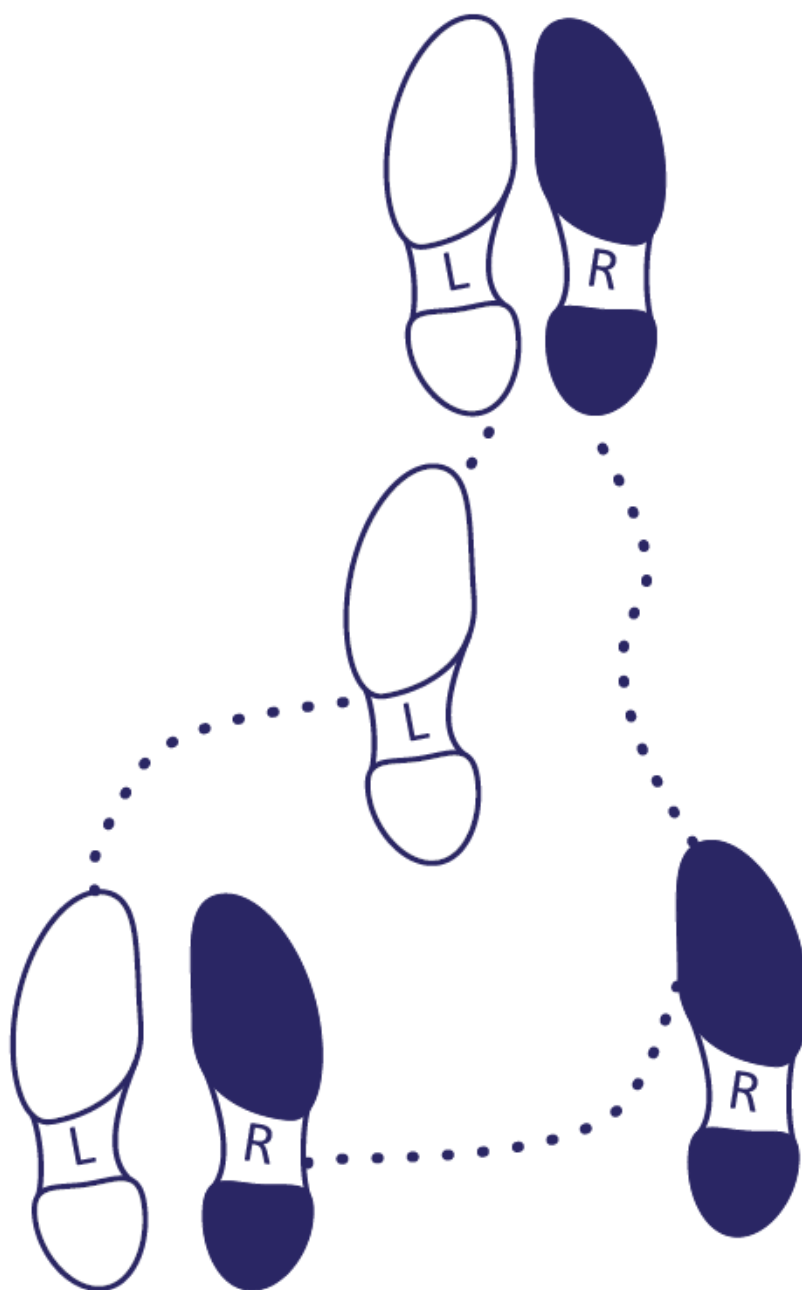


# *Coming forward*

The underreporting of heterosexual violence  
and same sex partner abuse in Victoria

William Leonard  
Anne Mitchell  
Marian Pitts  
Sunil Patel





Thank you to all the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and transgender Victorians who took the time to complete the *Coming Forward* survey. It is often very painful to be reminded of instances of violence or harassment or to answer questions that deal with domestic partner abuse. As one participant put it when asked to comment on their most recent experience of heterosexual violence, "Sorry, just can't". However, documenting our individual and collective experiences of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse is vital to gaining broad community support in challenging heterosexism and its effects.

