

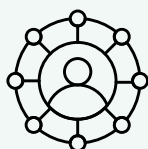


How are LGBTQ+ community-controlled organisations unique?

Findings from Phase One of Optimise⁺

LGBTQ+ community-controlled organisations share a set of key features that shape their work and make them unique.

Organisational-level



Led by community

Organisations are led by LGBTQ+ people at all levels, grounded in lived experience.

Responsive to community

Organisations actively listen to community and adapt to meet their needs.

 **By community, for community.** I think that is one of the most important factors... Our staff are queer. Our board is queer. We're active within the community and informed by the needs of community.

Service-level



Holistic support

Some organisations provide a wide range of support in one place, including for mental health, AOD, family violence, advocacy, education, and community support, recognising the impact of stigma, discrimination, and isolation on wellbeing. While some organisations are able to deliver multiple services directly due to greater resourcing, others achieve a similar outcome through partnerships.

Collaborative partnerships

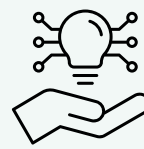
Organisations work closely with other services (both LGBTQ+ and mainstream) to connect people to the right support.

Community building

Services are designed to strengthen connection and reduce isolation.

 **[We're] actively participating in community processes to support and grow the community.**

Practice-level



Foundational knowledge

Staff draw on their own experiences and community knowledge to better understand service-users and to make them feel safe.

Relational practice

Service provision is built on shared connection and understanding based on LGBTQ+ experiences.

Safety-oriented approaches

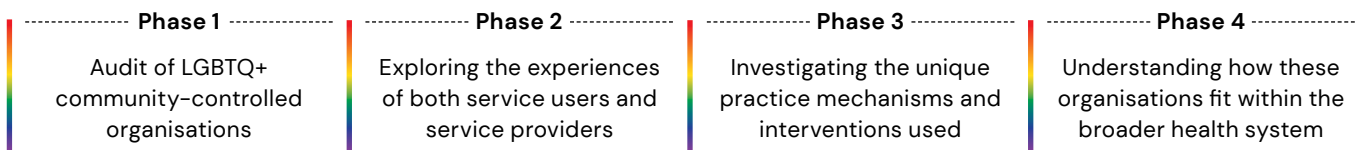
Staff prioritise creating inclusive, accepting, and judgment-free spaces when interacting with service-users.

 **Safety for many people is about having a peer organisation where they can go in and know that they're gonna be held and accepted for who they are.**

What is Optimise⁺

Optimise+ is a national research project focused on building an optimised model of care for LGBTQ+ people, by leveraging the strengths of LGBTQ+ community-controlled organisations that provide mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services in Australia.

Four phases:



What did we do in Phase One?

In Phase One, we worked with 16 LGBTQ+ community-controlled organisations across Australia.

We wanted to understand:

- What services they provide
- Where they operate
- What makes them unique

We collected this information through surveys and interviews with organisation leaders.

So, what are LGBTQ+ community-controlled organisations?

These are organisations that are run and led by LGBTQ+ people, for LGBTQ+ people.

- All provided services in metropolitan areas, and some in regional and remote areas.
- Staff sizes ranged from 7 to 200 people.
- Organisations were established between 1974 and 2015.

These organisations are led by lived experience, with 50–100% LGBTQ+ representation across staff, leadership, and boards, including trans and gender diverse people at every level.

What services are offered?



16/16

Mental health



9/16

Alcohol and other drugs (AOD)

Common types of support



Peer support & navigation



Counselling or therapy



Crisis support

Partners and funders

This research is a collaboration with 13 LGBTQ+ community controlled organisations: LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, ACON, Thorne Harbour Health, Transfolk WA, Living Proud, Queensland Council for LGBTI Health, Twenty10, Transgender Victoria, Meridian, A Gender Agenda, Working It Out, Minus18, and Switchboard.

Funded by the Medical Research Future Fund.



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