



# **2025 Australia Regional Rainbow Survey Summary: New South Wales**

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## Acknowledgement of Country

We pay our respect to all First Nations elders both past and present from the lands where Charles Sturt University students reside. In particular, we acknowledge the Wiradjuri, Ngunawal, Gundungarra and Biripai peoples of Australia, who are the traditional custodians of the land where our campuses are located.

Image: Smoking Ceremony performed by Wiradjuri elders at Bathurst Open Day 2019

# In a nutshell

**Results tend to mirror patterns observed previously.**

A similar proportion of people report being out. The need to conceal one's identity remains detrimental to psychological well-being.

**Family and friends, colleagues, and strangers in town are key sources of discrimination.**

Physical health care services still not very safe for LGBTQ+ people.

There is a call for more opportunities to socialise with LGBTQ+ people, and more LGBTQ+ health services.



# Introduction

LGBTQ+ people in rural and regional Australia report **lower levels of psychological well-being** compared to their metro peers (Mai et al., 2025)

This is due to **socio-environmental factors present or perceived** within these communities that privilege heterosexuality, displacing other identities (Marlin et al., 2022)

But, there is **limited data** that focuses specifically on rural LGBTQ+ Australians with extant studies taking a broad view when sampling the LGBTQ+ communities, typically attaining samples that are skewed towards metro locations.



# The components

Factor	Explanation	Example Studies
<b>Sense of community belonging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encompasses feelings of acceptance, support and connectedness within a community context.</li><li>• Generally, has been linked with behaviour change like vaccine uptake, and positive social outcomes.</li><li>• Amongst LGBTQ+ people it has been shown to buffer against depressive symptoms and enhance life satisfaction.</li></ul>	Allen et al., 2021; Chai, 2023; Marlin et al., 2022; Tolan et al., 2001
<b>Perceived daily discrimination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discrimination correlates with increased depressive symptoms, loneliness, and lower quality of life among LGBT individual.</li><li>• Has been linked to maladaptive behaviours including binge eating.</li><li>• Everyday discrimination scale considers unfair treatment in daily life targeted at marginalised groups</li></ul>	Jackson et al., 2019; Mason, et al., 2017; Meyer, 1995; Williams et al., 1997
<b>Identity management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strategies employed to navigate sexual and gender identities in various contexts in response to social stigma considering passing and revealing.</li><li>• Can be both conscious and unconscious measures put in place – and can be seen to provide agency over one’s environment.</li><li>• Identity management can add to the stress the individual experiences because of the need for constant vigilance.</li></ul>	Button, 2004; Chrobot-Mason et al., 2001; Lewis & Redshaw, 2024; Ro & Olson, 2020; Testa et al., 2014
<b>Hope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hope is an essential psychological resource that enables individuals to remain motivated and goal-oriented, even in the face of adversity (Snyder et al., 1991).</li><li>• Includes both agency and pathways thinking.</li></ul>	Snyder et al., 1991; Kwon & Hugelshofer, 2010; Snooks & McLaren, 2021; Glynn et al., 2023
<b>Access to LGBTQ+ services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Considers access to specific services for LGBTQ+ people, services that are welcoming of LGBTQ+ people, and spaces that use LGBTQ+ symbolism.</li><li>• Access to support services can act as a protective buffer helping validate identities and provide a safe environment to seek care.</li></ul>	Lewis, 2020; Marlin et al., 2022



# The Method

**Online survey:** survey length: 15 minutes. Administered via Qualtrics.

**Distributed online:** via LGBTQ+ social media groups/advocacy/support organisation, state Mental Health Commissions, paid advertising.

## Survey components:

- **Section A: Screeners**  
Age, Orientation/Identity, Location (Aus)
- **Section B: Community Lived Experience**  
Psychological Wellbeing (Ryff, 1995), Sense of community belonging (Tolan et al., 2001), Hope (Snyder et al., 1991), Daily discrimination scale (Williams et al., 1997), Identity management (Ro & Olson, 2020; Testa et al., 2014), Degree of outness (Ro & Olson, 2020; Meyer et al., 2010).
- **Section C: Community Descriptors**  
LGBTQ+ Specific services, LGBTQ+ welcoming services, LGBTQ+ symbolism, , experiences of discrimination Open Ended: Changes in the last 12months and OE: Changes needed.
- **Section D: ACON questions**  
Campaign knowledge, Channel of access
- **Section E: Sample Socio-economic descriptors**  
Employment, Income, Education, Relationship status, Cultural background, Religious background

