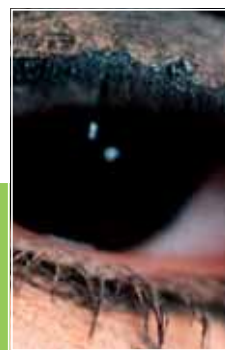


STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2007-2012

Working Together: Preventing violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people



Acknowledgements

The Network of Government Agencies (NOGA) would like to thank the many people who supported the development of the Strategic Framework 2007-2012 Working Together – Preventing violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

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 - * The Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project
 - * The Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, particularly it's past and present convenors
 - * ACON (formerly the Aids Council of NSW)
 - * Twenty10 Gay and Lesbian Youth and Family Support
 - * The Gender Centre
 - * The Inner City Legal Centre
 - * The Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service
 - * Bi-NSW
 - * ACON Northern Rivers
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- All those who have contributed to the development of this important Framework but are too numerous to mention here.

List of NOGA Agencies:

Anti-Discrimination Board
Attorney General's Department of NSW
City of Sydney
Commission for Children and Young People
Community Relations Commission
Department of Aboriginal Affairs
Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care
Department of Community Services
Department of Corrective Services
Department of Education & Training
Department of Housing
Department of Juvenile Justice
Department of Local Government
Department of Premier & Cabinet
Legal Aid Commission of NSW
NSW Department of Health
NSW Police Force
NSW Ombudsman
Workcover Authority of NSW

Key to abbreviations:

ACON	AIDS Council of NSW
AGD	Attorney General's Department of NSW
AHI	NSW Anti-Homophobia Interagency
AVP	Lesbian and Gay Anti-Violence Project (a project of ACON)
CAC	Community Advisory Committee
EAPS	Ethnic Affairs Priority Statement
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
GLBT	Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender
NOGA	Network of Government Agencies
TWENTY10	Gay and lesbian youth and family support service

Foreword

In 2003, the NSW Attorney General's Department, the NSW Police Force and a number of other key state government agencies, produced a report, *You Shouldn't Have to Hide to be Safe*. A significant research study into hate related violence against gay men and lesbians, this report revealed that 85% of respondents had experienced homophobic harassment, abuse or violence during their lives, and that many were living in fear of violence. There is no place for prejudice related violence in our community and no excuse for this kind of abuse.

We are pleased to introduce the *Strategic Framework 2007-2012; Working Together: Preventing violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people*. This document is the first of its kind in Australia, and sets out in detail the NSW Government's commitment to creating safer environments for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people. The *You shouldn't have to hide to be safe* report provided the evidence base to inform the strategic directions and key priority areas in this Strategic Framework.

The core elements of *Working Together* are consistent with current NSW Government policies, in particular the NSW State Plan and the *Anti Discrimination Act NSW 1977*. The *Strategic Framework* will build on successful initiatives, already aimed at reducing the incidence and impact of prejudice related violence, such as the NSW Police Force Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer Program and the NSW Attorney General's Department GLBT Strategic Responses to Violence Grants Program.

Working Together is the result of a strong partnership between the NSW Government and the GLBT community. To improve our response to hate related violence the NSW Government is committed to ongoing collaboration with the GLBT communities, working together making NSW a safer place for all people.



JOHN HATZISTERGOS
Attorney General
Minister for Justice



DAVID CAMPBELL
Minister for Police
Minister for the Illawarra

Contents

What is the 'Working Together' Strategic Framework	4
Why have a Strategic Framework?	4
What is the Research Evidence?	5
The Complexity of Violence	6
Statement of Principles	6
Goal and Strategic Directions 2007 – 2012	7
Key Priority Areas	8
Implementation	10
Bibliography	11
Appendix 1	12



1. What is the 'Working Together' Strategic Framework?

In November 2006, the NSW Premier, Morris Iemma, launched the NSW State Plan. Two key themes of the State Plan are 'Rights, Respect and Responsibility' and 'Delivering Better Services'. To deliver these themes the NSW Government will focus its attention on keeping people safe, reducing rates of crime (particularly violent crime), building harmonious communities, delivering customer friendly services and increasing customer satisfaction with government services.

