

# Trans @ Work

A guide for trans employees,  
their employers, and colleagues



Queensland  
**Human Rights**  
Commission

This publication is for trans and gender diverse employees, their employers, managers and colleagues who are seeking guidance on issues associated with transitioning at work.

We suggest ways to:

- work together to achieve a successful transition in the workplace;
- address pre-employment issues; and
- provide ongoing support to trans employees.

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# Discrimination and gender identity

Gender identity is a protected attribute under the Queensland *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* and employers must not directly or indirectly discriminate against an employee because of their gender identity.

The Queensland Human Rights Commission helps resolve complaints about discrimination.

## Why is a trans inclusive workplace important?

For the employee:

- staying in employment;
- maintaining self-respect;
- having financial security.

For the employer:

- improving staff satisfaction and retention through modern, inclusive workplace policies;
- enhancing public image of the organisation;
- reaching new client groups;
- improving teamwork and increasing productivity;
- complying with state and federal discrimination legislation, including the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld).

## Terminology

We understand that terminology is important and we aim to be as inclusive as possible.

In this guide we use the terms trans and gender diverse to acknowledge that there are many identities in the gender diversity spectrum.

Trans is an umbrella term that includes all identities within the gender identity spectrum, including (but not limited to) people who identify as transgender, transsexual, gender queer, gender fluid, non-binary, sistagirl, brotherboy, transman or transwoman.



# Gender diversity basics

Gender is an abstract and complex idea that means something different to each person. Gender identity, gender expression and biological sex are all different concepts.

A trans or gender diverse person may not feel comfortable talking about their gender expression, identity or biological sex with work colleagues or managers. It is usually not necessary to know personal information to support a trans or gender diverse person in the workplace.

We have outlined the meaning of the terms you might encounter.

## Terms used

**Affirmed gender** means the gender that matches a person's gender identity. For example, if a person was assigned male at birth and identifies as female, their affirmed gender is female.

**Biological sex** means the physical and biological characteristics that define males, females and intersex conditions.

**Cisgender** means that a person's biological sex and gender expression are the same. For example, a person expresses herself as female, and is also biologically female.

**Gender dysphoria** is a recognised medical condition in which a person's physiological sex does not match their gender identity or expression. One treatment for gender dysphoria is for the person to undergo a transition. Not all trans and gender diverse people have gender dysphoria or seek medical treatment.

**Gender expression** is the way in which a person communicates their gender identity to others through behaviour, clothing, appearance, voice and other forms of presentation. When someone identifies as trans, their biological sex is often not the same as their gender identity or expression.

**Gender identity** means a person's innermost concept of self as male or female — both or neither, how an individual perceives themselves, and what they call themselves.

Note: For the purpose of unlawful discrimination under the Anti-Discrimination Act, the definition says:

**gender identity**, in relation to a person, means that the person —

(a) identifies, or has identified, as a member of the opposite sex by living or seeking to live as a member of that sex; or

(b) is of indeterminate sex and seeks to live as a member of a particular sex.

**Transgender** means that a person does not identify with the biological sex they were assigned at birth.

**Transitioning** is the process a person goes through when changing their public gender presentation, to match their affirmed gender. A person who is transitioning may dress and live as their affirmed gender. They may alter their physical appearance or take hormones. Some, but not all trans people, may choose sex affirmation surgery.

# Information for trans employees

## Transitioning at work

You have the right to be yourself at work. You also have a right to feel safe in your workplace. If you have decided it is time to transition, or want to start presenting as your affirmed gender at work, this guide will help you get started.

Good communication is essential to a successful transition at work. As difficult as it may be to have that first conversation with your manager or HR officer, you will need to involve these people for a successful transition.

Work with your manager as much as possible; be prepared to answer their questions, and provide your input into how the process will work best for you. Be aware that your manager and HR department probably have never assisted a transition process before. Most people are not well educated about trans and gender diversity issues, and so your colleagues may not have much knowledge to draw on.

## Planning the transition

We recommend that before you start presenting as your affirmed gender, you work out a plan with your manager or HR officer.

A poorly planned (or unplanned) transition can lead to communication breakdowns, misunderstandings and insensitive treatment of you by colleagues. If you don't explain your needs or concerns to anyone, they cannot be addressed.