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December 2008

Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society (ARCSHS)  
La Trobe University  
1st Floor 215 Franklin Street  
Melbourne 3000  
Australia  
Tel (03) 9285 5382  
Fax (03) 9285 5220  
Email: [arcschs@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:arcschs@latrobe.edu.au)  
Website: [www.latrobe.edu.au/arcschs](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/arcschs)

Monograph Series Number 69  
ISBN 978 192 1377 525  
Layout and cover design Sunil Patel

Suggested citation:

Leonard, W., Mitchell, A., Patel, S., and Fox, C. (2008) *Coming forward: The underreporting of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse in Victoria*  
Monograph Series Number 69. Melbourne: The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University.



# Coming forward

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Christopher Fox





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# Acronyms

<b>ACON</b>	AIDS Council of NSW
<b>ARCSHS</b>	Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society
<b>ATSI</b>	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
<b>AVP</b>	Antiviolence Project
<b>DHS</b>	Victorian Department of Human Services
<b>DOJ</b>	Victorian Department of Justice
<b>GLBT</b>	Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and transgender
<b>GLHV</b>	Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria
<b>GLLOs</b>	Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers
<b>SOPV</b>	Sex on premises venue
<b>VAC</b>	Victorian AIDS Council
<b>VEOHRC</b>	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

# Executive summary

## Background

*Coming forward* reports on the responses of 390 gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and transgender (GLBT) Victorians to an online survey asking them about their experiences of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse. The survey also asked respondents questions about:

- Service access and quality when reporting incidents of abuse and pursuing cases through the criminal justice system
- Their knowledge and use of Victoria Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLOs), and
- Barriers and “incentives” to their reporting and seeking assistance following an incident of heterosexual violence or same sex partner abuse.

The project was funded by the Victoria Law Foundation and managed through Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria (GLHV) with assistance from Victoria Police.<sup>1</sup>

## Key findings

### About the respondents

The total number of respondents who successfully completed the survey was 390, 60 percent of whom were male. Three percent of respondents were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) descent, 12 percent were born overseas, nearly 12 per percent reported having one or more disabilities and approximately 4 per cent were transsexual or transgender. Just over half of respondents were in a same sex relationship and 16 percent had children.

---

<sup>1</sup> GLHV is located at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University (ARCSHS) and run as a consortium with the Victorian AIDS Council (VAC) and Women’s Health Victoria.



## Heterosexist violence & same sex partner abuse

### Incidence

The survey findings demonstrate that the actuality and threat of heterosexist violence are a part of GLBT Victorians' day-to-day lives.

- Nearly **one in seven** GLBT respondents report living in fear of heterosexist violence.
- Nearly **85 per cent** of GLBT respondents have been subject to heterosexist violence or harassment in their lifetimes
- **Seven in ten** GLBT respondents have been subject to heterosexist violence while alone in the past two years.
- **Eight in ten** GLBT respondents have experienced heterosexist violence as part of a *same sex couple* or *group* in the past two years
- **One in four** GLBT respondents have been subject to physical violence or the threat of physical violence over the last two years
- In **eighty-five per cent** of cases, violence and harassment were preceded or accompanied by heterosexist language
- Approximately **one in twenty** GLBT respondents have been subject to sexual assault over the last two years

The report's findings suggest that the incidence of abuse within same sex relationships is similar to that reported in heterosexual relationships.

- Just under **one third** of GLBT respondents have been in a same sex relationship where they were subject to abuse by their partner
- **Seventy-eight per cent** of the abuse was psychological and 58 per cent involved physical abuse or being hit
- Lesbians were more likely than gay men to report having been in an abusive same sex relationship (41 per cent and 28 per cent respectively)

### Where, when and by whom

Heterosexist violence can occur anywhere and at anytime. Respondents reported significant levels of violence across metropolitan, rural and regional Victoria. Much of the violence is random and committed by strangers. However, GLBT people are also subject to relatively high levels of heterosexist violence at home and at work.

