



CBR FAIR DAY IMPACT REPORT

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Meridian's **CBR Fair Day** is a well-loved event on the Canberra events calendar that has been bringing the community together to celebrate Canberra's Pride Festival and build community cohesion for the last 20 years. Funded by the ACT Health Directorate, CBR Fair Day promotes the creation of **safe and supportive communities** in which LGBTIQ+ people feel included, affirmed in their gender and sexual identities, and in which they are able to access high-quality and relevant services and information, which is strongly protective of **good health and wellbeing.**¹

We are proud to be working alongside the ACT Government in creating a safe and inclusive city for all Canberrans. CBR Fair Day contributes to the Government's achievement of the 2019 – 2023 LGBTIQ Strategy and their commitment to the Darlington Consensus Statement by promoting a safe and supportive community in which LGBTIQ people feel included, affirmed in their gender and sexual identities, and in which they are able to access high-quality and relevant services and information.



MEASURING THE IMPACT OF CBR FAIR DAY WITH THE CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGE FRAMEWORK

The Contribution to Change (C2C) Framework, developed by Collective Action, is an impact measurement methodology that was purpose-built for community-based organisations. It uses a theory-based approach to evaluate the effectiveness of community programs and their contribution to population-level outcomes. It does this by building a 'theory of change', which maps the assumed steps through which activities will contribute to population-level outcome and gathering evidence to test these assumptions.

The C2C Framework, along with other theory-based methodologies, recognises that social change is a dynamic and complex process, and it is therefore not realistic to claim that community outcomes can be solely attributed to a single program. Rather, social change results from a complex interaction of individual and social factors, and the contributions of many partners. While it is not possible to demonstrate a causal link from one program or organisation to long-term, community-level outcomes, it is possible to demonstrate where they may have made a contribution to change. To do this, the C2C framework brings together peer-based expertise, evaluation data, and the results of social research to show the pathway through which the organisation contributes to changes at the community-level over time.

WHAT IMPACT IS CBR FAIR DAY HAVING ON THE CANBERRA COMMUNITY?

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT ATTENDEES?

CBR Fair Day connects LGBTIQ+ people to information, services and support

HOW DID WE DO?

4.6/5



LGBTIQ+ people have improved access to safe and inclusive services.

By connecting LGBTIQ+ people to services and organisations that are relevant and inclusive, Fair Day contributes to reducing barriers to accessing services and support, increasing the likelihood that LGBTIQ+ people will seek support when they need it.

LGBTIQ+ people are more likely to seek support when they need it.

LGBTIQ+ people face barriers to accessing relevant and inclusive services that are caused by fears, or prior experiences of discrimination, lack of accessible and affordable services, and lack of LGBTIQ+ specialist services.^{18,19} The LGBTI Health Alliance reported in 2020 that many LGBTIQ+ people who had not used a health service in a time of crisis had not done so because they did not know of any crisis support or specialist services they could use.²⁰

Barriers to services are more significant for trans and gender diverse people.²¹ Research shows that the majority of trans and gender diverse young people feel isolated from medical and mental health services, and they have difficulty finding healthcare providers with the knowledge and experience to provide relevant and respectful care.⁸⁴

Ensuring LGBTIQ+ people have information about available safe, inclusive and knowledgeable LGBTIQ+ services is key to reducing barriers to services and increasing help-seeking behaviour.

Fair Day provides LGBTIQ+ people with a safe and inclusive space to celebrate pride

HOW DID WE DO?

4.6/5



LGBTIQ+ people have a stronger sense of belonging and community acceptance

Safe and inclusive spaces are critical for responding to the needs of groups who experience marginalisation and discrimination, including LGBTIQ+ people. The fear and reality of stigma and discrimination can lead to the avoidance of community spaces and connections, services, and support, leading to poorer health and wellbeing outcomes.²⁸

LGBTIQ+ people have increased self-acceptance and confidence in their identity

In providing LGBTIQ+ people with a safe and inclusive space to celebrate pride, CBR Fair Day contributes to LGBTIQ+ people's sense of community acceptance and belonging. LGBTIQ+ people frequently report feeling as though they do not belong and that their communities won't accept their identities, with the *Private lives 3* study revealing that only 30% reported feeling accepted in public.²⁹ Having to hide one's identity is stressful and associated with negative health outcomes, and the fear of rejection can be just as damaging to a person's mental health as rejection itself.³⁰ This can lead to a sense of isolation, which has a negative impact on health and wellbeing. Access to safe, inclusive, and identity-affirming spaces, support, and social connection are key protective factors against the harmful effects of stigma and discrimination.³¹

LGBTIQ+ people have a safe space to access support and build peer and community connections

Further, events which celebrate pride promote feelings of pride in oneself and in the community, which contributes to reducing the shame and stigma that can be internalised by LGBTIQ+ people.³² This can contribute to better self-esteem and supports improvements in health and wellbeing.

