Literature review & environmental scan

LGBTIQA+ youth physical activity in South Australia

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Purpose

South Australian Rainbow Advocacy Alliance (SARAA) is leading community-driven consultation and co-design to develop recommendations that increase physical activity participation among LGBTIQA+ young people aged 12–25 in South Australia.

This paper provides a background briefing, including a literature review and an environmental scan of initiatives shaping LGBTIQA+ young people's participation in physical activity. It explores the following themes.

Participation	**Global trends**: What are the global trends of physical activity participation rates among LGBTIQA+ young people? **Comparisons with non-LGBTIQA+ peers:** How do participation rates compare between LGBTIQA+ youth in Australia and their non-LGBTIQA+ peers? **Differences across subgroups:** Are there differences in participation across subgroups - eg trans young people, gay men, lesbian women? **Adults**: How do physical activity and sport participation rates differ between LGBTIQA+ young people and adults in South Australia? **Population-level data and surveillance**: What population-level data is available to understand physical activity and sport participation rates of LGBTIQA+ young people in Australia?
Factors influencing participation	**Types of barriers and enablers:** What psychological, social, cultural, and structural barriers and enablers to physical activity are identified for LGBTIQA+ young people? **SA context**: Which barriers and enablers are most relevant to the South Australian context?
Activity preferences	**Types of activities:** What types of physical activities do LGBTIQA+ young people in Australia prefer to participate in? **Settings:** Which sport and physical activity settings - such as public spaces, gyms, or leisure facilities - are most commonly used by LGBTIQA+ young people? **Sports:** Which sports show the highest participation rates among LGBTIQA+ young people in Australia?
Environmental scan	**Existing interventions:** What existing interventions are being implemented in South Australia? **Models to scale:** Which models could be adapted or scaled for South Australia?

Definitions

Physical activity

Physical activity is anything that gets your body moving, makes you breathe faster and speeds up your heart rate (Department of Health and Aged Care, 2025). It includes:

- incidental activity such as mowing the lawn, cleaning the house or walking to the bus stop
- exercise structured or planned physical activity, such as going to the gym, a swim or a jog each day
- sport such as playing rugby, netball or tennis
- muscle strengthening activity such as weight training or body weight exercises.

Sex, gender, variations in sex characteristics and sexual orientation

LGBTIQA+ is used throughout this paper as an umbrella descriptor for people whose sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics differ from the majority population. The initialism refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual, and the "+" acknowledges the diversity of identities and experiences that may not be explicitly listed (AIHW, 2025).

LGB is sometimes used as an umbrella term to focus on diverse sexualities, particularly where disparities in physical activity and sports participation relate to homophobia.

Intersex refers to people who have innate sex characteristics that don't fit medical and social norms for female or male bodies, and that create risks or experiences of stigma, discrimination and harm. Intersex people experience unique barriers to participation in sport and physical activity, including body shaming and the stigmatisation of physical characteristics. These are often distinct to barriers based on sexual orientation or gender identity (Carpenter, 2018).

Trans is used in this paper to refer to transgender and gender diverse people. Terminology differs throughout the literature, including 'non-cisgender youth'. The term trans/transgender and gender diverse is the most preferred terminology in South Australia (Zwickl, 2024).

Young people

Young people is used to refer to people aged 12-24 (AIHW, 2021).

Teen is used to refer to people aged 12-18 (Minus 18, 2025).

Young adult is used to refer to people aged 18-25 (Minus 18, 2025).

Physical activity participation

Global and national guidance recommends that (WHO, 2020; DoHDA, 2021):

- children and adolescents aged 5-17 years should do at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day
- adults aged 18-64 years should do 2.5-5 hours of moderate physical activity per week.

The majority of Australian children aged 2-17 (70%) do not meet the guidelines (DoHDA, 2021). One in twenty (5.6%) young people met the physical activity guidelines in 2022 (ABS, 2022).

International literature on LGBTIQA+ young people's participation

International research indicates that LGBTIQA+ young people participate in physical activity and sport at lower rates than the general youth population.

