

**QUEER DISPLACEMENTS:
SEXUALITY, MIGRATION & EXILE**

**2019
CONFERENCE
REPORT**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Queer Displacements: Sexuality, Migration and Exile 2019 conference (Queer Displacements) was organised by two queer refugee women, emerging academics and activists Renee Dixson and Tina Dixson. Queer Displacements took place on the Traditional lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people whose sovereignty was never ceded. The conference was hosted by the ANU Humanities Research Centre that provided financial and administration support.

The Queer Displacements conference was organised in 7 months but the work on it has begun much earlier. When we, Renee and Tina, sought asylum in Australia, experiences of exclusion, silencing and erasure have not vanished. They continued to exist, sometimes in more disguised (or well-meaning) ways.

To be a queer refugee is about resistance. You, as a queer refugee, resist racism, homophobia and systemic erasure of your experiences as too uncomfortable or too exotic. But you are also resisted to, by those for whom your resistance threatens their comforts and privileges. In our short time in Australia, we experienced both types of resistance, and both have fuelled our responsibility towards justice for all LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people even more. Thus, **Queer Displacements is not a product of passion. Queer Displacements is about solidarity, professionalism and responsibility.** It is not only about words. It is and must remain about actions.

Living in Australia, we have also met many great supporters, without whom Queer Displacements would not have happened the same way it did. We would like to express our gratitude to the following sponsors who made this event possible:

- the ACT Government Office for LGBTIQ+ Affairs;
- the ANU Research School of Humanities;
- the ANU Gender Institute;
- UNHCR Regional Representation in Canberra;
- AIDS Action Council and Canberra Inclusive Partnership;
- the Herbert and Valmae Freilich Project for the Study of Bigotry;
- Asylum Seekers Centre;
- Settlement Services International; and
- Miles of Love by Planet All.

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We would like to thank volunteers who dedicated their time for Queer Displacements to run smoothly. They are: Sumithri Venketasubramanian, Romy Listo, Che Bishop, Manaswini Iyengar, Tate McAllister, Bronte Charles, Kathryn Allan, Anne-Marie Delahunt and Henry Ruge-Owen.

The conference discussion on social media can be found using the hashtag #QueerDisplacements. Videos from keynote plenaries were published at <https://www.facebook.com/queersisterhood/>. This report, the repository of conference materials and the Canberra Statement can be found at <http://bit.ly/queer-displacements>.

This report has been prepared by Tina Dixson and Renee Dixson.

Cover photo: (c) Renee Dixson 2018.

INTRODUCTION

Despite improvements in human rights in some contexts around the world, many LGBTIQ+ people are still subjected to discrimination, violence, torture, imprisonment or death for simply being who they are.¹ In many cases, the only way to survive is to flee seeking asylum in other countries – the right given by the Refugee Convention. However, the journey to safety is never easy.

The right to seek asylum is under attack. It's being replaced by the discourse of securitisation and border management. The language of people and human rights is being eroded. Refugees are no longer assumed to be telling the truth. To draw on anthropologist Didier Fassin², their traumas must be proven with visible scars, their stories must be corroborated by experts and in a hostile environment like this, the plight of LGBTIQ+ asylum remains even more marginalised.

Not only are LGBTIQ+ people fleeing from persecution inflicted by various actors in their countries of origin, but they are also experiencing further violence: en route, in camps, detention centres and even in countries that promised a safe harbour. The truth about their sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics is questioned and scrutinised, very often not believed by immigration officials. They are subjected to harmful and unnecessary tests to prove who they are.

LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees are still forced to live in closets in their host countries, as often the only way to survive in asylum is to rely on ethnic community support. Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and queerphobia are still really there.

Racism is still alive. Heteronormativity is thriving. LGBTIQ+ asylum is still a rare debate in public discourses on asylum. When those narratives exist, they are often one-sided. LGBTIQ+ refugees are portrayed as a minority within a minority, as an exception, a deviation from the norm. Their stories of an oppressive past are craved for. Their victimhood is paraded. Their gratefulness is desired. Their pride and coming out are demanded. A Western way of living queerness is imposed with no possibility for alternatives or cultural ways.

Queer Displacements aimed for a different approach. The experience of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement is never just about access to legal assistance or storytelling. This is not just a story of the past. Displacement does not stop at the point of border crossing or even when a visa is granted. It is ongoing. These experiences have the capacity to inform policy, practice and research. For these reasons, Queer Displacements engaged diverse audiences (from those working for the government to people with the lived experience, from academics to activists) to provide different, multifaceted and nuanced perspectives on what it means to be forcibly displaced as a queer person and what actions are needed for those experiences not to be as they currently are.

The aim of this report is to preserve the memory of this historic event. This report consists of different sections. We begin by discussing the pre-conference panel. Then we will discuss the conference methodology i.e. approaches to organising such events where lived experience is at the centre. The next section will touch upon the topics of discussions during the conference. The last section is about the solidarity and it will bring together some useful resources as well as present the Canberra Statement on the access to safety and justice for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees.



Queer Displacements Opening (c) Evana Ho

PRE-CONFERENCE PANEL: LGBTIQ+ REFUGEES: SILENCING, ERASURE, HETERNORMATIVITY



The Queer Displacements conference was opened by a pre-conference panel on the evening of the 13th of November. The aim of this panel was to discuss the issues of sexuality and gender identity claims for protection, compare situations for LGBTIQ+ people seeking asylum and refugees in the US, Australia and Europe and raise awareness of the general public on the cause and solutions.

Speakers included: Professor Eithne Luibheid (University of Arizona), Lilith Raza (Queer Refugees Deutschland Project), Renee Dixson (Queer Sisterhood

Project and Assembling Digital Archive of LGBTIQ Oral Histories about Forced Displacement) and Azlan AP (Organiser and Campaigner, Democracy in Color).

During this panel, panelists touched upon asylum systems in the US, Germany and Australia. Professor Luibheid discussed why it is important to discuss female sexuality in the context of borders and asylum and Lilith Raza talked about the gaps that trans people experience in Germany. Renee Dixson discussed questions of visibility and how important it is to be visible as an LGBTIQ+ refugee. They also talked about the first world's digital archive that will collect and preserve oral histories of LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees and migrants that they are currently building. Azlan AP reflected on the heteronormativity of refugee spaces in Australia and why it is vital to centre lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement.

QUEER DISPLACEMENTS CONFERENCE METHODOLOGY

The Queer Displacements conference was a historic event for two main reasons. Firstly, it was for the first time in Australia that the topic of LGBTIQ+ asylum was a sole topic of the conference. Secondly, people with lived experience of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement were engaged in the meaningful way. Their experiences were centred throughout the conference.

To unpack these two claims more, below is the set of considerations that made Queer Displacements different. We hope that other people interested in organising similar events will find them useful.

FROM A MINORITY TO MAINSTREAM

From a personal observation in the last 5 years, where LGBTIQ+ asylum was discussed at various conferences, those sessions were mostly scheduled as concurrent. This includes conferences dedicated to LGBTIQ+ and (separately) refugee issues, as well as those on trauma. Understandably, it is not always possible to have all topics presented as plenary sessions, especially at large events. However, continuous scheduling of LGBTIQ+ asylum presentations as a concurrent session i.e. one of three or five has its unintended consequences. It sends a message that this is a minority topic that is only relevant for a small (minority) group of people. We've personally observed how at conferences where 300+ people are attending only 30 will show up for a session on LGBTIQ+ refugees. Such a scheduling also reinforces the message that the group of these people itself is rather small, and thus it is unlikely that it will be encountered by attendees in their work.

Queer Displacements challenged this assumption. The whole conference was dedicated to one overarching theme. Presenters and attendees, however, did not have to be the people only working with this group. The call for abstracts was open to all, even those interested to reflect on the absence of such a lens in their work.

The conference was pitched as to be of use for any organisation or academic essentially working with people, as such work is not done in the settings where all lived experiences are identical.



(LGBTIQ+ / Refugee community dialogue, (c) Manaswini Iyengar)

THE VALUE OF INTERSECTIONALITY

Following from the point above, the value of Queer Displacements is not simply in discussing what different challenges LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees are experiencing (though this is important and was done), but rather reiterating how LGBTIQ+, refugee, disability, gender, climate change, racial justice and other social justice work cannot be done in isolation from each other.

Gender equality cannot be achieved without combatting racism, ableism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and intersex phobia. LGBTIQ+ people cannot achieve full equality if racism is thriving. There can be no justice for refugees if it is contingent on their sexuality or gender.

Doing LGBTIQ+ asylum work means challenging cisgender, heterosexual, white, able-bodied, endonormative³ and patriarchal assumptions that permeate so many spaces. Being attentive to experiences that remain marginalised means making sure that one's work (in its broadest meaning) does not reinforce or contribute to that marginalisation but rather to its dismantling.

