhances team dynamics: improves communication and cooperation within teams.



Strengthens organisational culture: aligns the organisation with values of diversity and equality.

By prioritising education as part of the response to discriminatory incidents, sports organisations can make significant strides toward inclusivity and respect for all participants.

CASE STUDY:

TEAM EDUCATION APPROACH TO ADDRESS BIPHOBIA

In a touch football team, player Bailey was reported for making biphobic remarks about a teammate. Initially, the club considered disciplinary action against Bailey alone. However, they decided to conduct a team-wide education session on LGBTQ+ inclusion.

This approach helped the entire team understand the harm caused by biphobia, fostering empathy and respect. The session encouraged open discussions about inclusivity, improved communication, and promoted a more cohesive team environment. By addressing the issue collectively, the team not only resolved the incident but also strengthened its commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive culture.

SECTION 7:

IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

Implementation plan

To ensure the effective distribution and adoption of this Guideline, consider the following steps:

Action item	Considerations
Audience	Identify key personnel: Member Protection Information Officers, Complaint Managers and Decision Makers, Grievance Officers, Tribunal Members, Coaches, Team Managers.
Distribution	Share digitally via email, intranets, and shared drives. Provide physical copies during meetings or training.
Timing	Launch at key events or alongside policy updates and education initiatives.
Communication	Use clear messaging to highlight the Guideline's purpose and importance.
Leadership engagement	Encourage leaders to endorse and promote the Guideline through information sessions.
Policy integration	Ensure alignment with existing policies and incorporate into disciplinary guidelines.

Monitoring and compliance

To ensure processes are followed effectively, the following strategies should be implemented:

- **Regular reviews:** conduct periodic reviews of disciplinary cases to ensure adherence to recommended processes and identify areas for improvement.
- **Feedback channels:** establish channels for stakeholders to provide feedback on the Guideline's implementation and effectiveness, allowing for continuous improvement.
- **Performance metrics:** develop metrics to evaluate the success of education sessions and the overall impact on organisational culture, ensuring alignment with inclusivity goals.

By following these simplified implementation and compliance strategies, sports organisations can effectively integrate the Guideline and foster a more inclusive and respectful environment.

SECTION 8:

SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Additional resources

As resources in the realm of LGBTQ+ inclusion continue to develop, so too do the research and recommendations in this field. Ongoing advancements ensure that organisations have access to the latest insights and best practices for fostering inclusive and supportive environments in sports. By staying informed and utilising these resources, sports organisations can effectively address challenges and promote a culture of respect and equality.

PRIDE IN SPORT INDEX

The Pride in Sport Index (PSI) is an evidence-informed benchmarking tool (available free to Pride in Sport members) that provides a comprehensive evaluation of an organisation's LGBTQ+ inclusion practices. It goes beyond disciplinary areas to encompass all aspects of best practice in creating an inclusive sporting environment. By participating in the PSI, organisations can assess their current practices, identify areas for improvement, and celebrate successes in promoting LGBTQ+ inclusion.

PSI NATIONAL SURVEY

The PSI National Survey is designed to capture sport-specific responses to enhance the dataset for participating organisations. It collects valuable information on demographics, experiences, opinions, and other areas related to both LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ people. This data is used on a national scale to inform policies and practices, making it the recommended data collection method for sports organisations. Facilitated by Pride in Sport, a trusted national third party, the survey provides insights that guide organisations in their efforts to promote inclusion and address challenges effectively.

TRAINING PROGRAMS, EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS, AND SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

Education is a critical component of implementing the recommendations outlined in this Guideline. Sports organisations can seek training and educational materials from various sources, including Sport Integrity Australia, Pride in Sport, the Australian Sports Commission, and Play by the Rules. For LGBTQ+ support, organisations may wish to engage with Pride in Sport who can provide valuable expertise and guidance in creating inclusive environments.

Contact Information

For further support and guidance, please contact Pride in Sport:

Pride in Sport: www.prideinsport.com.au | Email: info@prideinsport.com.au

For additional resources and support on trans-inclusion policies, please refer to the materials available through Pride in Sport and other supporting organisations mentioned above.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A:

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed to help sports organisations implement and comply with the recommendations outlined in this Guideline, ensuring a comprehensive approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion and addressing incidents of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia.