This strategic framework has been developed by the NSW Government to address prejudice related violence against gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in NSW. 'Working Together' reinforces the commitment of the NSW Government to create and maintain a safe, harmonious and just community environment for all GLBT people throughout NSW. The strategic framework is a whole of government initiative, identifying key areas of work considered to be vital to address prejudice related violence against GLBT communities. The document sets out a number of strategic directions for NSW Government agencies, based on research evidence and consultation with communities. A number of key priority areas have been identified, also based on research evidence and an audit of achievements to date.

The strategic framework covers the period 2007-2012. It is intended to be a living document which will be reviewed annually.

2. Why have a Strategic Framework?

For some time the NSW Government has formally recognised prejudice related violence against GLBT people as an unacceptable social problem. The NSW gay and lesbian community has demonstrated significant initiative and leadership in this area of work. Activists and community organisations have lobbied for law reform and social justice through policy development, improvements to service provision and through data collection. Committed members of the gay and lesbian community have driven innovative community education strategies such as the anti-homophobia poster campaigns with funding and support from government.

This strategic framework aims to facilitate a coordinated approach to addressing prejudice related violence against GLBT people in NSW. By setting out strategic directions and key priority areas, the framework aims to provide the right balance between initiating new projects and responding to the changing environment, thereby providing a guide for prioritising competing demands and opportunities.

Further, this strategic framework will assist the NSW Government to communicate more effectively with other GLBT programs and external partners, thus enhancing collaborative relationships with key stakeholders.

The intent of this strategic framework is to make all environments safer for GLBT people, to help prevent hostility and violence as well as reduce its impact when it occurs. This includes institutional settings such as schools, TAFE colleges and universities, workplaces and correctional facilities.

The purpose of this strategic framework is to create a safe and secure community for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people in NSW through the collaboration between government and the community.

3. What is the research evidence?

Several research reports have confirmed that gay and lesbian people experience disproportionate levels of violence, compared to the general population.

In 2003, *'You shouldn't have to hide to be safe' A Report on Homophobic Hostilities and Violence Against Gay Men and Lesbians in New South Wales* identified the following:

- Over half (56%) of the respondents experienced homophobic abuse, harassment or violence in the past 12 months
- 85% reported these experiences at some time in their lives
- The three most common experiences were: verbal abuse; harassment such as spitting, offensive gestures, being followed and threatened; attempted and/or physical attack
- Young respondents (16-19 years) reported more incidents and greater impacts of the abuse and violence



The report also highlighted the complex experience of homophobia compounded by racism that is encountered by sub-groups within the GLBT communities, particularly Aboriginal people and those from Middle Eastern and Asian backgrounds.

This data confirms evidence collected by NSW Police in 1994/5¹ as well as more recent data collected by Hillier² from same sex attracted young people. In 2005, Hillier conducted a national study of 1,749 young people and found that despite feeling better about their sexuality, almost half of the respondents had experienced verbal or physical harassment and 16% had been physically assaulted. Other research studies conducted overseas also yield similar findings³.

There is limited evidence available to document the level and nature of violence against bisexual people (on the basis of their sexuality) and transgender people (on the basis of their gender identity). However anecdotal evidence suggests that members of these communities are also subject to disproportionately high levels of violence.

A national study of 1,749 young people and found that despite feeling better about their sexuality, almost half of the respondents had experienced verbal or physical harassment and 16% had been physically assaulted.

¹ NSW Police (1995), *Out of the Blue; A Police Survey of Violence and Harassment Against Gay Men and Lesbians*.

² Hillier L, Turner A & Mitchell (2005), *Writing themselves in again: 6 years on - The 2nd national report on the sexuality, health & well-being of same sex attracted young people in Australia* Monograph series no. 50, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne

³ Jarman N, Tennant A (2003), *An acceptable prejudice? Homophobic violence and harassment in Northern Ireland* Institute for Conflict Research, which reviewed Police data and surveyed 186 people - 82% of respondents experienced harassment and 55% were subjected to homophobic violence;

Another study in the UK - Bexley & Greenwich Homophobic Crime Survey Factsheet (2003) Count me in, revealed 69% of respondents had

experienced homophobic violence, threats or harassment in their lifetimes and 13% of incidents were described as physical violence;

The Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (2002) *Hate Crime Report*, found that sexual orientation hate crime was the only hate crime category to increase over a one year period - a 14% increase in anti-gay male crimes.