# The Sample

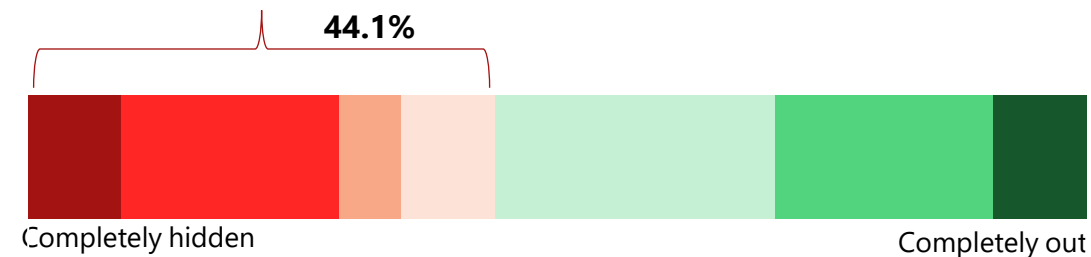
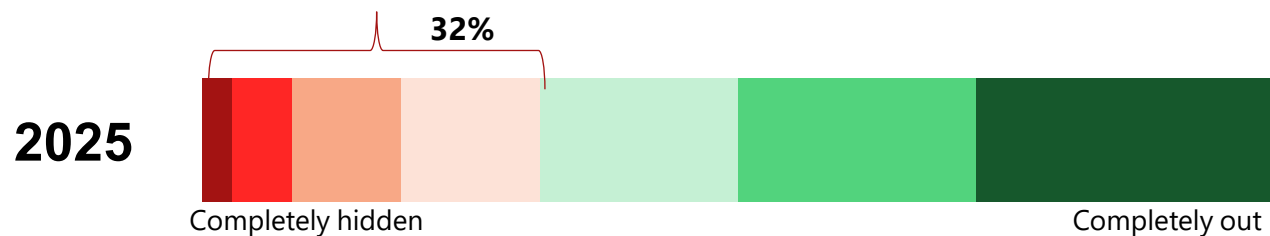
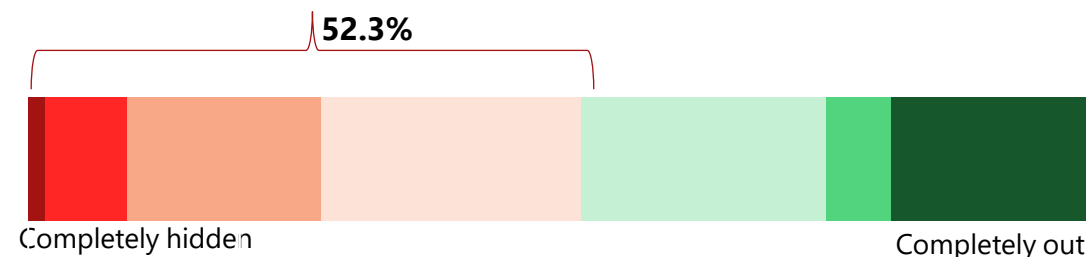
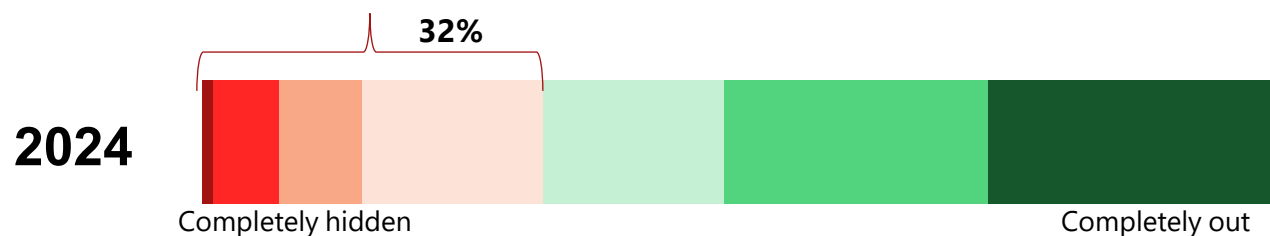
Total Sample, Australia wide N= 309: *n* = 117 rural/regional, *n* = 193 metro

