

Intersex, Transgender and Gender Diversity Survey 2017 Summary Report ANU Counselling Centre



Background

The Intersex, Transgender and Gender Diversity survey formed part of a SAAF funded project undertaken by the ANU Counselling Centre in 2017. This work focused on raising awareness and support for Intersex, Transgender and Gender Diverse students. It aligns with the ANU values of being an inclusive, open and respectful institution that reflects the diversity of our nation.

The survey was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the ANU.

Results of the survey were used to develop resources on Intersex and Transgender and Gender Diversity for the ANU community.

Acknowledgments

The survey was developed by the ANU Counselling Centre in consultation with the 2017 ANUSA Queer Officer and an ANU student representative from the Intersex community. This work would not have been possible without their support and guidance. The Counselling Centre would also like to acknowledge and thank all those who participated in the survey.

Survey Design

Intersex, Transgender and Gender Diverse students were invited to participate in the anonymous online survey via an all of student email, social media and ANUSA networks.

The survey asked about student demographics, identity, pronoun use, professional supports and included two main questions related to: 1) what Intersex, Transgender & Gender Diverse students most want others to be aware of and 2) how they most want to be supported. Tick box options as well as capacity for free text entry were provided for each question.

To participate respondents needed to meet three criteria: aged 18 years and over, ANU student and agree to participate.

The survey ran for the month of October 2017.

Terminology

We acknowledge that the following terms mean something unique and specific to the person using them and that language changes. There are a large number of terms which we have not included in the survey and this report but which should be respected and recognized. The following terms and definitions are defined in a way that reflects our use of them in the survey and report.

Gender - is part of a person's personal and social identity. Gender refers to each person's deeply felt internal and individual identity. A person's gender may or may not be reflected in outward social markers, including their name, outward appearance, mannerisms and dress.

Gender Diverse – an umbrella term for people whose gender identity is different to their sex assigned at birth and who may or may not identify as transgender.

Intersex – intersex people are born with physical or biological sex characteristics (such as sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal patterns and/or chromosomal patterns) that are more diverse than stereotypical definitions for male or female bodies. In this guide intersex is used as an umbrella term to describe over 40 different intersex variations.

Sex – the genetic, hormonal or physical sex characteristics assigned to an individual at birth.

Sexuality – our sexual feelings and attractions to others.

Transgender – an umbrella term for people whose gender identity is different to their sex assigned at birth. In this guide refers to people who identify as binary transgender.

Section 1. Response to the survey

This section of the report provides a summary of survey responses, demographics, identity and pronoun use.

Interest in the survey:

- **513** students followed the link.
- **232/513** answered yes to all 3 criteria (age18yrs+, ANU student, agree to participate).
- **128/232** responded to the two main questions &/or made free text comment.
- **18/128 (7%)** responses expressed phobic or prejudiced attitudes about Intersex, Transgender and Gender Diversity or about the survey*.
- **110** participants.

*These responses were deleted from the final report as they were irrelevant to the aims of the survey.

Demographics:

Degree

Postgraduate – 38%
Undergraduate – 59%
Other – 3%

Age

Range: 18 – 55 years.
Highest response rates were from 18 – 19 year olds (26% of respondents), with 69% of respondents in the age range 18 – 25 years.

Identity:

Ethnicity

Participants identified a range of ethnicities (their sense of belonging and attachment to a social group based on shared ancestry, language and culture). This question provided a free text option which allowed respondents to describe their ethnicity. Responses have been grouped based on the main ethnicity provided & additional identities have been included in brackets (see table below).

Table 1. Ethnicity of participants

Ethnicity	Number of participants	Percentage
African American	1	1%
Arabic	1	1%
Asian	8	7%
Australian (Asian, German, French, Lebanese, Chinese, Cambodian, British, European, Mixed race, White). eg. Chinese Australian, French Australian	34	31%
British/English.	3	3%
Celtic	1	1%
Chinese	6	5%
Danish	1	1%
European	5	4.5%

Filipino	1	1%
Greek-Italian	1	1%
Indian	3	3%
Indigenous	1	1%
Indonesian	1	1%
Jewish Latino Israeli	1	1%
Middle Eastern	2	2%
Mixed-race	2	2%
New Zealander	1	1%
Singaporean	2	2%
Vietnamese	1	1%
White/Caucasian (American, CALD, Anglo Saxon) eg. White Anglo Saxon, White American	25	23%

Religious Identity: see table below.