Queer Displacements highlighted how much social justice movements have in common and how much more work still needs to be done in collaboration. The topic of queer displacement is not separate from LGBTIQ+, refugee or other advocacy. It is an essential part of all of those struggles for justice.

PRIVILEGING LIVED EXPERIENCE BEYOND STORYTELLING

It is, unfortunately, very common, especially in the refugee spaces but more generally where trauma is involved to engage with the lived experiences in a tokenistic way. It also remains a common practice that an event distinguishes between 'experts' whose role is to present their research or work and a 'refugee' whose role is to tell their story of persecution and support received in the host country. Such a practice draws a hard line between who is the expert and who is not; contributes to single narratives on refugees (who gets to be invited; what story the audience wants to hear) and disregards people who've been forcibly displaced as agents, experts and decision-makers.

Queer Displacements approached the lived experience differently. Instead of parallel sessions, lived experience discussions were plenaries. Two out of four keynote speakers were people with the lived experience of queer forced displacement. A group of LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers from Sydney presented their work at the plenary. Lastly, a community dialogue was a plenary session too.

These plenaries were not organised as storytelling sessions. Presenters with lived experience were the experts. Their presentation moved beyond a recollection of persecution experiences to critically assess the gaps in protection and solutions that persisted in host countries. Such an engagement challenged assumptions of what a 'refugee story' should look like. It also allowed for a better engagement with the

audience beyond sympathy to calls for action, solidarity and accountability.

SCHOLARSHIPS TO ATTEND

It is important to recognise and express gratitude to organisational and individual donors with whose support, we were able to provide 27 scholarships to LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees living in 4 states in Australia (NSW, VIC, QLD and the ACT).

The call for scholarships was open and shared widely with an intention to reach new people, who may not necessarily be part of existing organisations. The only criterion to be eligible to apply for a scholarship was to self-identify as an LGBTIQ+ person and have the experience of seeking asylum or being forcibly displaced. There was no criterion to be an activist or an intend to undertake advocacy activities after the conference. There was no criterion to show financial disadvantage to be eligible to apply. This was done intentionally as the main goal was to connect people and bring them together. As indicated throughout this report many LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees may remain closeted because of reliance for the support on communities where it is risky to disclose who you are; or because of experiences of racism, homophobia and so on. Queer Displacements aimed to create a space where people could be openly who they are amongst others with similar experiences.

Scholarships included covering the registration fee, travel to/from Canberra and accommodation (that included breakfast). Unfortunately, this time it was not possible to provide attendees with per diems. More work on this will be done to ensure that during subsequent conferences, scholarship recipients are provided with funds to cover their meals beyond conference days.

We acknowledge that many scholarship recipients had to take unpaid days off their jobs, in many cases already casual and not secure employment, to attend Queer Displacements. We thank them for this. We also reflect that in some cases institutions are set up to work in ways that are detached from supporting communities. The funding to support the participation of LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees came from private donations and grants but not from the university funding (which is only available for academics or other 'experts').

MIX OF PRESENTATIONS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Queer Displacements combined in its content and attendance diverse types of knowledge and experiences. Queer Displacements were never intended to be a purely academic or practitioner conference. It intended to bridge those gaps and make connections. It intended to facilitate dialogues between stakeholders that may not reach each other on a regular basis.

MANAGING HEAVY CONTENT

During the second day of the conference, staff from the ANU Respectful Relationships Unit was present for debriefs. They could not be present during their first because of their capacity issues.

ACTION-ORIENTED OUTCOME

The Queer Displacements conference is planned to be a biannual event. It is important that the conference is not simply about discussions but that those discussions are leading to changes and improvements.

One of the immediate outcomes of the Queer Displacements was the creation of the Canberra Statement (see further in this report for more details). This conference report also serves as a reflection on the process and actions to follow.

DISCUSSING THE COMPLEXITY OF QUEER DISPLACEMENT

CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS

Received abstracts were grouped thematically and 9 themes emerged. We note that these themes are only the result of this conference, and they may not necessarily reflect the whole complexity of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement. The final conference program comprised of:

1. **4 keynote addresses** discussing the plight of LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees in the USA, Germany, South Africa and New Zealand with a specific focus on detention, trans and intersex asylum seekers and refugees as well as refugee-led organising. Keynote speakers were Professor Eithne Luibheid (University of Arizona, USA), Lilith Raza (Queer Refugees Deutschland Project, Germany), Dr B Caminga (Wits University, South Africa), and Eliana Rubashkyn (Rainbow Path, Aoteroa New Zealand).

2. There were **10 parallel sessions** with over 50 speakers covering the following 9 themes:

- **International Policy and LGBTIQ+ Refugees** (discussions reflected on the role of UNHCR in LGBTIQ+ refugee protection, LGBTIQ+ people in the Global Compact on Migration and Global Compact on Refugees and The Yogyakarta Principles Plus 10);
- **Documenting Experiences: Art, History and Ethics of Storytelling** (this theme included a presentation of the world's first digital archive of oral histories about LGBTIQ+ forced migration, historical research on homosexuality and Australian borders, ethics of representation of LGBTIQ+ forced migration within and from the African continent and an artwork (short film) reflecting on the ethics of storytelling);
- **Colonial Impositions: Ideal, Deserving and Vulnerable Subjects** (discussions touched on decolonisation and connections with the First Nations People, imposition of western cultural understanding of queer identity, queer persecution in formerly colonised nations and the politics of vulnerability and deservingness);
- **Queer Forced Displacement and The Law** (this theme included discussions on protection claims based on gender identity and sexual orientation, how to ask LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers correct questions for a better articulation of protection claims, review of Australian refugee decisions on the basis of LGBTI status, transnormativity in refugee determinations and queerness and crimmigration);
- **SOGIE⁴ Pacific Perspectives on Climate Displacement, Climate Migration and Current Refugee Law and Climate Change Policies;**
- **Inclusive Service Provision** (discussions provided reflections on running peer-led support services, pastoral care, leveraging resources for empowerment of LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees and a discussion on inclusive social support, housing and employment. In addition there was an interactive workshop on inclusive service provision run by Settlement Services International);
- **Policy, Advocacy and Activism** (discussions reflected immigration detention, protests against involuntary deportations, the role of philanthropy and questioned an imposed need for integration and patriotism);
- **Intersectional Identities and Experiences** (discussions focused on intersectionality, disability in refugee determination and trans women's experiences in Australia and Central America);
- **Health, Sexuality and Forced Displacement** (discussions included topics of substance abuse, documenting social consequences of discrimination among LGBTIQ refugees in Kenya, migrants' experiences with HIV and resources and referrals for health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees);

3. **A lived experience plenary** organised by the group of LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers from Sydney; and

4. **An LGBTIQ+ / refugee community dialogue session.**

The full conference program with speakers' names, biographies and abstract is located at: <http://bit.ly/queer-displacements>

LEARNINGS FROM THE LGBTIQ+ / REFUGEE COMMUNITY DIALOGUE SESSION

The LGBTIQ+ / refugee community dialogue session was organised with a goal to facilitate the discussion between LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees and other stakeholders. It was designed in the following way:

- The first part of the session was a dedicated space for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees to share their challenges in Australia, to highlight critical gaps in services, policy or research. During this part there was no interruptions or questions from the floor.
- The second part of the session was a space for the audience to reflect on what they have learned, propose solutions or share information.

Any LGBTIQ+ asylum seeker or refugee present at the conference could participate in the community dialogue. Each presenter had about 3 minutes to present their issues.

Information collected during this session is presented in the table below. The table consist of three columns: categories, current issues and systemic gaps and an empty space for different stakeholders to consider what they can do to help address those gaps and issues. Some of the issues presented below are relevant for all people in forced displacement regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics, others are very specific to LGBTIQ+ people.

In the second part of the community dialogue, an audience shared information useful to address identified challenges and gaps. We are currently in the process of collating existing research, advocacy and services that will populate the repository that can be found at <http://bit.ly/queer-displacements>. Please check back the link regularly for updated materials.