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY?

IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING OUTCOMES AND REDUCED BURDEN ON THE HEALTH SYSTEM

CBR Fair Day helps to improve the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people by connecting them to services and organisations that are relevant and inclusive.²² With fewer barriers to services and support, LGBTIQ+ people are more likely to seek and receive support, which has positive benefits for health and wellbeing.

Due to their exposure to stigma, discrimination and violence, LGBTIQ+ people often experience poorer mental and physical health and wellbeing outcomes.²³ A major factor contributing to these outcomes is a lack of access to services which could support improved health. Many LGBTIQ+ people delay or do not access the support they need,²⁴ which leads to late diagnoses and increased incidences of preventable diseases, more costly and urgent care, and places stress on crisis services, with patients often having conditions that could have been treated earlier and at a lower expense with proper access.²⁵ Removing barriers to services means that LGBTIQ+ people are more likely to access care when they need it which results in improved health outcomes.

Fair Day connects LGBTIQ+ people with health services and information that heightens their likelihood of finding appropriate and inclusive support. Research has shown that inclusive services which affirm the identities of LGBTIQ+ people are more effective in supporting health and wellbeing.²⁶ This also reduces the likelihood of them experiencing stigma and discrimination when accessing services, which is a protective factor against poor health and wellbeing.²⁷

IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING OUTCOMES

By contributing to an increase in the self-acceptance and confidence of LGBTIQ+ people, CBR Fair Day supports improved wellbeing and mental health. Being able to express gender identity improves the health and wellbeing of trans and gender diverse people. Improved self-esteem and self-acceptance leads to better mental health.³³

Fair Day encourages social connections and enhances LGBTIQ+ people's sense of belonging, which means that LGBTIQ+ are able to experience the health benefits of community engagement. Increased social connection and support, particularly connection with peers who share similar experiences, has the effect of improving the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people.³⁴

IMPROVED SOCIAL COHESION AND REDUCED DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMA AGAINST LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE

LGBTIQ+ young people, and in particular, young trans and gender diverse people, are significantly more likely to experience social isolation, discrimination, bullying, rejection by family and friends, and violence.³⁵ This can lead to them being disconnected from their communities. By creating a day that encourages connections between LGBTIQ+ communities and between allies and LGBTIQ+ people, CBR Fair Day is facilitating the creation of social bonds within the community, thereby lowering stigma around LGBTIQ+ identities.³⁶ Increased social participation is directly correlated with improvements in mental health, reduces the risk of a broad range of diseases, and increases life expectancy.³⁷



“My child chose Fair Day to disclose their trans-woman status. How exquisite is that! BTW I am so proud of her”



“I’m so glad there was an ace table! I felt so accepted! I met some amazing people yesterday and I’d love to meet even more!”



“I loved the sense of community at Fair Day this year.”

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT ATTENDEES?

Fair Day plays an important role in supporting the resilience, strength & optimism of LGBTQ+ people

HOW DID WE DO?

4.7/5



LGBTQ+ people have stronger coping mechanisms to resist the negative effects of stigma and discrimination, leading to better mental health outcomes and a lower risk of suicide

In supporting the resilience, strength and optimism of LGBTQ+ people, CBR Fair Day increases their ability to cope with the negative effects of stigma and discrimination. Resilience has been found to be a crucial protector of mental health and wellbeing. This is because it promotes a strong sense of self-acceptance and helps overcome internalised stigma about LGBTQ+ identities.³⁸

Fair Day provides LGBTQ+ people and their allies with a fun filled day of quality entertainment, cultural activities and community engagement

HOW DID WE DO?