- A 20-year (1998-2018) systematic review of 13 papers established that LGBTQ youth engaged in less physical activity than their non-LGBTQ peers (Greenspan, 2019).
- A systematic review of 56 studies examined the 24-hour movement behaviors of LGBTQA+ young people aged under 24 (Fortnum et al (2024)). It found that fewer LGBTQA+ young people (both children and adolescents, and young adults) met the aerobic and strength/resistance training guidelines than relevant population estimates, and that fewer LGBTQA+ children and adolescents met the sleep guidelines compared with population estimates.

Population-level data in the United States reflects similar patterns:

- Analysis of the CDC's 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data from students in grades 9-12 found the prevalence of having been physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day on 5 or more days was higher among heterosexual (49.6%) than gay, lesbian, and bisexual (32.2%) and not sure (34.2%) students (Kann et al., 2018). Further, 38.5% of gay, lesbian and bisexual students reported participating in team sports, compared with 57.9% of heterosexual students.
- Analysis of population-level data from 13,933 high school students in Wisconsin, US in 2012 found that gay and bisexual males are less likely to exercise daily, and that LGB males and females are less likely to participate in team sports (Mereish & Poteat, 2015).

In Canada, an analysis of population-level data from the 2019 Health Survey on Children and Youth found (Wang, 2024):

- LGB young people aged 15-17 were less likely to be both physically active and participate in organised sports than heterosexual youth.
- Trans young people aged 12-17 participated significantly less in organised sports, but experienced no difference in average minutes of physical activity per week.
- Differences between gay and bisexual men and heterosexual men were larger than differences between lesbian and bisexual women and heterosexual women.

LGBTIQA+ young people's participation in Australia

Two Australian studies include data on the participation of LGBTQA+ young people in physical activity.

- *Free to Exist* (2024) - one of the first Australian studies to document participation of LGBTQA+ young people aged 16-25 in sport and physical activity (Storr, 2024).
- *Writing Themselves In 4* (2021) - largest study on the experiences of LGBTQA+ young people aged 14-21 in Australia.

Compared to ABS and AusPlay data, these studies indicate that LGBTIQA+ young people engage in both sport and physical activity less than their non-LGBTIQA+ counterparts.

	LGBTIQA+	General population
Physical activity < 2.5 hours per week	21% (FTE)	31% (NHS 2022)
Sport participation (competitive or social)	54.2% (FTE)	60% (AusPlay)
Not played any sports in the past 12 months	37.8% (WTI)	17% (AusPlay)

Differences in subgroups

Free to Exist (2024) established that within LGBTIQA+ populations, participation levels vary based on gender identity and sexual orientation (Storr, 2024).

Trans and gender diverse participants are significantly less likely to participate in sport or physical activity than their cisgender counterparts.

Gender identity	Played competitive sport 2019-22	Plays social sport now
Male/man	56.8%	48.1%
Female/woman	44.2%	35.5%
Trans woman	43.8%	25%
Non-binary	36.4%	18.2%
Trans man	23.5%	5.9%

Gay and lesbian people are less likely to participate in sport than bisexual and heterosexual people.

Sexuality	Played competitive sport 2019-22	Plays social sport now
Heterosexual	55.8%	47.1%
Gay	38.5%	37.2%
Lesbian	36.1%	33.7%

Bisexual	50%	23.4%
Queer	39.6%	31.3%

LGBTIQA+ adult participation in South Australia

Inclusive Sport Practices (Drummond, 2019) was the first study of its kind to examine the experiences of South Australian LGBTIQ+ people of all ages in sport. It found LGBTIQ+ participants experienced a higher degree of challenges in sport in relation to their gender identification and sexual identity, with more LGBTIQ+ participants (39.7%) than heterosexual participants (15.7%) reporting they have felt unsafe or vulnerable in a sporting environment as a result of their gender identity or sexuality.

AusPlay 2024-25 data for LGBTIQA+ adults indicates that participation in sport and physical activity was:

- higher for gay and lesbian South Australians aged 18+ (71%) than heterosexual South Australians (66.3%)
- lower for bisexual South Australians aged 18+ (60.5%) than heterosexual South Australians (66.3%) on a weekly basis.

