



AFL response to Four Corners Questions

What are your procedures for handling disputes about harassment and discrimination issues?

The AFL is a game for all, regardless of race, religion, or sexual identity. We want players, staff, and everyone in football to be their authentic self and to be confident and supported in bringing their authentic selves to work.

We have environments at our clubs and in the AFL organisation where openly same-sex and diverse genders feel comfortable in bringing their authentic selves to work and feel supported in doing so – and the advent of AFLW has further strengthened that acceptance and support across our industry.

Our industry, our 18 clubs and the AFL would wrap our arms around any same-sex person who wants to communicate their status to the wider public beyond their own workplace and provide whatever support they need, both in the moment and in the future. The response of footballers past and present to Danielle Laidley and the overwhelming support she has received from the football community demonstrates how this game embraces people.

We are proud that people of all backgrounds play our game and work in our game and would be proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with any person who chooses to tell their story publicly.

Coming out is a personal decision and the timing is up to each individual and not up to the AFL, the clubs, the media or any other organization and we will never place pressure on any individual to make that choice to suit someone else's timing.

We learned a lot when we openly came out and supported the Same Sex marriage 'Yes' campaign to demonstrate support for our players, our people, and our fans and their choices to be their authentic selves and to be able to demonstrate their love.

Like any organisation, we know that we are not perfect and that we need to continue to listen, learn and to work with our own staff members through our AFL Pride and Allies Working Group to continue to learn directly from people with lived experience within the AFL and continue to provide opportunities for engagement and celebration of key LGBTQI+ events both internally and externally and provide input into the AFL's ongoing diversity strategy to promote greater inclusivity.

We will also work with external organisations like Pride in Sport. In 2017 the AFL was named inaugural Pride in Sport Organisation of the Year at the Pride in Diversity Inclusion Awards and last year we received a Bronze award but we know we can continue to improve.

We will also work with the E-Safety Commissioner to create a safer online world where people can exist without vilification, abuse or discrimination and to continue to provide a safe and welcoming workplace for all.

We will continue to work with our 1.2m members and supporters and with community clubs around Australia to promote greater diversity and inclusion.

- In discussing procedures for handling potential disputes about harassment and discrimination it is important to say that providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment is important to the AFL in not only attracting the best talent but also retaining people from all backgrounds and having them happy to work in an environment that supports them to bring their authentic selves to work.



- All AFL team members (casual and perm) completed training relating to harassment, bullying, and discrimination at the beginning of 2023. This training is undertaken every two years.
- All team members completed Respectful relationship training in 2021 / 2022 and Respectful Relationship training is provided for every new employee during their Induction session. This training essentially brings to life our Respectful and Inclusive Behaviour Policy which is centred on creating an equal, inclusive, safe and respectful environment for all people at the AFL.
- We also have a Complaints Resolution Policy and Procedure to deal with any complaints which includes the option of taking a complaint to an external independent, impartial and confidential service if people are uncomfortable making a complaint to their direct manager, a senior manager or their People business partner.

Do you keep a record of complaints and allegations about sexuality issues? Who keeps this and how is it recorded?

- Yes, the People Team keep a secure, confidential record of any complaints and allegations made against any AFL employee. Record of complaints also kept with integrity for an incident raised through the online portal.
- The Commission also has visibility of any complaints / allegations – which are reported on a quarterly basis so that they can also oversee the appropriate handling of complaints.
- We have not had any complaints of homophobia that have been referred to HR in anyone's memory.

How does the system balance the rights of the complainant and the alleged harasser?

- We have a number of guiding principles during any investigation designed to balance the rights of the complainant and alleged harasser.
- They are:
 - Everyone has a right to be heard and treated with respect;
 - Everyone has a right to procedural fairness and natural justice - the person against whom the allegation is made has the right to know what is alleged against them, the right to put their case in reply and the right for any decision to be made by an impartial decision maker;
 - The complainant and respondent will be kept informed on progress of the matter;
 - The AFL will respond quickly and appropriately to a complaint;
 - Complaints will be treated in confidence as far as reasonably possible;
 - All parties may have a support person present through the investigation process; and
 - The outcome of the investigation is final and all parties to the matter must accept and comply with the resolution and any recommendations or directions made.
 - The investigation report is confidential and will not be released.
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- Our approach is victim-centric and ensures that we listen to the victim and understand / assist with what path they want to take in regard to potential action.



Are there options for the informal and formal resolution of complaints?

- Yes, there are a range of options that people have to resolve complaints, including in the first instance approaching the person and letting them know the impact of their behaviours.
- There are a range of options going right up to the ability to engage an external independent and impartial organization to make a complaint.
- The AFL has also engaged the services of an independent, impartial and confidential service to all AFL People to discuss the alleged behaviour and options available for resolution and / or reporting. This service assists with removing barriers in relation to making a complaint or raising a concern internally so that the behaviour can be appropriately resolved either informally or formally rather than a team member staying silent, ultimately impacting their wellbeing and performance.

What awareness activities has the AFL undertaken to raise awareness of LGBTQIA+ issues? (ie. Awareness-raising events, panels, discussion groups, participating in LGBTQIA+ campaigns, speakers).

- Internally, the AFL Pride and Allies Group was established almost 3 years ago with staff across the AFL and works to actively raise awareness of LGBTQIA+ issues which include:
 - Team member events
 - events in partnership with Pride in Sport
 - panel discussions
 - Group lunch and learn sessions
 - Regular internal comms and engagement initiatives around days such as Wear it Purple Day and IDAHOBIT.
- Externally, the AFLW competition celebrates Pride Round (this year to happen in Round 10) and in 2022 was held to coincide with National Coming Out Day.
- Through our AFL and AFLW social media channels - with a combined audience of more than 2 million followers – we educate our fans and support our Pride community through celebrating important days in the Pride Calendar including IDAHOBIT and Wear it Purple Day.
- The AFL is a member of Pride in Sport and in 2022 ran a session for clubs on ensuring they have a strong, welcoming and inclusive environment for all employees and team members, and we have run a similar Lunch and Learn session for our own AFL staff,
- We also support our Pride and Allies Group in taking part in a series of external events such as MidSumma and in joining the Sydney Swans as part of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.