CATEGORY	SHARED ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND GAPS	WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE?
1. THE RIGHT TO SEEK ASYLUM		
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers	1.1. Lack of mandatory training for immigration decision makers on claims based on gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics (see point 3 below).	
Asylum seekers, LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers	1.2. Australian government policy of indefinite mandatory detention is enforced for those asylum seekers who arrive to Australia without a visa. No safety is guaranteed for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers in detention.	
Asylum seekers	1.3. Protracted waiting periods on asylum cases.	
Intersex asylum seekers	1.4. An invisibility of intersex people in policies and guidelines on refugee determination.	
Asylum seekers	1.5. Medical checks required as a part of the refugee determination cost around \$500 and the fee is not waived for asylum seekers.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers	1.6. Access to interpreters that are trained to interpret on the issues of gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics in a respectful way. Some LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers had to deal with incompetent and abusive interpreters during their departmental interviews.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers	1.7. Engaged interpreters are often from the same ethnic communities which may place LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers at risk of outing ⁵ and violence.	
2. ACCESS TO FREE EXPERT LEGAL ASSISTANCE		
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers	2.1. Lack of information about free legal assistance available with an additional challenge of not knowing whether the service will be LGBTIQ+ inclusive.	
Asylum seekers	2.2. High costs to engage private migration agents and high risks that advice and assistance provided by them will not be of a good quality.	

CATEGORY	SHARED ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND GAPS	WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE?
Asylum seekers	2.3. General lack of free legal assistance due to funding cuts.	
3. LACK OF MANDATORY TRAINING FOR IMMIGRATION DECISION MAKERS ON CLAIMS BASED ON GENDER IDENTITY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND SEX CHARACTERISTICS		
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers	3.1. Inconsistencies of decisions on SOGIESC ⁶ claims persist, and decisions vary by a case officer.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers	3.2. Lack of quality information and stereotypical questions still being asked of asylum seekers with regards to sexual orientation and gender identity.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers	3.3. Lack of mandatory training and ongoing professional development for immigration decision makers on claims based on gender identity, sexual orientation and sex characteristics.	
4. ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN ORDER TO SECURE EMPLOYMENT AND LIVELIHOODS		
Asylum seekers	4.1. High education fees (for those on Bridging visas or temporary protection visas) that equal international students fees.	
Asylum seekers, Refugees	4.2. Lack of transparency about available scholarships for asylum seekers and refugees. Some scholarships require to find 'right' people and tell your story to secure the scholarship.	
Asylum seekers, Refugees	4.3. Challenges with the recognition of previous qualifications. Universities are asking people to obtain records from their countries of origin, eg. explaining their grades. This may put people at risk disclosing their location where they have sought asylum.	
Asylum seekers, Refugees	4.4. Limited support during studying (eg. a lack of understanding of the impact of trauma on learning ability; not widely published policies that people for whom English is a second language are allowed to have dictionaries during exams) for asylum seekers and refugees.	
Asylum seekers, Refugees	4.5. Limited access to English classes. Free English lessons are available for permanent residents and only until level 3. University entry requirements are from level 6. Costs of private classes are from \$500 a week.	
5. ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SUPPORT		
Asylum seekers	5.1. Australian government cuts to the status resolution support payment (SRSS) are driving people into destitution leaving many asylum seekers not eligible for financial support and shifting the onus on NGOs to provide financial assistance. People are often going without food.	
Asylum seekers	5.2. Some mainstream charity organisations are asking asylum seekers to obtain their bank statement or other financial documents from their countries of origin to prove that they have no income. This places asylum seekers at huge risks as if they comply, they will be voluntarily disclosing to their countries of origin that they are seeking asylum elsewhere.	
6. ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT		
Asylum seekers	6.1. For people who are on bridging visas there are compounded barriers as a bridging visa is valid 28 days at any given point. Many employers choose not to employ people holding bridging visas.	

CATEGORY	SHARED ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND GAPS	WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE?
Asylum seekers, Refugees	6.2. Due to the lack of Australian work experiences, barriers to prove your qualifications and stereotypes from employers, many people are stuck in casual and precarious employment.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers & refugees	6.3. Homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexual harassment and gender pay gap are often prevalent. Despite legislative mechanism to tackle those, many LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers are not using those mechanisms out of fear that they will lose jobs or fear of retribution.	
7. ACCESS TO LGBTIQ+ AND CULTURALLY COMPETENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES		
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers & refugees	7.1. Waiting periods of up to a year to access LGBTIQ+ and culturally competent counselling support. Suicidal thoughts are prevalent.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers & refugees	7.2. Availability of mental health services that are trained to work with both LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees is limited.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers & refugees	7.3. LGBTIQ+ mental health service providers are not engaging interpreters consistently.	
8. AVAILABILITY OF LGBTIQ+ / REFUGEE SPECIALIST SUPPORT		
Asylum seekers	8.1. Lack of information about free legal assistance for asylum seekers. Many people have to pay private lawyers or migration agents.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers & refugees	8.2. Lack of visible information about existing support for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers & refugees	8.3. Lack of specialist services able to cater to the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer asylum seekers and refugees.	
Asylum seekers, Refugees	8.4. Lack of services in regional, rural and remote areas.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers & refugees	8.5. In the absence of specialist services, frequent referrals to other generalist or mainstream service who are not trained to work with LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum-seeking & refugee women	8.6. Lack of specialist women's services to work with LGBTIQ+ asylum-seeking and refugee women especially in areas of culturally competent and inclusive sexual and reproductive health and sexual and gender-based violence.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers & refugees with disability	8.7. Lack of intersectional support able to account for and meet the needs arising from an intersection of disability, sexuality and refugee status.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers & refugees	8.8. Lack of training for LGBTIQ+ organisations on cultural competency, migration and refugee status and for refugee, asylum seekers, migrant and settlement organisations on LGBTIQ+ issues and inclusion.	
9. ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS		
Trans asylum seekers & refugees	9.1. Ability to change names and sex markers in documents for trans asylum seekers and refugees and names for LGBTIQ people broadly varies by state.	

CATEGORY	SHARED ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND GAPS	WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE?
Asylum seekers	9.2. Impossibility to pass 100-point ID check ⁷ when the country of origin passport has expired and a person is still seeking asylum thus does not have sufficient amount of Australian documents.	
Asylum seekers	9.3. Inconsistent assessments for eligibility for Medicare. People living in regional areas are required to travel to larger cities as local Centrelink offices are not properly trained on issues of asylum.	
Refugees	9.4. For people who are recognised as refugees and are able to apply for a convention travel document ⁸ , challenges with travel persist as airlines travel staff is not familiar with the document. There were cases of LGBTIQ+ refugees being detained and denied a right to board the plane due to a lack of understanding of what a convention travel document was.	
Refugees	9.5. For people who've become Australian citizens, it is impossible to remove your place of birth from an Australian passport. This means that their country of origin is being disclosed on an ongoing basis and then even after the name change they will never be able to visit their countries of origin (for instance in an event of death of their parents) where dual citizenship is not recognised.	
10. ACCESS TO HOUSING: AVAILABILITY OF FREE AND SAFE HOUSING FOR LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE		
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers	10.1. Generalist housing service providers that are placing LGBTIQ+ asylum-seeking women into a mixed gender shared housing contribute to increasing risks of discrimination, bullying and violence.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers	10.2. Refugee service providers that are placing LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers into housing without collecting data (safely) that they are LGBTIQ+ and without work on non-discrimination with their broader client base, contribute to increasing risks of discrimination, bullying and violence.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers	10.3. Experiences of homelessness are common. They increase the risks of sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation including survival sex.	
11. ONGOING DISCRIMINATION OF TRANS PEOPLE IN ALL AREAS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIFE		
Trans asylum seekers & refugees	11.1. Refugee organisations are collecting data on gender in a binary way and not asking or using preferred clients' pronouns.	
Trans asylum seekers & refugees	11.2. Experiences of discrimination are compounded by racism and transphobia for trans asylum seekers and refugees.	
Trans asylum seekers & refugees	11.3. Discrimination and transphobia are prevalent in private rental market especially in cases where people are using documents with their dead names.	
LGBTIQ+ asylum-seeking & refugee women	12. INVISIBILITY OF WOMEN WITHIN NARRATIVES ON LGBTIQ+ REFUGEES AND REFUGEES MORE BROADLY; AND ONGOING EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT.	
Non-binary & gender diverse asylum seekers & refugees.	13. REFUGEE DETERMINATION SYSTEM THAT OPERATES THROUGH A RIGID GENDER BINARIES AND HETERONORMATIVE ASSUMPTIONS MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR NON-BINARY AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE TO PROVE THEIR CLAIMS FOR PROTECTION.	



