

**CULTURE AND PEOPLE COMMITTEE**

FOR INFORMATION

<b>Title</b>	Update on Gender Inclusive Bathroom Signage installed in Canberra based office bathrooms
<b>Recommendation</b>	1. That the Committee <b>note</b> the update on Gender Inclusive bathroom signage post installation in all Canberra based staff office bathrooms.
<b>Prepared by</b>	s. 22(1)(a)(ii) Director, Talent, Inclusion and Capability, People Branch, People Division
<b>Presenter</b>	Andrew Oliver - Branch Head, People Branch, People Division _____
<b>Sponsored by</b>	s. 22(1)(a)(ii) – Acting Chief People Officer, People Division

**Key Issues**

1. In May 2023, the Culture and People Committee **endorsed** the People Branch's request for Gender Inclusive bathroom signage (**see Attachment A**) to be installed in all employee bathrooms at 51 Allara Street and the John Gorton Building. In addition, this committee **agreed** to consult with staff beyond the Pride Network about the signage being installed in late December 2023.
2. Post installation of the signage, minimal vandalism to the signs has been reported. People Branch is committed to develop and execute an education piece (**see Attachment B**) on the intranet to inform employees on the meaning and importance of inclusive bathrooms, raises awareness on relevant legislation and provides an opportunity for staff feedback.

**Background**

3. The Gender Inclusive bathroom signage was developed in consultation with the Pride Network and is part of the department's commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and diverse workplace to ensure that everyone is comfortable using the appropriate bathroom facilities that align with their gender identity.
4. In Australia, inclusive bathrooms are supported by the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, and intersex status. Additionally, various state and territory anti-discrimination laws, such as the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* in New South Wales and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* in Victoria, further protect the rights of transgender and gender-diverse individuals.

**Next Steps**

5. In consultation with the Pride Network on the signage being in-place for the past six months, the Network has expressed their preference for all bathroom signage to be externally facing on the outside of each bathroom, rather than internally placed as this will assist staff in identifying which bathroom is safe and an inclusive space for them to use from the outside.
6. Property, Security and Infrastructure Branch has been consulted about the signage being relocated and support the approach. People Branch will work with the Pride Network to relocate all Gender Inclusive bathroom signage to be externally faced on the outside of each bathroom.

<b>Attachments</b>	A. Gender Inclusive Bathroom Signage design B. Gender Inclusive Bathroom Signage Intranet article
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**Australian Government****Department of Climate Change, Energy,  
the Environment and Water****Agenda Item X**  
**Wednesday, XX July 2024**

<b>Consultation</b>	The following consultations have been undertaken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Pride Network</li><li>• Finance Division - Property, Security and Infrastructure Branch</li></ul>
<b>Document distribution</b>	

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**CLASSIFICATION**

**Australian Government**  
**Department of Climate Change, Energy,  
 the Environment and Water**

PDR ID

To: Deputy Secretary Luise McCulloch (For decision)

## INCLUSIVE BATHROOM SIGNAGE

<b>Recommendation:</b> That you <b>approve</b> closure of the consultation process and move to implementation of the inclusive bathroom signage initiative.			
			<b>Approved / Please discuss</b>
<b>Signed:</b>		Date:	
<b>Comments:</b>			
<b>Clearing Officer:</b> Sent:.././..	Andrew Oliver	Branch Head, People Branch, People Division	Mob: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
	Kyle Sarah	A/g Branch Head, People Safety, Support and Wellbeing Branch, People Division	Mob: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)	A/g Director Inclusion, People Branch, People Division	

### Key Points

1. This brief provides an update on the implementation of inclusive bathroom signage across the department. It outlines the actions taken to date, and next steps in the national implementation.

### Consultation

2. The Pride Network, who originally championed the inclusive signage initiative, was engaged at multiple stages — including the initial concept development, signage design, and throughout the pilot period. The Gender Equity Network was consulted as part of the Health and Safety Representative (HSR) engagement process.
3. Since signage installation began in December 2023, the initiative has remained open to feedback from all staff. Employees were encouraged to raise concerns or questions via both

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formal and informal channels, including direct email. People Division responded to all queries and incorporated this input into broader planning, contributing to awareness, refinement and implementation decisions.