- Nearly half of reported incidents of heterosexist violence occurred in inner city Melbourne with 14 per cent spread across rural and regional Victoria







- **One in three** incidents of heterosexist violence occurs on the street
- **Thirteen per cent** of violence against GLBT people occurs in their own home and **10 per cent** at work
- In **70 per cent** of cases the perpetrator was a stranger or had no prior relationship to the victim
- **65 per cent** of respondents reported that multiple offenders were involved

## Hidden consequences

A large percentage of GLBT people hide their sexual orientation or gender identity or modify their behaviour in public to minimise the risk of being subjected to heterosexist violence.

- Approximately **45 per cent** of GLBT respondents *occasionally* hide their sexual orientation or gender identity at community events or while accessing services
- **One in three** GLBT respondents *usually* hide their sexual orientation or gender identity at religious events and one in five when in public and at work
- **Sixty per cent** of GLBT young people aged 14 to 24 years hide their sexual orientation or gender identity from family and **seventy per cent** when attending an educational institution
- A number of GLBT respondents wrote of monitoring their dress, behaviour, and public displays of affection with their partner or friends for fear of violence and abuse
- **Eleven per cent** of GLBT respondents reported that over the past two years a family member, child or friend had been subject to abuse because of their association with them as a GLBT person

## Reporting and seeking assistance

One of the major barriers to GLBT respondents reporting or seeking assistance for acts of heterosexist violence or same sex partner abuse is the belief that they will not be taken seriously. At the same time a large number of respondents believe that reporting will lead to further abuse from service providers. A majority of GLBT respondents strongly believe that mainstream police cannot and will not take heterosexist violence and harassment seriously. However, respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with the services and support provided by the GLLOs.

- **Seven out of ten** GLBT respondents did not report their most recent experience of heterosexist violence or harassment to police while 60 per cent did not report that experience to anyone
- Only **40 per cent** of GLBT respondents who reported their most recent experience of heterosexist violence or harassment to mainstream police found the police to be supportive and the service they provided valuable.





- **75 per cent** of victims of heterosexual violence who accessed the GLLOs found them to be supportive, while nearly 63 per cent found the service they provided to be valuable
- Only **6 per cent** of GLBT people who reported same sex partner abuse to police were referred to advice or support services

## Increased reporting

Nearly **70 per cent** of participants provided written responses to questions asking them about the barriers that prevented them from reporting or seeking assistance following incidents of heterosexual violence or same sex partner abuse and what could be done to increase the likelihood of their reporting or seeking assistance in the future.

- **One in four** respondents would be more likely to report or seek assistance following an incident of heterosexual violence or same sex partner abuse if they believed their complaint would be taken seriously.
- **One in seven** respondents advocated for anti-heterosexual social and legislative reforms including mainstream public education campaigns and legislation prohibiting not only heterosexual violence but also heterosexual harassment and vilification
- Nearly **one in five** GLBT respondents suggested improving service access and quality as a way of increasing their likelihood of reporting with the majority of responses targeting mainstream police. Improvements included:
  - ◆ GLBT-sensitivity and awareness training for mainstream services
  - ◆ Increased provision of GLBT-specific services
  - ◆ Increasing the number of and access to the GLLOs, particularly outside police stations; and
  - ◆ Improved reporting mechanisms and confidentiality.





*The everyday violence that plagues whole populations occurs largely below the news media's threshold.<sup>2</sup>*

*Just lock your door.<sup>3</sup>*

# 1 Introduction

"Just lock your door" was one police officer's solution to the problem of heterosexual violence and harassment. It captures the complex web of prejudice, inaction and lack of interest that confronts many gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and transgender (GLBT) people when deciding whether or not to report heterosexual violence or same sex partner abuse. "Just lock your door" is a piece of advice all too familiar to GLBT people. It is a reminder of that personal and collective closet in which many were compelled to hide their sexual orientation or gender identity. It is an ugly reminder of a time when the only protection against heterosexual abuse and prejudice was to be invisible, to publicly deny who you are and how you love in order to pass as "heterosexual".

