

WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



Vice-Chancellor's **GENDER EQUALITY FUND** **Final Report 2022**

Voice of Western through data unlinkability:

**Setting the agenda for better equity and inclusion
of Western staff and students with diverse
genders, sexualities, and sex characteristics**

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Contents

Notes on Terminology.....	1
Recommendations.....	2
Executive Summary.....	4
Itemised Budget Expenditure.....	5
Research Report.....	6
1. Background.....	6
2. Literature Review.....	7
2.1. LGBTQIA+ Students and Staff in Higher Education.....	7
2.2. Delphi Method.....	8
3. Methods.....	9
3.1. Study Population and Sample.....	9
3.2. The 3-stage Delivery Method.....	10
3.3. The Delphi survey.....	12
4. Results and Discussion.....	13
4.1. Participants' characteristics.....	13
4.2. Delphi findings.....	16
4.3. Pertinent qualitative points.....	18
4.4. Feedback on survey design.....	20
5. Conclusion.....	23
References.....	23
Appendix 1: Voice of Western Participant Information Sheet.....	25
Appendix 2: Voice of Western Consent Form.....	27
Appendix 3: Voice of Western Survey 1.....	28
Appendix 4: Voice of Western Survey 2.....	31

Notes on Terminology

The authors recognise the diversity of genders, sexualities, and sex characteristics represented by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and related people (LGBTQIA+). The authors acknowledge that the acronym LGBTQIA+ is not all-encompassing and does not capture the complexities of everyone's experiences. This term resonates with people differently and some people with diverse genders, sexualities, and sex characteristics may not identify with it. The acronym LGBTQIA+ has been chosen for use in this report in the absence of a national consensus and has been consulted on with members of Rainbow Western and Western Sydney University Queer Collective as people with lived experiences.

While at the time of this study there is no specific University-level initiatives focusing on Intersex people, discussions within and among the member organisations of the Western Sydney University Pride Network acknowledge the experiences and needs of Intersex people. Therefore, the authors respectfully include the "I" in the acronym LGBTQIA+ and "sex characteristics" in discussing diversity in this report.

This report also uses some variations of LGBTQIA+, as well as GSD which stands for Gender and Sexuality Diverse, to respect the study participants who used these acronyms in expressing their opinions. The phrase "diverse (or diversity in) genders, sexualities and sex characteristics" is also used throughout this report.

Recommendations

1. Western Sydney University should put in place an action plan to implement the following areas of focus for greater equity and inclusion of staff and students from diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics (numbered in order of importance):
 - I. University-Wide Vocal Support, Acceptance, Inclusion of LGBTQIA+ and Gender Diverse Staff and Students:
 - Strong stance on LGBTQIA+ related issues;
 - Advocacy for LGBTQIA+ and taking lead in our region;
 - Formal recognition of Statement of Support for LGBTQIA+ rights;
 - Academics to vocalise their support in class;
 - Stronger articulated support for Trans and GSD individuals and their rights.
 - II. Anti-Discrimination:
 - Disciplinary action for individuals discriminating against LGBTQIA+ community;
 - Clear and frequently stated zero tolerance policies to discrimination and harassment, including religiously- or politically-motivated discrimination.
 - III. Support Services:
 - Better communication about where LGBTQIA+ people can go to for support at University;
 - More support services including mental health;
 - Providing information on which counsellors are LGBTQIA+, queer-safe, and Allies;
 - Compulsory training for counsellors in LGBTQIA+ awareness.
 - IV. Inclusive Policies:
 - Non-gendered policy in relation to parent/s caring for children;
 - Recognition of chosen families many queer people have in relation to personal leave policies.
 - V. University Executive and Leadership:
 - Active support from executive leadership;
 - More gender-diverse and queer people in positions of leadership in areas not so well-known at University;
 - People in positions of leadership championing diversity and inclusion without tokenism.
 - VI. Create a Stronger LGBTQIA+ Community:
 - A stronger queer platform and organization with routine meetings; and
 - Queer groups that help build meaningful skills.
 - VII. Gender-Inclusive Language:
 - Normalise the use of pronouns in signatures;
 - Academics stating pronouns at start of class;
 - Gender-inclusive language to be used by all staff.
 - VIII. Support of LGBTQIA+ women, including Indigenous women and women of colour, to be more visible in academic and professional work-related contexts.
 - IX. Safe Spaces:
 - Increased number and physical size of safe spaces on all campuses;
 - Promotion of spaces and resources on/off campus;
 - Better communication and signage of LGBTQIA+ rooms on campuses;

- Separation of Queer spaces from other groups on campus that often have a negative viewpoint on LGBTQIA+.
- X. Recognition and Celebration:
- Greater recognition of the contribution LGBTQIA+ people make to the University community;
 - Profiling queer leaders;
 - Highlighting success stories, excellence, pride, and acceptance.
- 2. Western Sydney University should put in place an action plan to implement the following supports, initiatives, and programs for staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics (numbered in order of importance):**
- I. Educating the University Community:
 - a. Staff undergoing inclusion and sensitivity training on gender and sexuality diversity;
 - b. Education to dispel myths about LGBTQIA+ awareness on identities and issues;
 - c. A greater focus on educating people about trans, non-binary, and Sistergirl and Brotherboy identities.
 - II. When/if further toxic debates arrive at a local, state or national level, having an immediate response from Executive showing support for LGBTQIA+ staff and students.
 - III. An LGBTQIA+ advisory panel for Western.
 - IV. Inclusion and Accessibility Programs:
 - a. Recognition that a large percentage of persons that identify in LGBTQIA+ are ASD, ADD, ADHD with individual needs;
 - b. Sensory spaces on campuses for staff who are LGBTQIA+ and neurodiverse to help ground and settle.
 - V. More support for LGBTQIA+ people in the Western Sydney region.
 - VI. Mentoring program that encourages the inclusion of queer and gender-diverse people to be mentors/mentees.
 - VII. Student Campus Culture and Life:
 - a. More ways to connect and socialise for students;
 - b. An LGBTQIA+ representative in the Student Representative Council.
 - VIII. Removal of mandatory biological sex information on enrolment.
 - IX. Reaching Out to Key Stakeholders Across Western:
 - a. More networking/collaborative initiatives at Western that include gender-diverse and queer people as keynote/guest speakers;
 - b. A research group for relevant queer collaboration.
 - X. All areas of the University are held accountable to champion days of significance to the LGBTQIA+ community.
- 3. Western Sydney University should implement a 3-stage data collection method for internal surveys/questionnaires related to matters of diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics to prevent inadvertent linkages between participants' experiences/views and their personal information (demographic data and University positioning data).**

Executive Summary

- University staff and students who identify as LGBTQIA+ face persistent, pervasive and intersecting challenges in their work and studies.
- LGBTQIA+ participants in an anonymous survey run the risk of being re-identifiable from intersecting personal information provided.
- A novel 3-stage survey data collection method that segments intersecting personal and professional/study attributes was trialled with LGBTQIA+ Western Sydney University students and staff.
- Findings found the 3-stage surveying methods (Voice of Western) to be acceptable and not too onerous on the participants.
- Two rounds of a Delphi survey embedded in the 3-stage survey method identified and prioritised the areas of focus for improving LGBTQIA+ inclusion at Western Sydney University. The priorities included university-wide systematic support for and protection of LGBTQIA+ people; the use of non-gendered expression and inclusive language in classes, policies and procedures; improved recognition and celebration of genders, sexualities, and sex characteristics diversity; proactive demonstratable support for LGBTQIA+ people; and the importance of LGBTQIA+ safe spaces.
- The Voice of Western survey methods has the potential to be a safe and inclusive approach for deploying future sensitive, potentially re-identifiable surveys with disadvantaged, marginalised or vulnerable students or staff.
- The findings from the current Voice of Western survey provide further guidance and baseline for the University in terms of strategies to incorporate better support for LGBTQIA+ students and staff.

Itemised Budget Expenditure

Total funded amount \$4,941.79

Activity / Item	Expenditures (GST incl.)
Student Co-Researcher/Research Assistant 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 42 hours at HEW 5.1 (from VC Gender Equity Fund)• Additional 13 hours (from 20191.69220 – see Notes on Expenditure below)	\$2,504.49 \$805.00
Student Co-Researcher/Research Assistant 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 26.75 hours at HEW 5.1 (from VC Gender Equity Fund)	\$1,595.14
Total expenditure	\$4,904.63
Balance from the VC Gender Equity Fund	\$842.16

Notes on Expenditure

Due to the late start of the project from delays in obtaining funding decision and the severe backlogs at the Western Human Research Ethics Committee, time ran out for the student co-researchers and Research Assistant 2 could not complete the assigned work. Since the remaining fund could not be transferred to Research Assistant 1 due to the strict time limit for expenditures, Research Assistant 1 was funded from another Project Code to continue their work until the project's completion.

