



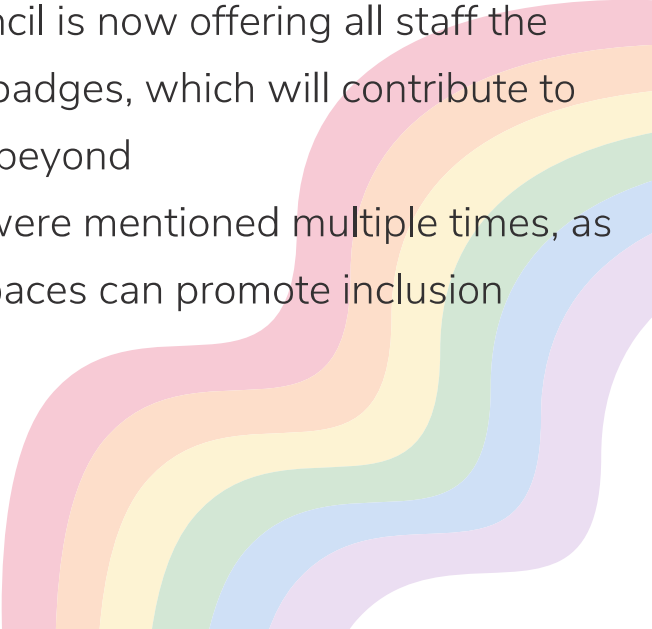
Improving our libraries for LGBTQIA+ Merri-bek community members: Survey Outcomes

We received over 110 responses to our recent community survey, including many insightful comments.

We thank all respondents for their contributions!

- 82.88% (92/111) of respondents are already library users
- Survey respondents would or currently do attend all five of our branches, with Brunswick and Coburg being the most strongly represented. This may be due in part to the reach of the survey and library branch sizes, however community members living in the North of Merri-bek were also enthusiastic about LGBTQIA+ programs and events at their local branches
- Intersectionality, safety, and inclusion were issues that were highlighted through respondents' comments

Service Provision

- Many respondents mentioned that visible markers of inclusion – posters, stickers, staff wearing lanyards or pronoun pins – would help them feel welcome and comfortable. Merri-bek Council is now offering all staff the option to include pronouns on their name badges, which will contribute to visibility and inclusion in the Libraries and beyond
 - Gender neutral bathrooms and language were mentioned multiple times, as well as other ways that staff and library spaces can promote inclusion
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Collections

- 80.73% (88/109) of respondents rated seeing their own identities represented in the collections as 'Very Important'
- There was strong support for a reading guide, search guides, stickers and signage – all of which we will continue to work towards
- Respondents wanted a good selection of LGBTQIA+ fiction and non-fiction to be available at all branches, easily accessible and on display
- LGBTQIA Collection was the most popular collection name for LGBTQIA+ collection materials, followed by Pride Collection

Programming

- We gained valuable insight into how we can improve our programming, and what patrons might most want to see. There was strong support for author talks and workshops, book groups, and children's programs
- A number of respondents mentioned the possibility of partnerships – within council, with organisations, and with community groups and individuals
- There was lots of interest in using library spaces for social groups or initiatives!

Many of the topics mentioned by respondents in relation to the libraries have also been raised in discussions about the upcoming Council-Wide LGBTQIA+ Action Plan. These topics include staff training, appropriate bathrooms, and visual markers of inclusivity and welcome.

The Council wide Action Plan is being developed in collaboration with the LGBTQIA+ Reference Group comprised of LGBTQIA-identifying Merri-bek community members. The plan will include a range of activities that celebrate Merri-bek's diverse and proud LGBTQIA+ communities and ensure Council's services and spaces are safe for everyone.

There will be opportunities to provide comments on the Council wide action plan via the Conversations Merri-bek platform in the near future. Once this is up and running, we will let you know so that you can share your thoughts!