In the context of police reporting, however, "Just lock your door" implies that GLBT people should keep not only themselves but also their experiences of heterosexual violence from public view. It suggests that GLBT people as individuals should carry sole responsibility for dealing with heterosexism and its effects, transforming their homes and houses from closets into bunkers. It lets police and other public agencies off the hook. It minimises their role in pursuing the perpetrators of heterosexual violence and harassment and in tackling the systemic prejudice and hatred on which such violence feeds.

A locked door makes coming forward extremely difficult if not impossible. Clearly these two options represent contradictory attitudes toward GLBT people and to dealing with heterosexism and its effects. At one level *Coming Forward* is a call for increased reporting of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse. This includes reporting not only physical and sexual abuse, but also the "everyday" vilification and harassment that plagues GLBT people's lives. Increased reporting depends on more GLBT people coming forward, which in turn rests on police and other agencies unlocking *their* doors and demonstrating a willingness and ability to deal with heterosexism and its effects. At another level *Coming Forward* is a call for progressive social change and the realisation of the principles of equality and justice newly minted in the Victorian Government's Human Rights Charter (*Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*). It represents the affirmation of sexual orientation and gender identity diversity, a recognition of GLBT people and their right to live their lives as they see fit, free from the threat and actuality of violence, harassment and discrimination.

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<sup>2</sup> McClintock, M. (2005)

<sup>3</sup> Advice from a member of Victoria Police to a victim of heterosexual abuse as recorded in this survey.



## 1.1 Background

Despite recent legislative reforms in a number of Australian states and territories, GLBT people continue to be subject to significantly higher than average levels of violence, harassment and discrimination.<sup>4</sup> A 2005 survey showed that while acceptance of GLBT people was increasing nationally, 35 per cent of Australians believe homosexuality is immoral (Flood & Hamilton, 2005).<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, recent state and national surveys of GLBT health and wellbeing show that levels of violence and harassment against GLBT people have remained constant over the past 10 years (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003; Hillier, Turner & Mitchell, 2005; Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, 2000). The social costs of heterosexual violence and discrimination are now well documented. They include not only poorer health outcomes for GLBT people (Leonard (Ed.), 2002; Pitts, Smith, Mitchell & Patel, 2006) but also the economic costs associated with their reduced social participation and community involvement (Banks, 2001; Florida, 2002; Pitts, Smith, Mitchell & Patel, 2006).

At the same time mainstream services have struggled to address the specific needs of GLBT people who have experienced heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse.<sup>6</sup> A growing body of research shows that rates of abuse are similar within same sex and heterosexual relationships (Aulivola, 2004; Donovan, Hester, Holmes, & McCarry, 2006; Farrell & Somali, 2006; McClennen, 2005; McKenry, Serovich, Mason & Mosack, 2006). "Existing studies", writes McClennen, "reveal similarities between opposite- and same-gender domestic violence in prevalence, types of abuse, and various dynamics..." (McClennen, 2005:149). Despite these similarities, very few domestic violence and sexual assault services provide expert assistance to the victims of same sex partner abuse. In 2006 Victoria Police reported that there were no publicly funded family violence counselling agencies to which they could refer male victims of same sex partner abuse.<sup>7</sup> In the same year the AIDS Council of NSW (ACON) called for "the allocation of funding for specific and specialist services" to address abuse in GLBT relationships (Farrell & Somali, 2006:3).

