

This is a guide only and should be adapted to your industry and circumstances.

## Navigating the Job Market as an LGBTQIA+ Jobseeker

### Introduction

LGBTQIA+ jobseekers bring valuable perspectives, resilience, and skills to the workforce. However, workplace discrimination and bias can still present barriers. Social enterprises, which often promote inclusivity and social impact, can be a great environment for LGBTQIA+ professionals seeking meaningful employment. This guide offers strategies for navigating the job market within social enterprises while ensuring your rights and wellbeing.

### 1. Understanding Your Rights and Protections

As an LGBTQIA+ jobseeker in Queensland, you are protected under both federal and state laws that prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status. Key legal protections include:

- **Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth):** Prohibits discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and intersex status.
- **Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth):** Provides protections against workplace discrimination and harassment.
- **Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld):** Specifically protects LGBTQIA+ individuals from discrimination in employment, education, accommodation, and the provision of goods and services.
- **Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld):** Reinforces protections for LGBTQIA+ individuals by embedding human rights principles in Queensland law.
- **Workplace Protections from the Australian Human Rights Commission:** Allows individuals to file complaints if they face workplace discrimination.

### 2. Identifying Inclusive Employers

Finding an LGBTQIA+-friendly employer is key to a positive work experience. Steps to take:

- **Research Social Enterprises:** Look for explicit commitments to LGBTQIA+ inclusion in their policies.
- **Check Employer Reviews and Ratings:** Websites like Pride in Diversity's Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) rank LGBTQIA+ inclusive employers.
- **Assess Workplace Policies:** Look for anti-discrimination policies, gender-neutral facilities, and employee resource groups for LGBTQIA+ staff.
- **Look for Affirmative Action Initiatives:** Some social enterprises actively recruit from LGBTQIA+ communities and promote inclusive hiring practices.

### 3. Preparing Your Application and Resume

Your resume and cover letter should showcase your skills while considering workplace culture. Tips include:

- **Highlight Inclusive Work Experience:** If applicable, list involvement in LGBTQIA+ organisations or advocacy roles.
- **Use Gender-Neutral Language:** Focus on skills and achievements rather than personal identity if disclosure is a concern.
- **Tailor Applications to Inclusive Employers:** Emphasise values that align with the organisation's mission.

### 4. Navigating the Job Search and Interview Process

While job hunting, consider strategies to ensure a comfortable and fair experience:

- **Utilise LGBTQIA+ Job Boards:** Websites such as Out for Australia and Pride in Diversity offer LGBTQIA+-friendly job listings.
- **Prepare for Interview Questions:** Think about how to respond if asked about identity or pronouns in an interview setting.
- **Know Your Rights:** Employers cannot legally discriminate based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status, and you are not required to disclose unless you choose to.
- **Understand Workplace Adjustments:** If you need gender-affirming support in the workplace, such as flexible leave for medical appointments, check workplace policies before accepting an offer.

### 5. Advocating for Yourself in the Workplace

Once hired, self-advocacy can contribute to a positive work experience. Ways to do this include:

- **Understanding Workplace Policies:** Familiarise yourself with grievance procedures in case of discrimination.
- **Joining Employee Resource Groups (ERGs):** Many organisations have LGBTQIA+ support networks.
- **Requesting Necessary Accommodations:** This could include pronoun usage in email signatures, gender-neutral facilities, or dress code flexibility.
- **Reporting Discrimination or Harassment:** If you experience discrimination, seek assistance through your employer's HR department, the Queensland Human Rights Commission, or Fair Work Australia.

## 6. Building a Career in Social Enterprises

A career in social enterprises can be fulfilling, and LGBTQIA+ jobseekers can thrive by:

- **Seeking Leadership and Mentorship Opportunities:** Engage with LGBTQIA+ networks for career growth.
- **Participating in Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives:** Advocate for inclusive policies and representation.
- **Continuing Professional Development:** Engage in training programs to enhance skills and advance your career.
- **Leveraging Government Programs:** Some Queensland and federal programs support LGBTQIA+ employment initiatives, such as grants for inclusive workplaces.

## 7. Maintaining Wellbeing and Resilience

Navigating the job market as an LGBTQIA+ jobseeker can be challenging. Maintain your confidence by:

- **Connecting with LGBTQIA+ Support Networks:** Organisations like Pride in Diversity, Out for Australia, and Minus18 provide career support.
- **Practicing Self-Care:** Seek work environments that align with your values and wellbeing.
- **Accessing Mental Health Resources:** LGBTQIA+-specific mental health services like QLife and local LGBTQIA+ support groups can provide guidance and reassurance.
- **Celebrating Your Successes:** Recognise your achievements and progress in finding an inclusive workplace.

## Summary

Navigating the job market as an LGBTQIA+ jobseeker requires confidence, awareness of your rights, and resilience. Social enterprises offer inclusive opportunities that align with values of diversity and equity. By leveraging support networks, identifying welcoming workplaces, and advocating for your needs, you can build a meaningful and fulfilling career.