Associate Professor Samia Goudie, image (c) Romy Listo



Professor Eithne Luibheid keynote address (c) Evana Ho



Tina and Renee Dixon, Queer Displacements convenors, (c) Sumithri Venketasubramanian



Lilith Raza keynote address (c) Evana Ho



Session 3: Documenting experiences: art, history, ethics of storytelling, (c) Sumithri Venketasubramanian



Eliana Rubashkyn keynote address (c) Evana Ho



Dr B Camminga keynote address (c) Evana Ho



SOGIE perspectives on climate change, image (c) Romy Listo



Queer Displacements and the law parallel session



Colonial impositions panel (c) Sumithri Venketasubramanian



Colonial impositions panel (c) Sumithri Venketasubramanian



Registration (c) Manaswini Iyengar



Health, sexuality and forced displacements parallel session (c) Manaswini Iyengar



Policy, advocacy, activism parallel session (c) Romy Listo



Intersectional experiences parallel session (c) Anne-Marie Delahunt



Queer Displacements and the law parallel session

CANBERRA STATEMENT

The Canberra Statement is one of the first tangible outcomes of the Queer Displacement conference. The statement was drafted by Tina Dixon, Renee Dixon and Eliana Rubashkyn (co-founder of the Rainbow Path New Zealand). The statement details the state of rights for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees, sets out necessary reforms and calls for a global solidarity with LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees. The statement in its draft received extensive feedback from the conference attendees and was finalised on the 2nd of December.

The Canberra Statement is a publicly available policy document which asks can be affirmed by individuals and organisations as their commitment towards access to safety and justice for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees. The full text of the statement is included in this report. The Canberra Statement can be signed on to on an ongoing basis. A standalone statement, full list of signatories and an online sign on form are available at <http://bit.ly/cbr-statement>.

For the 9th of December 2019, the Canberra Statement was signed on to by 275 stakeholders. This includes the following breakdown: 205 individuals/allies, 50 organisations, and 20 people from refugee backgrounds (where 14 identify as LGBTIQ+). Organisational signatories includes:

AUSTRALIA

1. A Gender Agenda (ACT)
2. ACON Health (NSW)
3. Aleph Melbourne (VIC)
4. Australasian Centre for Corporate Responsibility (ACCR)
5. Australia and New Zealand Tongzhi Rainbow Alliance ANTRA Inc.
6. Australia Lesbian Medical Association
7. Australian LGBTIQ Multicultural Council
8. Bisexual Alliance Victoria (VIC)
9. Companion House (ACT)
10. Democracy in Colour
11. drummond street services (VIC)
12. Family Planning Alliance Australia
13. Forced Migration Research Network UNSW
14. HIV/AIDS Legal Centre (NSW)
15. LAHRC - Latin American & Hispanic Rainbow Community
16. Lighthouse Partnerships
17. Many Coloured Sky
18. Mordd IndyMedia (ACT)
19. Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (VIC)
20. Multicultural Youth Affairs Network NSW
21. National Ethnic Disability Alliance
22. Open Dialogue Psychotherapy
23. Planet Ally
24. Pride Foundation Australia
25. Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT)
26. Queer Sisterhood Project (ACT)
27. queerspace (VIC)

28. Rainbow refugee action committee (ACT)
29. Road to Refuge (VIC)
30. Settlement Services International
31. Switchboard Victoria
32. The Art of Change Agency
33. The Third Space
34. THREE for All Foundation
35. TLLPC Pty Ltd (SA)
36. Transgender Victoria
37. TranzAustralia
38. Twenty10 inc GLCS NSW
39. WIRE (VIC)

BANGLADESH

40. Resilient (Trans-led organisation)

DENMARK

41. Women Refugee Route

GERMANY

42. Lesbian and Gay association in Germany project "Queer Refugees Deutschland"

NEW ZEALAND

43. Auckland Pride Festival
44. Intersex Awareness Trust Aotearoa/New Zealand
45. OUTLine
46. RainbowYOUTH
47. re.frame
48. Te Ngākau Kahukura
49. Tiwhanawhana Trust Aotearoa/New Zealand

USA

50. Transcend (Portland)

CANBERRA STATEMENT

ON THE ACCESS TO SAFETY AND JUSTICE FOR LGBTIQ+ ASYLUM SEEKERS, REFUGEES AND OTHER FORCIBLY DISPLACED PERSONS

PREAMBLE:

1. The Canberra Statement sets out the outcomes of the Queer Displacements: Sexuality, Migration and Exile (Queer Displacements) conference held on the 13-15 November 2019 in Canberra, Australia.

2. Queer Displacements was the first conference in Australia to address and discuss the issues of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) forced displacement in its complexity. It was attended by academics, non-government organisations (NGO), policy makers, government agencies, activists, asylum seekers and refugees.

3. Queer Displacements championed the voices and the lived experience of LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees, former refugees and otherwise forcibly displaced people. The conference was organised by two queer refugee women. Financial scholarships were provided to LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees to fully cover their participation.

4. LGBTIQ+ experiences of forced displacement were mainstreamed throughout 2.5 conference days. LGBTIQ+ refugees organised plenary sessions sharing their experiences that transcended sharing a stereotypical 'refugee story' embedded only in the past persecution to instead critically address the gaps in protection, support and solutions while living in Australia.

5. Queer Displacements has created a space for awareness raising, solidarity, building alliances and engaging the whole of society in ensuring justice, protection and solutions for LGBTIQ+ people in forced displacement.

6. Making this statement, we recognise the international human rights obligations of the host country Australia and all States that have signed the 1951 Refugee Convention and the Global Compact on Refugees, the Convention against all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention against Torture (CAT), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and other international human rights treaties.

7. We acknowledge that the Queer Displacements conference took place on the Traditional lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people in Canberra. We acknowledge that the sovereignty was never ceded.

8. The text of this statement has been developed by Tina Dixson (co-founder of the Queer Sisterhood Project, co-convenor of the Queer Displacements conference), Renee Dixson (creator of the Assembling Digital Archive of LGBTIQ oral histories about forced displacement, co-founder of the Queer Sisterhood Project, co-convenor of the Queer Displacements conference) and Eliana Rubashkyn (co-founder of Rainbow Path New Zealand), drawing on the discussions at the Queer Displacements conference and in consultation with the conference attendees.

9. The Canberra statement is a policy document that can be signed on to by individuals and organisations affirming a need for a set of reforms to ensure access to safety and justice for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE:

10. As conference attendees, who are LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees, LGBTIQ+ migrants, other forcibly displaced LGBTIQ+ persons, academics, policy makers, NGOs workers, government officials, activists and other allies, we recognise the urgent need to respond appropriately to LGBTIQ+ persons in forced displacement. Thus, we acknowledge that:

a. LGBTIQ+ people have existed in all cultures and societies throughout history.⁹

b. LGBTIQ+ people in forced displacement experience compounding challenges and have acute protection needs. These challenges and protection needs arise not from the fact that people have diverse sex characteristics, gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Instead they arise from structures and systems that may be inherently homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, intersexphobic, ableist, classist,

racist and xenophobic, or that fail to ensure that LGBTIQ+ people have equal access to available support including through lack of training or professional development on the experiences of LGBTIQ+ in forced displacement.

c. Sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated against LGBTIQ+ people is used as a heteronormative, endonormative¹⁰, transphobic and patriarchal tool of control and coercion to enforce gender and bodily conformity.

d. Harmful and unnecessary medical procedures and genital mutilations are still inflicted on intersex people. This violates their bodily integrity and autonomy.

e. Refugee determination process often operates through rigid gender binary and heteronormative assumptions which creates additional challenges for LGBTIQ+ women, men, non-binary and gender diverse people in proving their claims for protection.

f. As of March 2019, there are 70 UN Member States that criminalise consensual same-sex sexual acts. Of the 70 UN States, 26 specifically criminalise only such acts between men. The rest of the 44 criminalising UN States criminalise consensual same-sex sexual acts among all genders.¹¹

g. 6 UN Member States impose the death penalty on consensual same-sex sexual acts: Iran, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Nigeria, Sudan, and Somalia. In addition, the death penalty is a possible punishment in five UN Member States: Mauritania, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Pakistan and Afghanistan.¹²

h. 31 UN Member States impose up to eight years' imprisonment while the remaining 26 Member States impose even harsher penalties: between 10 years and life imprisonment.¹³

i. LGBTIQ+ women (and trans, non-binary and intersex people assigned a female sex at birth) face additional barriers to seek safety, where in many countries their freedom of movement is restricted by societal or legal rules and where they are forced to marry men.

j. Violence is heightened and continues to be perpetrated against LGBTIQ+ people en route, in the refugee camps, in transit countries and in host countries that are supposed to be safe.

k. LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced LGBTIQ+ people experience ongoing discrimination in all areas of public and private life including in the employment and education settings as well as (sometimes) from their ethnic or religious communities.

l. Decision makers tasked with refugee determination in many cases still lack comprehensive training and guidelines on the assessment of protection claims based on gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation. While we note the existence of the UNHCR guidelines on international protection no. 9¹⁴, these guidelines are not inclusive of protection claims based on intersex status / sex characteristics. This remains a major gap.

m. Identity documents remain one of the major challenges for transgender people in the forced displacement, who are often denied the right to change their sex marker and/or name based on their self-identification in either their country of origin or once they seek asylum.

n. Access to identity documents remains a crucial necessity as it impacts people's ability to secure their livelihoods, such as finding employment or opening bank accounts and exposes transgender people to ongoing violence, discrimination and exclusion.

o. Mental health services are lacking in their capacity to respond appropriately and timely to the mental health needs of LGBTIQ+ people who are considered to be in the most vulnerable situations;

p. Lack of appropriate and inclusive housing for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced people is driving people into homelessness and increases the risks of sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation, including survival sex.

q. Existing support services are not properly resourced or trained to meet the needs of LGBTIQ+ people in forced displacement. There is a general lack of specialised refugee or LGBTIQ+ services beyond metropolitan areas.

r. Many services remain gender-blind in their service provision, that further makes lesbian, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer women invisible and marginalised. Some LGBTIQ+ services have

been historically funded to work with more visible groups (frequently but not always gay men), thus are not meeting the needs of less visible or marginalised groups.

s. A lack of free legal advice and representation for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers limits their access to justice.

t. The lack of LGBTIQ+ specialist services and information about LGBTIQ+ forced displacement, including culturally and linguistically appropriate resources, makes it difficult for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced people to seek support, find their community and live their lives to the fullest potential celebrating who they are with pride.

u. LGBTIQ+ refugee-led work remains unfunded.