Research also demonstrates that many GLBT people underreport incidents of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse because they believe that authorities will be indifferent to their claims or that they will be subject to further discrimination (Blackbourn & Loveday, 2004; Cannon & Dirks-Linhorst, 2006; Dick, 2008; Kuehnle & Sullivan, 2003). The UK report on homophobic hate crimes concludes that "the majority of lesbian and gay people still strongly believe that the police cannot and will not take homophobic crime seriously" (Dick, 2008:6). A review of UK local authority reports on homophobic hate

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- 4 Two Australian studies suggest that rates of violence and discrimination against transsexual and transgender people are even higher than those experienced by gay men, lesbians and bisexuals (School of Sociology, University of NSW, 2004; Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, 2000). The former reports that up to 50 per cent of transsexual and transgender people were sacked following gender reassignment and 38 per cent believed they are subject to reportable levels of discrimination at least once a week.
  - 5 According to national survey results Victoria was the least homophobic state and Melbourne the most GLBT-friendly city in Australia (Flood & Hamilton, 2005). According to a review of international data, 20 per cent of those surveyed in the UK, France and Germany saw homosexuality as 'not wrong at all'. The same review found that in the US 75 per cent of the population hold homophobic beliefs compared to only 10 per cent of the population in the Netherlands. See Terrence Higgins Trust, 2004.
  - 6 Both private and public sector organisations have developed and implemented inclusive service delivery models and practices in an effort to better meet the needs of marginal and minority groups, including women, people with disabilities, and Indigenous and CALD Australians. With a few notable exceptions, however, they have yet to include the needs of GLBT people.
  - 7 When Victoria Police are going to lay charges or take out an intervention order on behalf of an affected family member they are required to refer that member to a family violence counselling service. While the Police have referred female victims of same sex partner abuse to mainstream women's services no such option has been available for gay male victims. In 2006 ALSO/VAC developed training on same sex partner abuse for mainstream agencies which was rolled out in 2007. However, funding has now expired and agencies will have to pay for such training in the future.



crimes found that “a significant proportion of gay victims of violent offences did not report incidents to the police because they feared the police reaction in terms of their sexuality” (Blackbourn & Loveday, 2004: 20). The limited Australian research on GLBT people’s underreporting of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse confirms these findings (Attorney General’s Department of NSW, 2003; Farrell & Somali, 2006). In NSW there have been renewed calls for GLBT-sensitivity training for Police following a recent increase in violent attacks against gay men on the Oxford street precinct in Sydney (Dennett, 2007:1; Dennett & Pollard, 2008:5).

The lack of incident data on heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse and of research on GLBT people’s experiences of seeking assistance have hampered efforts to engage government and mainstream organisations in the development of GLBT-sensitive services and interventions that address the effects and underlying causes of heterosexual violence (Blackbourn & Loveday, 2004:20; McClintock, 2005; Patton, 2007).<sup>8</sup>

## 1.2 Rationale and aims

*Coming Forward* reports on the responses of 390 GLBT Victorians to an on line survey asking them about their experiences of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse. The project was funded by the Victoria Law Foundation and managed through Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria with the assistance of Victoria Police. The project aims to provide a more accurate picture of the extent and nature of both heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse in Victoria and GLBT people’s experiences dealing with the criminal justice system and allied health and community agencies.

The report identifies barriers to GLBT people reporting and seeking assistance following incidents of heterosexual violence or same sex partner abuse. It concludes with recommendations aimed at:

- Combating heterosexism and promoting sexual orientation and gender identity diversity
- Increasing GLBT people’s reporting of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse
- Increasing GLBT people’s access to and use of the criminal justice system and allied health and community agencies; and
- Assisting those organisations that have responsibility for dealing with the victims of violence and partner abuse, including the police and courts, to develop GLBT-sensitive protocols and procedures.

The project does not ask questions about respondents’ health and wellbeing or their experiences within and outside the GLBT community. While the data highlight respondent’s negative experiences it is important to recognise that they do not represent the complexity and richness of GLBT people’s lives. It is also important to recognise that GLBT community organisations have led the fight against heterosexism and that this leadership is indicative of the GLBT community’s resilience and strength (Gray, Leonard, & Jack, 2006:21).