Age		Rural/Regional NSW	Cultural Background		Rural/Regional NSW	Income Level		Rural/Regional NSW
Average Age		40.12 (19-73 years, SD 14.74)	First Nations Australian		4.3%	Above average		27.4%
Sexual orientation			Australian/NZ		56.4%	Average		30.8%
Monosexual		69.6%	European		7.7%	Below average		41.9%
Plurisexual		30.4%	Asian		1.7%	Employment		
Gender			North American		0.9%	Full-time		52.1%
Man or male		35.9%	Multiple		29.1%	Part-time		27.4%
Woman or Female		51.3%	Relationship status			Not working		20.5%
Non-Binary		12.8%	Partnered		53.0%	Education		
Gender			Unpartnered		47.0%	Primary/Secondary/Vocational		38.5%
Cisgender		69.2%				University Degree		61.5%
Trans/Gender Diverse		30.8%						

# Degree of Outness

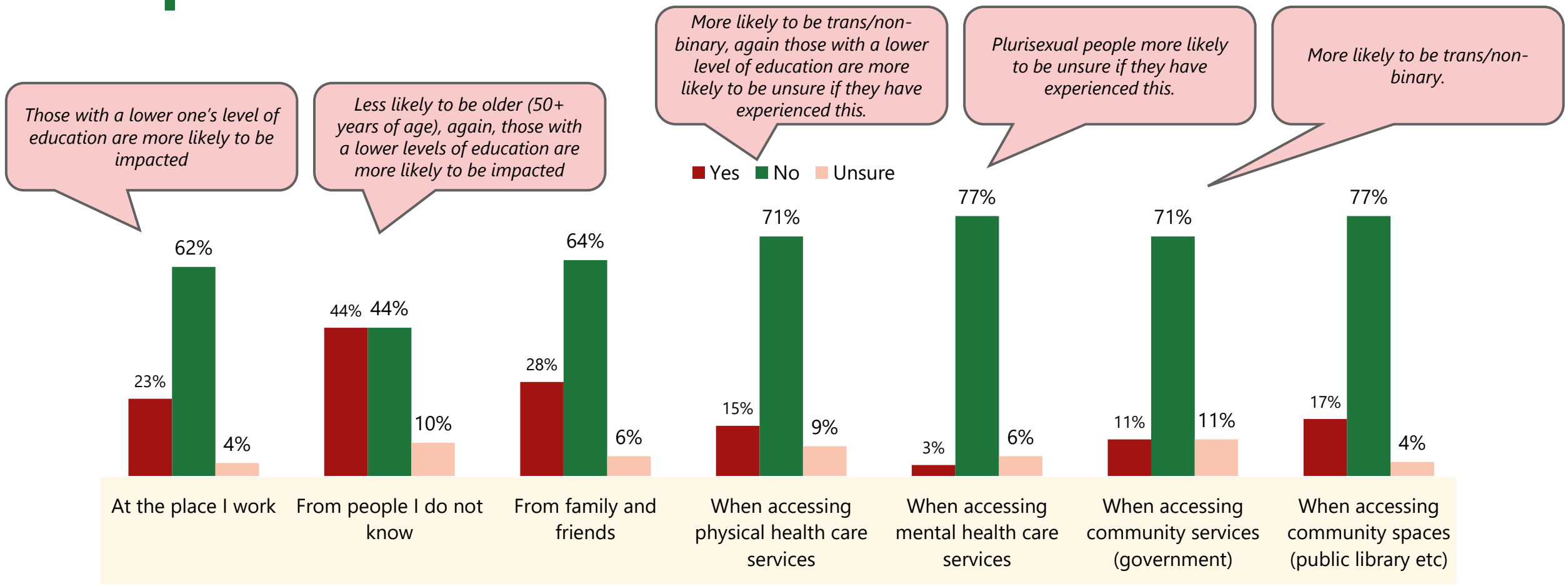
## Sexual Orientation

## Gender identity



2025 N = 117 adults in Rural/Regional NSW  
2024 N = 201 adults in Rural/Regional NSW  
Comparison between years should be made with caution.