If you are changing your name, it will mean that a new identity card, email address, computer logons, IT access and payroll details will have to be arranged. Usually your manager will be able to advise you on the best way to go about this. However, if you don't have a good relationship with your manager, consider asking for another person you are more comfortable with to manage your transition. You can also ask for a support person to be present for planning meetings.

## Support person or ally

It is good to find a support person or ally in your organisation who can help you through the transition process. Do you have a strong relationship with someone at work who will be open-minded and supportive when you come out as trans or gender diverse? If there is no one at work, you may be able to ask someone outside the organisation.

To prepare for your workplace transition, you could practise coming out to one person at work. You should make it clear to the person that you're not ready to make your transition known to everyone just yet, and they should keep it confidential.

## Names and pronouns (she, he, they)

Consider developing a standard response to say to people if they get your new name wrong, or use the wrong pronoun (such as using he instead of she). Be prepared for slip-ups, but also correct people if they keep getting it wrong. Complain to your manager if there are repeated and intentional incidents of misgendering.

## Toilets and change rooms

You have the right to use a toilet that matches your affirmed gender. Some trans people prefer initially, or even in the long term, to use a unisex toilet. This is a personal choice, and you should not be told that you cannot use the toilet that matches your affirmed gender; and you shouldn't be required to use an accessible toilet.

Be aware that toilet use can raise concerns for colleagues, so explain your needs to your manager. This is one of the messages that should be given to your colleagues up front and before you start using the toilet that matches your affirmed gender.

## Uniform and dress standards

If your workplace has a uniform, you can wear the uniform that matches your affirmed gender at any time. You should not be asked to continue dressing in a uniform that does not match your gender identity.

If your workplace requires a professional standard of dress, it is reasonable to expect you to dress appropriately in corporate clothing in line with what others of your affirmed gender wear. Similarly, if your workplace requires protective clothing, shoes etc., you will have to meet the expected standard for workplace health and safety in the way you dress.

## Co-worker reactions

Be prepared for co-worker reactions to your transition — whether good or bad. Most people are not well educated about trans and gender diverse people, and although it is not your role to educate others, you may need to set some clear boundaries with people about what is not okay, and what is acceptable to you. It is important to tell people if they are making you feel uncomfortable or crossing a line with their comments, questions or actions towards you. If there are persistent issues, discuss them with your manager.

You can use the Information for colleagues section of this guide as a handout, or as the basis for a talk with colleagues.

## Records, logins and email address

If you are changing your name, think about what changes you will need to make for ID cards, work badges, email addresses and computer access, and discuss the date you would like these changes to be made. You may also like to request to change your gender on personnel files.



# Information for employers: trans staff

## Why is getting it right so important?

For many trans and gender diverse people, presenting as their affirmed gender at work can be the final frontier.

In many cases the person transitioning will have presented as their affirmed gender in non-work situations, such as in their private lives with friends and family.

Work is a major part of a person's life. It is not only about livelihood, but influences a person's feeling of self-worth. After transitioning, the reality is that trans people often face prejudice when trying to get work, particularly at the interview stage. For this reason many trans people prefer to stay in their existing jobs; but even so, may still be fearful of losing that employment.

The employee may have real fears about the process ahead, and may look to you for support and guidance.

## Recruitment issues

### Visible inclusion policies

Trans and gender diverse employees may seek out employers who promote themselves as inclusive employers. Many company or organisation websites have inclusive hiring statements, but not all include statements about equal opportunity for people of diverse genders and gender identities. Consider adding a few words to your company's equal opportunity hiring policy and non-discrimination policy.

Gender identity can be specifically included in anti-discrimination policies to make it clear to other employees what the expectations of them are. Gender identity is a protected attribute under Queensland anti-discrimination law. You may be able to simply add the words **gender identity** and **gender expression** to your existing list of protected attributes, if they are not already there.

Here are some suggestions for text that you could include in your policy:

[Organisation name] fosters diversity, inclusion and respect in the workplace.

We recognise, appreciate and utilise the unique insights, perspectives and backgrounds of each staff member, including gender diverse employees.

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[Organisation name] promotes equal opportunity for all staff, including gender diverse employees.