Table 2. Religious identity of participants

Religious Identity	Number of participants	Percentage
Agnostic/atheist/not applicable/none	37	34%
Anglican	1	1
Buddhist	5	4.5
Christian	7	6%
Jewish	2	2%
Misotheist	1	1%
Mormon	1	1%
Muslim	3	3%
Pagan	2	2%
Questioning	1	1%
Roman Catholic	8	7%
Spiritual	1	1%
Unsure	1	1%

Intersex identity

8 participants reported an intersex variation.
 96 reported no variation.
 5 chose not to disclose.
 1 identified as 'other' - unconfirmed, probable.

Gender Identity – students identified a range of gender identities which are listed in the table below. Comments are also provided and describe how some individuals identify as and use more than one gender identity.

Table 3. Gender Identity of participants

Gender Identity	Number of students	%
Agender	8	7.3
Female	22	20
Genderfluid	2	1.8
Genderqueer	9	8.2
Male	35	31.8
Non-binary	14	12.7
Transperson	3	2.7
Transman	5	4.5
Transwoman	5	4.5
Two spirit	1	0.9
Other*	6	5.5

*comments:

- “Both female and trans woman apply”.
- “Femme aligned non-binary”.
- “Male / Nonbinary”.
- “Genderqueer and enby”.

Pronouns.

Students use a range of pronouns listed in the table below. Responses reflect identity with and use of more than one pronoun.

Table 4. Pronouns of participants

Pronoun	Number of students	%*
He/Him/His	78	71%
Hir/Hir/Hirs	1	1%
She/Her/Hers	60	55%
They/Them/Theirs	23	21%
Other*	18	16%
Xe/Xem/Xyrs	3	3%

* Adds up to more than 100% because students use more than one pronoun.

Comments*:

- “She / her / hers and sometimes they / them / theirs.”
- “They/them and she/hers.”
- “Ne/Nir/Ners.”
- “Choose not to disclose.”
- “They/them/theirs or She/her/hers.”
- “No pronouns, just my name please.”
- “He/Him/His or They/Them/Theirs.”
- “Changes between she/her and he/him.”

Additional comments on pronoun use are included here and in the Appendix*:

- “It is fluid.”
- “Preferred pronoun - just my name.”

- “My use means nothing unless it is accepted by the public.”
- “I'm not out, outside of the queer house.”
- “I tend to not mind too much, to be honest. Most people use she/her, others use he/him. It doesn't bother me what they use - but I don't like how it becomes awkward if/when they think they've gotten it wrong and try to apologise etc.”
- “They/them is also acceptable (but not preferred) due to most people struggling with non-traditional pronouns.
- “I am most comfortable being referred to by name only.”
- “I prefer they/them/theirs but I actually don't mind she or he in and of themselves. It's more about what the pronoun represents, that people would be assuming my gender and what's associated with that.
- “I am assigned female at birth and don't really identify as female but I'm used to being referred to as a girl (with she/her pronouns) and thus don't really mind it. Asking people to call me they/them feels more troublesome than helpful to me, because she/her does not discomfort me and I'd rather not get into an argument about gender to people if I brought this topic up.”
- “Awareness is a necessity, as incorrect use is quite hurtful.”
- “Whilst I am gender non-conforming and do not believe in gender (hence I am non-binary), and I encourage others to be gender non-conforming too, I believe that pronouns if pronouns are to exist (which they shouldn't, since I feel quite trapped by them), it seems to make the most sense to use them to confer my biological sex rather than gender.”
- “I would strongly encourage ANU counsellors and indeed all staff to ask for pronouns at all appointments, regardless of gender identity (including cisgender). Pronouns do change over time, and people may use different pronouns at different times. I also believe that this has the added benefit of affirming some trans people's identities.”

***see Appendix for further comments about pronoun use.**

Section 2. Awareness

This section outlines responses to the tickbox options provided as well as free text comments to the question: **'What do you most want others to understand about Intersex, Transgender and Gender Diversity?'** Responses are provided separately for Intersex and Gender.

What students most want others to understand about Intersex.



Intersex Pride Flag, Organisation Intersex International Australia 2013.