This checklist should be read alongside Sport Integrity Australia's [Investigation of Complaints Guidelines: A short guide to assist sporting organisations investigate complaints](#) [PDF 353 kB] and the [Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy Complaints Process: Step by step fact sheet](#) [PDF 841 kB].

1. Is this a formal complaint handling process, or an informal process?

Note: *almost all complaints of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia should be managed through a formal process, as behaviour motivated by sexual orientation or gender identity (or targeting a vulnerable population) are considered aggravating circumstances. Be cautious of downgrading offences because you assume there are no LGBTQ+ people involved – the majority of LGBTQ+ people in sport choose not to disclose their sexuality or gender identity.*

2. Have you identified which policy the alleged behaviour falls under and what complaints process you need to follow?
3. Have you collected (or put in place a process to collect) the pronouns of complainants, witnesses and respondents in the matter?
4. Do you have complaint management/record keeping systems and clear processes in place to maintain confidentiality?
5. Have you ensured that complaint managers/investigators/decision makers have completed LGBTQ+ awareness education and have an understanding of the key barriers faced by LGBTQ+ athletes and officials in sport?
6. Have you considered a proportionate response to the complaint (i.e. can it be managed through education or does it require investigation)?
7. If the matter requires investigation, have you taken steps to consider the personal views of investigating officers, their willingness to conduct the investigation and any real or perceived conflicts of interest?
8. Have you provided wellbeing information to all parties involved in the complaint? You could consider LGBTQ+ specific support services.
9. Have you provided a personal contact (within your sporting organisation) for LGBTQ+ support to affected party, any witnesses, and/or complainant to ask questions or have a confidential conversation?

10. Have you considered Provisional Action (such as a short-term suspension, reassignment of duties/supervision) to mitigate risk? Is the Provisional Action imposed proportionate? Noting that Provisional Action can be appealed (including through the National Sports Tribunal).
11. Have you planned to provide regular updates to complaint parties throughout the management of the complaint?
12. Have all parties been provided with information about their right to be accompanied by a support person?
13. Have you confirmed if an interpreter or any accessibility requirements are needed for any interviews or hearings?
14. If the investigation involves children and young people, do you have a process in place for ensuring that a parent or guardian is present at all times?
15. Are you comfortable accurately recording witness statements, including where those statements contain potentially confronting homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and behaviour?
16. Do you have a process in place to submit issues which arise (and lessons learned) from an investigation, or suggestions for future actions of the sporting organisation?
17. Have all relevant decision makers or tribunal panel members completed LGBTQ+ awareness education, or demonstrated an understanding of the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ participants in sport?
18. Have you taken steps to appoint a decision maker/s with lived experience or specific expertise for cases of homophobia, biphobia or transphobia?
19. Are decision makers provided with information about the range of education available for use as part of a sanction?
20. Are decision makers provided with a record of precedents (if any) to ensure that issues of LGBTQ+ harassment, bullying and/or vilification are managed consistently with other protected characteristics (i.e. race/culture, religion, disability etc)?
21. Do you have a process for providing information about LGBTQ+ support services at the conclusion of an investigation process?
22. Does your sport provide information and education about Member Protection and LGBTQ+ inclusion to participants, officials, coaches and administrators?

In addition to the above items, Pride In Sport suggests that you also consider the following from an organisational perspective:

1. Is your organisation/club a member of Pride in Sport, providing access to expert support, resources, and education on LGBTQ+ inclusion?
2. Does your organisation/club participate in the Pride in Sport Index, a national benchmarking tool that guides and measures evidence informed actions on LGBTQ+ inclusion?

APPENDIX B:

EXAMPLES OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT AND SANCTIONS

The following fictional case studies explore common instances of prohibited conduct against LGBTQ+ communities. For more information, please refer to the Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) [Guidance for Complaint Management and Sanctions \[PDF 2.6 MB\]](#).

Note: While SIA's 'Guidance for Complaint Management and Sanctioning' document was developed to support NIF sports in managing prohibited conduct under the National Integrity Framework (NIF) policies, the guidance is generic in nature and still relevant and able to be used by sports that are not operating under the NIF where their policies allow.

INCIDENT

Robyn, the parent of a player from the Southern Districts Swans under-16s Boys Baseball, made a complaint that the team regularly uses homophobic language, slurs and jokes during training. The complaint named the coach, Jesse, as inactive and negligent.