We hire and promote staff based on their ability, and not because of a person's attributes (such as age, race, sex, impairment, religion, sexuality, family responsibilities, gender identity, political beliefs etc.)

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[Organisation name] cares about treating people with dignity and respect in ways that acknowledge and engage diverse backgrounds and ideas.

Our policies, practices and behaviours foster a safe and inclusive workplace, and promote equitable and collaborative relationships.

At [Organisation name] we hire diverse staff who will contribute to this mission, including people who identify as LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or intersex).

## Inclusive forms

For cisgender people, filling in a form with only male or female tick box options is uncomplicated.

However, having only the male and female binary options is confronting and frustrating for gender diverse people. It also reflects badly on the organisation, and may create the impression that it is not an inclusive employer.

An alternative to tick boxes is to ask the person to specify their sex. For example:

Sex \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)

You may also question the reason for asking a person's sex, and whether the information is necessary.

## Job interviews

If you are unsure about how a person being interviewed would like to be addressed (that is, as he, she or they), it is okay to ask the person which they prefer. If the person corrects you, use the pronoun that they prefer.

Questions about a person's gender identity or expression during an interview are unwise if they don't relate to the person's ability to do the job. If a person has been asked about their gender identity during an interview and doesn't get the job, they may feel that the reason behind the decision was their gender identity, rather than merit.

## Managing a workplace transition

If an employee advises you that they are undergoing a gender transition, this section will provide you with advice and practical tools to ensure a successful transition at work.

### Appointing a case manager

We recommend that you have a case manager in charge of managing a workplace transition. This person will be the primary contact for the transitioning employee, and give colleagues someone to talk to on a confidential basis, if any issues arise.

The right person for the job is someone who is open, compassionate and sensitive. They should also be an effective communicator who is prepared to listen to all employee needs. The case manager should also be confident to deal with any conflict that may arise with colleagues about issues such as use of toilets and change rooms.

### Support person or ally

Ask the transitioning employee if they would like someone to be a support person or ally during the process. This could be a colleague that they have a close relationship with, or an external person such as a partner, friend or family member. They could also be another trans person.

### Questions to ask

Ask the trans person what their preferences and intentions are. The person may have firm views about their transition, or they may be unsure what exactly they want to happen. Before coming to any conclusions about the best way forward, have open discussions about options and consider what will work best for everyone.

Does the person want to set a date from which they will start presenting as their affirmed gender, or would they prefer it to happen over time? Does the date give enough time for practical measures to be put in place?

Will the person have a new name and pronoun? What will these be, and when should managers and staff start using them?

Does the person want to announce their transition to colleagues themselves? Would they like the news to be shared by email, or would they like a meeting to be held in their absence where the news is provided to staff?

Are there any resources about trans and gender diversity issues that could be made available to staff?

How should questions from staff be addressed? Should staff be directed to the trans or gender diverse person themselves, to HR, or a case manager?

What are the specific no go topics that should be avoided? (See the Inappropriate questions section of the Information for colleagues section of this guide.)

## Options to discuss

Here are some options to discuss with the transitioning employee. Consider the pros and cons of each option together.

- ☐ the transitioning employee informs each staff member themselves on a one-on-one basis (Note: this may be more practical in a small workplace.)
- ☐ the transitioning employee informs only some trusted staff individually
- ☐ a staff meeting where the transitioning employee announces and discusses their transition with the group
- ☐ a staff meeting (with or without the transitioning employee present) where a manager, HR person or other person of authority informs staff
- ☐ an email notification to staff and relevant stakeholders to be sent by the employer or transitioning employee
- ☐ a video presentation made by the transitioning employee introducing themselves as their affirmed gender
- ☐ a presentation from an external presenter (such as the Queensland Human Rights Commission) or a member of the trans or gender diverse community who has personal experience. For more information about training offered by the QHRC, email [training@qhrc.qld.gov.au](mailto:training@qhrc.qld.gov.au) or call 1300 130 670.



# Common issues

## Toilets and change rooms

A trans employee should be allowed to use a toilet or change room that matches their affirmed gender.

They may express a preference to use a unisex or accessible toilet, but should not be required to use one. Cisgender employees are not required to use a unisex toilet, so neither should a trans or gender diverse employee.

Also, do not direct a transitioning staff member to only use a toilet on another floor, or a toilet outside the office space. If the trans person is treated differently from others, there is a risk that this may be direct discrimination.