NEEDED REFORMS:

11. Thus, we reinforce the following and urgently needed reforms and changes:

a. Mandatory detention must be abolished; where it is unavoidable, time limits of detention must be in places with appropriate support for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced people. If LGBTIQ+ people are in detention, risk assessments around where they are placed must respect the individual's self-defined gender and assessment of their safety needs.

b. Those providing translation and interpreting services need to be LGBTIQ+ sensitive, trained and aware of both derogatory and positive identity terms. These services must be provided free of charge and treat LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced people with dignity and respect.

c. Health services must be culturally competent, including about the health needs of LGBTIQ+ people and work as a wrap-around service system in which every dimension of wellbeing is considered and gaps in healthcare due to forced displacement are addressed.

d. Gender-reaffirming health care, mental health, community support, financial support, HIV/AIDS, STI services, legal services, disability support services and other relevant services must be free, available, fully resourced and staff trained to work with LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced people regardless of their migration and/or legal status.

e. Identity documents must be provided in a timely manner to allow and enable a self-identification of name and gender from the time an LGBTIQ+ person claims asylum.

f. Prior education and employment must be recognised for all refugees.

g. LGBTIQ+ and refugee organisations must be fully resourced to provide tailored support for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced people. Such support and programs need to be developed in consultation with and ideally led by LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced people.

h. Intersectionality that considers all elements of a person's identity in a holistic way as well as how multiple disadvantage and oppression shapes their experiences, must be an underpinning lens across policy, research and support pertaining to LGBTIQ+ forced displacement.

i. LGBTIQ+ refugee-led initiatives and organisations need to be supported and resourced to champion the work on the issues of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement.

j. The principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the return of a refugee to a territory where their life or freedom is threatened must be implemented effectively, taken into consideration the specific threats faced by LGBTIQ+ individuals seeking asylum.

k. Durable solutions such as resettlement must be recognised as the only viable solution for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced people. This requires continual evaluation of resettlement mechanisms to ensure that they are sensitively implemented, paying attention to language and context in particular.

CALL FOR ACTION AND SOLIDARITY:

12. We, all gathered at the Queer Displacements Conference, call on organisations working in areas of health, legal, housing, refugee and settlement, disability, LGBTIQ and other services to ensure

ongoing training and professional development for all their staff from top to bottom meeting the needs of LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people including by addressing the impact of discrimination and violence and other human rights violations based on one's gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or sex characteristics.

13. We, all gathered at the Queer Displacements Conference, call on the government to ensure mandatory and ongoing training and professional development for all decision makers who deal with LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced people, on addressing discrimination, violence and other human rights violations based on a person's gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or sex characteristics.

14. We, all gathered at the Queer Displacements Conference, call on the global community to join us in solidarity with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced people to make sure justice, equal treatment and protection are afforded to them.

15. We, all gathered at the Queer Displacements Conference, encourage other organisations to support the issues raised and policy and practice reforms of the Canberra statement.

16. We, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer asylum seekers, refugees and other forcibly displaced people, call on supporters and allies to commit to centring and privileging our lived experience in all your work.

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US! ACTIONS NOT JUST WORDS!

TO SIGN ON TO THE CANBERRA STATEMENT GO TO: [HTTP://BIT.LY/CBR-STATEMENT](http://bit.ly/cbr-statement)



Queer Displacements Day 2 (c) Evana Ho

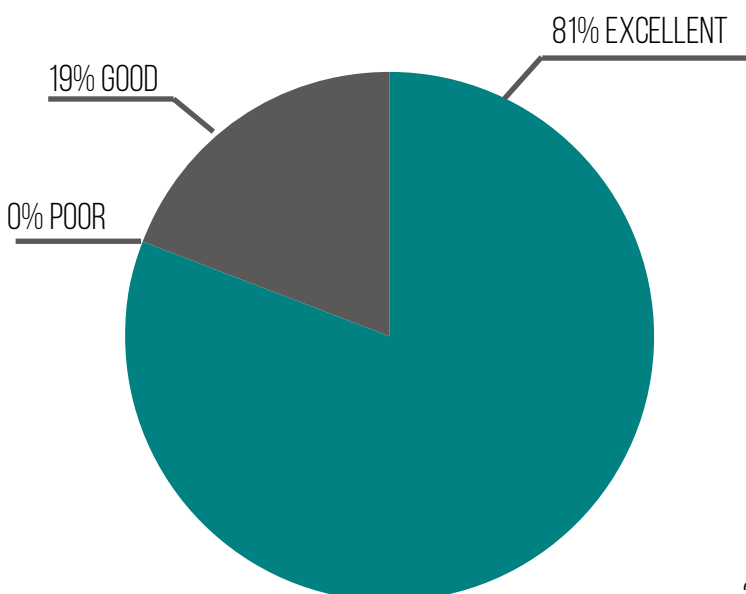
CONFERENCE EVALUATION

55 conference attendees filled out the evaluation form (this includes both full and partial responses). This included the following breakdown of attendees:

- Presenter - 24 people;
- Attendee - 17 people;
- Scholarship recipient - 12 people.

A category of 'presenter' does not include LGBTIQ+ people from refugee background who are counted as scholarship recipients. A category of 'attendee' counts those who only attended the conference and did not present.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION PROVIDED TO YOU IN THE LEAD-UP TO THE CONFERENCE?

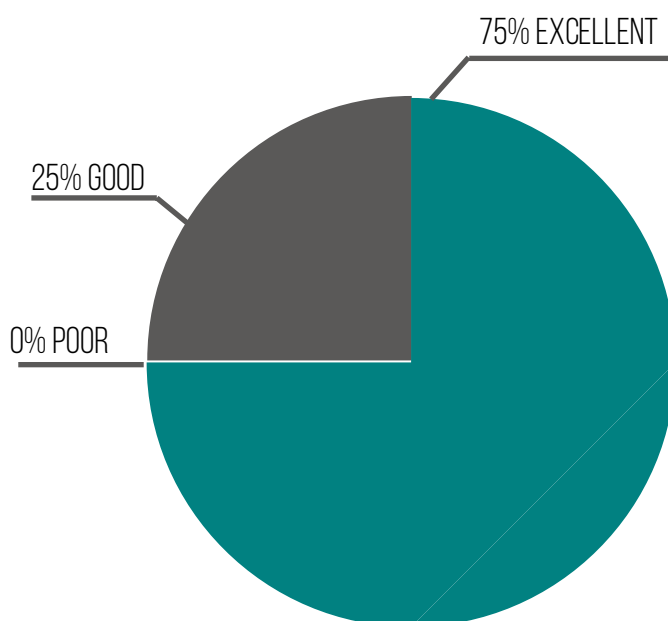


This question was asked those who selected 'presenter' and/or 'scholarship recipient'.

36 persons responded to this question. **81%** rated the information and communication received as '**excellent**' and 19% as good. Zero selected 'poor' as their response.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE SUPPORT PROVIDED TO YOU DURING THE CONFERENCE?

This question was asked those who selected 'presenter'. 24 persons responded to this question. **75%** rated the information and communication received as '**excellent**' and 25% as good. Zero selected 'poor' as their response.



DO YOU HAVE ANY THOUGHTS ON THE PANEL STRUCTURES? DID THIS STRUCTURE PROVIDE YOU WITH SUFFICIENT TIME TO PRESENT?

This question was asked those who selected 'presenter'. 24 persons responded to this question. Responses for this question are coded thematically. The number of mentions of suggestions does not reflect a total amount of responses as some respondents suggested multiple points.