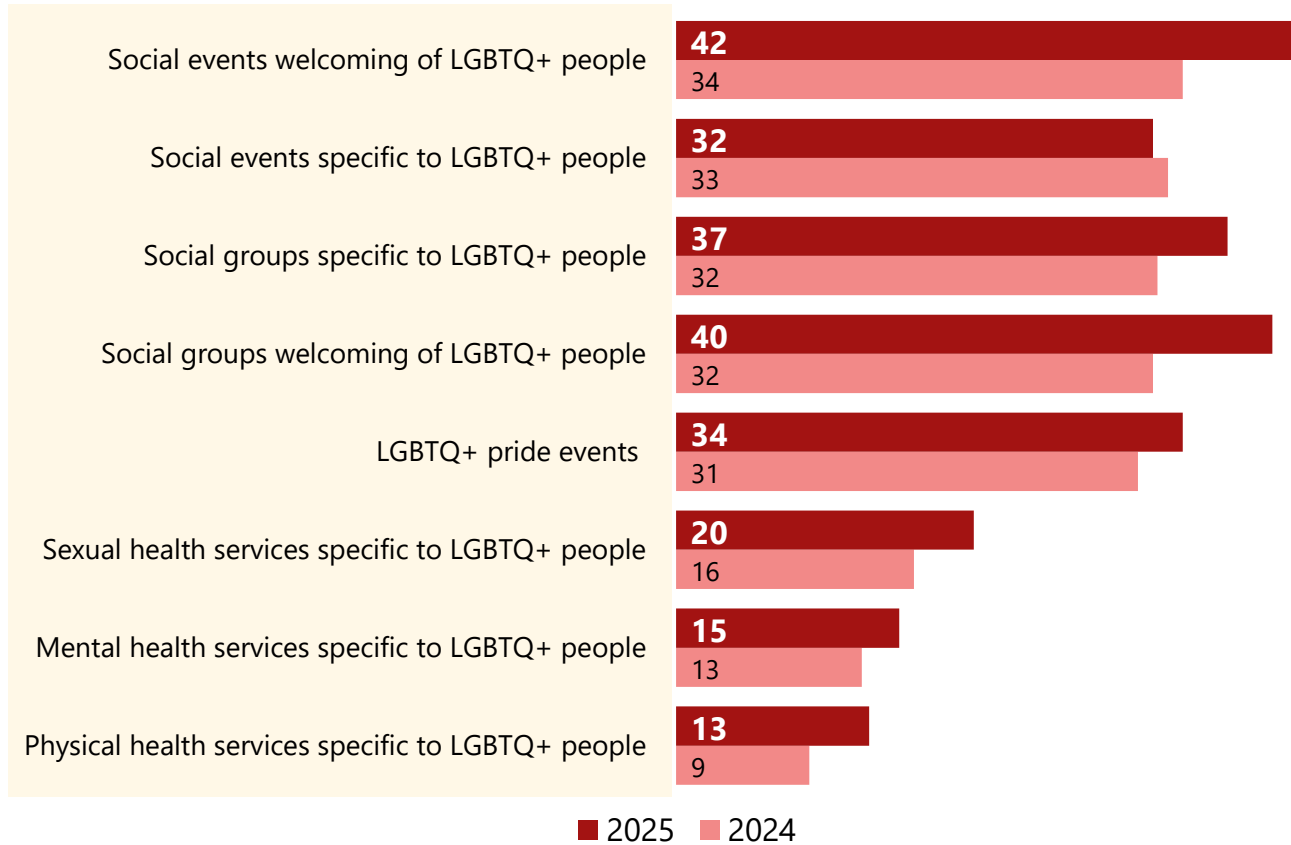
# Experiences of Discrimination



# Community access

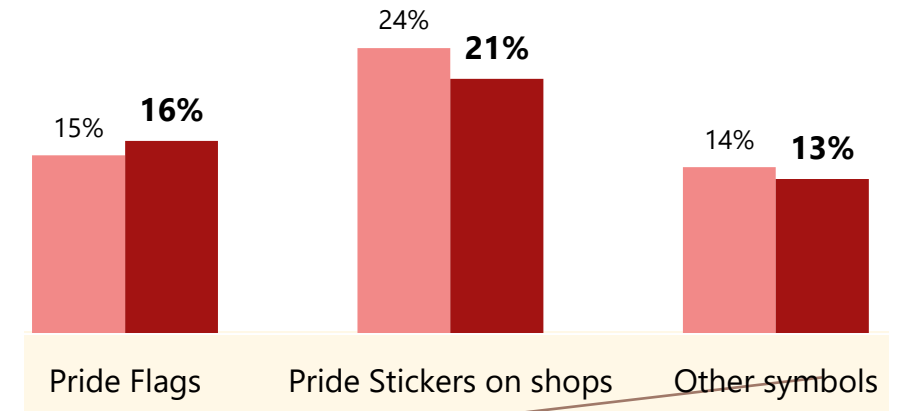
## Access to the following in/close to the town you live (%)