Table. Participation (%) in sport and physical by sexual orientation and frequency, compared by national and SA population (AusPlay, July 2024 - June 2025)

	At least once per week		At least three times per week participation	
	National	SA	National	SA
Straight (heterosexual)	67.9	66.3	49.0	47.6
Gay or Lesbian	71.2	71.0	55.3	56.5
Bisexual	68.2	60.5	48.2	48.0
Other	68.1	73.5	52.1	48.1

Data relating to participation of trans and gender diverse people is not currently available.

Greater analysis of data over time could be undertaken to determine if this is a consistent trend.

Australian national surveillance systems

There is currently limited Australian population-level data that monitors physical activity participation of LGBTIQA+ communities.

Australia's physical activity participation is measured through several national surveillance systems. There is inconsistency in whether data relating to sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation are collected and reported.

Table. LGBTIQA+ data in national physical activity surveillance systems

Name	What	LGBTIQA+ data collected (ABS Standard, 2020)
AusPlay Survey (Australian Sports Commission)	National sport & activity participation of Australians aged 15+	Sexual orientation and sex recorded at birth collected for people aged 18+ since July 2023 Variations of sex characteristics (intersex) not captured Trans and gender diverse classification not included in data release
National Health Survey (ABS)	National health monitoring Guideline adherence	Sexual orientation and sex recorded at birth collected for people aged 16+ since 2022 Variations of sex characteristics (intersex) not captured Sexual orientation and sex recorded at birth not available in data downloads
National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey (ABS)	Guideline adherence	Sexual orientation and sex recorded at birth collected for people aged 16+ since 2023 Physical activity data in future release
South Australian Population Health Survey (Preventive Health SA)	State health monitoring Guideline adherence	Does not collect sexual orientation, sex at birth or variations of sex characteristics (intersex)

Factors influencing participation

A range of social, cultural, environmental and economic determinants influence how and why people participate in physical activity (WHO, 2024). The literature discusses a range of barriers and enablers that uniquely influence LGBTIQA+ young people's engagement in physical activity, summarised below.

	Barriers	Facilitators
Psychological Internal thoughts, feelings, or perceptions	• Fear or perception of homophobia or transphobia • Gender dysphoria • Body self-consciousness • Negative or traumatic early experiences • Low interest or motivation • Confidence and skill-related • Time and competing commitments • Safety and injury concerns	• Feeling safe, affirmed and accepted • Validation through representation • Enjoyment and fun • Physical literacy and confidence • Autonomy to choose level of intensity or type of activity • Gender affirmation through exercise - eg building muscle to achieve a more masculine physique
Social Interactions with peers, teammates, teachers, coaches, or community members	• Anti-LGBTQIA+ harassment, bullying, and violence • Limited understanding of LGBTIQA+ identities amongst coaches • Lack of a safe space • Lack of LGBT+ specific events • Lack of positive role models • Lack of social interactions or	• Friend referral or support • Sense of belonging • Positive coaching relationship • Parent's support • Visible LGBTQ+ role models in leadership positions - eg coaches, administrators, and senior management

	community • Fear of discrimination based on multi-marginalisation (- eg race, disability) • Nobody to do it with	• Physical activity as a coping strategy to manage depression, anxiety, and gender dysphoria
Cultural Norms, values, and expectations within sport, recreation, and broader society	• Gendered nature of sports and activities • Hypermasculine stereotypes surrounding athleticism • Too competitive • Negative media discourse about LGBTIQA+ people in sport • Wrong age/too old/too young • Not culturally appropriate	• Welcoming culture that affirms LGBTIQA+ people • Knowledgeable, aware, and inclusive staff and coaches • Visible symbols of inclusion, such as Pride flags, stickers, and posters • Affirming and inclusive language (e.g., "folks" or "team" instead of gendered terms) • Authentic pride efforts that engage with LGBTIQA+ communities • Gender-affirming options • Visibility of LGBTIQA+ role models and athletes • Shifting the focus from performance and "toxic" winning-at-all-costs cultures to recreational, non-competitive "play"
Structural Systemic or organisational factors that limit access to safe and inclusive physical activity opportunities	• Lack of appropriate or inclusive facilities - eg locker rooms and bathrooms • Uniforms that are gender-segregated or tight-fitting - eg swimwear, netball skirts • Policies that mandate participation based solely on sex assigned at birth • Safety in public facilities • Cost • Inadequate public transport • Regional and rural isolation • Physical capacity barriers - eg disability, poor health • Environmental - eg weather	• Providing options for preferred names and pronouns on registration forms • LGBTIQA+-specific “come and try” programs • LGBTIQA+ exclusive clubs • Availability of private or gender-neutral changing rooms and bathrooms • Flexible uniform policies that allow for a range of styles and sizes, or let students choose clothing that matches their gender identity • Safer physical spaces • Policies and initiatives addressing discrimination • Co-designed programs for youth, by youth • Accessible facilities • Affordability and transport access • Availability of trained coaches