Research Report

1. Background

Systemic, institutional and interpersonal discrimination is an ongoing issue faced by people with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics (from this point onward respectfully referred to as LGBTQIA+) including at Australian university campuses despite increasing discourse around acceptance.(1) Such environment creates a lack of safety for LGBTQIA+ staff and students to be 'out' at the University. The term 'out' is commonly used to describe a person's public visibility or public acknowledgement of being LGBTQIA+. In contrast, one who are not publicly indicate their being LGBTQIA+ are often said to be 'in the closet' or 'closeted'. LGBTQIA+ persons often go through coming out in stages and continually throughout their life, despite it often being associated with a major coming out event such as disclosure to one's family.(2) LGBTQIA+ people being 'in the closet' and having their LGBTQIA+ identity hidden in universities leads to a vicious cycle. Strategies toward better equity and inclusion of LGBTQIA+ staff and students require input from those with lived experiences. Yet, surveys and consultations are often limited only to those who feel safe and brave enough to be 'out', thus limiting the range of voices.

The increased acknowledgment of the importance of intersectionality in the University (3), while being a very positive progress, creates an additional layer of complexity to obtaining the voices of all LGBTQIA+ staff and students especially those who are not 'out'. The identity of a participant in an anonymous survey could become re-identifiable from the intersecting personal and University positioning information they provide, especially if they have quite distinctive and relatively rare intersecting attributes (e.g., being a Southeast Asian cisgender married gay man aged 50-55 who works as a School of Medicine Level D full time academic with 10-15 years of service and is based at Campbelltown Campus). The possibility of identifying/re-identifying LGBTQIA+ people may lead to their choosing not to participate in surveys and consultations despite the anonymity of data collection. While human research ethics principles may protect survey participants against identification/re-identification, many internal surveys are considered non-research and therefore are not bound by these ethical safeguards.

The Voice of Western (VOW) project was designed to address these issues through a targeted consultation with LGBTQIA+ students and staff at Western using a novel 3-stage approach to encourage participation beyond those who are 'out' and encourage free and honest expression of needs. In this approach, participants' personal, University positioning, and opinion data were collected separately to significantly reduce the possibility of identification/re-identification. In the third stage of this approach, participants' opinions were collected using a Delphi survey (4) to identify and prioritise areas of focus for better equity and inclusion of Western staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics.

This project was directly built on the findings from two recent Vice Chancellor Gender Equity Fund projects:

1. Nicholas, Robinson and Townley reported poor understanding of trans and gender diversity among Western staff, which highlights the importance of reaching the LGBTQIA+ staff and students directly to capture their voice.(5)

2. Robinson, Wolfinger, Nicholas and Sullivan found that collecting personal data can be met with resistance to disclose information due to concerns regarding privacy and possible identification.(3) This finding strongly resonates with an internal 2021 Rainbow Western survey (unpublished) where the fear of identification was recognised as a barrier for honest participation in research and consultation processes.

By significantly reducing inadvertent identification of participants with layers of security, the VOW project findings are expected to contribute to the setting of LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion agenda and encourage safer and honest survey participation of LGBTQIA+ students and staff.

2. Literature Review

2.1. LGBTQIA+ Students and Staff in Higher Education

The lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ students and staff in higher education is an underexplored yet important topic. LGBTQIA+ people are known to often navigate numerous issues, including:

- assumptions and misconceptions in the workplace about their sexuality, gender identity, and intersex variations;
- experiencing or witnessing stigma, discrimination and bullying from colleagues;
- fear of disclosure of being LGBTQIA+ to colleagues;
- sense of isolation in working environments; and
- mental health stress and wellbeing related problems due to emerging issues and debate in the public domain regarding LGBTQIA+ lives.(6)

It is well known that groups who are deemed less acceptable and treated as “others” tend to be excluded within hierarchical power systems due to systemic organisational and social issues.(7) LGBTQIA+ people often experience this “othering” due to the pervasive heteronormativity which negatively impacts on their everyday experiences. In a heteronormative environment, heterosexuality is privileged as normal and natural (8), rendering the LGBTQIA+ individuals as “pathological, deviant, invisible, unintelligible, or written out of existence”.(9) Such environment leads to social devaluation (10, 11), whereby individuals experiencing explicit and/or implicit forms of discrimination, resulting in negative health and wellbeing outcomes.(12, 13, 14) Although universities are regarded as progressive spaces, the impact of heteronormative values continue to be present within the structure of higher education, leading to systemic discrimination both at the personal and institutional levels.(15)

Research studies and reports on the experiences of LGBTQIA+ university students and staff have previously focused on campus experience and belongingness. These reports suggested enablement strategies to assist the LGBTQIA+ population to feel supported within higher education settings.(1, 5, 16, 17, 18) Of note, many Australian reports and studies in this space have focused primarily on the LGBTQIA+ student experience in higher education and not on professional and academic staff, though international studies have focused on staff members.(19) Across these reports, LGBTQIA+ students were often asked their perceptions about the on-campus climate towards the LGBTQIA+ populations. Some Australian studies reported a positive outlook and welcoming campus environments and yet, despite this

sentiment, students still reported experiencing both microaggressions and hostile behaviour.(16, 18) Of further importance, participating students reported that they did not feel safe enough to turn to supports offered by the university during these incidents.(16, 18) Australian LGBTQIA+ university students have reported similar concerns including:

- university staff and administration not updating students' accurate names or using their dead names;
- regular mis-gendering of students;
- course content using gendered terms;
- the pathologising of homosexuality;
- presence of heteronormative assumptions;
- lack of representation of LGBTQIA+ people in training across courses;
- LGBTQIA+ people not presented in course materials and perspectives; and
- LGBTQIA+ students taking on the responsibility of informing the class about the LGBTQIA+ perspectives.(1, 16, 17, 18, 19)

Meanwhile, a UK study focusing on LGBTQ+ university staff visibility found that “staff felt relatively comfortable coming out to their peer-groups in the workplace but were less confident in coming out to students”.(20) Other reports have found barriers to disclosure, including concerns about employment security and discrimination, concerns that students might respond in homophobic ways to disclosure, and anxieties that their identity might compromise their research career.(17, 18, 19) LGBTQIA+ university staff in the UK have additionally cited systemic institutional discrimination and implicit discrimination which impacted their promotions, discretionary pay rises and redundancies; and experiences of discrimination through exclusion from crucial social networks within departments.(19)

In relation to how universities address LGBTQIA+ focused discrimination, staff members reported that homophobic remarks made by others were rarely considered unacceptable or challenged by other staff.(21) Less than half of staff participants agreed that harassment or bullying towards queer staff was dealt with as a serious disciplinary offence at their institutions.(19) Staff members further reported that the lack of visible queer senior staff (whether professorial staff, vice chancellors, chancellors, and members of governing councils) was an implicit clue that disclosing sexual orientation is a barrier to progression in the sector.(1, 5, 19)

Across the cited University-focused reports, these institutions were reported as not carrying out regular surveys about the experiences of LGBTQIA+ students and staff. Yet, since the higher education environment is often perceived as hostile and unsupportive, it is reasonable to conclude that being identified is a concern for a significant proportion of LGBTQIA+ students and staff.

