TRANS-AFFIRMING LANGUAGE GUIDE

TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE: These are inclusive umbrella terms that describe people whose gender is different to what was presumed for them at birth.

Trans people may position 'being trans' as a history or experience, rather than an identity, and consider their gender identity as simply being female, male or a non-binary identity. Some trans people connect strongly with their trans experience, whereas others do not. Processes of gender affirmation may or may not be part of a trans or gender diverse person's life.

NON-BINARY: People whose gender is not, or not exclusively female or male, are sometimes labelled non-binary.

A person might identify solely as non-binary, or relate to non-binary as an umbrella term and consider themselves genderfluid, genderqueer, trans masculine, trans feminine, agender, bigender, or something else.

TRANSITION/GENDER AFFIRMATION: The personal process or processes a trans person determines is right for them in order to live as their defined gender and so that society recognises this. Transition may involve social, medical/surgical and/or legal steps that affirm a person's gender.

Affirming gender doesn't mean changing gender, 'having a sex change' or 'becoming a man or a woman', and transition isn't the same as being trans. A trans person who hasn't medically or legally affirmed their gender is no less the man, woman or non-binary person they've always been.

CISGENDER: A term used to describe people whose gender is the same as what was presumed for them at birth (male or female). 'Cis' is a Latin term meaning 'on the same side as'.

SISTERGIRL: A term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to describe gender diverse people that have a female spirit and take on female roles within the community. Including looking after children and family. Many Sistergirls live a traditional lifestyle and have strong cultural backgrounds.

BROTHERBOY: A term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to describe gender diverse people who have a male spirit and take on male roles within the community. Brotherboys have a strong sense of their cultural identity.

Note: How the words Sistergirl and Brotherboy are used can differ between locations, countries and nations. These terms may not specifically define who someone is, but might complement identity. Sistergirls and Brotherboys might be non-binary, female or male. The terms Sistagirl and Brothaboy are different and are used by Aboriginal communities as terms of endearment for Aboriginal cis women (Sistagirl) and Aboriginal cis men (Brothaboy).

GENDER EXPERIENCES: Trans, gender diverse, cis and cisgender are all experiences of gender and are distinct from male, female and non-binary gender identities.

GENDER DYSPHORIA: The distress or unease sometimes experienced when someone's gender isn't recognised by society, or doesn't feel congruent to their body. Gender dysphoria does not equal being trans.

Many trans people do not experience gender dysphoria, or if they do, it may cease with support or gender affirmation. With or without gender dysphoria, being trans is not a mental illness. A term used for those seeking medical gender affirmation, with or without distress, is Gender Incongruence.

AFAB/PFAB: Assigned female at birth/Presumed female at birth.

AMAB/PMAB: Assigned male at birth/Presumed male at birth.

LEGAL MARKER: The classification recorded when a child's birth is registered. In NSW, this is either M or F at birth and can later be amended to either M, F or X.

SEX CHARACTERISTICS: Physical parts of the body that are related to body development/regulation and reproductive systems. Primary sex characteristics are gonads, chromosomes, genitals and hormones. Secondary sex characteristics can include the development of breasts, voice pitch, facial, pubic hair etc.

Physical organs, hormones and chromosomes are not male or female; the gendering of body parts is a significant source of stigma, discrimination and pathologisation.

CISGENDERISM/CISSEXISM: Where something is based on a discriminatory social or structural view that positions (intentionally or not) the trans experience as either not existing or as something to be pathologised.

Cissexism believes that gender identity is determined at birth and is a fixed and innate identity that is based on the body and that only binary (male or female) identities are valid and real.

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YAY	NAY
"LGBTQ people when compared to the general population"	"LGBTQ people when compared with their heterosexual peers"
Trans and gender diverse people have any sexual orientation including heterosexual, queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual etc.	
Trans and gender diverse, transgender, trans person	Trans*, transgendered, transgenderism, transvestite, tranny, pre-op/post-op, cross dresser, sex & gender diverse. 'Transgender' is an adjective, not a noun or verb. It shouldn't be used on its own, e.g. 'a trans' or 'the transgender'
Transitioning, affirming gender	Transing, transgendering, trans'd
Men, women and non-binary people	Men, women and trans
Gender-affirming healthcare, transition-related healthcare	Gender reassignment, sex change, sex reassignment
Gay and bi men (cis and trans)	Gay, bi and trans men
Man, man with a trans experience, trans man	Transman (as in tallman instead of tall man)
Sex characteristics include chromosomes, hormones, gonads and genitals. Body parts don't have genders.	Biological sex is male, female or intersex, biologically male, biologically female
Ask: "What is your pronoun?"	"What is your preferred pronoun?"
Woman, woman with a trans experience, trans woman	Transwoman (as in tallwoman instead of tall woman)
Think: "Would I ask a cisgender person this?"	"Have you had the surgery?" / "Tell me more about your genitals?" / "What is your real name?"

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