A range of qualitative studies explore these barriers and enablers in detail, including:

- **Symons et al (2014) The impacts of discriminatory experiences on lesbian, gay and bisexual people in sport** - Examines the impact of sexist and homophobic discrimination experienced by LGB people in Australian sporting settings. In sport, participants experienced sexism directly and systemically, and homophobia explicitly and implicitly. Women experienced sexism and homophobia, whilst men reported more homophobic events. Most mentioned impacts of discrimination were negative emotions such as sadness, anger, distress and shame, followed by negative engagement with sport such as disliking sport, or avoiding or leaving sport. Concludes that this social stress makes the benefits of sport - eg physical and mental wellbeing, social connections and enjoyment more difficult to realise.

- **Storr (2022) 'Game to play?': barriers and facilitators to sexuality and gender diverse young people's participation in sport and physical activity** - Qualitative study of LGBTIQA+ people aged 18–24 in Australia and their attitudes to and experiences of sport and physical activity. Identifies LGBTIQA+ young people are 'game to play' and solutions must focus on creating more welcoming and inclusive sporting cultures.
- **Storr (2024) 'The tennis club is my safe space': assessing the positive impact of playing tennis on LGBT+ people in Australia** - Qualitative study commissioned by Tennis Australia to assess the positive role that tennis has on the lives of LGBT+ people in Australia.
- **Litchfield, C. (et al) (2025) Exclusion, belonging and mental wellness: the sporting and physically active leisure experiences of women in rural Australia** - Qualitative study examined the sporting experiences of LGBQ women aged 29-73 living in rural and remote areas of Australia
- **Englefield L (2016) Sport, Physical Activity and LGBT** - A 10-week study commissioned by Sport England examining the participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in sport, including an overview of what exists and case studies of what works. It found that LGBT sports clubs are struggling to address inactivity due to issues including facility availability, lack of funding, lack of coaching staff to provide sessions for beginners, and lack of support to consider additional barriers faced by transgender participants.
- **Erikainen, S. (2022) Specific Detriment: Barriers and Opportunities for Non-Binary Inclusive Sports in Scotland** - World cafe participatory study exploring barriers that non-binary people face accessing sport.
- **Caudwell, J (2021) Queering Indoor Swimming in the UK: Transgender and Non-binary wellbeing** - Qualitative observations from a local transgender social indoor swimming group at Bournemouth University. Highlighted the importance of play and pleasure, feeling free, and transgender and non-binary imaginations to physical activity participation, and wellbeing.
- **Herrick (2020) A Case Study Exploring the Experiences of a Transgender Athlete in Synchronized Skating, a Subdiscipline of Figure Skating** - Case study of a synchronized figure skater who was able to continue competing throughout his transition process. Four overarching themes for inclusive practice: (a) building inclusivity: "promote a safe space," (b) acknowledging stress, (c) disclosure: "I didn't want to talk about my past," and (d) celebration.
- **Hargie (2017) 'People have a knack of making you feel excluded if they catch on to your difference': Transgender experiences of exclusion in sport** - Exploring accounts of transgender people in relation to their experiences of sport and physical activity. Four key themes emerged: a) the intimidating nature of the changing/locker room environment; b) the impact of alienating sports experiences at school; c) the fear of public space and how this drastically constrained their ability to engage in sport and physical activity; d) and the overall effects of being denied the social, health and wellbeing aspects of sport.
- **Jones, B (2017) Barriers and facilitators of physical activity and sport participation among young transgender adults who are medically transitioning** Explores what factors are associated with physical activity and sport engagement in young transgender adults who are medically transitioning, focused on transgender people aged 18–36 years who had initiated their medical transition at a transgender health service in the United Kingdom. Barriers included inadequate changing facilities, body dissatisfaction, fears surrounding "passing" and not being accepted by others. Facilitators included increasing their body satisfaction and gender congruence.
- **Morris J (2016) Transgender and gender nonconforming athletes: Creating safe spaces for all** - Guidance on how coaches can create more welcoming environments for trans and gender diverse people by using appropriate language, educating team members, and offering social support.