2.2. Delphi Method

The Delphi technique is a structured consensus method based on the view that combining the opinion of a group of experts will result in more accurate information than relying on the opinion of a single individual expert.(22) The Delphi approach involves several rounds in which

participants are asked their opinions about a particular issue. Questions for each round are formed from results of the previous round/s, allowing the study to evolve over time, ultimately reaching an anonymous consensus.(23, 24)

The emphasis on anonymity and reaching consensus around important and often sensitive topics has made the Delphi method favoured in research with vulnerable populations. The method also allows for the impact of power dynamics to be subsided as participants consulted in each round are anonymous and able to share their ideas freely.(25) This advantage has made the Delphi method effective in research studies that explore the perspectives of the medical community and LGBTQIA+ community, which in other circumstances often are faced with a power imbalance and mistrust.(26)

In studies using Delphi for consensus building with anonymous participants, without possibility of tracking participation between Delphi rounds, research has shown that inviting participants for all Delphi rounds irrespective of a response to the previous round will lead to a better representation of the opinions of the original participant group. Such strategy does not influence the final outcome of the Delphi, and actually reduces the chance of a false consensus.(27)

Considering the position of LGBTQIA+ university staff and students as previously outlined, and the power imbalances which are inherent in universities, the Delphi method is likely to be effective in identifying and prioritising the needs as voiced by staff and students with lived LGBTQIA+ experiences. The Delphi method provides participants an opportunity to cite their experiences, give suggestions, and openly discuss their perspectives as they continue through the Delphi rounds without fear of retribution, backlash or retaliation.(28) The Delphi method has been successfully used in various LGBTQIA+ contexts such as to develop a transgender friendly curriculum framework for undergraduate medical education (29); to develop guidelines for mental health professionals on how to administer first aid to LGBTIQ people with mental health issues (30), and to measure the experiences of LGBT persons in the workplace.(31)

3. Methods

The VOW Study was approved by the Western Human Research Ethics Committee (H15139). VOW is a Delphi survey (4) with a 3-stage delivery method for each Delphi round to de-link participants' identity from their responses (Figure 1).

3.1. Study Population and Sample

The VOW Study invited participation from all Western LGBTQIA+ students and staff. Since the VOW Study focused on canvassing the opinions of Western LGBTQIA+ students and staff, they were considered 'experts' in the Delphi method (4, 22) based on their lived experiences. The sample size was not calculated for two reasons. First, the population size cannot be ascertained at any given time (nor should the number direct outcomes; see Results and Discussion and Conclusion below). Second, the Delphi survey is not meant to result in broad generalisation, and therefore no inferential analyses were to be made.

Recruitment of participants were done via multiple internal communication channels at Western including:

- Rainbow Western;
- Western Queer Collective;
- Ally Network;
- Sexualities and Gender Research;
- Respectful Relationships;
- Science in Australia Gender Equity;
- Inclusive Communities;
- Student Representative Council;
- Office of Equity and Diversity;
- Equity and Diversity Working Parties;
- VC newsletter;
- Western Life;
- Western e-Updates;
- Translational Health Research Institute;
- Young and Resilient Research Centre;
- Institute for Culture and Society;
- Graduate Research School.

One reminder was broadcast through the communication channels for each survey round.

3.2. The 3-stage Delivery Method

This method was inspired from a common method used in anonymous surveys which provide opportunity for participants to enter a draw by submitting their personal data in a separate, un-linked survey. The VOW research team modified this method into a novel 3-stage survey which separated data collection on the participants' personal attributes, their University positioning i.e., their employment and/or enrolment status, and their responses to the core questions of the survey. These three stages were collected in three Qualtrics surveys, each 'owned' and only accessible by a different research team member. The survey owners were responsible to remove all potentially identifying information before sharing their data to be analysed by the whole team (Figure 1).

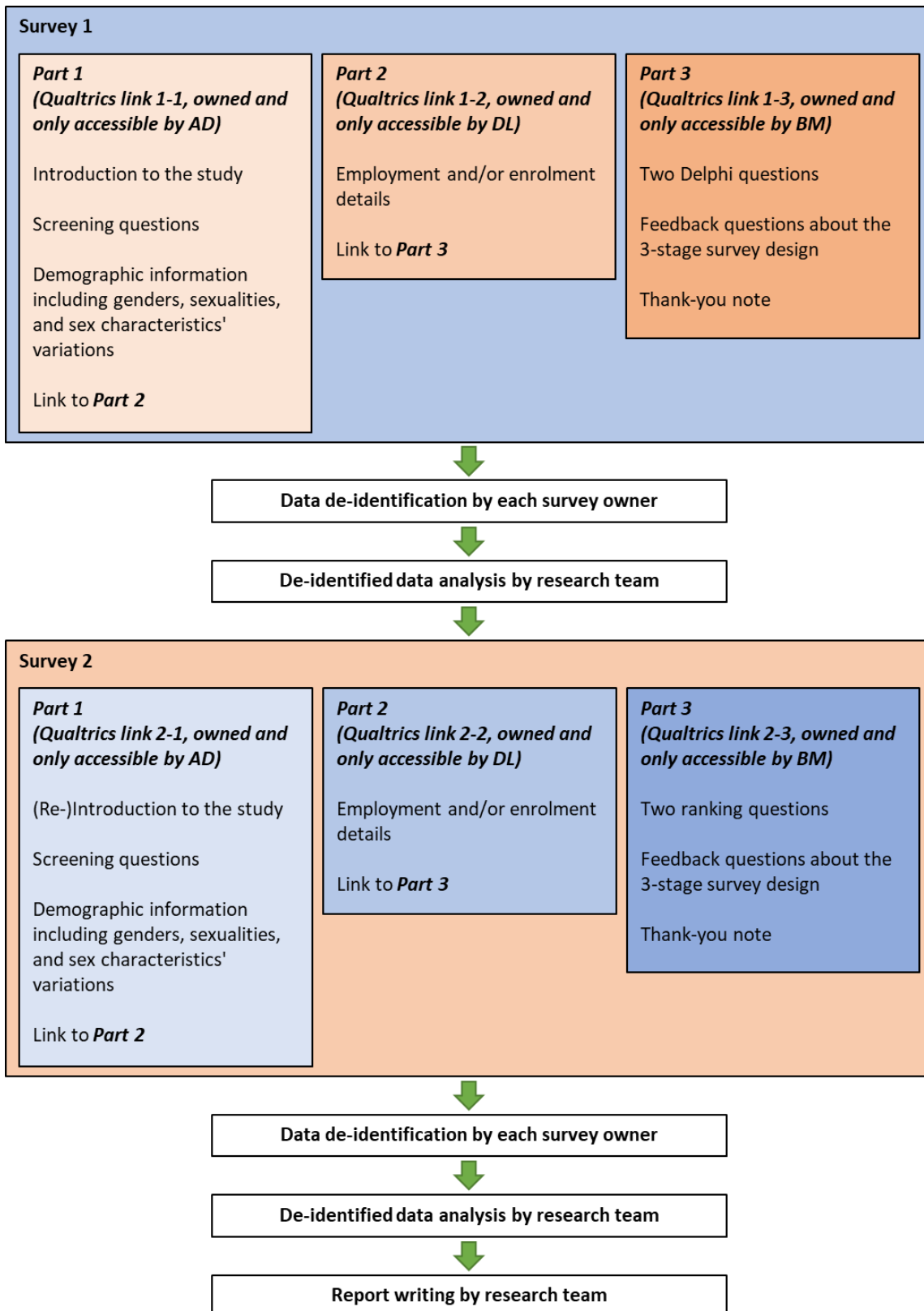


Figure 1. The VOW Study flowchart

3.3. The Delphi survey

The Delphi survey started with two open-ended questions in the first round:

1. What areas do you want Western Sydney University to focus on for better equity and inclusion of staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and/or sex characteristics?
2. What supports/initiatives/programs do you want Western Sydney University to provide for staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics?

Responses to these questions were de-identified by the Part 3 surveys' owner (BM) and analysed by the research team to create a list of items under each question to be presented in the second Delphi survey. Participants of the second Delphi survey were asked to rank-order by importance their top ten picks from each item list.

First, the rank-order data were cleaned by removing all ranks greater than ten. The scores were then reversed to give ten points to the most important and one point to the 10th most important item on each participant's list. Five analyses were done on each item:

1. The total score obtained ("sum"), which represents the overall importance of the item according to the participants.
2. How many participants voted for it ("count"), which represents how many participants placed top ten importance on the item.
3. Voting pattern (data not reported), to identify any concerning split e.g. 1-1-1-8-10-10-10-10.
4. "Sum" divided by "count" ("mean"), which indicates the relative importance of an item according to the participants.
5. Standard deviation of the mean ("SD"), which indicates the relative spread of the scores for each item.

All analyses were done on Microsoft Excel 365. A strong consensus was achieved for each question after the second survey, negating the need for any subsequent rounds.

Whilst the VOW Study focused on the direct answers to the Delphi questions, many participants provided elaborate context to their responses. The research team decided to report and discuss pertinent points from this additional information to respect the participants' desire to share their stories and to provide a richer picture of the Delphi findings.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Participants' characteristics

The first survey engaged 60, 60, and 41 participants in its three sections, respectively; and the second survey engaged around half the number of participants (32, 30, and 25, respectively, Table 1). Survey 1 participants tended to be younger and had a wider range of characteristics than Survey 2 (Tables 1-4).

