

# INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDE

## STUDENT RESOURCE

[swinburne.edu.au/safercommunity](https://swinburne.edu.au/safercommunity)

MADE BY THE SAFER COMMUNITY TEAM

### CREATING A SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SWINBURNE COMMUNITY.

#### What is inclusive language?

Inclusive language is respectful and promotes value and acceptance of all people. It is free from any words, tones or phrases that prejudice, demean, insult, discriminate, stereotype, exclude, belittle or trivialise people due to personal attributes or association with certain groups. Inclusive language is not about forcing political correctness; it is about effectively communicating in a way that is respectful towards the experiences and values of all people.

#### Why should we use inclusive language?

Swinburne works hard to create a safe, accepting and vibrant community that celebrates equity, diversity and inclusion. We value and respect the diversity of our people within the community to break down any harmful stereotypes, prejudice and stigma. The language we use can make people feel valued, included and empowered within our community. Language is considered inclusive when we use words that demonstrate our respect for how people describe themselves based on personal characteristics such as culture, disability, gender, identity, age, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identity and connection.

#### A few principles of inclusive language:

- Using people-focused language that puts the individual first and doesn't stereotype or classify people based on their identity or association with a group or culture. An example of people-focused language may be using the term 'people who identify as transgender' rather than 'transgender'.
- Understanding some terms are acceptable to use by certain groups as a means of claiming their identity, but may be derogatory or disrespectful, particularly when used by others outside of the group.
- Asking which pronoun an individual prefers to describe themselves instead of making assumptions about their gender.
- Avoiding assumptions based on general stereotypes or limited information.
- Being mindful of the implications of the language you use. Try to avoid excluding others based on the choice of your words.
- Empowering a person or group to speak for themselves. If you do need to speak on behalf of a group of people, it is important that you consult appropriately to ensure that any language you use is reflective and respectful of the group.
- Being an active bystander by aiming to address and remove harmful stereotypes and assumptions. If you witness someone behaving inappropriately, you can bring this to their attention. Let them know how their behaviour is impacting others and take an educative approach by forwarding them some relevant information.
- Pausing to consider whether it is necessary to refer to an individual's or group's personal characteristics, and if it is, are the references to personal characteristics inclusive?

# INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDE

	INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE PRACTICE	LANGUAGES NOT TO USE
<b>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware of the diversity of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.</li> <li>• Acknowledge the historical context and the systemic barriers many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples face.</li> <li>• Always use capitals when referring to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, i.e. 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples', 'First people', or 'Indigenous Australian'.</li> <li>• Where possible, consult with the local Traditional Owner groups to ensure that any language and practices are reflective of the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aboriginal shouldn't be used as a noun.</li> <li>• The word 'aborigine' should be avoided when referring to Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples as it is used as a general term for the original inhabitant of a country.</li> <li>• Don't abbreviate to 'ATSI'. Use Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in full.</li> <li>• Don't isolate or exclude Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. An example of this may be stating that 'all Australian people have access to a quality education system', which may exclude the lived experience and cultural learnings of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.</li> <li>• Don't misrepresent, trivialise or belittle important cultural beliefs, events and practices. An example of this may be referring to the Dreaming as myth.</li> <li>• Avoid making assumptions about someone's ancestry based on their physical features. Terms such as 'half-caste', 'full-blooded' and 'part Aboriginal' should not be used.</li> </ul>
<b>Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only refer to someone's cultural background when it is appropriate. Generally, it is unnecessary to refer to someone's cultural background, but if you do need to, use people-centric language e.g., person of Sri Lankan descent.</li> <li>• Respect cultural differences and language barriers that may be present. In cross-cultural communication you should ensure that your language is simple and accessible and body language isn't offensive.</li> <li>• Educate yourself on someone's cultural background where possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't use umbrella terms such as 'African'. This ignores the multiple ethnicities within Africa. Where it is appropriate, refer to a person's ethnicity, e.g., Ethiopian, Egyptian.</li> <li>• Don't use racist and harmful stereotypes.</li> <li>• Don't use derogatory terms such as 'wogs' or 'gringo'.</li> <li>• Don't make someone's culture invisible.</li> <li>• Don't make 'positive/patronising' comments based on stereotypes, such as 'you speak such good English'.</li> <li>• Avoid the assumption that a person with a recognisable accent was not born in Australia.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who identify as transsexual or transgender may use a preferred pronoun to represent their gender identity. Be guided by them.</li> <li>• Ask someone what pronouns they use (e.g., he, she, they, ze*) and respectfully use them correctly. Ask privately whenever possible to reduce discomfort.</li> <li>• Only use gendered language when it is appropriate. Use gender neutral terms where possible, e.g., use the Chair rather than Chairman, or 'welcome to all' rather than 'hello ladies and gentlemen'.</li> <li>• Use gender neutral pronouns (they) where possible. If you misgender someone, apologise briefly and start using respectful gender language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't deadname. Deadnaming is when someone, knowingly or unknowingly, refers to a person who identifies as transgender by the name they used before they transitioned, which is often associated as a source of discomfort. This is commonly referred to as their 'given name' or 'birth name'. When you refer to a person who identifies as transgender by their non-affirmed name, it can feel invalidating and as though you don't respect their identity.</li> <li>• Don't make an assumption about someone's gender based on their name or physical features.</li> <li>• Don't use gender references in a demeaning or trivialising way, e.g., 'throw like a girl'.</li> <li>• Don't use expressions that stereotype gender roles, e.g., 'women stay at home and care for children'.</li> </ul>