4. Consultation on the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Risk Assessment has been conducted through established departmental processes, including targeted engagement with HSRs.
5. The consultation resulted in a minor change to the risk assessment based on Comcare feedback. Comcare suggested that the likelihood relating to “Risk 15 - Sexual harassment” be changed from “remote” to “possible”. As a result, the overall risk rating moved from Low to Medium.
6. WHS has finalised the risk assessment in consideration of staff feedback, incorporating any necessary changes. **The overall risk assessment rating remains medium.**
7. WHS will close the risk assessment consultation process by summarising and responding to the feedback provided by the HSRs.
8. Legal advice confirmed that consultation was not a legislative requirement under the WHS Act or relevant discrimination laws. Regardless, the department has been fair and reasonable in its efforts to ensure diverse perspectives have been considered, beyond the minimum requirements.
9. People Division considers that there is no need for any further consultation, such as inviting the Departmental Consultative Committee representatives to provide comment because:
  - The HSR consultation process provided all employees an opportunity to comment on the risk assessment and the initiative more broadly through their HSR; and
  - Feedback provided through the HSRs did not generate any new issues that were not already identified through the trial period in JGB, similarly further consultation is unlikely to surface any new feedback that requires addressing.
10. Further, the consultation process continues to create a potential psychosocial risk to some employees. The Pride network has indicated that several members have become distressed through the continuation of the consultation on bathroom signage.

**Communications and Implementation Plan**

11. The department should proceed with the implementation of the inclusive bathroom signage initiative. Implementation activities will include a communications campaign, education campaign, employee engagement sessions and upgrading or installation of bathroom signage nationally.
12. This national rollout strategy is structured into four distinct phases, designed to align communications, engagement and operational readiness across a complex and geographically diverse organisation.

**Phase 1: Education and Awareness (August–September 2025)**

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13. The first phase focuses on clearly articulating the intent and legislative basis for inclusive signage to all staff. An updated intranet article will launch the campaign, titled “What inclusive bathroom signage means (and what it doesn’t).” This resource will address misconceptions, reinforce the department’s legal obligations under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and WHS Act 2011, and invite respectful engagement.
14. To support consistent messaging, talking points will be distributed to SES Band 1 and 2 and people managers, with an emphasis on psychological safety, respectful dialogue, and creating a workplace where all employees feel supported. These messages will be amplified through established internal communication channels including McCulloch’s Mid-week. Example messaging can be found at **Attachment A**.

**Phase 2: Staff Engagement (September–October 2025)**

15. A series of structured online drop-in information sessions will be offered as part of the engagement approach. To support safety and clarity, staff will be invited to pre-submit questions in advance. This will help guide discussion, ensure psychological safety and support respectful, informed engagement across a range of views.
16. It is recommended that these sessions be delivered by an external provider — such as Pride in Diversity or A Gender Agenda — to ensure the sessions are facilitated in a psychologically safe and inclusive way. Using a third-party provider also supports neutrality, helps build staff confidence in the process, and reduces the risk of potentially distressing disclosures being directed to departmental staff who may not be appropriately trained to respond. Inclusion and WHS representatives will remain available to support but will not be responsible for facilitating the sessions directly.

**Phase 3: Localised Implementation Planning (October–November 2025)**

17. This phase will involve detailed logistical planning tailored to the needs of each site type. For DCCEEW-owned buildings, Property will coordinate readiness assessments and installation logistics. For co-occupied tenancies, consultation will occur with building managers and fellow tenants to ensure consistency and coordination.
18. Parks and other culturally sensitive sites will be approached in consultation with the Indigenous Liaison Officer and local WHS representatives. These conversations will guide implementation approaches that respect community and cultural values.
19. Signage placement will also be reviewed to ensure visibility and durability. While the Pride Network’s preference is for externally facing signage, Property will provide guidance on materials, wall surfaces and frame types, balancing visibility with protection against vandalism.

**Phase 4: National Rollout (December 2025-February 2026)**

20. Final installation of signage across sites will commence, aligned to the implementation plan and operational readiness. This final phase will be supported by a refreshed communication push, including an updated intranet article and broader awareness activities through the Pride Network.

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21. The overarching communications campaign will be delivered in partnership with the Communications Branch and reviewed in consultation with the Pride Network. Pride Co-Champion, Anita Agett, will support messaging design to ensure tone and content are inclusive, respectful, and well aligned with the department's broader culture and values.

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