Table 1. VOW study participants' characteristics

Characteristics	Survey 1	Survey 2
Completed responses (persons)		
Part 1	60	32
Part 2	60	30
Part 3	41	25
Age (years)		
Range	17-69	21-64
Lower quartile / Median / Upper quartile	23 / 28 / 44	28.5 / 39 / 50
Cultural background categories – see Table 2	34	16
Sex characteristics (persons)		
Intersex	0	0
Not intersex	56	32
Don't know	4	0
Gender categories (see Table 3)	10	8
Sexuality categories (see Table 4)	11	8
University status		
Staff only	26	18
Student only	29	7
Both staff and student	5	5
Staff positioning		
Employment status		
Professional	17	12
Academic	13	8
Both	1	2
Employment type		
Casual	6	4
Contract	5	6
Fixed term	3	4
Part-time	3	1
Ongoing	17	13

Characteristics	Survey 1	Survey 2
Student positioning		
Study level		
Diploma	1	0
Bachelor's	14	2
Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma	1	1
Master's (including M.Res.)	9	1
PhD	4	8
Enrolment type		
Part time	3	3
Full time	26	9
Home campus (all participants)		
Bankstown	4	2
Campbelltown	10	8
Hawkesbury	9	8
Liverpool	1	3
Nirimba	1	0
Online	2	3
Parramatta City	5	1
Parramatta South	14	7
Penrith/Kingswood/Werrington	19	9
Westmead	0	1
Primary work/study location (all participants)		
On campus	36	10
Remotely	14	16
Both equally	10	8
Organisational unit (all participants)		
Division of Academic	4	0
Division of Finance and Resources	4	4
Division of People and Advancement	2	4
Division of Research, Enterprise and International	1	1
Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment	0	1
Institute for Culture and Society	2	3
NICM Health Research Institute	1	0
School of Business	2	0
School of Computer, Data and Mathematical Sciences	3	1
School of Education	6	2
School of Engineering, Design and Built Environment	3	0
School of Health Sciences	4	1
School of Humanities and Communication Arts	4	0
School of Medicine	4	1
School of Nursing and Midwifery	2	0
School of Psychology	4	3
School of Science	8	4
School of Social Sciences	11	5
The College	1	0
Translational Health Research Institute	2	3
Others	2	3

Table 2. VOW study participants' cultural backgrounds

Survey 1 (n=60)		Survey 2 (n=32)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal • Aboriginal, Australian • Aboriginal, Irish • Anglo-Australian • Anglo-Australian, New Zealander • Anglo-Saxon • Asian • Australian • Australian, Croatian, Serbian • Australian, Dutch • Australian, Greek • Australian, Peruvian • Australian, Zimbabwean • Austrian • British • British, Welsh • Caucasian • Caucasian-Australian • Chinese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English, German • Filipino • German • Greek, Australian • Indian, Australian • Indian • Italian, Macedonian • Lebanese • LGBTIQA+ • Mauritian, Australian • Midwest-American • South Asian, Sri Lankan, Person of Colour, Third-Worlder • South Asian, Sri Lankan, Sinhalese • Sri Lankan, White Australian • White Australian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal • American • Anglo-Australian • Anglo-Saxon • Aotearoa/New Zealander, Anglo-Australian, Migrant • Australian • Australian, Dutch • Australian, European • Australian, Malaysian-Chinese, British • Caucasian • English • European • Hispanic • Middle Eastern • South Asian, Sri Lankan • White

Table 3. VOW study participants' genders

Survey 1 (n=60)	Survey 2 (n=32)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Androgyne • Bigender • Cisgender Man • Cisgender Woman • Demigirl • Genderfluid • Genderqueer • Nonbinary • Transgender Man • Transgender Woman • Prefer Not to Answer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bigender • Cisgender Man • Cisgender Woman • Genderfluid • Genderqueer • Nonbinary • Transgender Woman • Prefer Not to Answer

Table 4. VOW study participants' sexualities

Survey 1 (n=60)	Survey 2 (n=32)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bisexual • Lesbian • Gay • Pansexual • Asexual • Queer • Heterosexual or straight • Demiromantic • Polysexual • Fluid • Greyromantic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gay • Lesbian • Bisexual • Asexual • Pansexual • Queer • Aromantic • Heterosexual or straight

Overall, Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 clearly demonstrate the vast intersectional diversity characteristics of Western LGBTQIA+ staff and students. Participants came from a wide range of university areas and had highly varied positions. While many categories in Tables 2, 3 and 4 were only reported by one person each, each voice is just as valid. Dismissing the voice from any category due to low number will end up disregarding a sizeable amount of valid data. Therefore, counting the number of people belonging to any specific category – be it LGBTQIA+ identities, personal attributes, and professional/study standing – and linking those numbers to expressed opinions means very little in inclusive practices at Western. The VOW data indicate that Western approaches to LGBTQIA+ matters need to be inclusive for all diversity aspects and their intersectionality permutations regardless of the actual numbers.

The attrition rates between Part 1 and Part 3 in Survey 1 and 2 were 19/60 (32%) and 7/32 (22%), respectively. These attrition rates need to be considered when interpreting the participants' evaluation of the 3-stage survey methods later in Section 4.4. of this report.

4.2. Delphi findings

Forty-one participants in Survey 1 contributed multiple broad-ranging and overlapping inputs. The inputs were grouped into 16 and 17 items under Delphi question 1 and 2, respectively, treading the fine balance between creating a reasonable list size and avoiding over-generalisation.

Of the 25 participants who responded to the Delphi questions in Survey 2; 17 (59%) also responded to Part 3 of Survey 1. A clear and strong consensus was achieved for each Delphi question with convergence of the most voted and highest scored items, and there were no apparent lopsided voting patterns (Tables 5a and 5b; voting pattern data not presented). The items in Tables 5a and 5b are listed in the order of importance, and the darker shading indicates the areas of stronger opinions. Whilst participants were only asked to rank-order ten most important items, the two tables contain all items to provide a full picture of participants' range of opinions.

Table 5a. Final results of the VOW Study for Delphi question #1

#	What areas do you want Western Sydney University to focus on for better equity and inclusion of staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and/or sex characteristics?	Sum	Count	Mean	SD
1	University-Wide Vocal Support, Acceptance, Inclusion of LGBTQIA+ and Gender Diverse Staff and Students: Strong stance on LGBTQIA+ related issues; Advocacy for LGBTQIA+ and taking lead in our region; Formal recognition of Statement of Support for LGBTQIA+ rights; Academics to vocalise their support in class; Stronger articulated support for Trans and GSD individuals and their rights.	155	22	7.0	2.6
8	Anti-Discrimination: Disciplinary action for individuals discriminating against LGBTQIA+ community; Clear and frequently stated zero tolerance policies to discrimination and harassment, including religiously- or politically-motivated discrimination.	145	23	6.3	3.1
4	Support Services: Better communication about where LGBTQIA+ people can go to for support at University; More support services including mental health; Providing information on which counsellors are LGBTQIA+, queer-safe, and Allies; Compulsory training for counsellors in LGBTQIA+ awareness.	144	23	6.3	2.6
13	Inclusive Policies: Non-gendered policy in relation to parent/s caring for children; Recognition of chosen families many queer people have in relation to personal leave policies.	126	21	6.0	2.8
10	University Executive and Leadership: Active support from executive leadership; More gender-diverse and queer people in positions of leadership in areas not so well-known at University; People in positions of leadership championing diversity and inclusion without tokenism.	109	20	5.5	3.4
15	Create a Stronger LGBTQIA+ Community: A stronger queer platform and organization with routine meetings; Queer groups that help build meaningful skills.	95	18	5.3	3.0
2	Gender-Inclusive Language: Normalise the use of pronouns in signatures; Academics stating pronouns at start of class; Gender-inclusive language to be used by all staff.	94	17	5.5	2.9
12	Support of LBTIQA+ women, including Indigenous women and women of colour, to be more visible in academic and professional work-related contexts.	94	17	5.5	3.0
5	Safe Spaces: Increased number and physical size of safe spaces on all campuses; Promotion of spaces and resources on/off campus; Better communication and signage of LGBTQIA+ rooms on campuses; Separation of Queer spaces from other groups on campus that often have a negative viewpoint on LGBTQIA+.	88	18	4.9	2.7
11	Recognition and Celebration: Greater recognition of the contribution LGBTQIA+ people make to the University community; Profiling queer leaders; Highlighting success stories, excellence, pride, and acceptance.	86	16	5.4	3.5
3	Accurate Names: Implement clear process on change of names; Ensure accurate names in email addresses, attendance sheets, ID cards; More consistent systems for students to use accurate names.	77	15	5.1	2.1
6	Inclusive Bathrooms: More gender-neutral bathrooms on all campuses; Hygiene products in both men's and women's bathrooms.	67	15	4.5	3.1
7	Destigmatising LGBTIQ+ People in Multicultural/Multi-Faith Communities.	57	11	5.2	2.5
9	Pedagogy: Learning content that accounts for gender and sexual diversity in the teaching material where relevant; Content in all UG/PG programs that discuss LGBTQIA+ community from a strength perspective.	55	12	4.6	2.8
16	Conduct research in the LGBT area within the group and the university.	35	7	5.0	2.3
14	Wellbeing surveys which disaggregate by GSD to show what's happening for this cohort of staff.	30	8	3.8	2.3