Majority of respondents (N19) were satisfied with the panel structure of presentations.

The structure was incredibly complete. This is possibly one of the best conferences I have attended in this field.

Some suggestions were also made how to improve the structure. This included: a) to have more time for Q/A; b) to improve tracking of time so presenters do not go overtime; and c) to have a facilitator for each panel. Other feedback suggested to have flexible timing (eg. Individually check with presenters how much time they need; N1), to have more than 15-20 min presentation slots (N3) and to provide longer breaks between sessions (N1).

DID YOU HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION AND SUPPORT DURING THE CONFERENCE TO MAKE CHOICES WHICH SESSIONS TO ATTEND?

This question was asked those who selected 'attendee'. 19 persons responded to this question. All of them were satisfied with the provided with sufficient information.

The book that was given to us at the start of the conference was about as comprehensive a guide as I have ever received at a conference. The tight focus of each stream with very little overlap, as well as some remarkably comprehensive plenary sessions meant that I felt there was not a single wasted moment across the two days.

WOULD YOU DO YOUR RESPECTIVE WORK DIFFERENTLY NOW? IF YES, HOW? IF NO, WHAT ARE THE REASONS?

40 persons responded to this question. 28 responses can be categorised as a conference attendee is **more informed** on various issues related to LGBTIQ+ asylum.

Yes. I feel like I am a changed person now. I have a lot more empathy and understanding around queer displacements which will reflect in my work and advocacy as well.

I think attending the conference was really useful in raising awareness and helping to develop a better understanding of some of the issues that LGBTIQ+ people have to deal with on a daily basis. It means I can look at what I do and the language I use through a clearer lens of awareness and with consideration of the potential impact I may have for LGBTIQ+ people and others.

Such responses can further be categorised in terms of the **willingness and commitment to action** based on the received information. Respondents indicated how they will be using their workplaces to make changes.

Yes. We are discussing our processes and how they can be improved based on information at the conference.

Yes - the conference absolutely brought to the fore the importance of decolonising our practices. It also really made me think about what our work in this sector is. Like so much of panels was, yes, about service delivery and so on but a lot of it was just 'I want to be seen. I want to be treated like a human. I want someone to show they care about what happens to me' (and that's what a lot of LGBTIQ+ people seeking asylum were saying they found for the first time in a space like the conference). And it made me think about where I spend my time in my days as a worker in this sector, and how much do I advocate for people and how do people know that we're seeing them and caring what happens to them? Not like 'this is a problem, we're not doing it right' but 'can I do it better?'

Yes, in line with the Canberra statement, I feel an urgency to centre lived experience in how I work. Whilst I have always tried to do this, the conference has given me more ideas as to how to do this and also provided new networks through which this can be further unpacked and put into action. I am very thankful for the convenors and presenters.

Several comments touched upon the **conference methodology as a good practice** in terms of engaging people with the lived experience of forced displacement and how they are hoping to replicate this practice.

The conference demonstrated how to deliver a conference that centred lived experience, which will impact on my planning of future conferences or events. I deepened my understanding of how to support and work alongside LGBTQI refugees and people seeking asylum, mainly through the sessions delivered by people with lived experience.

Yes, the conference gave me better perspective and excellent models to replicate for future conferences I may assist in organising, in terms of how people with lived experience could lead and drive the discussions.

Yes, I am increasingly attentive to the tension between academic critique and policy, and was heartened by the very good demonstration throughout the conference of both working together. This demonstrated to me what good practice looked like, and offered a model to follow in my own academic work and dissemination.

A small number of respondents (N6) indicated that they **will not change their approaches** to work.

DID YOU HAVE ENOUGH SUPPORT DURING THE CONFERENCE?

This question was asked those who selected 'scholarship recipient'. 100% (out of 12 who filled out the evaluation form) felt that they were provided with enough support during the conference.

WHY WAS IT IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE?

This question was asked those who selected 'scholarship recipient'. 6 respondents answered that their primary goal was to **meet the community**, people like them.

I've been looking forward to this platform for a very long time now. I attended this conference to meet people who are or have gone through similar experiences as a queer asylum seeker, topics around homophobia, inequality and LGBTQA+ displacement in a nutshell.

To get in touch with the LGBTQI+ people - my people.

5 respondents were hoping to **share their lived experiences** of living as an LGBTQI+ person in forced displacement in order to get support, educate others and find more connections.

It was a safe place to share my experience as a refugee.

2 respondents also said that they were hoping to **enhance their own understanding on LGBTQI+ asylum**.

This conference helped me to expand my thoughts and knowledge around of what LGBTQI + asylum seekers going through similar experiences. I got more information and connected to networks that could help me in my life. The stories and experiences that were shared at the conference from the audience, touched my feelings deeply and were a reminder for me of some experiences I went through.

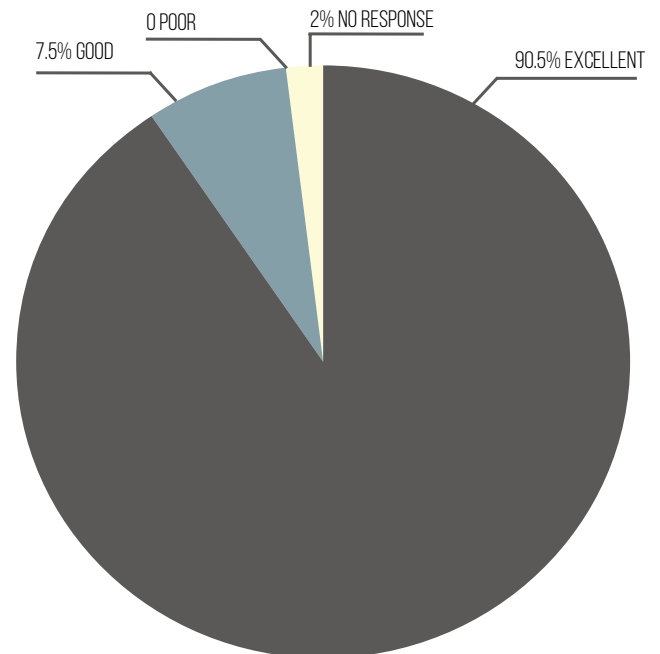
HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE OVERALL CONTENT OF THE CONFERENCE PROGRAM?

53 persons responded to this question. **91%** (N48) rated the conference program as **'excellent'**.

DO YOU HAVE ANY THOUGHTS ON THE FORMAT OF THE CONFERENCE (I.E. HAVING LIVED-EXPERIENCE PLENARIES, COMMUNITY DIALOGUE)?

47 persons responded to this question. Responses for this question are coded thematically. The number of mentions of suggestions does not reflect a total amount of responses as some respondents suggested multiple points.

Most of the respondents (N42) were satisfied with the format of the conference. Out of those 38% respondents commented on **the value of centring the lived experience**.



Loved the community dialogues and lived-experience plenaries. It's an extraordinary achievement by Tina and Renee to have had such a high proportion of presenters from refugee backgrounds.

I really enjoyed it. Many conferences I go to usually have a small lived experience section, which could almost be viewed as tokenistic. Providing people with a lived experience the opportunity to speak helped to flesh out the relevance of the conference. Mixing this with plenaries and community dialogue really enhanced relevance for me.

I loved the centring of lived experience - this was incredible. I also liked the balance of academia and practice, which can feel a bit rare in conferences.

The centring of lived-experience was fantastic and vital.

Lived experience and community dialogue are critical, non-negotiable, contributions to the conference. Academic discussion without lived experience has been a frequent failing of international engagement with asylum seekers in a number of fora.

In addition, respondents who talked about the value of centring the lived experience, reinforced the need to **replicate this methodology for other conferences**:

As previously stated, plenary sessions were the highlight of the conference and this approach should be adopted by all conferences in to the future.

Other respondents that were satisfied with the conference structure also commented on the **wealth of the program**. They expressed thoughts that they wished to attend all the sessions. Some of this responses also included a feedback on a better timing of individual presentations to be able to move between the parallel sessions.

It was incredible - I wouldn't change anything except that I wish I could have attended all the parallel sessions.

The dilemma with every conference is having to choose between sessions when one wants to attend all of them! It is really important to hear about people's personal experiences without re-traumatising people in the re-telling of their stories.

There was also feedback on the **safety and wellbeing considerations** for conference participants.

The conference format was excellent in terms of high-quality research speakers, very informed service providers and people talking about personal experiences. This worked beautifully with the small(ish) audience that provided a sense of support and intimacy, however the work done to ensure was a safe space - no photographs, recordings, retelling of stories, always opportunity for questions and comments, reminding every day about not treating people's experiences as a source of entertainment really enabled the space to be safe. If there was a bigger audience and more mixed (policy makers etc that may not be that friendly - this is an assumption!) not sure the intimate dynamic would be the same and the conversations so deeply respectful. I learnt something from all the speakers.