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8 What McClintock, in relation to reporting of hate crimes more broadly, calls the “information deficit”. (McClintock, 2005:17)



## 1.3 Frameworks

### 1.3.1 Heterosexism

This report uses the term *heterosexism* to describe the complex social and psychological processes underpinning violence and discrimination against not only gay men, lesbians and bisexuals, but also against transsexuals and transgender people. While most of the work in this area treats homophobia and transphobia as separate phenomena (Scott, Pringle & Lumsdaine, 2004; Victorian Department of Human Services, 2003), an emerging body of research suggests that the two are linked (Dodds, Keogh & Hickson, 2005; Jagose, 1996; Leonard, 2005).

Heterosexism has been used to describe a social system that privileges heterosexuality at the expense of non-heteronormative sexual orientations and gender identities (Fish, 2006; Herek, 1990; Leonard, 2005). Heterosexism assumes that sex, gender and the relationship between the two are fixed at birth. Men are born masculine, women feminine and sexuality is the gendered, reciprocal attraction between the two. According to this heterosexist presumption, society is built on the primal division and attraction between male and female. Those who challenge this presumption are subject to differing degrees of discrimination and abuse. This includes gay men, lesbians and bisexuals who challenge the belief that only sexed opposites attract, and transsexuals and transgender people who challenge the belief that there is a fixed and singular relationship between biological sex and gender identity. This framework suggests that homophobia and transphobia are both discrete forms of discrimination and also part of a singular, coordinated system for punishing those who in different ways pose a threat to heterosexist privilege and authority.

In this report heterosexist abuse includes both sexual orientation and gender identity violence and discrimination while homophobic abuse is used more narrowly to refer to violence directed against same sex attracted and bisexual people.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.3.2 Everyday violence

The majority of reports on violence against GLBT people and abuse within same sex relationships have focused on incidents of physical and sexual assault. Although there are important strategic reasons for doing so, this approach has down played the everyday harassment and vilification that constitute the majority of abuse directed at GLBT people. This report brings the everyday abuse that plagues GLBT people to the fore. It suggests that in its very ordinariness and taken-for-grantedness this everyday abuse has profound effects on GLBT people's lives.

This everyday culture of harassment is supported by less visible but no less damaging forms of institutional violence. In this report institutional violence refers to the ways in which the beliefs, policies

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<sup>9</sup> Victoria Police consider a crime homophobic when an offence is "based on [the victim's] real or perceived sexual preference or gender identity". Reported in Victoria Police Gazette (18 June 2001).



and practices of particular organisations devalue and marginalise GLBT people. Such violence maintains as it contributes to prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes and in so doing is part of the heterosexual machinery that sustains as it justifies harassment and abuse of GLBT people. This report argues that it is this everyday culture of heterosexual harassment that provides the fuel for more violent acts of physical and sexual abuse.







## 2 Methodology

*Coming Forward* is the first survey to look in detail at GLBT Victorians' experiences of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse. A number of Victorian and national surveys on GLBT health and wellbeing have included supplementary questions on homophobic violence and same sex partner abuse but have necessarily yielded limited and highly selective data (Pitts, Smith, Mitchell & Patel, 2006; Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, 2000; McNair & Thomacos, 2005). A 2003 NSW report, *You shouldn't have to hide to be safe*, is the most comprehensive survey of homophobic violence conducted in Australia. The project was managed by Urbis Keys Young in partnership with over 20 New South Wales Government agencies, local government and gay and lesbian community organisations. The report describes the responses of 600 GLBT people across NSW to a postal and internet survey conducted between March and June 2003 and eight focus group discussions with gay men and lesbians from a range of different backgrounds.

A 2008 UK report is the first to provide national data on what it calls "homophobic hate crime" (Dick, 2008:10). The project was a collaboration between YouGovplc, a private internet-based research consultancy, and Stonewall. Adults who identified as gay, lesbian and bisexual on YouGovplc's existing survey-participation data base were emailed early in 2008 inviting them to take part in the study. The total sample size was 1,721 GLB adults from across Britain with Stonewall responsible for analysing and presenting the data.