Table 5b. Final results of the VOW Study for Delphi question #2

#	What supports/initiatives/programs do you want Western Sydney University to provide for staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics?	Sum	Count	Mean	SD
7	Educating the University Community: Staff undergoing inclusion and sensitivity training on gender and sexuality diversity; Education to dispel myths about LGBTQIA+ and awareness on identities and issues; A greater focus on educating people about trans, non-binary, and Sistergirl and Brotherboy identities.	145	19	7.6	2.0
5	When/if further toxic debates arrive at a local, state or national level, having an immediate response from Executive showing support for LGBTQIA+ staff and students.	133	18	7.4	2.4
14	An LGBTQIA+ advisory panel for Western.	115	18	6.4	3.0
13	Inclusion and Accessibility Programs: Recognition that a large percentage of persons that identify in LGBTQIA+ are ASD, ADD, ADHD with individual needs; Sensory spaces on campuses for staff who are LGBTQIA+ and neurodiverse to help ground and settle.	99	19	5.2	3.1
16	More support for LGBTQIA+ people in the Western Sydney region.	91	17	5.4	3.0
8	Mentoring program that encourages the inclusion of queer and gender-diverse people to be mentors/mentees.	88	17	5.2	3.1
17	Student Campus Culture and Life: More ways to connect and socialise for students; An LGBTQIA+ representative in the Student Representative Council.	88	18	4.9	2.7
1	Removal of mandatory biological sex information on enrolment.	76	13	5.8	3.9
11	Reaching Out to Key Stakeholders Across Western: More networking/collaborative initiatives at Western that include gender-diverse and queer people as keynote/guest speakers; A research group for relevant queer collaboration.	73	16	4.6	2.1
9	All areas of the University are held accountable to champion days of significance to the LGBTQIA+ community.	66	14	4.7	2.8
12	More promotion of Ally training; Walking the Ally and Rainbow Western networks so that staff and students know LGBTQIA+ people exist and have support when needed.	64	17	3.8	1.9
2	Funding LGBTQIA+ student scholarships and/or bursaries.	63	14	4.5	2.7
10	Specific programs for LGBTQIA+ professional staff.	62	9	6.9	1.8
4	Aiming for Pride in Diversity's Employer of the Year award (as RMIT achieved in 2019).	54	10	5.4	3.5
3	Funding activities suggested by the Queer Collective, Ally network and Rainbow Western.	48	7	6.9	2.0
15	LGBTQIA+ Western merchandise.	41	8	5.1	2.9
6	Departments/institutes to display physical signage indicating LGBTQIA+ acceptance.	40	8	5.0	2.6

4.3. Pertinent qualitative points

Three themes were identified from the additional contextual information participants volunteered in their Delphi responses in Survey 1: What counts as LGBTQIA+ positivity, Inconsistent levels of LGBTQIA+ positivity across Western, and Specific challenges for LGBTQIA+ subgroups.

4.3.1. What counts as LGBTQIA+ positivity

Some participants indicated that what seemed to be menial things could mean a lot in expressing respect to LGBTQIA+ people, or lack of it. One participant pointed out that Western graduation ceremonies were opened with “welcome ladies and gentlemen” which they found very disappointing.

Visibility and promotion of LGBTQIA+ support services were deemed lacking and needing improvement. A professional staff member stated “I’m not aware of any programs or initiatives [for professional staff] at all currently.” A student participant lamented the lack of promotion of LGBTQIA+ support to students. One participant contrasted this lack of visibility and promotion with certain religious groups who had a lot more signs and advertisement on campus, even to the point of “having people go around to ask random students to attend their sessions ... [which is] unfair and uncomfortable, especially for people in the LGBTQIA+ community”. Whilst LGBTQIA+ *friendly* staff are much appreciated, some participants specifically pointed out the need for support being provided *by LGBTQIA+ staff*:

I would love to find some specific LGBTQIA+ counsellors or information. Not just people who are allies but people who genuinely understand the queer experience. I dealt with coming out while at university and found it a very lonely experience. I searched for counsellors but didn't really get anywhere at university. The cost of a queer counsellor outside of uni was huge and so I just kind of dealt with it. I know queer people are much more comfortable talking to other queer people - so maybe including a queer counsellor would help.

4.3.2. Inconsistent levels of LGBTQIA+ positivity across Western

Past and present Western initiatives, such as celebration of LGBTQIA+ days of importance, Ally training, prompt reaction to queer space vandalism, general LGBTQIA+ support, and LGBTQIA+ friendly environment in *some* work units were praised. For example, one participant stated “[My work unit] is inclusive and demonstrates equity.” However, the positivity was clearly not uniform across the University, with *some* work units being reported as making participants feel very unsafe:

I am not “out” to anyone. I know my team will not accept me and I will experience a hostile environment. I also do not feel the University genuinely takes care of people like me, that my career will be limited, and that I will not have a safe environment to work in, so I stay closeted so I can keep my job.

My day to day is to go to work, pretend to be male, go home and wallow in self-pity. I don't know how to fix things and make things better, if I did I wouldn't be so scared of losing my job and being an outcast from my colleagues for being transgender.

The lack of ‘public outness’ of LGBTQIA+ senior staff was pointed out by one participant as signalling “the actual and real culture of Western as not being as open, accepting and affirming as [those LGBTQIA+ senior staff] believe”. Others pointed out the possibility of Ally training participants being already LGBTQIA+ supportive to begin with, instead of those who needed to be trained to be more supportive, such as all managers “especially Deans, Deputy Deans, DAPS, Directors”.

Another strong lack of uniformity across the University was felt across different participant groups. A participant stated “As a contractor, it can feel like I am already ‘not equal’ to my WSU

employee counterparts. Perhaps there are HR initiatives that aim to drive inclusivity and diversity at Western, but I don't see that as a contractor." Another participant lamented:

The University as a whole cares about the students and the academics but doesn't care too much about Professional staff. Programs are abundant for students and Academics are treated on a higher plain [*sic*]. Professional staff seem to be expendable to the University, so we get left over scraps and after thought. Specifically around gender, sexuality, and such, anything would be a good start.

Some work units were reported to have hardly any queer representation, which made a participant "carry an unfair burden to have to constantly explain / correct colleagues who unintentionally say ignorant and offensive things." This quote related back to the previous paragraph about the need for Ally training to target work units of concern, not just self-selecting, LGBTQIA+ supportive participants.

4.3.3. Specific challenges for LGBTQIA+ subgroups

A few participants reported specific challenges across subgroups of LGBTQIA+ identities. One participant expressed their doubts about the safety of discussing their identity as a bisexual person of colour with the Counselling Service. A few participants reported mixed levels of support for queer neurodivergent people at the University. While participants in the main agreed on the importance of safe spaces on campus, there were discrepancies in defining who should be allowed to be on those safe spaces. There was a shared aversion toward religious groups and certain political groups which led to a demand for physical/geographic separation of spaces. However, some comments from member/s of particular LGBTQIA+ subgroup/s about other subgroup/s indicated that there was still much needed work toward acceptance and respect of all within the LGBTQIA+ group itself.

