



Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee

Inquiry: Inquiry into anti-LGBTIQ+ hate crimes in Victoria

Hearing date: 25 June 2026

Question taken on notice

Directed to: Respect Victoria

Received date: 23 July 2026

1. Michael GALEA, page 58

Question Asked:

I take your point in terms of when you are looking at the offenders, yes, it probably is black and white – there is no inherent right to anonymity for them. But my question would go more to the everyday users or the victim-survivors of these attacks, or the innocent people, if we can say, many of whom, even in a modern progressive state like Victoria, may well be in family or other situations where to be open about their sexuality puts them in extreme danger. In fact we have had major reported breaches of data from companies as well known as Medibank, Optus and Qantas. Is there a justification for some people to perhaps fear putting that information on to a third-party app that is probably based overseas? How do you balance the two needs in your mind?

Helen BOLTON: It is possibly beyond our remit. As Laura said, we are kind of primary prevention before any violence occurs. But we can certainly take that on notice and come back to you.

Response:

As this inquiry and its preceding circumstances have revealed, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia tragically persist in Victoria driving violence and hate towards our LGBTIQ+ community.

In this context, it is understandable that some members of the LGBTIQ+ community – particularly those who are not ‘out’ to their families or workplaces – may fear disclosing their identity and sexuality when using apps designed for LGBTIQ+ people, such as Grindr. How best to address this within the design of an app depends on balancing human rights, public policy and technological and security capacity factors.

Respect Victoria is not an expert in communications technology, internet security or app design and it is beyond our remit to weigh in further on this question. We respectfully suggest enquiring of the eSafety Commission or other stakeholders with expertise in this area.

2. **Aiv PUGLIELLI, page 60**

Question Asked:

That pipeline that you are describing I would like to examine a bit more, even in a sort of case study sense – I am not sure. Can you step us through what radicalisation into something like anti-LGBTIQA+ hate might look like when it is entered into initially from, say, a place of misogyny?

Laura VINES: Yes, certainly. We would be happy to provide some more detailed information on notice after the fact.

Response:

Pathways into anti-LGBTIQA+ hate can overlap with pathways into other forms of extremist or violence-supportive attitudes, including misogyny. The 2024 Man Box report found that there remains significant perceived social pressure among men to exclude gay and trans peers to be accepted. Adolescent Man Box (2025) found that attitudes among teen boys were the same or worse than the 2024 Man Box report.

As Respect Victoria's submission to this inquiry outlines, misogynistic content has grown across social media platforms, forming a significant component of the 'manosphere'. This is a network of online communities that reinforce rigid gender norms, hostility towards women and prejudice towards people whose identities challenge traditional ideas about gender and sexuality.

Men are attracted to these pathways with content about loneliness, identity or self-improvement before progressing towards increasingly polarising narratives that blame women, feminism or LGBTIQA+ communities for broader social and personal grievances.

Respect Victoria's primary prevention work seeks to interrupt these pathways before violence occurs. One example is [Jefferson](#) from Respect Victoria's '[What Kind of Man Do You Want to Be?](#)' campaign. Jefferson describes being drawn into online incel communities through content that initially appeared supportive but became, in his words, "blame disguised as help". He explains how these communities normalised resentment towards women and distorted his thinking before his sister recognised the changes in him and helped him disengage from what he describes as "a dangerous algorithm".

While Jefferson's story relates to misogyny rather than anti-LGBTIQIA+ hate specifically, it demonstrates how prevention can address the underlying drivers that many forms of prejudice have in common. By encouraging men to question rigid ideas about masculinity, build emotional literacy and develop respectful relationships, campaigns such as 'What Kind of Man Do You Want to Be?' help strengthen protective factors against misogyny, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia before these attitudes become entrenched.

For further research about how misogyny predicts violent extremism including anti-LGBTQIA+ hate, see

- Sara Meger's research on Misogyny and Youth Radicalisation Leading to Violent Extremism
- Anthony Morgan and Timothy Cubitt's work on [trends in exposure to fringe and radical content and groups online](#).
- See Roose, Flood and Alfano's work on Challenging the Use of [Masculinity as a Recruitment Mechanism in Extremist Narratives](#).

For information on [young men's experiences masculinity content online](#) see Fisher, Powell, Lewis, Chhabra, Gerrard and Seidler's work.