Intersex:

- People with intersex variations may or may not use the term intersex to refer to themselves.
- In terms of data collection, sex usually refers to chromosomal, gonadal & anatomical features associated with biological sex.
- Not all people are born with genetic, hormonal or physical sex characteristics that are typically 'male' or 'female'.
- Intersex refers to a biological variation in which a person is born with genetic, hormonal or physical sex characteristics that fall outside the typical definitions of male or female.
- Intersex is an umbrella term used to describe over 40 different intersex variations. Intersex is not a third sex and there are many different ways people describe themselves and their bodies.
- Intersex is not about gender or sexuality, it is about biological variations.
- That the goals of intersex activism before anything else are bodily autonomy and informed medical consent.
- That intersex people with an intersex variation have a range of human rights and health issues, notably arising from forced and coercive medical interventions,
- That intersex variation is part of the normal diversity of the human condition.

Free text comments are included here and in the Appendix*:

- "That the goals of intersex activism before anything else are bodily autonomy and informed medical consent. That intersex people don't have to deal with their variation alone."
- "Support by counsellors when someone is exploring their gender identity or intersex status, in the form of giving space for a student to talk about it without fear of judgement or repercussions in other parts of their student life."
- "These things are not alike and should not be sandwiched together like this."
- "That in terms of data collection, sex usually refers to the legal sex assigned at birth, which may only approximate to sex characteristics."

* see Appendix for further comments on understanding Intersex.

Section 2. Awareness cont'd

What students most want others to understand about Transgender and Gender Diversity.



Nonbinary Pride Flag, Kye Rowan 2014

Transgender Pride Flag, Monica Helms 1999

Transgender and Gender Diversity:

- A person's gender identity does not always align with the sex they were assigned at birth.
- Gender identity is a separate (but sometimes related)* construct to sexual identity.
- Gender is a social construct which allows for a range of gender identities.
- Gender identity is not a choice.
- Gender identities are often fluid or nuanced, rather than simple
- That Transgender and Gender Diverse are not interchangeable. Some people identify with one but not the other, while others may identify with both or neither.
- This is not a phase, I am not confused, I will not grow out of it,
- More than one gender label can apply to an individual
- That whether or not you think someone looks like the gender they identify you should respect their pronouns, name and gender.

**"for me, my sexuality has been closely linked with my gender identity".*

Free text comments are included here and in the Appendix*:

- "Gender and pronouns of others should be respected - it's not that hard to change/use different pronouns for a person and can be extremely validating."
- "These are just categories you cannot always fit into."
- "That Transgender and Gender Diverse are not interchangeable. Some people identify with one but not the other, while others may identify with both or neither."
- "My gender is real and not made up."
- "That anyone can/should be gender non-conforming since gender seems to be a harmful/mentally damaging social construct."
- "That gender identities other than binary male or female exist and are valid. And that gender identities are often fluid or nuanced, rather than simple."
- "Gender identity is not a choice."
- "How to call out transphobia and stop it when you see it."
- "This is not a phase, I am not confused, I will not grow out of it, and that should be ok."
- "Genitals/chromosomes/biology do not denote gender."
- "More than one gender label can apply to an individual."

*see Appendix for further comments on understanding Transgender and Gender Diversity.

Section 3. Support

Tick box and free text responses to the question **‘What do you most want others to do to support Intersex, Transgender and Gender Diverse students?’** are listed below. Where relevant, responses have been separated for Intersex and Gender.

Intersex, Transgender and Gender Diverse support*:

- Provide a range of gender and sex options wherever these markers are requested, including an ‘Other’ (please specify) option.
- Consider whether to collect data on biological sex, whether data on gender is more appropriate or whether data on sex/gender is required at all.
- Refrain from making assumptions about a person's sex or gender identity, for example based on their name, voice or appearance.
- Ask what my pronouns are.
- Provide gender neutral toilets.
- Allow individuals to update data related to sex &/or gender.
- Ask for, and use my preferred name (unless I request otherwise).
- Respect, acknowledge & support intersex, transgender and gender diverse students.
- Actively work to understand, challenge and eliminate discrimination against intersex, transgender and gender diverse students.
- Provide appropriate advocacy and referral to services and supports within the ANU and external to the ANU.
- Display intersex, transgender and gender diverse resources.
- “Please always be eager to learn more, though respectfully. You don't necessarily have to be a vocal supporter but just learning about the topic and being able to talk about ITGD people respectfully is good.”
- “In my experience, most ITGD persons desire only to be treated with a baseline of respect and social normalcy. As to what that means in specifics, well, at this point in time it mostly just means listening to who we are and expanding one's perceptions of human experiences accordingly. Similar to when dealing with matters of ability, discrimination can often take the form of negligence in communal structure -- both physical and communicative. Providing gender-neutral toilets and doing away with needless, generalized, gender-&-sex-specific groupings within accommodation, paperwork or the language of public discussion would be appreciated. Gender (understood to be a social construct) should be regarded as an "opt-in" part of identity. If students wish to organize themselves around commonality of gender experience (such as the ANU Women's Department), then this is both fair and often incredibly valuable. The problem comes when "opting-into" a gender identity is presented as mandatory. It's worth recognizing, too, that no matter how many additional categories are added to our discourse, we will never cover the full range of human experiences and cultural identities present in our community. It would be better to leave gender out of our communal structure entirely, unless in recognition of gender-specific needs or factors of discrimination. Such would also help disconnect heteronormativity from our communal structures and language (yay~). I'd like to compare gender to race momentarily: both are somewhat-arbitrarily stratified collections of identity that -- while once believed to define human experiences in a primarily physical way -- are better understood today to affect us in (primarily) social ways. Stereotyping, forced segregation and social tribalism all contribute to the most dehumanizing attitudes and criminal behaviors present in our society, and as such we have for a long time sought to remove this stratification of identity from our everyday interactions. We don't define or identify people by "name, race, gender" anymore, and the world is better for it. So I ask... why still try to define the participants in our society on the basis of "name, gender"? Why gender, first-and-foremost? When (outside of scenarios of need, as I have mentioned -- which, notably, apply to a wide range of identities, not just gender) is that something truly worth identifying in the way we conduct our society? It's a very old-fashioned way of perceiving the world, based on a great deal of fear regarding sexual dimorphism that simply isn't representative of reality. Anyway, I would add additionally that (unless discussing specific medical conditions or complications) there is

absolutely no reason to ask for unsolicited information about a person's sex -- neither in paperwork nor face-to-face. Use gender if one absolutely must, but never sex. -- Thankyou so much for your interest and support!"

- "Nothing, I am not feeble and oppressed."
- Know about and access training and resources on intersex, transgender and gender diversity.
- Provide a feedback and complaints process of which all students are aware.
- 'Be respectful, always'.

Intersex

- Promote a better understanding of intersex people and their concerns.
- "Why are these issues presented together as if they are relevant to a single homogenous group? So few of those issues are really relevant to intersex people?"

Transgender and Gender Diversity

- Be aware of non-binary gender identities when asking for student representatives.
- Allow transgender and gender diverse students to change their name/s eg. on ISIS and academic transcripts.
- Consider transgender and gender diverse students if you are arranging accommodation off campus eg. camping trips.
- "Drop the 'did you just assume my gender' jokes. They're not funny and they make actual TGD people feel unsafe."
- "Be peaceful."
- "Support services for distant education students who have to participate in a lot of online spaces where gender markers are often wrongly used."
- "That while someone is figuring out their gender, their pronouns and name may change multiple times. This doesn't mean they are indecisive or confused, it is just them trying to find what feels most comfortable. Be understanding and respectful."
- "Not make accommodations for differences so overt. Show respect and understanding on a personal level, such as asking for a name and using that instead of assumed pronouns wherever possible. The status of my gender identity is not the whole sum of my being and should neither be highlighted or condemned."
- "Allow the option for preferred name/pronouns without forcing the transgender individual to out themselves."
- "Providing access opportunities for students who have faced discrimination/setbacks as a result of their gender identity."
- "Addition of alternative titles to normative gendered titles. A 'Mx' option would be useful."
- "Not ask us to justify our gender etc."

***see Appendix for additional comments not included here.**

Section 4. Services and supports.

This section documents the recommendations made by students about what supports and services they have found useful.

Recommended by students for Intersex support.