- **Lawley S (2018) Review of LGBT+ Sport and Physical Activity Infrastructure** - Explores challenges for LGBT+ sports groups in England including limited resources, governance pressures and high safeguarding demands.

Enablers specific to LGBTIQA+ young people in South Australia

South Australian and Australian literature identified the following enablers as most likely to influence participation of LGBTIQA+ young people:

Theme	
Psychological Internal thoughts, feelings, or perceptions	• Social connection (Storr, 2022; Storr, 2024) • Mental and physical health benefits (Storr, 2022) • Gender affirmation through exercise - eg building muscle to achieve a more masculine physique (Storr, 2024)
Social Interactions with peers, teammates, teachers, coaches, or community members	• Welcoming culture that supports LGBTIQA+ people (Storr, 2024) • Training and inclusive practice for coaches and professionals (Storr, 2022; Drummond, 2022)
Cultural Norms, values, and expectations within sport, recreation, and broader society	• Focus on fun, not competition (Storr, 2022) • Visible LGBTQ+ role models in leadership positions - eg coaches, administrators, and senior management (Drummond, 2019)
Structural Systemic or organisational factors that limit access to safe and inclusive physical activity opportunities	• Anti homo/bi/transphobia policies or initiatives (Storr, 2024; Drummond, 2019) • LGBTIQA+ specific come and try programs (Storr, 2024) • Inclusive facilities - eg providing all-gender bathroom and changing room access, gender neutral uniforms (Drummond, 2019) removing or covering mirrors, displaying LGBTQIA+ affirming signage, offering orientation and inductions to help participants feel comfortable in the space (Austin, 2025)

Free to Exist (2024) assessed the most influential barriers and enablers for LGBTIQA+ Australian young people as:

Barriers (/7)	Facilitators (%)
Safety in public facilities (5.1) Gendered nature in sport (5) Homophobic or transphobic discrimination (5) Lack of a safe space (5) Lack of inclusive facilities - eg unisex bathrooms (5)	Friend referral or support (56%) Welcoming culture supports LGBTIQA+ people (44%) LGBTIQA+ specific come and try programs (41%) Anti homo/bi/transphobia policies or initiatives (36%)

Inclusive Sport Practices (Drummond, 2019) made 15 recommendations to increase participation of LGBTIQA+ South Australians in sport:

Theme	Recommendation
Strategy and governance	• **Committees to oversee inclusive practice** at community, junior, and elite levels (Recs 11, 12, 13) • Full-time **funded role** to support clubs statewide to develop inclusive practice and policies (Rec 15)
Policies and guidelines	• Development of **inclusive guidelines for grassroots clubs** (Rec 6) • **Policies for transgender inclusion** (Rec 9)

Education	• Building **inclusive leadership** cultures (Rec 14) • **Coach education** on communication and management of LGBTIQ+ participants (Rec 1) • Online **education tools for volunteers** (Rec 7) • **School-based education** to influence peer and teacher interactions (Rec 8) • Funding for diversity education within sporting clubs (Rec 10)
Safer spaces and facilities	• Funding LGBTIQ+ community to assist clubs to **improve facilities and uniforms** (Rec 2)
Cultural norms	• **Awareness campaigns** to minimise stigma around LGBTIQ+ community in sports (Rec 5)
Research	• **Education of emerging sport leaders** through tertiary partnerships (Rec 3) • **Research partnerships** to explore new LGBTIQ+ inclusive pathways (Rec 4)

Activity preferences of LGBTIQA+ young people

Free to Exist (Storr, 2024), *Writing Themselves In* (Hill, 2021) and *Inclusive Sport Practices* (Drummond, 2019) each assessed physical activity and sport preferences for LGBTIQA+ young people in Australia.