Top2 Box: Agree, Strongly Agree



## LGBTQ+ Symbolism

Top2 Box: Often, Very Often

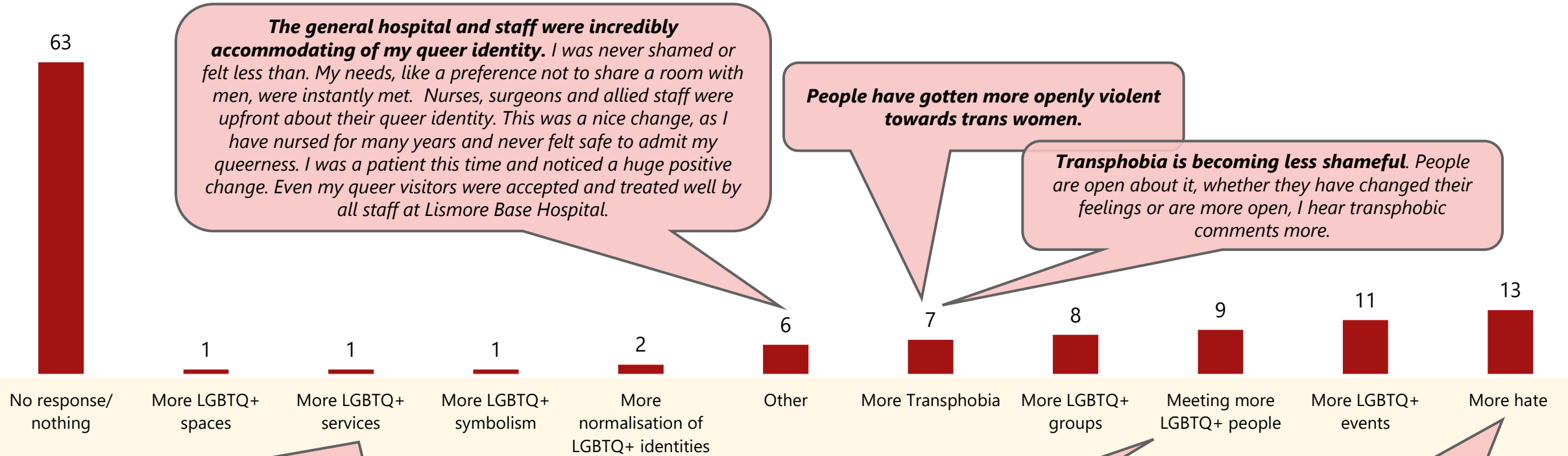


Coles Progress flags  
 People holding hands  
 Pride/events  
 Public Library

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# The changes in the last 12 months

What changes had our participants noticed in the 12 months prior (n) ?



**The general hospital and staff were incredibly accommodating of my queer identity.** I was never shamed or felt less than. My needs, like a preference not to share a room with men, were instantly met. Nurses, surgeons and allied staff were upfront about their queer identity. This was a nice change, as I have nursed for many years and never felt safe to admit my queerness. I was a patient this time and noticed a huge positive change. Even my queer visitors were accepted and treated well by all staff at Lismore Base Hospital.

**People have gotten more openly violent towards trans women.**

**Transphobia is becoming less shameful.** People are open about it, whether they have changed their feelings or are more open, I hear transphobic comments more.

*I am only openly out with people I know. I don't go out of my way to be out to anyone else. It's not a very accepting place overall, despite having a huge LGBTQIA+ population. Somewhat politically right wing. I think there are some more services and events happening through volunteer groups; however, they are often kept somewhat quiet due to the homophobia and threats made when they are public. So, some change but not all positive.*

**The community is growing, but the support infrastructure for community is not.**

*Protests during a pride event, people trying to defund the event and actively speaking against it*