\*Although the pronouns 'ze' and 'they' tend to be thought as gender neutral, a person who goes by 'ze' or 'they' could actually be a man, a woman, both, neither, or something else.

<p><b>Sexuality</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are unsure, use LGBTIQ+ inclusive terms such as 'partner', rather than 'girlfriend' or 'boyfriend', to refer to someone's significant other, unless the preferred term has been specified by the person directly.</li> <li>• Don't assume that everyone is heterosexual (straight), or that this is the norm.</li> <li>• Don't question or make assumptions about someone's gender, sexuality, sexual orientation or relationship. Accept and respect how people define themselves.</li> <li>• Don't ask if you don't have to. Let yourself be led by how much someone wishes to talk about themselves, their sexual orientation and relationships.</li> <li>• Don't assume every person who may be comfortable being 'out' in the university environment is 'out' in other settings – people have the right to disclose their sexuality, sexual orientation or gender identity in their own time and on their own terms.</li> <li>• If you need to, you can simply ask people what pronouns they use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't make assumptions or stereotypes about someone's sexual orientation e.g. he's so flamboyant, he must be gay.</li> <li>• Don't use LGBTIQ terminology in a derogatory way, e.g. the word 'gay' when used in a negative way to refer to a situation or event unrelated to sexuality.</li> <li>• Don't ask intrusive questions about people's sexual activities or private lives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use people-centric language. A disability should never define the person; i.e., person with disability or people with disability.</li> <li>• Focus on the person, not the impairment. Refer to a person's disability only when it is related to what you are talking about.</li> <li>• Use a strengths-based approach, such as 'person experiencing poor mental health' instead of saying 'crazy person'.</li> <li>• Call a person with a disability by their name, just as you would refer to a person without a disability by their own name.</li> <li>• Use expressions that recognise the capacity of people to make meaningful contributions to and be a part of the community. People with disabilities seek to be included just the same as everyone else.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't use inappropriate language such as cripple, handicapped, mental patient, 'wheelchair bound', 'disabled person'.</li> <li>• Don't use derogatory language such as 'retard' or 'spaz' in any way or context. This can include things such as 'the computer is having a spaz' or 'you are such a retard'.</li> <li>• Don't make out that people with a disability are victims or objects needing pity. Language that refers to people with disabilities as being victims or weak should be avoided.</li> <li>• Avoid language that implies a person with disability is inspirational simply because they experience disability. Having a disability doesn't make someone a hero, a victim, a burden, or brave simply because they are living their lives. It can be condescending to suggest that a person with a disability is brave for going through life.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Age</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only refer to age when relevant to the context.</li> <li>• When it is necessary, use people-centric language e.g., older adults or younger people.</li> <li>• Use language that recognises the value of the person's experience, knowledge and the richness of their perspective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't stereotype, e.g., old men are grumpy, old people won't adapt to new technologies or mature age students are annoying and want to dictate class discussions.</li> </ul>

# ON CAMPUS SUPPORT

## SAFER COMMUNITY

Safer Community offers advice, support, intervention, and risk management for students who experience or witness inappropriate, concerning or threatening behaviours on or off campus. You can get in touch with the team by email or via the online reporting form:

[safercommunity@swin.edu.au](mailto:safercommunity@swin.edu.au)  
[swinburne.edu.au/incident-reporting-form](https://swinburne.edu.au/incident-reporting-form)  
[swinburne.edu.au/safercommunity](https://swinburne.edu.au/safercommunity)

## SWINBURNE SECURITY

Contact campus security services for emergencies on campus, after hours assistance or for a security escort.

03 9214 3333

## CRISIS LINE - OUT OF HOURS

The Swinburne crisis line is available to help 24 hours a day on weekends and public holidays, and outside business hours on weekdays (before 9am and after 5pm).

Call 1300 854 144

Text 0488 884 145

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING (PSYCHOLOGICAL AND COUNSELLING SERVICES)

If you are struggling with a personal, emotional or mental health difficulty, whether related to your studies or your life away from university, counselling may help. Register and make an appointment with the counselling services.