4. The complexity of violence

This strategic framework acknowledges the complexity of violence experienced by some GLBT people, in particular:

- Multiple layers of prejudice and violence. Initiatives developed in response to this strategy will recognise that homophobia can be experienced in conjunction with other forms of prejudice, such as racism.
- The significant and ongoing impact of prejudice related violence. Hillier⁵ describes the profound impact of homophobic abuse on young people's health and well being such as increased risks of self-harm and drug abuse. The strategy seeks to build capacity within the GLBT community and amongst service providers to better respond to the consequences of this prejudice related violence.
- The cumulative impact of violence. Research evidence suggests that a range of psychological and social responses including lifestyle change may result from the experience and/or fear of violence⁶.

5. Statement of principles

This strategic framework is based on a number of principles of working with and for GLBT communities:

Collaboration

- Partnership between government and non-government agencies is essential to ensuring a coordinated and effective response.

Diversity

- Diverse responses are required given the multiple dimensions of diversity that exist in the GLBT community, including gender, ethnicity, ability and age.
- The inclusion of young people, Aboriginal people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and transgender people is a priority in planning and implementation of initiatives.

Whole of community responsibility

- The prevention of prejudice related violence against GLBT is a whole of community responsibility.

⁴ Mouzos J & Thompson S (June 2000), Gay-Hate Related Homicides: An Overview of Major Findings in NSW Australian Institute of Criminology

⁵ Hillier et al (2005); Hillier L, Dempsey D, Harrison L, Beale L, Matthews L & Rosenthal D (1998), Writing themselves in: A national report on the sexuality, health & well being of same

sex attracted young people in Australia National Centre in HIV Social Research, La Trobe University, Melbourne

⁶ NSW Attorney General's Department (2003), 'You shouldn't have to hide to be safe' A Report on Homophobic Hostilities and Violence Against Gay Men and Lesbians in New South Wales

For the purposes of this strategic framework, prejudice related violence refers to hate and fear based abuse and violence directed at GLBT people because they are, or are perceived to be, GLBT.

Violence includes:

- *Physical and non-physical forms of harassment, abuse and violence, and*
- *Fear of violence.*

A violent act motivated by prejudice or hatred of GLBT people might range from an incident of verbal abuse from a passing car to a fatal physical assault often associated with a high level of brutality⁴.

The goal of this Strategic Framework is to develop safer physical and social environments for GLBT people.

6. Goal and strategic directions 2007 – 2012

There have been significant achievements as a result of the efforts of government and non-government agencies' work in this area. This strategic framework seeks to achieve its goal by building on the achievements of past and current initiatives. The Strategic Directions 2007-2012 provide a framework for government agencies to focus their efforts and develop new and innovative responses to this social problem, based on existing research and evidence-based practice. There is also a regular reporting mechanism that will allow agencies to highlight their achievements.

6.1 Develop, implement and evaluate government policies and programs to address prejudice related violence against GLBT people.

This strategic direction encourages government agencies to develop policies and programs to deliver an effective and appropriate response to prejudice related violence against GLBT people. 'Working Together' provides a framework for government agencies to develop policies and projects in consultation with the GLBT communities that address, but are not limited to, the key priority areas set out in section 7.

Government initiatives will be guided by research evidence and will draw upon best practice to build and consolidate upon existing work to reduce levels of violence against GLBT people through early intervention initiatives and awareness raising projects. Policies and programs will also reduce the impact of violence against GLBT people by increasing the GLBT communities' capacity to respond to violence and ensuring an appropriate service response to victims of violence.

Examples of initiatives:

- NSW Police Policy Statement on Gay and Lesbian Issues (2003 - 2006)
- *You shouldn't have to hide to be safe* research project
- NSW Police Force Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer Program
- Workplace harassment and discrimination policies (EEO, EAP)
- AGD GLBT Strategic Responses to Violence Grants Program

6.2 Develop collaborative, partnership based responses with a range of government and non-government agencies to reduce the incidence and impact of prejudice related violence against GLBT people.