Ask the transitioning staff member at what point they would like to start using the toilet of their affirmed gender, and if they would prefer to use a unisex toilet in the short or long term.

## Uniform and dress standards

If the workplace has a uniform, a trans employee may need a new uniform to match their affirmed gender. They should not be expected to continue dressing in a uniform that does not match their gender identity.

If you require a professional standard of dress in the workplace, it is reasonable to expect the transitioning employee to wear appropriate corporate clothing in line with what other people of their affirmed gender wear at work.

If you require protective clothing, shoes etc., the transitioning employee will also have to meet the expected standard for workplace health and safety in the way they dress.

Transitioning is not like flicking a switch; it is a process that can take time.

The transitioning employee may experiment with levels of masculinity and femininity, and style of dress until they find what works best for them. This is not about the person seeking attention, but finding themselves in their gender identity.

## Records, logins and email address

A trans person usually changes their name to match their affirmed gender.

### Name change

People born or adopted in Queensland, who are over the age of 18, can apply to change their legal name through the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. This service is also available to people born overseas who have lived in Queensland for the past 12 months; but people born in other Australian states have to apply to the state in which they were born.

### Birth certificate

A person who has had sexual reassignment surgery can apply to note the change of sex on their Queensland birth certificate. However, this service is not available to trans people who have not undergone sexual reassignment surgery. There is no provision for a person who wishes to be identified as other than male or female to note this on their birth certificate.

## Driver licence and passport

Once a person has changed their legal name, they can apply to change their personal details on a Queensland driver licence. They can change the gender on the licence by supplying a letter from a psychiatrist or psychologist confirming the gender transition. This service is also available to trans people who have not had gender reassignment surgery. A similar process is available to have a passport reissued in a new name and gender.

## Australian Tax Office and superannuation records

The Australian Tax Office (ATO) has procedures for updating details of name and gender on their records. To change gender information with the ATO, the trans employee should provide a statement from a medical practitioner, or a valid passport specifying the amended sex, or an amended birth certificate. From July 2016, an option of X (indeterminate/intersex/unspecified) will be available for ATO records.

Once the trans employee has changed their ATO records, they will be able to contact their superannuation fund to change the details on those records.

## In-house details

The trans employee will need to change all their records to their new identity.

Changing records is a process that will involve the employer and employee working together. Avoid unreasonable delays as this may cause unnecessary distress for the transitioning employee. The in-house records that usually have to be changed or reissued are:

- email account;
- computer login;
- ID card or badge;
- personnel records; and
- payroll.

**It is not appropriate to insist that a trans employee registers a change of sex with the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages before you allow a change to their employment records. A trans employee who has not had gender reassignment surgery cannot comply with this condition. It is a common misconception that a person must formally change their sex with the Registry before expressing themselves as their affirmed gender.**

## Sick leave

As a manager, you do not necessarily need to know if a person is undergoing surgery to change their biological sex. Only discuss it if the employee raises the issue themselves. Sex affirmation surgery is not chosen by all trans people. You would not ask a cisgender woman about a gynaecological procedure; it is simply information you do not require as their manager.

However, a transitioning employee may require some flexibility when it comes to taking time off for medical appointments and surgery. Gender dysphoria is a recognised medical condition, and as with other medical conditions, an employer needs to make reasonable adjustments to allow leave to occur.

When a person starts hormone treatment, they go through an experience similar to puberty. This may affect mood in some people, but the effects will decrease over time. Be patient as the person adjusts to the hormones, and be mindful that behavioural changes will settle down in time.

## Co-worker reactions

Be prepared to manage co-workers' reactions to the transition process. Most people are not well educated about trans and gender diversity issues, and you should be prepared to educate your staff. You can use the *Information for colleagues* section in this resource as a handout, or as the basis for a discussion with the trans employee's colleagues.

Try to provide this information prior to the start of the transition process so that employees are clear about what the expectations of them are. If there are negative reactions by co-workers, the organisation risks being vicariously liable (under the Anti-Discrimination Act) for the actions of employees.