03 9214 8483

[swinburne.edu.au/counselling](https://swinburne.edu.au/counselling)

## INDIGENOUS STUDENT SERVICES

The Indigenous Student Services team in the Moondani Toombadool Centre supports Indigenous students, including on-campus, online and community learners, to be in control of their own studies. The Hawthorn Campus also has an Indigenous Student Lounge located at TB 218.

03 9214 8481

[indigenousstudents@swin.edu.au](mailto:indigenousstudents@swin.edu.au)

[swinburne.edu.au/about/our-university/indigenous-matters/indigenous-student-support](https://swinburne.edu.au/about/our-university/indigenous-matters/indigenous-student-support)

## INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY SERVICE

Swinburne Student Life provides policy advice, support and guidance in academic issues, and advocates for best outcomes in complaints, grievances, appeals and misconduct hearings.

03 9214 5445

[studentlife@swin.edu.au](mailto:studentlife@swin.edu.au)

[swinburne.edu.au/advocacy](https://swinburne.edu.au/advocacy)

## ACCESSABILITY

Provides advice to students who have a disability, mental health condition or who are a primary carer for someone on what reasonable adjustments can be made to ensure equal opportunity to access and participate in their education at Swinburne.

03 9214 5234

[swinburne.edu.au/accessability](https://swinburne.edu.au/accessability)

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADVISORY & SUPPORT

Provides advice and support to international students with all aspects related to living and studying in Melbourne.

03 9214 6741

[swinburne.edu.au/current-students/student-services-support/support-for-international-students](https://swinburne.edu.au/current-students/student-services-support/support-for-international-students)

## GENDER NEUTRAL BATHROOMS

Gender neutral bathrooms for students who identify as transgender and/or queer are available across Swinburne.

[swinburne.edu.au/about/campuses-facilities/facilities-services/gender-neutral-bathrooms-safe-spaces](https://swinburne.edu.au/about/campuses-facilities/facilities-services/gender-neutral-bathrooms-safe-spaces)

## SAFE SPACES

The Swinburne Student Union hold collectives that represent the Queer community, women, Indigenous, Ethnocultural and students with disabilities. The Women's Room is a supportive space for female students to feel safe on campus. The Queer Space provides a similar atmosphere for our LGBTIQ community. Both spaces are filled with couches, desks and plenty of friendly faces. So if you want to chill out, study or you're just keen for a chat, drop by Level 2 of the AD Building on the Hawthorn campus.

[ssu.org.au/about-the-union/your-collectives](https://ssu.org.au/about-the-union/your-collectives)

# OFF CAMPUS SUPPORT

## **POLICE**

National emergency response and reporting.

In emergencies call **000**

[police.vic.gov.au](https://www.police.vic.gov.au)

## **LIFELINE**

24/7 phone crisis support and suicide prevention.

**13 11 14**

[lifeline.org.au](https://www.lifeline.org.au)

## **EHEADSPACE**

A confidential, free and secure space to chat to qualified youth mental health professionals.

[eheadspace.org.au](https://www.eheadspace.org.au)

## **SWITCHBOARD**

Switchboard Victoria provides peer-driven support services for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender diverse, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQA+) people, their families, allies and communities.

**1800 184 527**

Chat online [qlife.org.au/resources/chat](https://www qlife.org.au/resources/chat)

## **NATIONAL LGBTI HEALTH ALLIANCE**

The National LGBTI Health Alliance is the national peak health organisation in Australia for organisations and individuals that provide health-related programs, services and research focused on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people (LGBTI) and other sexuality, gender, and bodily diverse people and communities.

[lgbtihealth.org.au](https://www.lgbtihealth.org.au)

## **VICTORIA POLICE - LGBTIQ LIAISON OFFICERS**

Victoria Police has appointed a number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer liaison officers (GLLOs) across the state. The GLLO Mission Statement is to contribute to the creation of mutual trust between police, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender and intersex persons so they have increasing confidence in police through the provision of fair and equitable policing service.

**03 9247 6944**

[melbourne.gllo@police.vic.gov.au](mailto:melbourne.gllo@police.vic.gov.au)

[police.vic.gov.au/LGBTIQ-liaison-officers](https://www.police.vic.gov.au/LGBTIQ-liaison-officers)

## **NATIONAL ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY CONTROLLED HEALTH ORGANISATION**

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) is the national leadership body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health in Australia, providing advice and guidance to the Australian Government on policy and budget matters while advocating for community-developed health solutions.

[naccho.org.au](https://www.naccho.org.au)

## **EMBRACE MULTICULTURAL MENTAL HEALTH**

Embrace Multicultural Mental Health (the Embrace Project) is run by Mental Health Australia and provides a national focus on mental health and suicide prevention for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

[embracementalhealth.org.au](https://www.embracementalhealth.org.au)