



ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION YOUTH PROGRAMS

OUR FRAMEWORK

As the national, youth driven charity for LGBTQIA+ youth, access and inclusion is at the core of Minus18. We understand young people who engage with Minus18 have a diverse range of life experiences beyond their gender and sexuality. It is important that all young people who engage with Minus18 feel like it's a place where they belong, regardless of their background. That is why accessibility and inclusion are vital to the spaces, events and resources Minus18 produces.

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

- » **ACCESSIBILITY** refers to the factors that allow or prevent someone from accessing a place, event, service, or experience. For example, young wheelchair users might not be able to participate fully in an event if there are no ramps for them to physically access the venue.
- » **INCLUSION** refers to how those factors are managed so people are able to access the place, service, or experience. For example, ensuring venues have ramps so they are wheelchair accessible.

PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

An Access & Inclusion Framework documents our guiding principles for best practices regarding accessibility and inclusion. The main purpose of this document is to inform strategy, policy, events and projects that Minus18 undertakes. These principles also provide a frame of reference for other community organisations working in the youth space. These principles are primarily oriented towards the young people who are our stakeholders, clients and event participants. The framework was developed through consultation with young people, and by Minus18 Board members, with lived experiences. It is important that this framework is informed by young people and reflects the needs of youth accessing Minus18. As a result, it is a live document that is updated every 2 years.

CURRENT PRIORITIES

Minus18's Strategic Plan sets the organisation's strategic priorities, We recognise the importance of intersectionality and that access and inclusion is a constantly evolving space. Minus18 balances prioritising the needs of specific individuals and communities with providing welcoming spaces, events and resources that can accommodate difference. Priority areas for the 2020-2022 strategic plan are:

People of Colour (POC)

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander

Regional/Rural Youth

Youth with Disabilities

Trans/gender diverse Youth

Low Socioeconomic Youth

These priorities are periodically evaluated and revised.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

VISIBILITY

- » Acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land in which our events take place; this includes an Acknowledgement of Country or a Welcome to Country where appropriate.
- » Engaging volunteers, staff, Board members, performing artists and speakers who identify with our priority demographics.
- » Portraying a broad range of self-identified young people within our marketing material, strategies and social media.

PHYSICAL SPACES

- » Ensuring our events are wheelchair-accessible.
- » Providing gender-neutral bathrooms by selecting venues that are already equipped with these facilities, or by re-badging these spaces according to the facilities inside them (e.g urinals, stalls etc.).
- » Providing spaces and/or services that cater towards young people from diverse backgrounds (ie Providing quiet, low-light, comfortable chill-out spaces for all young people and specifically to accommodate neuro-diverse youth).
- » Providing catering that can be enjoyed by persons of diverse faiths and cultures.

DIGITAL SPACES

- » Obtaining verbal consent for photos or digital representations that may appear publicly on our website, promotional material or social media.
- » Using Content Warnings and disclaimers in workshops and written materials when issues or content may unsettle or disturb young people.
- » Providing trained youth workers at larger events (ie Dance Events, Queer Formal), who can offer assistance and support.
- » Providing printed materials and web-links to mental health service providers and support hotlines.

LANGUAGE

- » Provide an option to request Auslan interpreters at larger events (ie Dance Events, Queer Formal).
- » Using gender-neutral language at all of our events and in all of our printed and digital materials.
- » Using gender-neutral language (e.g. 'they' pronouns) when speaking about anyone whose gender identity we are unfamiliar with.

TRAINING

- » Briefing our performers, contractors and speakers on inclusive best practices.
- » Providing training and workshops to organisations and communities in the language/terms/inclusion space.

OUTREACH

- » Partnering with youth organisations and services in rural/regional areas to invite and support the attendance of their young people.
- » Providing free or low-cost tickets to events to minimise economic barriers for young people.
- » Evaluating our sponsors and partners against our Partnership Framework to ensure they reflect our values in practice.

FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

- » Implementing strategies for, and being open to feedback from all of our youth, community members and stakeholders.
- » Continuously improving policies and governance to reflect community needs and the lived experiences of young people.

Access and inclusion are central to affirming LGBTQIA+ young people and providing events, activities and advocacy that are free from homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and interphobia in all settings. Minus18 is committed to improving and leading the way in this space.

DEFINITIONS

PEOPLE

Sex is our physical body, referring to anatomy, genetics or hormones that are typically considered male or female. Generally, when people are born, the doctor will assign a sex on their birth certificate based on these characteristics.

Gender identity refers to our sense of self when it comes to identifying as masculine or feminine. Basically, it is how we feel in our mind, how we identify, dress and interact with others. For a lot of people, gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth. This is referred to as cisgender. When our gender identity doesn't match the sex we were assigned at birth, this is referred to as transgender (e.g. being assigned male at birth, but identifying as a woman).

Some people identify with aspects of male and female while others might not really feel like either. This identity is referred to as being gender diverse or non-binary. For gender diverse people, the word they use to describe their identity is very personal and entirely up to them.

Some cultures have genders that are specific to their own history and heritage. For example, some indigenous communities recognise people as sistergirls and brotherboys to describe individuals who identify as transgender in other cultures. Similarly, other cultures recognise genders which are outside the male-female binary. It is important to acknowledge and respect these culturally-specific gender identities.

Being **intersex** is different to being transgender or gender-diverse. Intersex refers to someone whose anatomy, genetic profile or hormones don't clearly match male or female sex characteristics. Being intersex is different to being transgender or gender-diverse. For example, some intersex people are born with genitals that don't look either male or female. Similarly, some intersex people might be born with female genitals, but have male chromosomes. Someone with an intersex variation may identify as cisgender, transgender or gender-diverse.

People of Colour (POC) broadly speaking, refers to someone of African, South American, Arab, Asian, Indigenous, Pacific Islander, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or multiracial cultural background, who does not identify as 'white' or 'caucasian'. People who have a mix of backgrounds, even where it includes a 'white' or 'caucasian' background, may still identify as POC. The intersection between LGBTQIA+ and POC is often referred to as Queer and Trans People of Colour (QTPOC).

Youth with Disabilities refers to any young person with a restriction to their mental, sensory, or mobility functions.

Neurodiversity describes anyone whose way of thinking, understanding information and interpreting their

environment is different to what society usually expects. It is a broad category including young people experiencing Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, and others.

Regional / Rural Youth refers to young people who live outside Australian capital cities and other metropolitan centres.

Low Socioeconomic Youth refers to young people have less access to financial, education and employment opportunities due to their location, family circumstances, homelessness, unemployment or dependence.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander - An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which they live. They are the traditional owners and custodians of this land.

Cultural and Linguistically Diverse - Cultural diversity refers to differences related to people's language, religion, beliefs, laws, customs, knowledge and other capabilities and habits that are a result of the society they are a part of.

SPACES

Social Events- small-scale events (20-30 participants) that run every 2-3 weeks in Melbourne, such as movie nights, craft days and social outings.

Dance Events- moderate-scale events (50-100 participants) that run over the school holidays in Melbourne.

Queer Formal- large-scale events (greater than 100 participants) running yearly in Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney, containing live music, entertainment and dancing.

Professional Development Workshops- moderate-size events (up to 80 people) delivered by Minus18 staff to third-party organisations with the aim of professional training in the LGBTQIA+ youth space

Youth Workshops- moderate-size events hosted by third-party organisations (up to 80 people) and delivered by Minus18 staff with the aim of empowering other young people and adults in creating LGBTQIA+ youth inclusion.

Online spaces- websites owned or primarily run by Minus18. This includes the Minus18 website and related social media, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Youtube Channel.