3. **Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO, page 61**

Question Asked:

Can I just ask a question about addressing isolation of young men? From your research and work in community and evidence, is there a relationship between people not engaging in public group programs or institutions and then being isolated and fed into this information online and driving these sorts of behaviours and rigid attitudes which may lead to violence?

Laura VINES: I think there is certainly a lot of research. We are happy to provide some details offline.

Response:

While social isolation may be the point of entry of some men into the manosphere or harmful online spaces, there are also other pathways that include peer networks and homosocial bonding.

While Respect Victoria has not done specific research into this topic ourselves, we have compiled some key research that discusses isolation and other entry points for violent extremism.

- [An Introductory Guide to the Manosphere and the Impacts for Young People, Teachers and Schools](#) from ANROWS this paper explicitly discusses pathways into the manosphere.
- [The Anti-social Network: The Role of the Social Media Manosphere in Young Men's Lives](#) from Wilson, Fisher and Seidler this paper speaks to how socially isolated young men appear particularly vulnerable to core manosphere ideologies.
- [Disengagement from online misogynistic incel communities and its implications for attitudes to gendered violence](#) from Doherty, Dowling and Dickens this paper speaks to how while disillusionment is the main reason for leaving incel communities, new social connections, joining religious and community groups also helped.

4. **Ann-Marie HERMANS, page 62**

Question Asked:

You could take this on notice. In terms of de-escalating violence in this area, if you have thoughts on how we do that as a community – de-escalating violence, hatred violence – we would love to have you share some of that. Even if you have to take it on notice and send us something in writing, I would value reading what you have to say.

Helen BOLTON: Thank you, Ann-Marie. We will take that on notice. We appreciate the opportunity. Thank you for asking for that.

Response:

Preventing anti-LGBTIQ+ hatred and violence requires a whole-of-community approach that combines primary prevention, early intervention and effective responses to harm.

As outlined in our submission from a primary prevention perspective, Respect Victoria considers it important to promote positive and inclusive understandings of gender and masculinity. Broad action to address the drivers of violence against women, across the community, can help to address homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Limited ideas about bodies, sex, gender and social expectations, key drivers of violence against women – particularly rigid gender stereotypes; dominant forms of masculinity and male peer cultures that emphasise aggression, dominance and control – all compound the homophobia and transphobia experienced by people with diverse sexuality and gender expressions. These drivers of violence privilege heterosexuality and cis

gender identities and provide ‘rich soil’ for discrimination and harassment in public spaces, as well as amplifying intimate partner violence, sexual and violence and sexual harassment against women and people from LGBTIQ+ communities.

Campaigns such as [‘What Kind of Man Do You Want to Be?’](#) encourage men to question rigid gender stereotypes, recognise harmful online influences and understand that strength is reflected in empathy, respect and healthy relationships.

Evidence also supports investing in respectful relationships education, strengthening digital and media literacy to help people recognise manipulative online content, and creating opportunities for social connection, particularly for young men experiencing loneliness or isolation. Schools, workplaces, sporting clubs and community organisations all have a role in modelling inclusion, challenging prejudice and supporting active bystander behaviours.

The [Love you Queerly campaign](#) also explicitly demonstrates another narrative that combats homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Love You Queerly was created and delivered in partnership by Respect Victoria and [Zoe Belle Gender Collective](#). The campaign features a series of videos of trans and gender diverse Victorians reading messages of love and support collected at Midsumma and reflecting on what those messages mean to them. When transphobia and harmful beliefs about gender go unchallenged, and are reinforced in the media, it can be hard for trans and gender diverse people to feel supported or to have hope. Visible solidarity from allies, friends, families and communities is vital. The campaign is an invitation to allies to show up, speak up and make their support known. Diversity is our strength, and everyone has a right to safety, respect and dignity.

Primary prevention work addressing rigid gender norms needs to be complemented with targeted activity to understand and centre the experience of members of LGBTIQ+ community in these prevention efforts, providing an opportunity to align efforts and amplify gains for all. For example as part of the whole of population activity to end violence across [Respect Ballarat](#), the Q-Hub is collaborating with LGBTIQ+ young people to tailor existing Respectful Relationship resources for the Queer community.

Reducing anti-LGBTIQ+ violence is not only about responding after incidents occur. It is about creating communities where respect, equality and inclusion are actively promoted, and where the attitudes that can lead to hatred and violence are less likely to emerge in the first place.