Here are some tips:

- **Develop** standard responses to employees who raise issues about toilet use and physical appearance.
- **Encourage** staff to raise concerns privately with the case manager, so that the transitioning staff member is not placed in an uncomfortable or harmful position.
- **Anticipate** that misgendering (calling the person by the wrong name or pronoun) is likely to occur by accident to begin with; but be aware that these mistakes can be hurtful to a trans or gender diverse person. Any consistent and intentional misgendering could be unlawful discrimination.
- **Consider and plan** for what consequences there may be for a co-worker who treats the transitioning employee unfavourably.

## External relationships

Provide basic information to people who interact with your employees and need to know about the transition, such as security staff. The trans employee may have an external client or customer group that they regularly deal with.

Have a standard response ready in case a client or customer asks for the person by their old name. If there are ongoing relationships, one option is to send an email to key stakeholders about the transition. Alternatively, the transitioning employee may wish to handle these interactions themselves. This is something to discuss with the transitioning employee to determine their preference.

## Confidentiality

Talk with the transitioning employee about whether they are comfortable with disclosing their trans status. For practical reasons, colleagues present around the time of the transition will become aware of the transition. However, after the transition there is no good reason for a new employee who knows the person as their affirmed gender to be told about the employee's trans status.

### Possible discrimination risks for an employer

Moving an employee to a different position in the organisation (when not requested) may be seen as unfavourable treatment.

Requiring a staff member to use a toilet or change room that does not match their affirmed gender is gender identity discrimination.

Refusing time off for medical appointments could be impairment or gender identity discrimination.

Refusing to organise a name change at the employee's request on personnel files, emails, ID cards and other documents could be indirect discrimination.



# Information for colleagues: trans co-workers

## Name and pronouns

The most important way you can respect your trans or gender diverse colleague is by consistently using their preferred name and pronoun. This may be he, she or sometimes they. If you make a mistake, don't make a big deal of it. Apologise and get it right next time.

## The past

When you talk about the time before your colleague's transition, be careful to avoid statements such as 'when you were a male/female...' because the person may feel that they have always been their new gender and are simply affirming it now.

If you have a long work history with the person, you may talk about experiences you have shared in the past. The best option is to ask the person how they would like you to refer to them when talking about past events. Another way is to avoid gendering the person at all, by referring to the relevant time instead. For example, 'In September last year...' or 'when you were a child'. Be guided by the words they use when they refer to themselves in the past.

## Inappropriate questions

Use caution when asking questions about the person's transition or gender identity. Many topics are not polite to raise in conversation, and they include:

- the person's anatomy or biological gender;
- whether the person has or intends to have surgery;
- whether the person is on hormone treatment; and
- the person's sexuality (sexuality is not relevant to gender identity).

Of course, if the trans or gender diverse person raises these issues themselves, and is comfortable discussing these topics, that is alright. But as a general rule, ask yourself, 'Would I ask a cisgender person this question?'

## Jokes

Jokes can be discriminatory and cause unintentional harm. A person who is transitioning is going through a major, stressful life change. Understandably, they may be sensitive to jokes, especially about anatomy. If other people make jokes like that, speak up if you can, and say that those kinds of jokes are not appropriate.

## Gossip

Respect your colleague's privacy by not gossiping about their transition. If there is a new staff member at your workplace, do not 'out' your colleague as trans. This is a major breach of trust and privacy.

## Same treatment

When a colleague is transitioning, treat the situation as 'business as usual'.

Your colleague will notice if you start treating them differently after transitioning. Different treatment may simply involve avoiding the person because you feel awkward about the situation.

If you have never known anyone who is trans before and you feel a bit uncomfortable, do your best to continue to treat the person the same way you did before they transitioned. A simple 'Hi, how are you?' in the hallway helps the person feel validated in their affirmed gender.

## Fashion advice

In the early days of transition, a person may still be finding their fashion style, or experimenting with different levels of femininity or masculinity in the way they present themselves. Even if you are tempted to comment, your colleague may be more sensitive than usual about appearance, and so it is probably better to avoid the topic, unless specifically asked for advice.

## Emotional support

Transitioning is a huge step that impacts on every aspect of the person's life, and work is often the final frontier for a trans or gender diverse person coming out.

Usually a trans person will have expressed themselves in their affirmed gender in their private life. Your colleague may have real fears about things going badly at work, and jeopardising their livelihood. It can be hard for trans people to obtain reliable employment after transitioning, so retaining their current job is all the more important to them.