Case categorisation: this matter could be managed by SIA as Baseball Australia has adopted the NIF and the alleged conduct was towards persons under 18. SIA investigated the incident to consider if Jesse had breached the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. Baseball Australia implemented Provisional Action in the form of supervision while the investigation was ongoing. A senior club coach was delegated to attend all training sessions during the investigation period.

Aggravating/mitigating factors: the investigation substantiated that Jesse had breached the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and also observed that the team culture, facilitated by Jesse's inaction, allowed behaviours which were widespread and co-ordinated, and were motivated by homophobia. Mitigating factors included Jesse's age and inexperience as a coach, limited education in inclusive intervention, and his cooperation with the Provisional Action and investigation.

Sanction: SIA's findings were passed on to Baseball Australia who was responsible for making the sanction decision. SIA's investigation findings were accepted by Jesse. The State Sporting Organisation (SSO) organised participation for Jesse in a 2-hour LGBTQ+ inclusion education session, and arranged for a senior club coach to mentor Jesse in order to stop a continuation of this prohibited conduct. Team players received a verbal warning that although this complaint named Jesse, they may be formally investigated under the Member Protection Policy or Code of Conduct in the future if language and behaviour did not improve.

INCIDENT

A report was made against Mary, the coach of a women's under-30 handball team, who yelled at her team during a game "Make sure you use extra force on Erica and everyone like her! They don't deserve to be here and should be punished for it", "Let's show them how real women can play!" This comment was made by Mary while Mary was standing next to and looking at Erica, who is a transgender athlete on the team.

Case categorisation: SIA did not have authority to manage the matter as the conduct was not against people under the age of 18, nor could it be defined as discrimination. The report was made directly to the SSO who managed the matter as alleged vilification under the Member Protection Policy. The complaints process was managed under the Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy. While disrespectful comments generally sit within Category 1, an attack on a protected characteristic (in this case gender/transgender identity) adds an element of complexity which led to the matter being investigated. The investigation process occurred and Mary was given an opportunity to respond to the allegations but was not forthcoming with information. The investigation relied on multiple witness statement and substantiated a breach of the Member Protection Policy. (Note: when considering a breach of vilification, it is not required to prove that any transgender athletes were present in the game for transphobic conduct to occur).

Aggravating/mitigating factors: the investigator considered a range of aggravating factors, including the vulnerability of the affected party, and the transphobic motivation of the breach. The investigator also noted a pattern of online and in-person commentary at a club level which sought to denigrate and exclude gender-diverse participants from the club, leading to the belief that this comment was more likely premeditated than 'spur of the moment'. Mary did not cooperate with the investigation process.

Sanction: due to the potential risk of further harm and Mary's refusal to engage with the investigations process, Provisional Action was imposed which provided for a temporary suspension from coaching and club duties for the duration of the investigation. Decision makers imposed a 6-week ban (including the period covered by the Provisional Action). Given Mary's longstanding and public opposition to inclusion, mandated education was included with a focus on integrity, member protection, behaviour and language. A 'good behaviour' period of six months was also imposed.

Appeal: upon notification of the outcome, Mary lodged a dispute of Breach Notice. A Hearing Tribunal was convened, including members with educational training in LGBTQ+ inclusion, specifically transgender inclusion. Mary argued that her right to 'free speech' entitled her to the language used during the game. The panel countered that Member Protection policies set a clear expectation for conduct in a sporting environment. The appeal was not successful. This case informed future education efforts by SIA to ensure coaches are aware of their responsibility to protect the welfare of all members – regardless of personal beliefs.

INCIDENT

Corey, a well-known player in a national basketball team, was captured on stadium microphones during a television broadcast calling a referee a "dumb f*ggot".

Case categorisation: SIA could not manage the complaint as basketball does not fall under the NIF (but they instead meet integrity policy standards set by SIA). SIA advised the reporter to submit the complaint to the sporting organisation. The SSO managed the complaint under the relevant complaints policy. The state body considered the case categorisation model to determine if the matter required investigation. The investigation occurred and substantiated an instance of verbal abuse under the Member Protection Policy.

Aggravating/mitigating factors: the breach was motivated by homophobia (a protected characteristic), and occurred during a period of probation following a previous substantiated integrity breach and sanction. Further, Corey had not complied with a previous order to participate in education and training. As a top-tier player in a televised event, Corey held a profile and position of respect which compounded the damage of his language in the game.