Some participants pointed out that staff and students in general still lacked knowledge about LGBTQIA+ people and their lived experiences. However, some participants also demonstrated their lack of knowledge, for example by mistakenly believing that the Ally Network membership was only open to straight and cisgender people. This misconception led to a comment that the Ally Network should be replaced by an all-queer group.

4.4. Feedback on survey design

The attrition rates between Part 1 and Part 3 of 32% (Survey 1) and 22% (Survey 2) notwithstanding, the majority of participants who completed Part 3 of both surveys appreciated the 3-stage data collection method and did not find it too onerous or over-the-top (Table 3). Open-ended comments included suggestion for a broader use of this approach in "all University satisfaction surveys", which may be related to "they ask quite a few questions about where you are from, which could make identification easier".

Table 6. Participants' quantitative feedback on the 3-stage survey design

Statement	Survey 1 n=41			Survey 2 n=25		
	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree
I prefer for research data collection to be conducted in a way where my personal information is not linked to my responses.	3 (7%)	13 (32%)	25 (61%)	3 (12%)	7 (28%)	15 (60%)
I feel safer responding to sensitive questions concerning my experiences/views when I know that my personal information is not linked to my responses.	2 (5%)	6 (15%)	33 (80%)	3 (12%)	5 (20%)	17 (68%)
I can be more honest in my responses to sensitive questions concerning my experiences/views when I know that my personal information is not linked to my responses.	3 (7%)	8 (20%)	30 (73%)	1 (4%)	8 (32%)	16 (64%)
I am more willing to respond to sensitive questions concerning my experiences/views when I know that my personal information is not linked to my responses to research questions.	4 (10%)	8 (20%)	29 (70%)	2 (8%)	5 (20%)	18 (72%)
The three-part survey approach is burdensome for me.	29 (70%)	8 (20%)	4 (10%)	15 (60%)	10 (40%)	0
The three-step survey approach is an excessive measure to prevent data linkages between my personal information and my responses to questions concerning my experiences/views.	29 (70%)	7 (17%)	5 (13%)	16 (64%)	9 (36%)	0
I would recommend this three-step approach for Western staff/student surveys where sensitive and/or critical opinions are sought.	2 (5%)	9 (22%)	30 (73%)	1 (4%)	7 (28%)	17 (68%)

One long comment, lamenting the need for this approach, deserved a full quote:

It is a sad state of affairs for staff/students to be afraid that they will be further marginalised by completing an in-house, anonymous survey with university ethical approvals. The implication is that someone will try to find out who they (we) are and use this against us. This would be highly, highly unethical. Going to these great lengths to reinforce this idea is - in my opinion - not smart. Instead, we should be going to great lengths to reassure our colleagues and our students that the university has their best interests at heart and would NEVER try to ascertain who they were as individuals. There's a reason why the demographic data and the substantive data are collected together: to be able to make the links between (minority) identity status and

experiences of discrimination/wellbeing/workload or whatever the survey is about. I understand that you are trying to make individuals feel safe using this approach. That said, if we perpetuate the idea that we are UNSAFE by sharing our personal details with the university, we create a situation where the university doesn't have the data to link identities to experiences. This is a problem - since we know that GSD individuals do experience marginalisation and that this is compounded for those with intersecting marginalised identities. Without being able to make those links with usable datasets, the university's hands are tied (and... they absolve themselves from doing anything about it... let's not be complicit in this!!!)

Indeed, not all participants felt unsafe; one participant commented: "I am personally not worried about this, but that just says that I feel supported in my work and personal life." Yet, the notion of being unsafe as LGBTQIA+ individuals was very real for participants who supported this 3-stage survey, citing "vulnerable positions because of their youth or employment status etc." and "I'm in the closet ... I need to be anonymous because I am a casual worker and am unsafe." One participant stated:

I often lie on demographic questions or provide close enough answers as I am not comfortable complete the survey otherwise. I figure a somewhat false response is better than none.

Two participants reflected on the challenging realities; one went beyond LGBTQIA+ identities. Both suggested much more work needed to be done:

I like the [3-stage] approach, but it does highlight that something in me still feels uncomfortable about me being open about who I am in the workplace. I hope that one day I will not need a 3 part survey to state what we need and how it can be delivered, much like mothers in the workplace. although, in academia, I am still aware of people who have hidden their pregnancies because they are worried they will not get the grant or be taken off a project. We still have a long way to go with gender equity in this and all workplaces.

I admire what you are doing. I am fearful of backlash and of losing my job. The University talks big about inclusion but it is very rarely seen. If I came out I know I would be ostracised by my team and fear that I would ultimately lose my job. For all the talk the University does, I do not trust they genuinely have my safety in mind. There is a long way to go.

The final quote below underlined the importance of trust, which resonates with a few previous quotes:

Whatever the way forward, I don't feel that LGBTQIA+ staff should be asked to disclose in all circumstances. The University asks a lot of questions about staff experiences, and most are not relevant to my sexuality. But some are. I wonder whether SaGR and/or Rainbow Western could coordinate a bi-annual staff survey, parallel to MyVoice, that asks queer staff to reflect on our organisational culture, their experiences as a staff member, whether they feel able to participate to their fullest, whether they experience exclusion or discrimination, what barriers might exist, and what could be done to improve? There could also be open text spaces to comment on particular aspects of university life, e.g., career development, promotions, flex working, supervisor relationships, institutional processes, etc.? SaGR and RW are trusted existing groups and if leading this project would likely manage it safely and solicit honest responses. Obviously if this were to happen, SaGR/RW should be funded to have RA support for analysis, and the report should go to the VC's Committee for response.

5. Conclusion

The Voice of Western project has successfully employed a novel 3-stage method and a Delphi survey to identify and prioritise the needs of Western LGBTQIA+ staff and students in a manner which greatly reduced the risk of participants being identified or re-identified. Separation of participants' personal attributes, University positioning, and opinion data was not considered too onerous by participants. There is clear evidence that some participants felt quite unsafe in reporting these data in one survey which may identify/re-identify them.

Considering the varied level of LGBTQIA+ positivity across Western, and the myriad LGBTQIA+ lived experiences among students and staff, it is recommended that the Voice of Western method i.e., the 3-stage approach to separate participants' personal, University positioning, and opinion data, is applied for all LGBTQIA+ related surveys, until Western has earned the trust of LGBTQIA+ students and staff through tangible and consistent affirming actions. Positively addressing the recommended actions from the Delphi survey is a good place to start.

Further afield, the benefits of the Voice of Western method should be considered for other groups such as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people, or in exploring sensitive topics such as discrimination and harassment. The need to know 'which groups of people experience what' must be carefully weighed against the need for truthful answers, free from the fear of identification/re-identification. After all, respect, inclusivity, and safety measures must be afforded to all people regardless of their numbers and expressed identities.

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Appendix 1: Voice of Western Participant Information Sheet

Project Title: Voice of Western through data unlinkability: Setting the agenda for better equity and inclusion of Western staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics

Short Project Title: Voice of Western (VOW)

Project Summary: The Voice of Western (VOW) project aims to identify and prioritise areas of focus for better equity and inclusion of Western staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics, as set out by members of these groups, through targeted consultation using a Delphi survey. The VOW project additionally evaluates a novel 3-stage approach to collecting participants' identity data without data linkages between personal data and participants' opinions.

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Dr Anna Denejkina (Chief Investigator), Associate Prof Brahm Marjadi, Anita King, Dr David Lim, Dr George Turner, Rannie Singh and Eman Shatnawi, Western Sydney University.

How is the study being paid for? Vice Chancellor's Gender Equity Fund 2022

What will I be asked to do?

In the first instance, you will be asked to complete 1 survey, which will ask you to:

1. List any areas of focus you would suggest for better equity and inclusion of Western staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics;
2. Self-report your demographic and work/study characteristics;
3. Lastly, you will be asked about your opinion on the overall design of the survey which is meant to reduce the possibility of inadvertent identification.

The survey uses a 3-stage method using three separate forms without data linkages between the demographic data, the work/study data, and the areas of focus and opinion data.

The second round of the survey will be made available following the data analyses of Survey 1, and if you choose to participate in the second round, you will be asked to rank-order the top ten areas of focus from the compiled list from the first round. The survey third round (which is similar to the second round but with a shorter list) will only be run if consensus has not been achieved in the second round.

How much of my time will I need to give?

15-20 minutes per survey maximum

What benefits will I, and/or the broader community, receive for participating?