National organisations run by and for intersex people:

- **Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome Support Group Australia (AISSGA)** – peer support, information and advocacy group for people affected by AIS &/or other intersex variations, and their families.
<http://aissga.org.au>
- **OII Australia – Intersex Australia** (Organisation Intersex International Australia) - an independent support, education and policy development organization by and for people with intersex variations.
<http://oii.org.au>

Local organisation:

- **A Gender Agenda** – works with, and on behalf of, intersex, transgender and gender diverse people, their friends, families and allies. Provides social support, events, workshops, advocacy and resources.
<http://genderrights.org.au/>

Recommended Reading:

- **The Darlington Statement**

This is a joint consensus statement made by Australian and Aotearoa/New Zealand intersex organisations and independent advocates, in March 2017. It sets out the priorities and calls by the intersex human rights movement in our countries, under six headings: a preamble, human rights and legal reform; health and wellbeing; peer support; allies; and education, awareness and employment.
<https://oii.org.au/darlington-statement/>

Recommended by students for Transgender and Gender Diversity support.

A Gender Agenda – works with, and on behalf of, intersex, transgender and gender diverse people, their friends, families and allies. Provides social support, events, workshops, advocacy and resources.
<http://genderrights.org.au/>

AIDS Action Council of the ACT – provides Counselling & Referral services, peer education & workshops, LGBTI Community Development, Facilities & Resources.
6257 2855
<http://aidsaction.org.au/>

ANUSA Queer* Department & Queer Officer – provides support to all Queer* students at ANU. Run social events, advocate and run political campaigns.
sa.queer@anu.edu.au
<https://anunqueerdepartment.com/>

Diversity ACT – provides a social hub, social support network and community resources for the local LGBTIQ community and members.
02) 6231 3128
<https://diversityact.org.au/>

ANU Counselling Centre

Headspace – provides early intervention mental health services to 12 – 25 year olds.
<https://www.headspace.org.au/>

Minus18 – a youth-led organization for LGBTI youth.
<https://minus18.org.au/>

QLife – provides peer-supported telephone and web-based services for LGBTI people.
1800 184 527
<https://qlife.org.au/>

Relationships Australia Canberra – provides relationship support services to enhance human and family relationships.
02) 6122 7100
<http://www.relationships.org.au/locations/act/deakin>

TranzAustralia – a collective that exists for people with intersex variations & Trans* or Sex &/or Gender Diverse people.
<https://www.facebook.com/TranzAustralia/>

Please note: There were also recommendations made for private GP's, Psychiatrists and Clinical Psychologists in ACT and Sydney. A list of these is available on request from the ANU Counselling Centre:

ANU Counselling Centre
Building 18, North Road
P 6125 2442
W counselling.anu.edu.au
E counselling.centre@anu.edu.au

Thankyou for your interest.

For further information on the survey and related resources please visit our website or contact us on counselling.centre@anu.edu.au.

Appendix

1. Additional comments from Section 1 on Pronoun Use.

- "I'm not open about my identity, so people call me she/her."
- "I'm still fine with others using she/her/hers for me but I refer to myself with they/them/theirs."
- "I chose she/her/hers as it aligns with my visible physical sex. At times I am mistaken for male and am happy to be called he/him/his as well. Best case scenario for me is for gender to simply not be discussed as I consider it irrelevant."
- "Don't be offended if someone gets it wrong."
- "When referring to myself I use 'she'; when referring to others I use 'they'."
- "I'm not particularly bothered when people get it wrong. But I'm always happy to be asked and offered 'They' as an option."

2. Additional comments from Section 2 on what students most want you to understand about Intersex.

- "That in terms of data collection, sex usually refers to the legal sex assigned at birth, which may only approximate to sex characteristics."
- "That intersex variation is part of the normal diversity of the human condition. It is not a lifestyle choice. Hopefully the more people understand this, the more it is 'normalised', the less stigma will be associated with identifying as intersex."
- "That 'biological sex' is a fallacy, and forms that ask for it should specify what that info is related to. E.g. My blood is male (testosterone, high fbc etc), but I have ovaries, and now virilised (technically intersex) genitals, due to HRT. Even if a form asks for gender and sex in two different fields, I'm unsure what to put unless the form specifies what the data is being used for."
- "That it's illegal to discriminate against LGBTI people and it makes you a huge asshole if you do it - and that it also has consequences both socially (people realising you're a huge asshole, and you getting fired) and legally (you being charged with an actual crime)."
- "This survey really prioritises the needs of trans people over intersex people, collapsing both groups into a single ugly acronym that no-one will understand and having trans people essentially prioritise issues affecting others."
- "That sex (binary or otherwise) has no impact on the personalities of individuals."
- "That intersex people have a range of human rights and health issues, notably arising from forced and coercive medical interventions, and this stuff is completely omitted from your survey. Indeed, you homogenise intersex and trans populations and focus primarily on the needs of people with transgender identities."
- "A person's personality hardly has to do with their physical qualities, it has far more to do with social influence. Don't assume that just because a person has x behaviour or trait, it means they are male or female."