Collaboration and partnerships between government and non-government agencies have been vital aspects of initiatives addressing violence against GLBT people to date. Strong and enduring partnerships will create ongoing capacity to deliver interventions that address prejudice related violence against GLBT people. Furthermore, collaboration and partnerships between government and non-government agencies hold great potential to expand and share expertise and resources.

This strategic direction aims to increase opportunities for stronger links between the GLBT communities and government agencies in an effort to reduce the incidence and impact of violence against GLBT people.

Examples of initiatives:

- NSW Anti-Homophobia Interagency
- *Understanding your legal rights: A guide for lesbians and gay men in NSW*

6.3 Review legislative reforms aimed at reducing the incidence and impact of prejudice violence against GLBT people

A legislative framework in NSW that recognises prejudice related violence against GLBT people as a serious crime is essential in addressing the issue. Legislative initiatives that protect the GLBT communities from discrimination in everyday life are an important component of the legislative framework.

The removal of discrimination against GLBT people in the law sets an example in valuing and accepting diversity. This strategic direction focuses on legislative measures that can reduce victimisation of GLBT people, and ensure fair and equal treatment of GLBT people before the law.

Examples of initiatives:

- *Anti-Discrimination Act NSW 1977*
- *Property (Relationships) Legislation Amendment Act 1999* which extended to same sex couples many (but not all) of the same rights and obligations enjoyed by heterosexual couples.



A number of research reports have identified workplaces as key sites of homophobic hostility.

7. Key priority areas 2007 - 2012

Following analysis of data and consultations with community groups, a number of priority areas have been identified:

7.1 Focus on key sites of hostility and violence – particularly educational and workplace environments

It is vital for government to examine the key sites of hostility and violence in addressing prejudice related violence against GLBT people. Research reports on the issue indicate that GLBT people's experiences of violence takes place across a range of different locations. This strategic framework recognises that violence can occur at a range of sites, including the street and places of residence, however, educational and workplace environments will be the focus of work for the NSW Government for the 2007-2012 period.

A number of research reports have identified workplaces as key sites of homophobic hostility⁷. In recognition of the significant portion of time spent in workplaces, occupational health and safety has been a priority of the NSW Government, through legislation including the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000*, the *Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Regulation 2001* and the implementation of policies and procedures across the public sector through the Taking Safety Seriously strategy which focuses on the establishment of workplace safety management systems in public sector agencies.

Along with the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*, occupational health and safety policies aim to create work environments that are safe and healthy, and free from discrimination, harassment and violence. This strategic framework provides the NSW Government with an opportunity to build on previous work and provide leadership by introducing innovative strategies, such as workplace diversity programs, and make improvements in OHS and injury management to help create safe and supportive work environments for GLBT people across the public sector.

The *You shouldn't have to hide to be safe* report found that educational environments, in particular schools, were key sites of homophobic violence and hostility. Other research studies⁸ have yielded similar findings and as a result recommended a targeted approach to reducing homophobic violence in educational settings. This key priority area reinforces the NSW Government's responsibility to provide a safe learning environment for all students in the public education system and encourages targeted interventions to reduce the incidence and impact of prejudice related violence against GLBT students.

7.2 Service delivery reform – ensuring that policies are developed and implemented to provide protection and support to GLBT people across all public services

The development of policies ensuring an appropriate response from NSW Government agencies to the GLBT communities is an integral part of addressing prejudice related violence against GLBT people. The rationale for this key priority area stems from the *You shouldn't have to hide to be safe* report which found only a small portion of victims of violence sought assistance from services.

The provision of quality services has been a central focus of the NSW public sector reform agenda in recent years. This strategic framework seeks to build on current public sector reform initiatives to include the provision of quality services to GLBT people. This key priority area encourages public sector agencies to take the opportunity to develop policies and procedures to improve access to services for GLBT people to reduce the impact of victimisation.

Prevention strategies have been a key component of work for the NSW Government addressing complex social problems such as domestic violence.



7.3 Prevention strategies – providing information and education about prejudice related violence

The role of early intervention strategies is vital in addressing prejudice related violence against GLBT people. Early intervention strategies prevent the development of abusive and violent behaviours directed against lesbians and gay men and is a key priority area for this strategic framework. Evaluation needs to be a strong component of these initiatives to determine approaches that are most likely to impact on attitudes and behaviours to reduce the incidence of violence.