Preferred activities include:

- active recreation - eg walking and cycling
- social sport that prioritises fun and connection over competition
- public spaces - eg park, oval, beach
- gyms, sports and leisure facilities.

The highest rates of participation were reported for:

1. Swimming
2. Basketball
3. Badminton
4. Soccer
5. AFL
6. Netball
7. Dance
8. Tennis
9. Cycling
10. Athletics

South Australian environmental scan

This environmental scan summarises the current landscape of strategies, programs, training and structural supports that seek to increase physical activity participation among LGBTIQA+ young people aged 12–25 in South Australia and Australia. Initiatives are outlined in following themes:

- National & State policy, frameworks and strategic plans
- Sector capacity building
- Education & training for community clubs
- Safer spaces & facilities
- LGBTIQA+ specific programming
- Visibility initiatives
- Research

Theme	Existing programs and initiatives
National & State policy, frameworks and strategic plans	• National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ People (Cth) includes physical activity • Data on LGBTIQA+ being collected in national physical activity surveillance systems (AusPlay, National Health Survey) • *Guidelines - Including transgender and gender diverse people in sport (2019)* (Australian Human Rights Commission) • *LGBTQ+ Sport Integrity Guideline* supports decision makers to identify, manage and resolve incidents of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in sport (Sport Integrity Australia) • Guidelines for local clubs on best practice for inclusion of transgender and intersex participants (ACT Human Rights Commission)

Sector capacity building	• National sporting bodies are developing LGBTIQA+ inclusion guidance:
	  ○ AFL Gender Diversity Policy and Companion Guide
	  ○ Badminton Australia LGBTQ+ Inclusion Policy and guides for administrators, participants, peers & allies
	  ○ Cricket Australia Transgender and gender diverse guidelines
	• Pride in Sport Index (PSI) is Australia's leading benchmarking tool for LGBTQ+ inclusion in sport. Low response rate from South Australia (ACON, Pride in Sport).
	• Rainbow Sports Alliance is a membership for local governments, clubs and sporting bodies working in LGBTIQA+ inclusion (Proud2Play).
	• Rainbow Roadmap supports Victorian sport organisations to embed LGBTIQ+ practices into core business (VicSport)
	• Australian Pride in Sport Awards celebrates excellence in LGBTQ+ inclusion in Australian sport (ACON, Pride in Sport).

Education & training for coaches &	• Play by the Rules hosts two free e-learning for coaches and professionals at community clubs on Creating an LGBTI+ Inclusive Club and Responding to LGBTIQA+ scenarios in community sport.

community clubs	• Training, education and consultation offerings from Proud2Play, Pride in Sport and PrideCup. • Some sports have sport specific inclusion training - eg Basketball Australia Pride in Sport e-learning • LGBTIQA+ inclusion information is included in national knowledge sharing platform, Clearinghouse for Sport (AusSport) • Australian Sports Commission has resources on LGBTIQ+ and trans and gender diverse inclusion including posters and fact sheets and case studies (AusSport) • Brief mention of LGBTIQ+ communities on OfRSR SA webpage
Safer spaces and facilities	• Inclusive Sport Uniform Guidelines targeted towards increasing participation of women and girls could support participation of LGBTIQA+ people (SA Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing)