In some cases, if taking hormones, the person may be subject to moderate to severe mood swings, but this will be resolved over time.

Compassion, patience and understanding shown by work colleagues go a long way to supporting a colleague who is transitioning.

# Real life stories

## Gillian's story

*This is a real life story. All the names have been changed to protect privacy.*

Gillian worked in an administrative role for a large government agency for 10 years. When she started in the role, she presented as a male person called Simon.

In January, Gillian had a private conversation with her manager, Stephanie, and disclosed that she is a transwoman, identifies as a female, and intends to start presenting as a female at work. Gillian and Stephanie agreed to meet again to discuss a transition plan.

In early February, Gillian and Stephanie had several planning meetings and included Kristina from HR. In consultation, they set 1 March as the date that Gillian would attend work for the first time presenting as her affirmed gender. Everyone agreed that Gillian would go on leave from 23 February and return to work on 1 March.

Stephanie, Timothy (the director of the branch), and Kristina offered to hold a meeting with the assistance of the Queensland Human Rights Commission, to inform staff of Gillian's transition. Gillian was happy with this option, but was worried about staff reactions, and said she would prefer not to attend. Gillian offered to make a video of herself presenting as female to familiarise colleagues with the way she will look when she returns to work on 1 March. Everyone agreed that it would be good to play the video at the staff meeting.

In late February while Gillian was on leave, Stephanie organised the following:

- a new photo ID card and security pass;
- intranet and internet access;
- a new email address;
- changes to personnel and HR files; and
- phone calls to internal clients to make them aware of Gillian as the new contact.

She also met with the head of building security and other service areas to ensure they would be aware of the transition prior to 1 March.

On 24 February, while Gillian was on leave, the staff meeting was held with the following agenda:

Timothy, the Director, explained the purpose of the meeting, announced Simon's transition to female, and expressed support for Gillian.

Gillian's video in which she introduces herself to staff was played. Speakers from the Queensland Human Rights Commission explained staff obligations under the Queensland *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*. A transgender woman who had transitioned at work spoke to staff, giving a personal account of her experiences.

Time was allowed at the meeting to ask the speakers questions, and Gillian's manager Stephanie offered to hold individual private discussions.

Handouts about transgender issues compiled by Stephanie were given to staff.

Gillian returned to work on 1 March and continued her duties as before. She emailed all staff to thank them for their support, and received many encouraging responses. Stephanie and Gillian have continued to meet to discuss any issues that have come up related to the transition.

Gillian has seen many improvements in her life: confidence, positive relationships, health and outlook since expressing her true self and successfully transitioning in the workplace.



## Lily's story

*This is a real life story. All the names have been changed to protect privacy.*

Lily is a professional who transitioned from male to female at work. When she started working at her current job, she was presenting as a male person named Jim.

Lily had been diagnosed with gender dysphoria in October the previous year, and was undergoing hormone replacement therapy.

In January, Jim confided in her manager Phillip that she identifies as a transgender woman and intended to present as a woman called Lily. At that stage, she had considered ceasing her current role and seeking a new job. Jim told Phillip that she had been on hormone replacement therapy and having counselling for the last six months. Phillip responded with strong support, relieved that it was now clear what had been causing Jim's low moods and depression over the past year. This encouraged Lily to reconsider her plan, and she decided to transition in her current job.

This was a totally new situation for Phillip to manage, and he asked Jim what her needs would be over the next few months. In response, Jim created a formal transition plan, including background information on gender dysphoria, some proposed timelines and relevant medical information. Phillip gratefully accepted this information, and a timeline was agreed, with the date for Jim to start presenting as female at work set for 31 March.

In consultation with Jim, over a period of four weeks Phillip had one-on-one sessions with colleagues to explain that the transition would be occurring. Jim also talked to her colleagues and showed them pictures of what Lily looks like. Phillip always made sure that Jim knew when a one-on-one session would be taking place, and took care to tailor the message depending on the reaction he expected from the particular employee. Phillip explained to employees it might be necessary to cut Lily a bit of extra slack as it would be an emotional time for her.

Jim told Phillip that she would like to use the female toilet on the ground floor, then after a couple of months, use the female toilets on their office floor. This was a decision that Phillip supported.