Prevention strategies have been a key component of work for the NSW Government addressing complex social problems such as domestic violence. This key priority area encourages NSW Government agencies to develop, implement and evaluate similar prevention strategies to address prejudice related violence against GLBT people.

7.4 Support for victims of prejudice related violence

Recent research indicates that victimisation within the GLBT communities remains at high levels in comparison to the general community⁹. Not seeking assistance from agencies after an incident of violence, or encountering inappropriate services often compounds the experience of violence for victims. The *You shouldn't have to hide to be safe* report also found that young people in particular are vulnerable to the impact of homophobic abuse and violence, and less likely to seek help.

There is a body of evidence¹⁰ to suggest that the initial and medium term response to victims of prejudice related violence is important. Further, it is evident that victims of prejudice related violence are at high risk of secondary victimisation by encountering inappropriate services. The NSW Government Charter of Victims Rights obliges government agencies to ensure that a victim is at all times treated with courtesy and compassion, and that their rights and dignity are respected. The Charter ensures a recognised position for victims within the NSW criminal justice system, and provides guidelines for government agencies to assist their work in this area.

This key priority area calls on government agencies to review their services to victims of crime to ensure that the needs of victims of prejudice related violence are being recognised.

7.5 Research into prejudice related violence against GLBT people with a focus on transgender and bisexual people

Using research evidence to inform decision-making has been acknowledged as good practice in crime prevention. However, the availability of published research that examines violence against GLBT people is limited, particularly in relation to bisexual and transgender people. Over the last fifteen years numerous research studies have provided valuable information about prejudice related violence based on sexuality, however a number of significant areas requiring research remain. Therefore, this key priority area recommends initiatives to build and maintain a research agenda to examine experiences of violence against GLBT people, with a focus on bisexual and transgender people.

⁷ Irwin, J. (1999) *The Pink Ceiling is Too Low: Workplace experiences of lesbians, gay men and transgender people NSW*: Australian Centre of Lesbian and Gay Research, University of Sydney; NSW Attorney General's Department (2003), *'You shouldn't have to hide to be safe' A Report on Homophobic Hostilities and Violence Against Gay Men and Lesbians in New South Wales*.

⁸ Hillier et al (2005); Hillier L, Dempsey D, Harrison L, Beale L, Matthews L & Rosenthal D (1998), *Writing themselves in again: A national report on the sexuality, health & well-being of same sex attracted young people in Australia* National Centre in HIV Social Research, La Trobe University, Melbourne

⁹ NSW Attorney General's Department (2003), *'You shouldn't have to hide to be safe' A Report on Homophobic Hostilities and Violence Against Gay Men and Lesbians in New South Wales*.

¹⁰ Boeckmann R & Turpin-Petrosino C, (2002) *Understanding the Harm of Hate Crime*, *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 58 No.2 pp207-225; Herek G, Cogan J & Gillis, J (2002) *Victim Experiences in Hate Crimes Based on Sexual Orientation*, *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 58 No.2, pp319-339.

8. Implementation

The Crime Prevention Division (CPD) of the NSW Attorney General's Department will lead the implementation of the strategic framework, in partnership with the Network of Government Agencies (NOGA). Each government agency within NOGA will be encouraged to align their current initiatives that are relevant to GLBT people with the strategic directions and key priority areas identified in this strategic framework, and to use the strategic framework to inform their annual business and resource allocation.

Each government agency is responsible for the development of and progress on its own initiatives. NOGA will facilitate government agencies collaborating on initiatives, where appropriate, to avoid duplication and to achieve agreed goals. CPD will coordinate an annual report on progress and achievements using the reporting template shown in Appendix 1.



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Appendix 1: Template for NOGA Annual Reporting

Key Priority areas	Progress/achievements to date	Initiatives/projects planned for 2008 - 2009
Key sites of hostility and violence – particularly educational and workplace environments.		
Service delivery reform – ensuring that policies are developed and implemented to provide protection and support to GLBT people across all public services.		
Prevention strategies – reducing the incidence of hostility and violence by providing information and education about prejudice related violence.		
Support for victims of prejudice related violence.		
Research into prejudice related violence against GLBT people, with a focus on transgender and bisexual people.		