LGBTIQA+ specific programming	• Active Rainbow Families is a free year-long program for LGBTIQA+ households in Victoria, offering an Adventure Passport and activity pack valued at $350 to get communities active. It's a pilot program funded by VicHealth's Growing Healthy Communities grant.
	• LGBTIQA+ specific sporting clubs and teams in SA include:
	  ○ Adelaide University Sharks (Rugby/ Touch)
	  ○ Adelaide Dolphins
	  ○ Pride Tennis Adelaide
	  ○ Adelaide Spikers Volleyball
	  ○ Frontrunners Adelaide
	  ○ Adelaide Spectres (Basketball)
	  ○ Queer Sporting Alliance (Basketball)
	  ○ Hike Society Adelaide
	  ○ Climbing QTs
	  ○ Murder City Roller Derby
	• LGBTIQA+ specific gyms and fitness classes:
	  ○ Unity Fitness is an LGBTIQA+ specific PT and group fitness gym. Similar queer-owned business models exist interstate - eg City Gym (Sydney) Fit Bomb (WA).
	  ○ NFP models exist interstate run by fitness clubs or local councils - eg QFit is a class at Carlton Baths (YMCA)
	• LGBTIQA+ come and try events have recently been held by:
	  ○ Adelaide University Sport LGBTIQA+ multisport activation
	  ○ Squash SA Rainbow Racquets
	  ○ Adelaide Cricket Club's trans cricket initiative
	• LGBTIQA+ supporter groups in SA include:
	  ○ Rainbow Crows (AFL)
	  ○ Port Adelaide Queer Squad (AFL)
	• Multiple LGBTIQA+ activity directives including:
	  ○ Proud2Play's national directory lists 8 SA initiatives
	  ○ Pride in Sport's national directory has 12 SA initiatives
	  ○ Rainbow Directory SA has 10 SA initiatives (Catalyst Foundation)
	  ○ Adelaide LGBTIQA+ Events (Bfriend Uniting Communities)

Visibility initiatives	• Pride Cup supports community clubs to host a Pride Round. Participating clubs receive a free LGBTIQ+ Education session, support

	on connecting with local community and event promotion. SA participants include: ○ Adelaide University Cricket Club ○ Murder City Roller Derby ○ Hahndorf Soccer Club ○ Adelaide Atletico (Soccer) ○ Barossa Rams (Rugby) ○ Woodville South Football Club (AFL) ○ Adelaide University Hockey Club ○ Adelaide University Rugby Union Club • Play With Pride is an annual event uniting athletes, advocates, and allies in support of LGBTIQA+ representation in sport (Adelaide University Sport & Fitness). • Pride Hubs at major sporting events - eg Australian Open Pride Hub, Australian F1 Grand Prix. Opportunity to implement at SA major events - eg AFL Gather Round. • Surf Life Saving Australia have a partnership with community group Lifesavers with Pride. Their Pride Rescue Boards promote that everyone is welcome in Surf Life Saving and are in use at Christies Beach, Seacliff and Brighton Surf Life Saving Clubs. 130+ clubs participate in Rainbow Beaches annually in February to visibly demonstrate their inclusion of LGBTQIA+ communities. • AIS Thrive With Pride supports LGBTQ+ and ally athletes to role model and champion LGBTQ+ inclusion initiatives in their sport. Two SA athletes in 2025 - Lachlan Davis (Gymnastics) and Anu Francis (Para-triathlon). (Australian Institute of Sport). • '*Well Played: Young Proud and Active*' is a short film highlighting the importance of inclusion in physical activity and the positive impact it has on young people's health and wellbeing (Twenty10, 2019). • *Hoops* is a documentary funded by Screen Australia following a transgender basketballer who was blocked from playing NBL. • Rainbow Shoelace Project is an LGBTIQ+ awareness initiative started by 12-year-old Abbie Jane to show support by wearing Pride coloured shoelace beads. • Sweat with Pride is a fundraising initiative that encourages participants to commit to at least 21 minutes of sweat each day in June to raise funds for LGBTIQA+ causes (Rainbow Giving Australia).
Research	• Inclusive Sport Practices study in 2019 focused on LGBTIQA+ inclusion in sport (Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing SA (OfRSR)) • Trans Health Research (University of Melbourne) have a range of research on trans women in sport, debunking myths about performance advantages and safety concerns. • The GAME Study follows trans adults aged 18-65 for the first 12 months of treatment to explore the effects of hormone therapy on fitness and performance (Trans Health Research). • A therapeutic exercise program for adolescents engaged in gender diversity services is being trialled, funded by an NHMRC Grant. The research was presented at AusPATH 2025 and there is an opportunity to expand the trial to SA WCH Gender Diversity Service.