Several respondents (N5) expressed the need for **better support** to be provided in terms of counselling and debriefs as well as quiet rooms. [Please note that ANU counselling was only fully available on the second conference day. This would be improved for future conferences.]

Several respondents (N2) expressed need to have **more time allocated for the community dialogue** sessions as well as involved government officials in this session.

There should be more time provided for the community discussion and dialogue involving more official authorities.

Community dialogue with personnel from the immigration and other higher body corporations to hear out the experiences we go through as people of colour and why seeking refuge is our only way to survive.

WHAT IS YOUR MAIN TAKEAWAY FROM THE CONFERENCE?

44 persons responded to this question. Responses can be categorised in the following way:

- 46% of respondents conference takeaway was a willingness to act;
- 41% of respondents conference takeaway was information;
- 7% of respondents found support networks (mainly met other LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees)
- 2% of respondents appreciated the conference structure;
- 4% of respondents made other comments.

Willingness to act responses included the following takeaways:

- Canberra statement;
- The need to centre lived experience;
- The need to develop relevant organisational policies;
- The need to engage more with the community of LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers and refugees;
- The need to be discussing issues of queer forced displacement more.

So many takeaways A framework for meaningful participation that is truly diverse and centres lived experience needs to be taken up by key institutions and NGOS (perhaps this is the Canberra statement).

That our journey is still a long way to go. Let's move together and create a safer place for the LGBTQIA+ asylees and refugees.

The need to centre lived experience, the diversity of experience.

That we need to engage the Australian LGBTQI community more with this issue so that we can help fix some of the urgent needs of LGBTQI displaced people such as housing, identification, no detention etc. as well as engaging the wider community to improve inclusivity of LGBTQI people at home and abroad to prevent queer displacements.

The need to centre lived experience, the diversity of experience.

Responses grouped as 'information' included raised awareness on various issues of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED IN THE FUTURE IN TERMS OF EVENT ORGANISATION?

39 persons responded to this question. Responses included:

- **Logistical improvements (N7)**
 - o An ability to attend more session (N1);
 - o Support with finding accommodation (N1);
 - o Longer and more breaks (N1);
 - o More vegetarian food choices (N1);
 - o Allow more time for discussion (N1);
 - o Have more interactive workshops (N1);
 - o Have more plenary sessions (N1);
- **Conference attendance by diverse stakeholders** (such as invite more representatives from mainstream queer organisations or government departments) (N4).
- **Availability of gender-neutral bathrooms** (N3);
- **Queer Displacements to be held annually** (N2);
- **Longer conference duration** (3 days) (N2);
- **Improve name tags** (N2):
 - o Add pronouns (N1);
 - o Add organisational affiliations (N1);
- **More opportunities for collaboration** (N1);
- **Queer Displacements to be held in other cities** (N1);

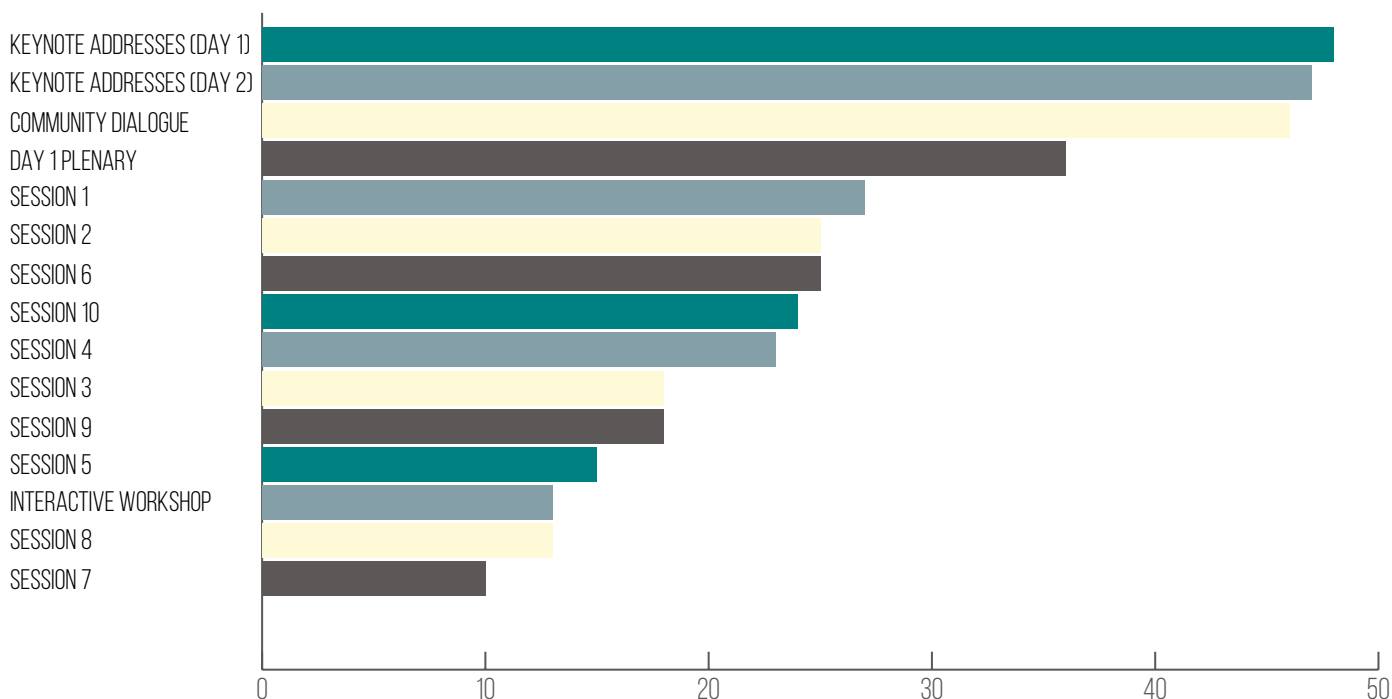
25% respondents had no further comments to make **being satisfied** with how the conference was organised.

Nothing!! It was really perfect.

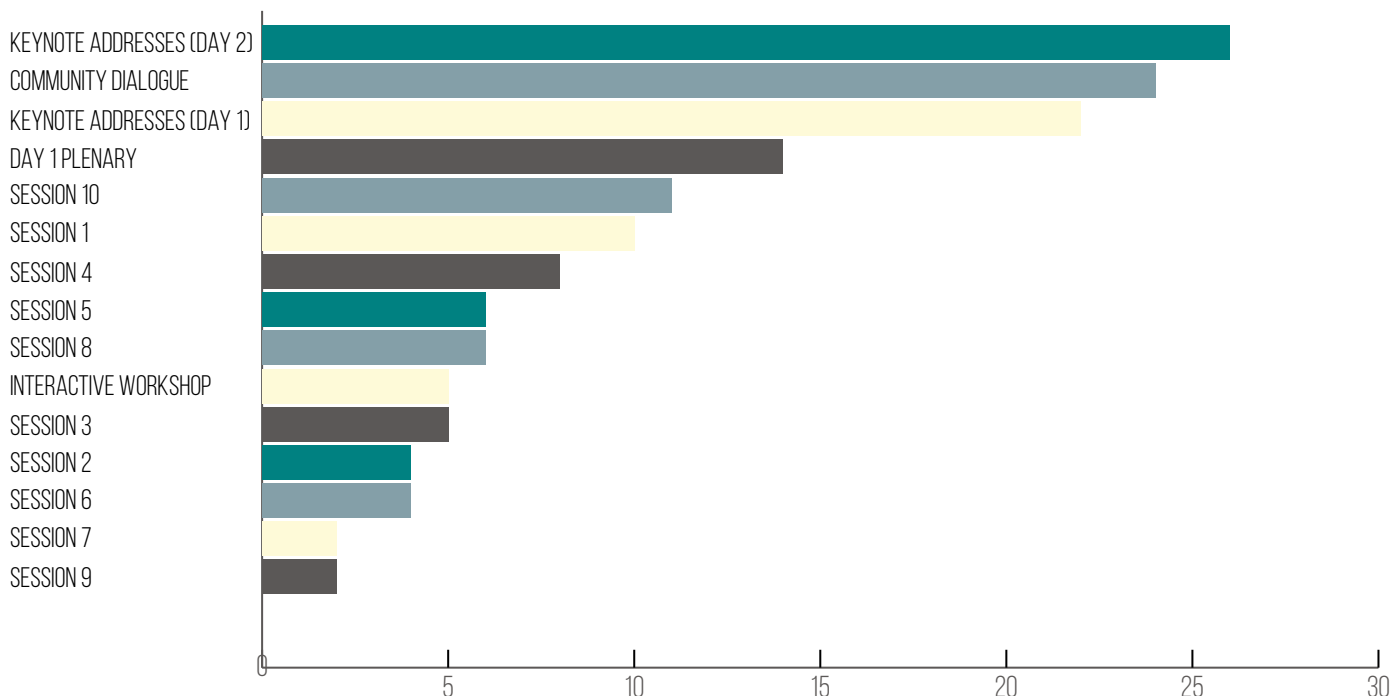
PLEASE SELECT ALL SESSIONS THAT YOU'VE ATTENDED.

