



LGBT+ INCLUSION IN FOOTBALL IN VICTORIA

This report has been prepared by Proud 2 Play for Football Victoria | March 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the generosity of VicHealth for their support in providing Football Victoria with the funding to complete this important research.

“As a Male Champion of Change, my role is to ensure equity and to celebrate the diversity it brings to the world game. Football Victoria is committed to driving a culture of inclusive behaviours throughout our workplace practices and interactions on and off the field. I am proud this welcoming behaviour actively displays our support for LGBT+ inclusion across the football landscape.”

- Peter Filopoulos

On behalf of Football Victoria we would also like to thank the following people who made up the LGBTI+ Inclusion in Football Victoria Steering Committee.

Cassie Lindsey – FFA

Andy Brennan – Former A-League player

Erin Clout – Professional Footballers Australia

Clare Collings – VicHealth

Helen Tyrikos – Sport and Recreation Victoria

Luke Major – Proud2Play

Kris Alexiou – Football Victoria

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SUMMARY

Previous research shows that sport is an environment where LGBT+ people typically do not feel safe to participate. Homophobia, transphobia and other discriminatory behaviours have been found to be commonplace across many sports. How LGBT+ inclusion (or these discriminatory behaviours) appear in the sport of football, particularly within community-level football, has previously been unknown. Thanks to the generosity of VicHealth, Football Victoria (FV) commissioned Proud 2 Play to complete research into LGBT+ inclusion in football in Victoria. The following questions were answered:

1. What are the attitudes of the football community towards LGBT+ inclusion in football in Victoria?
2. What are the experiences of LGBT+ people who participate in football in Victoria?
3. Which initiatives can FV develop to improve LGBT+ inclusion in football in Victoria?

The key findings from this research include:

- Discrimination and prejudice towards LGBT+ people involved in football is common, and this has a negative impact on their experiences within sport and their continued involvement over the course of their lives.
- 75% of LGBT+ and 50% of heterosexual people have witnessed or experienced homophobia or discrimination based on sexuality or gender identity.
- While 70% of people feel that transgender or gender diverse people would be welcome in their club, around half of all people held a neutral opinion or disagreed with transgender or gender diverse people playing based on their gender identity.
- Homophobia manifests overtly through behaviours such as discriminatory language use, while transphobia manifests less visibly through attitudes.
- Despite homophobic behaviour being commonplace in football in Victoria, most people believe a player coming out as LGBT+ would have a positive impact on the game and would be very comfortable if their favourite player did.
- There is an attitude that LGBT+ inclusion is neither a problem nor a priority in football
- There is a distinct lack of education and knowledge about LGBT+ inclusion.
- Most people think more should be done to support LGBT+ inclusion.
- The main recommendations from this research include:
 - Acknowledge that there is an issue of LGBT+ inclusion within football in Victoria
 - Receive commitment from the FV leadership team to proactively pursue the recommendations from this research
 - Develop a short- and long-term LGBT+ inclusion strategy to guide future work at FV in this space.
 - Incorporation of this strategy into the FV Strategic Plan
 - Embedding LGBT+ inclusion work into the job responsibility of a staff member, or multiple staff members
 - Maintaining a steering group for LGBT+ inclusion work in football in Victoria

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