Considerations for co-design

This paper provides high-level guidance to next steps of the co-design project, including:

- establishing common definitions
- exploring baseline participation rates
- understanding documented barriers and enablers to physical activity
- establishing activity preferences for LGBTIQA+ young people - active recreation or social sport in public spaces or gyms and leisure facilities.

1. Focus on solutions

Much is already known about the participation, barriers and enablers to the participation of LGBTIQA+ young people in physical activity, documented in:

- *Free to Exist* (Storr, 2014) focused on LGBTIQA+ young people in Australia
- *Inclusive Sport Practices* (Drummond, 2019) focused on LGBTIQA+ South Australians
- The Equal Play study (Symons, 2014) focused on the impact of homophobic bullying for young people.

Less is known about the application and effectiveness of interventions in the South Australian context.

Consequently, co-design efforts should prioritise identifying and testing scalable solutions rather than re-documenting known obstacles.

2. Recognise population diversity

LGBTIQA+ young people are not a monolith; physical activity solutions must be tailored to the needs of different cohorts. For example, the needs of gay men often differ significantly from those of trans women or non-binary youth. Intersectional identities including First Nations, disabled, and culturally diverse youth and people living regionally require active outreach and specific analysis to ensure programs are inclusive of their unique lived experiences.

3. Community survey structure

The literature provides a range of data collection methods that could be embedded in the community survey and program design, for example:

- AusPlay Questionnaire (July 2024) - participation in physical activity and sport
- The Active Australia Survey (2003) - participation in leisure-time physical activity
- The Single Item Measure (SIM) - moderate to vigorous physical activity
- Simple Physical Activity Questionnaire (SIMPAQ) - combined physical activity behaviours
- Short Form 12 Health Survey Questionnaire (SF-12) - quality of life
- World Health Organisation-Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5) - wellbeing
- Pre-exercise screening system for young people to minimise the risk of injury
- D&I Data at Work - demographic questions

Further work is needed to determine questions appropriate to inform program design.

4. **Authentic engagement**

To avoid tokenism, co-design must embed youth leadership and lived experience at every stage. Key strategies include:

- Employing a lived experience project team and steering committee that includes LGBTIQA+ sector and community representatives.
- Recognizing youth expertise by reimbursing participants for their time rather than relying on volunteer labor.
- Spacing out activities and clearly communicating how youth input will be used to make tangible decisions.
- Clearly communicating expectations and outcomes of lived experience co-design.

5. **Ecosystem readiness**

There is an extensive network of LGBTIQA+ community groups and champions in South Australia actively working in this space - eg LGBTIQA+ sporting clubs, Adelaide University Sport, AIS Ambassadors, clubs engaged with Pride Cup and Pride In Sport. Co-design must actively engage these stakeholders.

There appears to be less organisational capacity in the broader South Australian physical activity ecosystem - eg OfRSR SA, state sporting organisations, sporting clubs and recreation centres. Co-design provides an opportunity to build buy-in into LGBTIQA+ inclusion for these stakeholders.

This could be further scoped by assessing whether organisations have:

- **Policies**: Explicit LGBTIQA+ inclusion and anti-discrimination policies
- **Training**: LGBTIQA+ inclusion training offered to staff and coaches
- **Facilities**: Gender-neutral toilets and changerooms, inclusive uniform options, and gender-neutral registration forms.
- **Visibility**: Visible symbols of inclusion, such as pride rounds or specific programming

6. Standardised Monitoring and Evidence

Co-design should be supported by coordinated and standardised monitoring of physical activity participation. Using existing ABS Standards for LGBTIQA+ inclusive data collection ensures that the recommendations developed through co-design are grounded in a long-term collective understanding of inequities at the population level. This is consistent with WHO's Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030 (WHO, 2018) and research to develop a more comprehensive Physical Activity Surveillance System (PASS) for Australia (The Australian Prevention Partnership Centre, 2022).

In parallel to co-design, the opportunity to implement ABS Standards for LGBTIQA+ inclusive data collection in state-based population level health surveys - eg South Australian Population Health Survey, should be explored.

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