The most attended plenary sessions were keynote addresses on both days and a community dialogue.

Out of parallel sessions, the most attended sessions were: SESSION 1: International Policy and LGBTIQ+ Refugees; SESSION 2: Colonial Impositions: Ideal, Deserving and Vulnerable Subjects and SESSION 6: Policy, Advocacy and Activism.



SELECT TOP 3 THE MOST USEFUL SESSIONS FOR YOUR WORK



Out of plenary sessions, the most attended sessions were KEYNOTE ADDRESSES Day 2 (Eliana Rubashkyn, Dr B Camminga); LGBTIA+/Refugee community dialogue and KEYNOTE ADDRESSES Day 1 (Prof Eithne Luibheid, Lilith Raza).

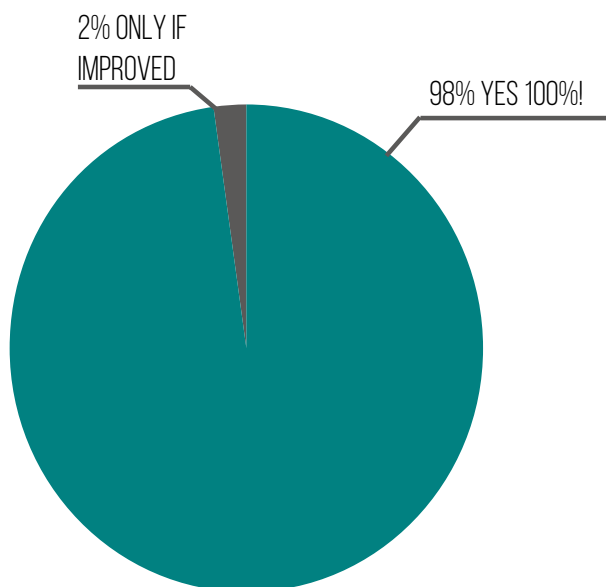
Out of parallel sessions, the most attended sessions were: SESSION 10: Queer Forced Displacement and the Law; SESSION 1: International Policy and LGBTIQ+ Refugees; and SESSION 4: Queer Forced Displacement and the Law.

WOULD YOU ATTEND THE 2021 CONFERENCE?

53 responses were provided to this question. **85%** indicated their readiness to **attend the 2021 conference**.

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND QUEER DISPLACEMENTS TO YOUR NETWORKS?

52 responses were provided to this question. **98% of respondents would recommend Queer Displacements to their networks**.



ARE THERE ANY TOPICS THAT WILL DEFINITELY NEED TO BE INCLUDED IN THE 2021 CONFERENCE?

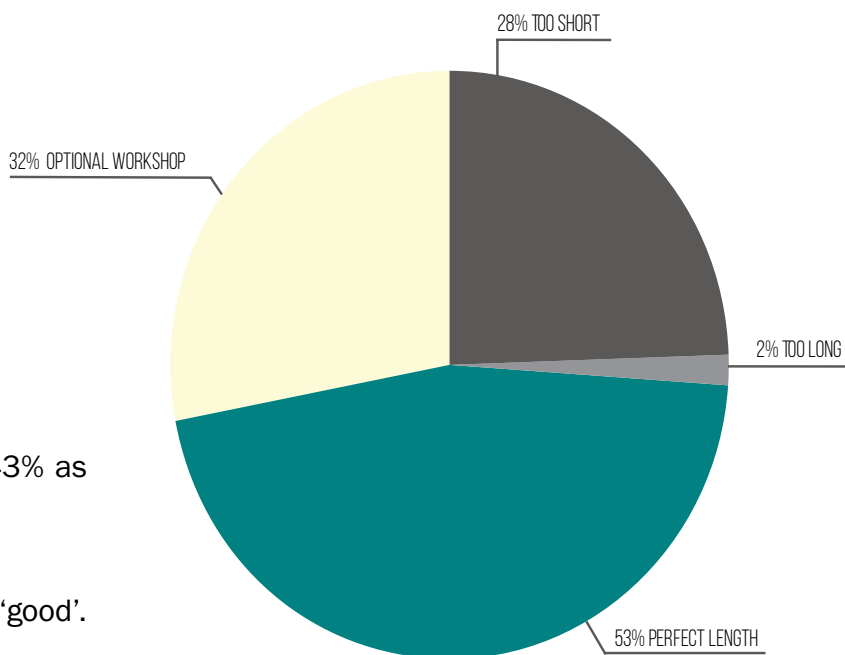
Indicated topics included:

- More on decolonisation and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- More topics on trans and non-binary experiences;
- Specific countries of origin (especially those located in the Middle East and North Africa);
- LGBTIQ+ international students and migrants;
- Opportunities for research;
- Sessions allowing to build collaborations between sectors;
- Mental health;
- Sexual health;

- Intersectionality and advocacy to mainstream refugee organisations;
- How to be a good ally;
- The role of the UNHCR and IOM in international resettlement programs;
- Accountability in the NGO sector;
- Rights and responsibilities in Australia;
- Self-care for advocates;
- Drugs and alcohol use;
- Report back on the progress achieved since the 2019 Queer Displacements.

PLEASE COMMENT ON THE LENGTH OF THE EVENT

53 persons responded to this question. This was a multiple-choice question. **53%** agreed that the conference was of **perfect length**. **32%** expressed their interest in an optional **pre- or post-conference workshop**.



HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE VENUE?

56% rated the venue as **'excellent'**, **43%** as **'good'** and **1%** as **'poor'**.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE FOOD PROVIDED?

47% rated food as **'excellent'**, **53%** as **'good'**.

OTHER FEEDBACK

No negative feedback was provided.

Thank-you. This is genuinely one of the best conferences I have been to in a long time. It has had a significant impact on the way I will continue to work.

I really enjoyed and learned a lot from this conference. I liked the way that it created a safe space for people to share information. I think it's a shame we don't talk about these issues more.

Thank you very much. The price was also very accessible and enabled me to attend - much appreciated.

Thank you so much! These kind of events should be out there more often so people like me can reach out. I always wanted a platform like this out there to create public awareness, an environment where we can be ourselves and speak out about what we have been through. This is my community and these are my people! Nothing About Us Without Us.

RELEVANT LINKS

1. <http://bit.ly/queer-displacements>

- A detailed concept note and a full Queer Displacements conference program
- A repository of the Queer Displacements conference materials

2. **Canberra Statement** including an online sign on form is located here: <http://bit.ly/cbr-statement>

3. **A cartoon 'Being Queer and Refugee'** produced by the Queer Sisterhood Project, can be found at: <http://bit.ly/queer-sisterhood>

4. **A brochure 'Being Queer and Refugee'** produced by the Queer Sisterhood Project that contains 30 tips for inclusive service provision can be found at: <http://bit.ly/queer-sisterhood>

ENDNOTES

1 International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association: Lucas Ramon Mendos, State-Sponsored Homophobia 2019 (Geneva; ILGA, March 2019)

2 Fassin, D., Rechtman, R. (2009) *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*. Princeton University Press

3 An assumption that non-intersex people are the norm.

4 SOGIE stands for sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

5 Outing means disclosure of one's gender identity, sexual orientation or sex characteristics to others without their consent.

6 SOGIESC stands for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics.

7 The 100 point check is a personal identification system adopted by the Australian Government to combat financial transaction fraud by individuals and companies, enacted by the Financial Transactions Reports Act (1988) (FTR Act). The 100 point system applies to individuals opening new bank accounts. Points are allocated to the types of documentary proof of identity that the person can produce, and they must have at least 100 points of identification to be able to operate an account. The system now also applies to the establishment of a number of official identity documents, such as an Australian passport and driving licence.[2] Additionally, 100 point checking also applies in superannuation.

8 <https://www.passports.gov.au/travel-related-documents>

9 Adapted from the 2018 Darlington Statement

10 Ibid n3.

11 International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association: Lucas Ramon Mendos, State-Sponsored Homophobia 2019 (Geneva; ILGA, March 2019)

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 UNHCR (2012) Guidelines on international protection no.9. Claims to Refugee Status based on Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity within the context of Article 1A(2) of the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

<http://bit.ly/queer-displacements>
#QueerDisplacements