4.4/5



LGBTQ+ people are more engaged with and participate actively in their communities

LGBTQ+ people feel a greater sense of belonging and acceptance

In providing them with a fun day of community engagement, CBR Fair Day exposes LGBTQ+ people to an event at which they have a positive experience of engaging with the community and being accepted. Events such as Fair Day have been shown to be important in increasing community acceptance and belonging.⁴² LGBTQ+ people feel more accepted at events that are for LGBTQ+ people. *Private Lives 3* found that a much greater proportion of participants (67.5%) felt accepted at LGBTQ+ events or venues compared to mainstream events and venues.⁴³ Furthermore, pride-specific events help to reduce marginalisation and discrimination in the community⁴⁴ and so work to increase LGBTQ+ people's sense of social belonging. These events also foster a stronger understanding in the public of issues important to LGBTQ+ people.⁴⁵ This can increase whole-community advocacy efforts and community participation of LGBTQ+ people and their allies. Community events, services, and support can connect LGBTQ+ people to information, peers, and safe spaces,⁴⁶ reducing feelings of isolation.⁴⁷

Fair Day strengthens community connection and cohesion

HOW DID WE DO?

4.4/5



LGBTQ+ people feel a sense of belonging and acceptance in the community

LGBTQ+ have stronger support networks

In gathering together people of diverse identities and experiences to participate in a day of entertainment and celebration of pride, CBR Fair Day helps to create connected and cohesive communities. This contributes to increasing LGBTQ+ people's sense of belonging and acceptance.

Through facilitating social connection and peer connectedness, Fair Day enhances the resilience of LGBTQ+ communities and increases access to community support.⁵¹ Community cohesion and connection directly influences social support for LGBTQ+ people.⁵² Strengthening the support available to LGBTQ+ people is associated with higher levels of self-esteem, less depression, fewer reports of suicidal ideation or suicide attempts, and reduced risk of homelessness.⁵³ Fair Day engages a high proportion of heterosexual people as well, showing that it is achieving its goal of creating community cohesion within the broader community as well as within LGBTQ+ communities.⁵⁴ The event attracts allies who wish to share support for the LGBTQ+ community, which shows that the event advances efforts to create a more inclusive and welcoming society in which events like Fair Day are seen as important to the entire community.

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY?

IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING OUTCOMES AND REDUCED RATES OF SUICIDE

CBR Fair Day enhances LGBTIQ+ people's strength, resilience and optimism, which are strong protective factors for the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people. When LGBTIQ+ people are resilient to the effects of stress, stigma and discrimination, they have better mental health and wellbeing outcomes.³⁹ Resilience has been a recent focus on research into suicide prevention, as it has been found to reduce risk of suicide in populations of people at high risk of suicide.⁴⁰ Additionally, having a sense of optimism cultivates hope for the future and is a protective factor that can prevent or lower the possibility of suicidal ideation.⁴¹

IMPROVED SOCIAL COHESION AND REDUCED DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMA AGAINST LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE

Fair Day promotes cohesive communities in which people are not rejected for their identities. By creating a day that encourages connections between LGBTIQ+ communities and between allies and LGBTIQ+ people, CBR Fair Day is facilitating the creation of social bonds within the community.⁴⁸ As a major event on the Canberra cultural calendar, the event encourages community connection and inclusion. When LGBTIQ+ people participate in their communities, and feel a sense of belonging in those communities, they are less isolated and enjoy stronger social support.⁴⁹ Increased social participation is directly correlated with improvements in mental health, reduces the risk of a broad range of diseases, and increases life expectancy.⁵⁰

IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING OUTCOMES

Social support for LGBTIQ+ people is a major protective factor for health and wellbeing.⁵⁵ Increased social inclusion and connection is vital to protecting the mental and physical health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ young people.⁸⁸ As well as improving mental health and wellbeing, social inclusion reduces the risk of a broad range of diseases, including cancer and cardiovascular disease. It is also associated with increased life expectancy.⁵⁶ *Writing in themselves 4* found that young LGBTIQ+ people reported that social connection and being affirmed by others made them feel good, improving mental wellbeing.⁵⁷

IMPROVED SOCIAL COHESION AND REDUCED DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMA AGAINST LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE

In strengthening community connection and cohesion, CBR Fair Day improves social cohesion by creating environments in which LGBTIQ+ communities are well-connected, and supported by mainstream communities, services and groups. This works to combat marginalisation of LGBTIQ+ people, leading to lower incidences of stigma and discrimination.⁵⁸



“The family disco was really great. Our children were delighted at having a dance party for “two mum & two dad families”. We would love to see it next year, and have already let other queer families know how great it was.”



“CBR Fair Day is the BEST opportunity for LGBTIQ+ people in Canberra to celebrate what makes them unique, amazing, loving individuals.”

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