The Voice of Western (VOW) project aims to identify and prioritise areas of focus for better equity and inclusion of Western staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics. To encourage participation beyond those who are 'out' and encourage free and honest expression of needs, the project will pilot and evaluate a novel 3-stage approach to collect participants' identity data which will significantly reduce the possibility of inadvertent identification.

This project will promote the University's Gender and Equity agenda through its first aim to identify and prioritise areas of focus for better equity and inclusion of Western staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics, as set out by members of these groups. This benefits individual participants, staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics, and the University as a whole.

The project will also advance practice-based improvements within the University through its second aim of using and evaluating a novel 3-stage method and approach to collect participants' identity data (including sensitive demographic and University employment data), which will significantly reduce the possibility of inadvertent identification. This benefits staff and students individually as it may lead to a better and safer way of data-collection throughout the University. This novel 3-stage method evaluation is further of benefit to the wider research community as it sets out a new process of data collection which can be used to ensure that data is not identifiable.

Will the study involve any risk or discomfort for me? If so, what will be done to rectify it?

There are no risks or discomfort anticipated by participating in this study.

How do you intend to publish or disseminate the results?

The study findings will be made available to the VC Gender Equity Committee via the full project report, and an executive summary will be shared to Rainbow Western, Queer Collective, Ally Network, and Equity & Diversity Working Parties and other groups for further distribution to their members/Schools/Institutes. The findings may be published as journal article/s and/or conference presentation/s.

In any publication and/or presentation, information will be provided in such a way that the participant cannot be identified. This is achieved by using a 3-stage method using three separate forms:

The first form will collect demographic data; The second form (with a separate link from the first) will collect work/study details only; The third form (with another new link) will be the Delphi survey and will collect participants' opinion about this layered design which is meant to prohibit inadvertent identification from intersecting personal (albeit anonymous) data.

Will the data and information that I have provided be disposed of?

Please be assured that only the researchers will have access to the raw data you provide. However, your data may be used in other related projects for an extended period of time (the anonymised data may be used by similarly themed future projects).

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate you can withdraw at any time without giving reason by closing the browser window and exiting the survey,

If you do choose to withdraw your data by closing the browser window and exiting the survey, any information that you have supplied will not be used as part of the study.

If you choose to submit your data by clicking 'Submit Now' at the end of the survey, due to the anonymous and untraceable nature of participation your data will not be able to be removed from the study as the research team has no way of linking your responses and your data to you.

Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can tell other people about the study by sharing the EOI or the survey link with other staff and/or students of Western Sydney University.

What if I require further information?

Please contact *Dr Anna Denejkina (Chief Investigator)* should you wish to discuss the research further before deciding whether or not to participate

Dr Anna Denejkina – a.denejkina@westernsydney.edu.au

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form. The information sheet is for you to keep and the consent form is retained by the researcher/s.

This study has been approved by the Western Sydney University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is **H15139**.

Appendix 2: Voice of Western Consent Form

Project Title: Voice of Western through data unlinkability: Setting the agenda for better equity and inclusion of Western staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics

Short Project Title: Voice of Western (VOW)

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Western Sydney University. The ethics reference number is **H15139**.

I hereby consent to participate in the above named research project.

I acknowledge that:

- I have read the participant information sheet (or where appropriate, have had it read to me) and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s
- The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent to: *Participating in an online questionnaire*

I consent for my data and information provided to be used in this project and other related projects for an extended period of time.

I understand that my involvement is confidential and that the information gained during the study may be published and stored for other research use but no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s, and any organisations involved, now or in the future.

I consent to participate in this study YES/NO

What if I have a complaint?

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through Research Engagement, Development and Innovation (REDI) on Tel +61 2 4736 0229 or email humanethics@westernsydney.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix 3: Voice of Western Survey 1

[Participant Information Sheet]
[Consent Form]

Please indicate your agreement to the following statements:

1. I have read and understood the information provided to me
2. I consent to participate in this study
 - a. I DO CONSENT to participate in this study
 - b. I DO NOT CONSENT to participate in this study

SURVEY 1, PART 1

A. Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria Questions

1. Are you a staff or/and student at Western Sydney University? [options: Yes/No]
 - a. Yes = Proceed to Question 2
 - b. No = Survey ends. Message: "Thank you for your interest. Unfortunately, you do not meet our inclusion criteria. You can email Rainbow Western Committee [RW Committee's email address] if you are interested in knowing about LGBTQIA+ matters at our University."
2. Do you identify as LGBTQIA+ or having one or more of gender, sexuality, and/or sex characteristics diversity? [Options: Yes/No]
 - a. Yes = Proceed to Survey 1, Part 1
 - b. No = Survey ends. Message: "Thank you for your interest. Unfortunately, you do not meet our inclusion criteria. You might consider joining the WSU Ally Network [Ally Web page here] to support the WSU LGBTQIA+ staff and students."

B. Demographic Questions

1. What is your age in years? [open numerical response]
2. What cultural background/s do you identify with? [Open text box response]
3. What is your gender identity? [options: Select all that apply: Androgyne/Bigender/Cisgender Woman/Cisgender Man/ Genderfluid/Genderqueer/Nonbinary/Polygender/Transgender Woman/Transgender Man/Not listed (open response)/Prefer Not to Answer]
4. Which sexuality/ies do you identify with? [options: Select all that apply: Asexual/Aromantic/Heterosexual or straight/Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Pansexual/Not listed (open response)/ Prefer not to Answer]
5. Were you born with a variation of sex characteristics (this is sometimes called intersex or differences of sex development)? [options: Yes/No/Don't Know/Prefer Not to Answer]

Thank you for answering Part 1 of the survey. Click here now [link to Part 2 Qualtrics Survey] to continue to the de-linked Part 2 where we will ask about your status at WSU.

SURVEY 1, PART 2

University Positioning Questions

1. Are you a WSU staff or student [options: Staff/Student/Both]
Staff =
 - 1.a Are you a professional or academic staff member [options: Professional Staff Member/Academic Staff Member/Both]
 - 2.a What is your employment type/s? [options: Select all that apply: Contract/Casual/Ongoing/Part-time]
 - 3.a What is/are your home campus/es? [options: Select all that apply: include full list of campuses]
 - 4.a Do you work primarily on campus or remotely [options: Primarily on Campus/Primarily Remotely/Both Equally]

Student =

1.b What is your current level of study? [options: Associate Degree/Bachelor's Degree/Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/Master's Degree/Professional Degree (example: Law, Medical, Dental)/MRes/MPhil/Doctorate (example: PhD)/Other (open response)]

2.b What is your study load? [options: Fulltime/Part time]

3.b What is your home campus? [options: Select all that apply: include full list of campuses]

4.b Do you study primarily on campus or remotely? [options: Primarily on Campus/Primarily Remotely/Both Equally]

Both =

1.c Are you a professional or academic staff member [options: Professional Staff Member/Academic Staff Member/Both]

2.c What is your employment type/s? [options: Select all that apply: Contract/Casual/Ongoing/Part-time]

3.c What is/are your home campus/es for work? [options: Select all that apply: include full list of campuses]

4.c Do you work primarily on campus or remotely? [options: Primarily on Campus/Primarily Remotely/Both Equally]

5.c What is your current level of study? [options: Associate Degree/Bachelor's Degree/Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma/Master Degree/Professional Degree (example: Law, Medical, Dental)/MRes/MPhil/Doctorate (example: PhD)/Other (open response)]

6.c What is your study load? [options: Fulltime/Part time]

7.c What is your home campus for study? [options: Select all that apply: include full list of campuses]

8.c Do you study primarily on campus or remotely? [options: Primarily on Campus/Primarily Remotely/Both Equally]

2. Please select your School/s and/or Institute/s. [options: Select all that apply: full list provided]

Thank you for answering Part 2 of the survey. Click here now [[link to Part 3 Qualtrics Survey](#)] to continue to the de-linked Part 3 of the survey where we will ask about (a) your opinions on the experiences of being LGBTQIA+ and/or having one or more of gender, sexuality, and/or sex characteristics diversity at WSU and (b) the way we de-identify you in this survey.