Jim took a week off and returned to work as Lily on 31 March. Lily's colleagues showed her overwhelming support and acceptance. Lily was surprised how accepting her colleagues were; and something else happened. People started coming to her in private and confiding in her, disclosing their own hidden issues and fears. Even colleagues with whom she had previously had issues, came forward expressing their regret at past falling-outs and expressing respect for her courage in coming out.

Lily felt liberated because she was finally able to present as her affirmed gender in all aspects of her life.

## Eric's story

*This is a real life story. All the names have been changed to protect privacy.*

Eric has worked in a retail store for 7 years. He was hired by the company as a female called Linda. After 4 years working at the store, Linda started taking male hormones to begin the transition to male. Linda came out as transgender to a colleague, Jonathon, who he knew would be supportive.

Linda set up a meeting with two of his managers, to discuss his planned transition and requested that Jonathon come along as a support person. Linda found starting the conversation very hard, but finally got the courage to say the words. The managers immediately asked about what name to use, and started using Eric right away. They expressed relief and excitement, and told Eric they felt honoured that this information was shared with them.

In the meeting they also discussed practicalities, including paperwork, obtaining a locker key for the men's locker room, using the men's toilet, and providing a new ID badge. Eric and his managers also discussed how the news would be shared with colleagues. The managers' suggestion was to put it in the newsletter, but Eric said he would prefer to write a letter to the team to be put up on the noticeboard in the tea room.

Eric's letter contained the following information:

- his new name, and that he would now like to be referred to as 'he' and 'him';
- that he would be using the men's toilet from now on;
- an acknowledgement that it may be a bit weird for everyone (including him) to get used to the change initially, but asked everyone to try their best to get his name and pronouns right;
- a request that they not tell new team members when they start that he is transgender.

While Eric was on leave, he requested that his department's managers inform his colleagues about the transition and refer them to his letter. At the store there were staff working different shifts, so the same message was relayed in the morning meetings every day for a week. In advance, Eric also asked his supportive colleagues who already knew about the transition to speak up for him and answer questions on his behalf.

After transitioning, he found that colleagues did fairly well with his name and pronouns. Although there were slip-ups, he did not feel that these were intentional. He found that external stakeholders such as sales reps did not know about the transition, so to avoid any awkwardness he asked his supportive colleagues to explain his new name and pronouns to them.

Eric feels happy and supported in his role at the retail store and is now a long-term employee. He feels that the workplace has a good culture and is a supportive environment. He has experienced this not only in the way he was treated during his transition, but in the way that diversity is accepted generally.

# Where to go for help

## Trans support groups

### ATSAQ: Australian Transgender Support Association Queensland Inc

Phone: (07)3843 5024 (8am to 6pm)  
Email: [atsaq.inc@gmail.com](mailto:atsaq.inc@gmail.com)  
Web: [www.atsaq.com/](http://www.atsaq.com/)

### Many Genders, One Voice

Email: [evieryder@outlook.com](mailto:evieryder@outlook.com)  
Web: [www.manygendersonevoice.org/](http://www.manygendersonevoice.org/)

### FTM Australia

Phone: 0403 876 393  
Email: [mail@ftmaustralia.org](mailto:mail@ftmaustralia.org)  
Web: [www.ftmbrisbane.org](http://www.ftmbrisbane.org)

### QuAC (Queensland Aids Council)

Phone: (07) 3017 1777; 1800 177 434 | Cairns (07) 4041 5451; 1800 884 401  
Email: [info@quac.org.au](mailto:info@quac.org.au) | Cairns: [cns@quac.org.au](mailto:cns@quac.org.au)  
Web: [www.qahc.org.au](http://www.qahc.org.au)  
Gender clinic: (07) 3017 1777 (Wednesday only 1pm to 5pm)

### Seahorse Society Queensland Inc

Phone: 0403 876 393  
Email: [seahorseqld@gmail.com](mailto:seahorseqld@gmail.com)  
Web: [seahorseqld.org.au](http://seahorseqld.org.au)

## Youth

### Open Doors Youth Service

Phone: (07) 3257 7660  
Email: [opendoors@opendoors.net.au](mailto:opendoors@opendoors.net.au)  
Web: [www.opendoors.net.au](http://www.opendoors.net.au)