3. Additional comments from Section 2 on what students most want you to understand about Transgender and Gender Diversity.

- "Experiences of gender identity can be fluid."
- "That 'transgender' is not a separate identity to male and female; trans men are men and trans women are women."
- "I don't 'feel' male. I am male."
- "More than one gender label can apply to an individual."
- "Just chill. Yeah it's important that you educate yourself, and it's helpful when you respect how we'd like to be treated and addressed, but don't get so worried or avoid the subject. Take us at face value when we say we want to be referred to in a particular way, and then just... go with it?"
- "Using physical transition resources that are mostly associated with trans men and women does not make me a trans man or woman (ie, getting chest surgery and using testosterone-based hrt does not make me a trans man). Also to refer to transgender people as their current preferred gender, even when referencing them in a time before they were 'out' or identifying as their current gender (unless told otherwise)."

- “Gender ROLES are social constructs as well as gender itself.”
- “Stop treating me differently and being scared what pronouns might offend me. For those who get triggered so easily, grow the fuck up, we are different and we can't expect everyone to bow down to us, have a little respect, it works both ways.”
- “First of all, 'transgender' is a describing word, not a noun. The way it's being used in this survey is wrong. Also, I think it's important to emphasise that it's possible to be fluid in your gender identity, and that two or more genders can sit equally within one person - that this is a really valid way of identifying.”
- “If I identify as male, I want to be treated as male. Giving preferential, non-binary treatment e.g., in bathrooms defeats the purpose of trying to fit with who I am. If I didn't want to try and look and act and be male, I would be making a huge fuss over being trans like some people do; but if I can be seen as just male (not FTM, not whatever bullshit other people try and pull), then I'm happy.”
- “Gender is simply related to a person's beliefs about themselves and their identity.”
- “Even the 'alternative' genders come with their own constructs and expectations!”
- “That even if a person doesn't look like how you expect someone of their gender identity to look, doesn't mean they aren't that gender identity. That whether or not you think someone looks like the gender they identify you should respect their pronouns, name and gender.”
- “I would like others to recognise that gender identities can change and can be fluid over time. This is often not discussed, and I have had my own issues with this.”
- “'Agender' is not a gender, it's the rejection of "gender" as a relevant social category.”
- “I don't want anyone to understand me. I don't know how people should be educated to become not just open minded but to be fair to whatever they do not relate to.”

4. Additional comments from Section 3 on what students most want you to do to support them.

- “They cannot be huge assholes! that's basically it! Also, they can take action if they see people discriminating against LGBTI people (including firing them, reminding them it's illegal, Academic penalties etc - they need to learn NOW that this behaviour is not acceptable and that there ARE consequences to being awful people).”
- “The notion of "biological sex" is fraught and frequently meaningless. Trans and intersex ppl could count differently for "biological sex" depending on how it's defined. (genitals, hormone profile, chromosomes, secondary sex characteristics). The term is beyond useless.”
- “Allow opportunities to change preferred names on ID cards.”
- “Make the process of changing gender markers and preferred names easier for TGD students without making us jump through so many bureaucratic hoops. Make all bathrooms gender neutral or at least ensure gender neutral bathrooms are readily available without always conflating them with disabled bathrooms.”
- “To make it common practice to ask everyone about their pronouns and names, as often TGD students can feel singled out and isolated if they're the only ones being asked.”
- “Be able to update gender online.”
- “To normalise stating pronouns as well as name in class icebreakers, for example. For students suffering because of confusion surrounding their gender identity to have access to resources and for gender diverse students to feel safe in the ANU community, especially when it comes to other students.”