SURVEY 1, PART 3

A. Research Questions

Please consider your experiences as a staff member and/or student at Western Sydney University, taking into account your identity as LGBTQIA+ and/or having one or more of gender, sexuality, and/or sex characteristics diversity. Please think about your experiences holistically, taking into account your intersectional identities. Intersectionality is defined as the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as, but not limited to, race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Please respond to these questions as extensively as possible, and feel free to use dot-points if this makes the questions easier to respond to:

32. What areas do you want Western Sydney University to focus on for better equity and inclusion of staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and/or sex characteristics? [Open text box response]

33. What supports/initiatives/programs do you want Western Sydney University to provide for staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics? [Open text box response]

B. Survey Feedback Questions

This study has been designed to ensure that your demographic information, university status, and opinions are de-linked/detached from one another by using three separate surveys. Your responses and personal identity information will stay separate and will be analysed by three different teams to minimise the risk of inadvertent identification based on the intersections between your answers.

We would like to get your feedback on this method of survey design.

Please consider the following statements and rate them on a scale of 1 to 3 (1 = Disagree, 2 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, and 3 = Agree). We understand you may have different opinions for different surveys; if this is the case, please feel free to provide open-text comments.

1. I prefer for research data collection to be conducted in a way where my personal information are not linked to my responses. [1/2/3] Comments (optional) [Open text box response]:
2. I feel safer responding to sensitive questions concerning my experiences/views when I know that my personal information is not linked to my responses. [1/2/3] Comments (optional) [Open text box response]:
3. I can be more honest in my responses to sensitive questions concerning my experiences/views when I know that my personal information is not linked to my responses. [1/2/3] Comments (optional) [Open text box response]:
4. I am more willing to respond to sensitive questions concerning my experiences/views when I know that my personal information is not linked to my responses to research questions. [1/2/3] Comments (optional) [Open text box response]:
5. The three-step survey approach is burdensome for me. [1/2/3] Comments (optional) [Open text box response]:
6. The three-step survey approach is an excessive measure to prevent data linkages between my personal information and my responses to questions concerning my experiences/views. [1/2/3] Comments (optional) [Open text box response]:
7. I would recommend this three-step approach for WSU staff/student surveys where sensitive and/or critical opinions are sought. [1/2/3] Comments (optional) [Open text box response]:
8. Please suggest any other approaches which you believe would increase safe and honest participation of WSU staff and students in surveys where sensitive and/or critical opinions are sought. [Open text box response]
9. Please write any other comments you may have about this three-step survey. [Open text box response]

Thank you for completing this survey. We will broadcast another call for a follow-up survey in a few weeks' time so please keep watching this space!

Appendix 4: Voice of Western Survey 2

[Participant Information Sheet]
[Consent Form]

Please indicate your agreement to the following statements:

1. I have read and understood the information provided to me
2. I consent to participate in this study
 - a. I DO CONSENT to participate in this study
 - b. I DO NOT CONSENT to participate in this study

SURVEY 2, PART 1

Identical with Survey 1, Part 1.

SURVEY 2, PART 2

Identical with Survey 1, Part 2.

SURVEY 2, PART 3

A. Research Questions

Please consider your experiences as a staff member and/or student at Western Sydney University, taking into account your identity as LGBTQIA+ and/or having one or more of gender, sexuality, and/or sex characteristics diversity. Please think about your experiences holistically, taking into account your intersectional identities. Intersectionality is defined as the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as, but not limited to, race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Please respond to these questions as extensively as possible, and feel free to use dot-points if this makes the questions easier to respond to:

1. Please rate the following areas of focus that you want Western Sydney University to focus on for better equity and inclusion of staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and/or sex characteristics. Please select only your top ten areas of focus.
 - 1) University-Wide Vocal Support, Acceptance, Inclusion of LGBTQIA+ and Gender Diverse Staff and Students: Strong stance on LGBTQIA+ related issues; Advocacy for LGBTQIA+ and taking lead in our region; Formal recognition of Statement of Support for LGBTQIA+ rights; Academics to vocalise their support in class; Stronger articulated support for Trans and GSD individuals and their rights.
 - 2) Gender-Inclusive Language: Normalise the use of pronouns in signatures; Academics stating pronouns at start of class; Gender-inclusive language to be used by all staff.
 - 3) Accurate Names: Implement clear process on change of names; Ensure accurate names in email addresses, attendance sheets, ID cards; More consistent systems for students to use accurate names.
 - 4) Support Services: Better communication about where LGBTQIA+ people can go to for support at University; More support services including mental health; Providing information on which counsellors are LGBTQIA+, queer-safe, and Allies; Compulsory training for counsellors in LGBTQIA+ awareness.
 - 5) Safe Spaces: Increased number and physical size of safe spaces on all campuses; Promotion of spaces and resources on/off campus; Better communication and signage of LGBTQIA+ rooms on campuses; Separation of Queer spaces from other groups on campus that often have a negative viewpoint on LGBTQIA+.
 - 6) Inclusive Bathrooms: More gender-neutral bathrooms on all campuses; Hygiene products in both men's and women's bathrooms.
 - 7) Destigmatising LGBTIQ+ People in Multicultural/Multi-Faith Communities.
 - 8) Anti-Discrimination: Disciplinary action for individuals discriminating against LGBTQIA+ community; Clear and frequently stated zero tolerance policies to discrimination and harassment, including religiously- or politically-motivated discrimination.

- 9) Pedagogy: Learning content that accounts for gender and sexual diversity in the teaching material where relevant; Content in all UG/PG programs that discuss LGBTQIA+ community from a strength perspective.
 - 10) University Executive and Leadership: Active support from executive leadership; More gender-diverse and queer people in positions of leadership in areas not so well-known at University; People in positions of leadership championing diversity and inclusion without tokenism.
 - 11) Recognition and Celebration: Greater recognition of the contribution LGBTQIA+ people make to the University community; Profiling queer leaders; Highlighting success stories, excellence, pride, and acceptance.
 - 12) Support of LGBTQIA+ women, including Indigenous women and women of colour, to be more visible in academic and professional work-related contexts.
 - 13) Inclusive Policies: Non-gendered policy in relation to parent/s caring for children; Recognition of chosen families many queer people have in relation to personal leave policies.
 - 14) Wellbeing surveys which disaggregate by GSD to show what's happening for this cohort of staff.
 - 15) Create a Stronger LGBTQIA+ Community: A stronger queer platform and organization with routine meetings; Queer groups that help build meaningful skills.
 - 16) Conduct research in the LGBT area within the group and the university.
2. Please rate the following supports/initiatives/programs that you want Western Sydney University to provide for staff and students with diverse genders, sexualities and sex characteristics? Please select only your top ten supports/initiatives/programs.
- 1) Removal of mandatory biological sex information on enrolment.
 - 2) Funding LGBTQIA+ student scholarships and/or bursaries.
 - 3) Funding activities suggested by the Queer Collective, Ally network and Rainbow Western.
 - 4) Aiming for Pride in Diversity's Employer of the Year award (as RMIT achieved in 2019).
 - 5) When/if further toxic debates arrive at a local, state or national level, having an immediate response from Executive showing support for LGBTQIA+ staff and students.
 - 6) Departments/institutes to display physical signage indicating LGBTQIA+ acceptance.
 - 7) Educating the University Community: Staff undergoing inclusion and sensitivity training on gender and sexuality diversity; Education to dispel myths about LGBTQIA+ and awareness on identities and issues; A greater focus on educating people about trans, non-binary, and Sistergirl and Brotherboy identities.
 - 8) Mentoring program that encourages the inclusion of queer and gender-diverse people to be mentors/mentees.
 - 9) All areas of the University are held accountable to champion days of significance to the LGBTQIA+ community.
 - 10) Specific programs for LGBTQIA+ professional staff.
 - 11) Reaching Out to Key Stakeholders Across Western: More networking/collaborative initiatives at Western that include gender-diverse and queer people as keynote/guest speakers; A research group for relevant queer collaboration.
 - 12) More promotion of Ally training; Walking the Ally and Rainbow Western networks so that staff and students know LGBTQIA+ people exist and have support when needed.
 - 13) Inclusion and Accessibility Programs: Recognition that a large percentage of persons that identify in LGBTQIA+ are ASD, ADD, ADHD with individual needs; Sensory spaces on campuses for staff who are LGBTQIA+ and neurodiverse to help ground and settle.
 - 14) An LGBTQIA+ advisory panel for Western.
 - 15) LGBTQIA+ Western merchandise.
 - 16) More support for LGBTQIA+ people in the Western Sydney region.
 - 17) Student Campus Culture and Life: More ways to connect and socialise for students; An LGBTQIA+ representative in the Student Representative Council.

B. Survey Feedback Questions

Identical with Survey 1, Part 3B.