

Putting on LGBTIQ+ events safely



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Firstly, this might seem a lot of things to do to create an event, but we want events for our LGBTIQ+ community run as safely as possible. But these are not hard and fast rules, and we acknowledge that some of these actions might put a financial burden on your event, especially if it's small.

Instead, look over all these actions and choose which ones are right for you and your event.

Conduct a risk assessment and develop a safety action plan

For these type of events, a risk assessment isn't OH&S things like tripping hazards, it's about the possibility of unfavourable media reports, or harmful social media posts, which can also lead to protests at the event itself, and figuring out how to avoid those potential issues. It's also about letting the police know that the event is going on, so that they can be aware and on the lookout for any planned disruptions of the event.

Risk Assessment

The risk assessment might look something like this:

Risk Category	Potential Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Physical Safety	Violence or harassment towards attendees	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hire security personnel trained in LGBTQ+ awareness and conflict resolution. - Ensure venue has clear exit routes and emergency procedures.
	Accidents or medical emergencies	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have trained medical staff or volunteers on-site. - Clearly mark first aid stations.
Inclusivity	Exclusionary behaviour or discrimination	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination. - Provide diversity and sensitivity training for staff and volunteers.
	Lack of accessibility for people with disability	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose venues with wheelchair accessibility and accommodations for various disabilities. - Provide ASL interpreters or other necessary accommodations.
Logistical	Technical difficulties with sound or lighting	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perform thorough equipment checks prior to the event. - Have backup equipment available.
	Overcrowding and venue capacity issues	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement ticketing or registration system to manage attendance. - Communicate capacity limits clearly.
Public Relations	Negative media attention or backlash	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a crisis communication plan.

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Risk Category	Potential Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be proactive in addressing any controversies or concerns. - Consider online safety implications and mitigations.
Financial	Budget overruns or unexpected costs	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan a detailed budget accounting for all potential expenses. - Consider fundraising or sponsorship opportunities.
	Low ticket sales or attendance	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market the event effectively to target audience segments. - Offer early bird discounts or promotional deals.

You can find a blank risk assessment at the bottom of this page for your event.

Safety plan

The safety plan could cover things like:

- Ticket booking process and information collection
- Venues safety audit
- Safety for bump in/bump out
- Use of security, marshals or volunteers and safety briefings
- Safe and effective marketing and promotional strategy
- Attendees getting to and from the event
- Planning for potential disruption and what to do
- Communication plan in the event of postponement or cancellation.

2. Contact your local police station

Police can assist with the aim that the event goes ahead as planned.

Every station has one or more LLOs – LGBTQAI+ Liaison Officers. When you ring your local station, ask to be put through to an LLO to chat about your event.

They will ask you questions such as:

- Are you aware of any specific threats or plans to disrupt this local event or is your concern based on the recent events in Melbourne?
- Are there any dignitaries or notable guests attending that may attract protest groups for reasons other than this event?

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- Number of people you expect to attend this event (how many have attended in recent years?)
- Are people required to register or can anyone just come along?
- Is the event being held outside? If it is in a building, will you have anyone controlling entry?
- Are you anticipating the need to close any roads or have traffic diversions in place?
- Is the council engaging traffic management and/or security for the event?
- What is the duration of the event?
- What expectations do you have of the Police who may attend? (public order management, traffic management, community liaison/engagement?)

The police can do such things as:

- Monitor social media
- Responding to online abuse or protest activity
- Safety advice
- Reviewing risk assessments
- Turn up in uniform to provide a clear presence
- Do drive bys to ensure everything is ok

3. Involve community

For organizations and groups that are not LGBTIQ+ led (such as councils and local libraries), it's important to partner with LGBTIQ+ groups.

LGBTIQ+ people know ourselves and our community the best

So we can give you great advice about:

- What the event should look like
- What it should include
- Who should (or shouldn't) be involved
- What other angles/options you might need to think about

We can also help spread the word to other LGBTIQ+ folks.

If you are unsure how to contact a local LGBTIQ+ organisation or community, please email pride@ballarat.vic.gov.au and we can help put you in touch with the right people to make your event a success.

4. Understanding photography consent

It's really important to understand that not everyone wants to be photographed at any event. There are lots of reasons for this, they might be shy, they might not want to be identified as being at an LGBTIQ+ event, they may be a refugee or a domestic violence survivor who needs to keep away from social media for safety reasons, or they might just not want to be photographed. As an event organiser, you need to respect this.

Ways to ensure that your event is photographed safely

- At the start of the event, announce that there will be photos taken, and anyone who doesn't wish to be photographed can come and collect something visible (a lanyard or a wrist band) that shows they don't wish to be in photographs

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- Ask any members of the public who wish to take photos to respect this system.
- Have an A frame or some sort of large sign at the entrance to your event saying this as well.
- Include this information in your email to guests/patrons/audience
- Consider having an 'opt in' system rather than an 'opt out' system, so only people who volunteer to be photographed are.
- Communicate what the photos will be used for – only for social media, only for a funding grant acquittal, only for publication at a later date about your event, a mix of these or for other things. Be clear what the photos will be used for, and then stick to that.
- Consider using a 'model release form' (also known as a 'talent release form') which you get a person to sign. This is a legal form that gives permission from the person being photographed to you to use the photographs in certain or all ways. Do an internet search for a form to see examples.
- Consider not taking photos at all, and encouraging attendees not to take photos either.

5. Online safety

Online safety is at the forefront of a lot of people's minds, but the queer community doesn't always get it right. Here's some things to think about when considering how to keep your event and your guests safe from an online perspective.

Things to consider for online safety

- Will you advertise or share the event online?
- If so, where? Will you focus on closed or private online groups, such as a closed Facebook group or private X/Twitter account?
- If you post publicly, be aware that anyone can find it and share it.
- Also be aware of people in any promotion images you are using. Have they given their express consent to be in photographs used to promote an LGBTIQ+ event?
- If you need to give an email address out, consider making one for the event, or for your group, or just using one that does not include your name. If your full name is in the contact email address, people who are unfriendly to your event might be able to search the internet and social media to find out more about you.

Good luck with your event!