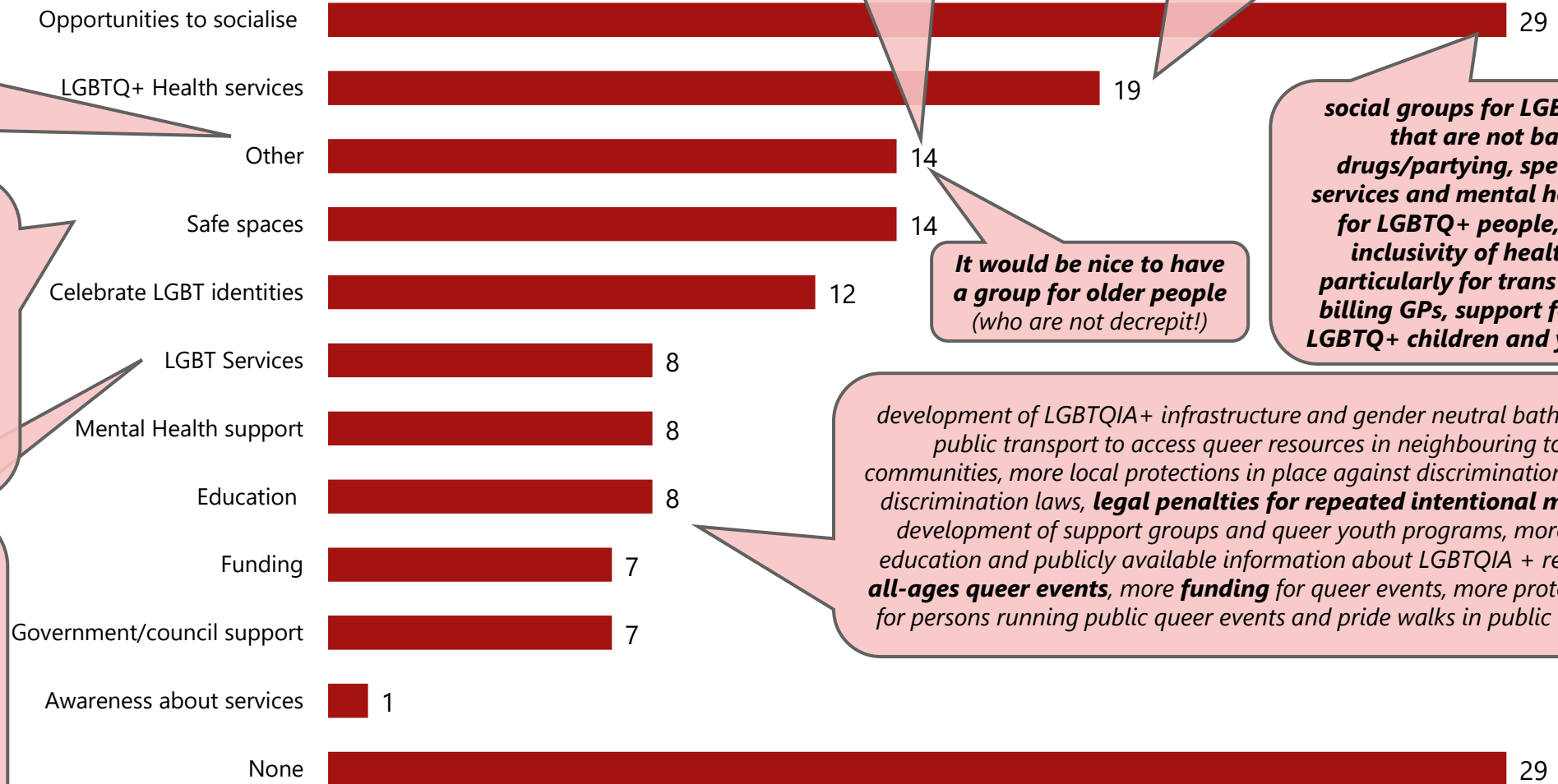
# The changes that are needed

What changes do our participants think are needed (n) ?

There's not a lot here, I've got a family and a life and friends and settled, **but my heart breaks for the baby-queers** :(

**Transgender specific medical services need to be provided. Gender neutral bathrooms. Better education and understanding of the LGBTQIA+ community and what we need. Advertising safe spaces for transgender people in sport.**

Spaces where LGBTQ+ people are overtly welcomed. Where people do not think they need to hide and where they truly are safe to be themselves. E.g. **a regular social group in a location that feels safe.** More visibility, visible support within the town. Inclusion within local media and events



Sanctioned public men's cruising space

more gender-affirming health care services for my peers, more knowledgeable GPs

It would be nice to have a group for older people (who are not decrepit!)

social groups for LGBTQ+ people that are not based on drugs/partying, specific health services and mental health services for LGBTQ+ people, improving inclusivity of health services particularly for trans people, bulk billing GPs, support for parents of LGBTQ+ children and young people.

development of LGBTQIA+ infrastructure and gender neutral bathrooms, further public transport to access queer resources in neighbouring towns and communities, more local protections in place against discrimination, stronger anti-discrimination laws, **legal penalties for repeated intentional misgendering**, development of support groups and queer youth programs, more queer-lead education and publicly available information about LGBTQIA+ resources, more **all-ages queer events**, more **funding** for queer events, more protections in place for persons running public queer events and pride walks in public business areas

# Thank you!



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