



South Australian Rainbow Advocacy Alliance
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21 June 2022

By email

Child Development Council
ChildrenSA@sa.gov.au

Submission re: First Review of South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People

To the Child Development Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission regarding the First Review of South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People.

This submission is being made on behalf of the SA Rainbow Advocacy Alliance (SARAA), a community run charity working for a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQA+) inclusive, healthy and safe South Australians.

With generous support from the Department of Human Services SA, we coordinate an [LGBTIQA+ Community Advisory Group](#) to serve as a diverse but collective voice for the LGBTIQA+ community in public policy and decision-making. We frequently provide advice to government bodies like the Child Development Council.

Our submission is also informed by our [Vision for SA Pride 2030](#) which sets out key priorities to create a LGBTIQA+ healthy, safe and inclusive South Australia. Developed as a result of consultation with over 600 LGBTIQA+ South Australians, our Vision calls for leaders to:

- protect our equality and safety under the law
- include and support us in our education systems
- improve our health and wellbeing
- represent and lead for our communities.

Feedback on First Review of South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People

SARAA strongly supports the Framework's vision to create a South Australia where all children and young people grow strong and lead happy, healthy lives.

This can and must include LGBTIQA+ children and young people who experience significantly poorer mental health outcomes than the general population.



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We believe this First Review of the Framework presents an opportunity to acknowledge LGBTIQ+ children and young people as a priority cohort and to update the Framework to adequately measure progress towards improving their development and wellbeing.

LGBTIQ+ children and young people experience poorer mental health outcomes

Mental health issues such as depression and anxiety are an increasing concern for all young people, regardless of their gender identity or sexuality, with [headspace's National Youth Mental Health Survey](#) (June 2020) finding that 1 in 3 Australian young people reported high or very high levels of distress (34%).

In working to improve the development and wellbeing of children and young people, governments and decision makers must pay particular attention to priority cohorts who have been at heightened risk for decades; LGBTIQ+ children and young people being one such group.

LGBTIQ+ children and young people experience significantly poorer mental health outcomes in contrast to their non-LGBTIQ+ peers.

[Writing Themselves in 4 \(2019\)](#), the largest ever study on the experiences of LGBTQ+ young people aged 14-21 in Australia, found that LGBTIQ+ young people were 3 times as likely as those in the general Australian population to report high or very high levels of psychological distress. Indeed, over 80% of South Australian participants reported high or very high levels of psychological distress.

The tragic reality of leaving psychological distress and poor mental health unaddressed is the needless loss of young lives, with over 50% of LGBTIQ+ South Australians reporting having experienced suicidal ideation in the past 12 months in the same study, a rate of more than 5 times that of the general population. Of these, 10% of LGBTIQ+ South Australian respondents had attempted suicide in the past 12 months while 25% had attempted suicide at some point in their lifetime.

Despite these alarming rates of mental ill health and suicidal ideation in young LGBTIQ+ South Australians, public policy responses targeted specifically to our communities are limited.

South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People is one example of this, with the Framework currently making no mention of LGBTIQ+ young people or diverse sex, sexuality and gender.

We strongly recommend the Child Development Council review South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People with an LGBTIQ+ lens, taking into consideration what makes a good life for children and young people with diverse sex, sexuality and gender.

This could include a wellbeing indicator that children are supported to explore and celebrate their sense of self, including their sex, sexuality and gender, and a safety indicator that children are free from discrimination and harassment.

Measuring outcomes for LGBTIQ+ children and young people

Currently, South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People does not adequately measure outcomes for LGBTIQ+ children and young people.

This is consistent with many datasets across the South Australian government which fail to adequately count and consider LGBTIQ+ people.

In public policy making and service design, we know that what gets measured matters. So when data collection excludes us, we lack the evidence base to demonstrate the need for services for our community and get left behind when policies, laws and services are planned.

LGBTQIA+ inclusive data collection in the Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People is vital to:

- identifying barriers and gaps in service provision for LGBTIQ+ children and young people
- developing strategies and approaches to create LGBTIQ+ appropriate services
- changing practice to include LGBTIQ+ communities
- signalling to LGBTIQ+ children and young people that they matter.

Guidance on LGBTIQ+ inclusive data collection is provided in both the:

- [SA Government Data Collection and Gender Guideline \(July 2021\)](#)
- [Australian Bureau of Statistics Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables.](#)

To ensure South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People adequately measures progress for LGBTIQ+ children and young people we recommend implementing the following:

Gender

Currently the Framework disaggregates data by “male and female”. Instead we recommend using the following data descriptor and elements -

Gender refers to current gender, which may be different to sex recorded at birth and may be different to what is indicated on legal documents.

- Man or male
- Woman or female
- Non-binary
- I use a different term (please specify)
- Prefer not to answer

Sex recorded at birth to derive cisgender or transgender/ gender diverse

Currently the Framework does not capture whether a child or young person is transgender or gender diverse.

Cisgender means people who have reported that their gender is the same as their sex recorded at birth.

Transgender means people who have reported that their gender is different to their sex recorded at birth.

We recommend capturing this information using the following data descriptor and elements:

A person’s sex is based upon their sex characteristics, such as their chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. Sex recorded at birth refers to what was determined by sex characteristics observed at birth or infancy.

- Male
- Female
- Another term (please specify)

Data will show that a person is transgender if:

- their sex recorded at birth was female and their gender is male
- their sex recorded at birth was male and their gender is female
- their gender or sex is non-binary
- they use a different term to describe their gender or sex.

Intersex

Currently the Framework does not capture whether a child or young person is intersex.

To determine if a person was born with a variation of sex characteristics (sometimes called 'intersex' or 'DSD') we recommend using the following data descriptor and elements:

Variations of sex characteristics refers to people with innate genetic, hormonal or physical sex characteristics that do not conform to medical norms for female or male bodies. It refers to a wide spectrum of variations to genitals, hormones, chromosomes and/or reproductive organs.

Were you born with a variation of sex characteristics (sometimes called 'intersex' or 'DSD')?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

Sexual orientation

Currently the Framework does not capture a child or young persons sexual orientation.

We recommend using the following data descriptor and options:

Sexual orientation is an umbrella concept that encapsulates:

- sexual identity (how a person thinks of their sexuality and the terms they identify with)
- attraction (romantic or sexual interest in another person)
- behaviour (sexual behaviour).

How do you describe your sexual orientation?

- Straight (heterosexual)
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- I use a different term (please specify)
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

Data not available

We recognise that the Framework utilises data from across the South Australian government and that many datasets will not include data in relation to gender, trans or gender diverse status, intersex status or sexual orientation.

In these instances we recommend including a statement to the effect that LGBTIQ+ children and young people are a priority cohort, however insufficient data is available to measure progress towards improving their development and wellbeing.



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Conclusion

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the First Review of South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People. We would be very happy to discuss these matters with you further.

If you wish to discuss these matters further, please contact Kelly Vincent, SARAA's Policy and Project Officer via email info@saraa.org.au.

We will also make this submission publicly available on our website to ensure our members and supporters are aware of our position.

Kind regards,

Kelly Vincent
they/them or she/her

Policy & Project Officer
SA Rainbow Advocacy Alliance (SARAA)
Email: info@saraa.org.au

SARAA acknowledges and pays respects to the Kurna, Nukunu and Ngarrindjeri people, whose land we operate and live on. Aboriginal land was stolen, never ceded, and we stand in solidarity with First Nations people, especially those who are also members of the LGBTIQA+, Brotherboy and Sistergirl communities.