Sanction: considering the potential impact on public confidence in the integrity of sport, and the placement of the incident within an ongoing pattern of harmful behaviours, decision makers imposed a six-week suspension (Category 2). Existing sanctions from the previous incident (education participation) were carried over, with the addition of a period of mandatory counselling. A process of formal conciliation with the Referee's Commission was also imposed.

INCIDENT

After moving to a new small town, Katie, a 49-year-old trans woman, approaches the local sports team to ask about volunteering or becoming an official. She is informed that the club does not have a guideline for trans-inclusion, and as such she could not join the club.

Case categorisation: as an incident of alleged discrimination, the case was designated as Category 2. The case was also referred onwards to the State Anti-Discrimination Board. While some legal exclusions exist within Section 42 of the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, these are limited to athletes within certain types of competitive sporting activities. The exclusion of transgender people from other functions in sport (officials, administrators, volunteers, committees etc) is a clear act of discrimination.

Aggravating/mitigating factors: the complaint manager made enquiries with the club president who accepted responsibility and showed remorse.

Sanction: the complaint manager gathered information that assisted them to form a view that the actions were an honest and reasonable mistake, owing to a misunderstanding of Australian law. A process of conciliation between Katie and the club leadership ordered to address Katie's concerns. Current club board members were required to complete an education program focusing on LGBTQ+ inclusion. Katie expressed her satisfaction with the outcome and now helps run the canteen on weekends.

Endnotes

1. Liddel-Hunt, S., Uink, B., Daglas, K., Hill, J.H.L., Hayward, L., Stretton, N., Perry, Y., Hill, B., & Lin, A. (2023) Walkern Katatdj (Rainbow Knowledge) Phase 2 National Survey Community Report, Perth, Western Australia. **Click to return to page 2.**
2. Amos N, Hill A O, Jones J, Melendez-Torres G J, Carman M, Lyons A and Bourne A (2023) Affirming educational and workplace settings are associated with positive mental health and happiness outcomes for LGBTQA+ youth in Australia. *BMC Public Health*, 23(1), 1421. DOI: 10.1186/s12889-023-16034-7. **Click to return to page 3.**
3. Symons C, O'Sullivan G, Borkoles E, Andersen M B and Polman R C J (2014) *The Impact of Homophobic Bullying during Sport and Physical Education Participation on Same-Sex-Attracted and Gender-Diverse Young Australians' Depression and Anxiety Levels* [College of Sport and Exercise Science and the Institute for Sport, Exercise and Active Living], Victoria University. **Click to return to page 4.**
4. Drummond M, Elliott S, Drummond C, Prichard I, Lewis L and Bevan N (2021) Sport and the LGBTIQ+ Community: A South Australian Study. *Front. Psychol.* 12:671586. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.671586. **Click to return to page 17.**
5. Denison E, Faulkner N, O'Brien KS, et al (2023) Effectiveness of an educational intervention targeting homophobic language use by young male athletes: a cluster randomised controlled trial. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 57:515-520. DOI: 10.1136/bjsports-2022-105916. **Click to return to page 26.**
6. Theriault, D (2017) Implementation of Promising Practices for LGBTQ Inclusion: A Multilevel Process. *Journal of Park & Recreation Administration* 35.3. DOI:10.18666/JPRA-2017-V35-I3-7702. **Click to return to page 27.**

Text alternative for the complaints submission flow chart on page 12

Flow chart is titled "where to submit a complaint".

The first step asks the question: is the sport operating under the National Integrity Framework?

To check this, visit the following link to the Sport Integrity Australia website: [Sports signed up to the National Integrity Framework \(sportintegrity.gov.au\)](https://sportintegrity.gov.au).

If the answer to this question is 'no', the complaint is to be submitted to the sport. There is a note attached to this action; the NST has rules around who can make an application to it and what types of matters can be heard by it. If you are a complaints manager and wish to refer the complaint to the NST, this usually occurs through your NSO/NSOD.

If the answer to the question was yes, the next step asks: is the affected party under the age of 18?

If the affected party is under the age of 18, the complaint is to be submitted to Sport Integrity Australia.

If the affected party is over the age of 18, the next step asks: is the matter potentially discrimination?

If the answer to this question is 'yes', the complaint is to be submitted to Sport Integrity Australia.

If the matter is not potentially discrimination, the complaint is to be submitted to the sport, with the same note as previously mentioned.

Click here to return to the complaints submission flowchart graphic on page 12.

WWW.SPORTINTEGRITY.GOV.AU