## Legal

### LGBTI Legal Service

Phone: 0401 936 232  
Email: [lgbti.legalservice@gmail.com](mailto:lgbti.legalservice@gmail.com)  
Web: [www.lgbtilegalservice.org/home](http://www.lgbtilegalservice.org/home)

### Queensland Working Women's Service

Phone: (07) 3211 1440; 1800 621 458  
Web: [www.qwws.org.au](http://www.qwws.org.au)

## Employer assistance

### Pride in Diversity

Phone: (02) 9206 2139; Hearing Impaired: (02) 9283 2088  
Web: [www.prideindiversity.com.au](http://www.prideindiversity.com.au)

# About the QHRC

We are an independent statutory body established under the Queensland *Human Rights Act 2019*. We were formerly the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland, and still handle complaints and training on discrimination, vilification, victimisation and sexual harassment, under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (Qld).

We support businesses, state and local government, the community sector and people throughout the state.

Our work includes:

- resolving discrimination complaints;
- delivering training to business, government and the community on discrimination and human rights; and
- promoting public discussion on human rights.

We have offices in Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton.

## Training

As the leading authority on the *Human Rights Act 2019*, QHRC is responsible for delivering practical training to help all people in Queensland to understand their rights and responsibilities under the Act, and to help organisations to promote and protect people's human rights. We also offer training on a variety of aspects of anti-discrimination law, including information and capacity building workshops on gender identity and supporting trans and gender diverse employees.

You can contact our training team at [training@qhrc.qld.gov.au](mailto:training@qhrc.qld.gov.au).

## Complaints, information and enquires

The QHRC has a free enquiry service which can provide information about the Human Rights Act and Anti-Discrimination Act, rights and responsibilities under these laws, our complaints process, and referrals to other support or complaint agencies where relevant.

Our highly skilled complaint management team is responsible for assessing all complaints received and working with parties to resolve the issues through conciliation.

You can read more about our complaints process and conciliation on our website at [www.qhrc.qld.gov.au](http://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au), or contact our enquiry line on 1300 130 670.

**STATEWIDE**  
tollfree 1300 130 670  
info@qhrc.qld.gov.au  
qhrc.qld.gov.au  
fax 07 3193 9979



Queensland  
**Human Rights  
Commission**

**South East Queensland office**

Level 20, 53 Albert St  
Brisbane Q 4000  
(corner of Albert and Margaret Streets)  
City East Post Shop  
PO Box 15565  
City East Q 4002  
1300 130 670

**Central Queensland office**

Level 1, James Larcombe Place  
209 Bolsover Street  
Rockhampton Q 4700

PO Box 1390  
Rockhampton Q 4700  
1300 130 670 or 4933 5104

**North Queensland office**

Ground Floor, 187-209 Stanley St  
Townsville Q 4810

PO Box 1566  
Townsville Q 4810  
1300 130 670 or 4421 4000

**Far North Queensland Office**

Ground Floor, 10 Grove Street  
Cairns Q 4870

PO Box 4699  
Cairns Q 4870  
1300 130 670 or 4037 2100

The Queensland Human Rights Commission operates a telephone information and enquiry service.

People with a hearing or speech impairment can call through the National Relay Service:

- Speak & Listen users, phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 130 670
- Internet Relay users, connect to the National Relay Service (see [www.relayservice.com.au](http://www.relayservice.com.au) for details) and then ask for 1300 130 670.

The National Relay Service website includes information about the options available to people who are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment. They can also contact 1800 555 660 or [helpdesk@relayservice.com.au](mailto:helpdesk@relayservice.com.au) for information or support.

Callers who want to speak to us in a language other than English can contact TIS (Translating and Interpreting Service) on 131 450 from anywhere in Australia. Our website also has brief information on discrimination, sexual harassment, vilification and how to contact the commission in thirty languages.

## Contact us

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STATEWIDE ENQUIRY LINE: 1300 130 670

[WWW.QHRC.QLD.GOV.AU](http://WWW.QHRC.QLD.GOV.AU)

[TRAINING@QHRC.QLD.GOV.AU](mailto:TRAINING@QHRC.QLD.GOV.AU)



Queensland  
**Human Rights**  
Commission