Although both the NSW and UK reports provide useful comparisons with the findings of this survey, neither looked at violence against transsexual and transgender people. Unlike *Coming Forward*, both relied on homophobia and not heterosexism for their conceptual scaffolding and did not consider the structural similarities between homophobia and transphobia. At the same time neither report included data on same sex partner abuse. Research shows that there is significant overlap in the reasons behind GLBT people's underreporting of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse (Kuehnle & Sullivan, 2003; Rose, 2003). The inclusion of questions on heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse in the *Coming Forward* survey is informed by this research and the belief that information on both should be included in the development of resources and training aimed at improving the quality of services provided to GLBT people.

### 2.1 Survey design

On line surveys have proven useful in recruiting members of hard to reach populations, including GLBT people in Australia and overseas (Henrickson, Neville, Jordan & Donaghey, 2007; Hillier, Turner & Mitchell, 2005; Riggle, Rostosky & Reedy, 2005). The internet provides reach and anonymity, both important

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<sup>10</sup> The report, following the UK Association of Chief Police Officers, defines hate crime as "any hate incident, which constitutes a criminal offence, perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by prejudice or hate", p.11.



considerations when trying to maximise participation from populations where individuals are spread unevenly across the catchment area and where privacy is an issue. On line surveys have been used in a number of recent reports at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS), La Trobe University and have proven successful in increasing GLBT people's participation (Couch, Pitts et al., 2007; Pitts, Smith, Mitchell & Patel, 2006).

The survey was designed by a small group of researchers at ARCSHS. Both *Private Lives* and *You Shouldn't have to hide to be safe* were used in the design and layout of the survey to allow for comparison of results where appropriate. The draft questionnaire was reviewed by a steering committee that included academics, and community, police and legal representatives (see Attachment B, p.75) for a list of members). Their advice guided the development of the final questionnaire. The committee also provided critical feedback on the final draft of the report.

The questionnaire included quantitative and qualitative questions. The latter were important in allowing individuals to detail, in their own words, their experiences of violence and harassment and to give some insight into the personal effects of what might otherwise remain disembodied, even if disturbing, statistics.

The survey was hosted by [www.demographix.co.uk](http://www.demographix.co.uk). Participants were resident in Victoria and over 14 years of age (These conditions were set out in the opening page; responses from those under 14 years were disregarded while those resident in a state other than Victoria were directed to a web page that informed them that they were not able to complete the survey). The survey was in English only.

Ethics approval for the survey was granted by the La Trobe University Human Research Ethics Committee (Reference No. 07-28).

## 2.2 Advertising and recruitment

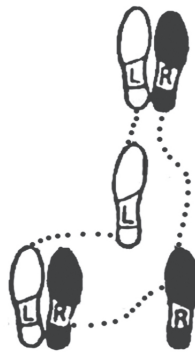
Emails publicising the survey were sent out through GLBT community and professional networks, Victoria Police Gay and Lesbian Advisory Unit, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC), domestic and family violence agencies and a number of government and non-government organisations. The survey was also publicised on Joy FM radio and 3CR in Melbourne and posted as a banner advertisement on Gaydar and Pinksofa from 23 November to 22 December 2007.

Business cards were designed which had a brief description of the survey and the URL (Figure 1). The cards were distributed primarily through GLBT community organisations and at GLBT community events.



**Figure 1** – Business card advertising the Coming Forward survey

coming forward



[www.comingforwardsurvey.org.au](http://www.comingforwardsurvey.org.au)



## 2.3 Data analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS Version 14. Descriptive statistics were computed and comparative statistical analyses such as chi-square and t-tests performed to gauge differences between different groups of participants.

Qualitative analyses involved thematic analysis and limited data coding. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data was used to interpret the results.

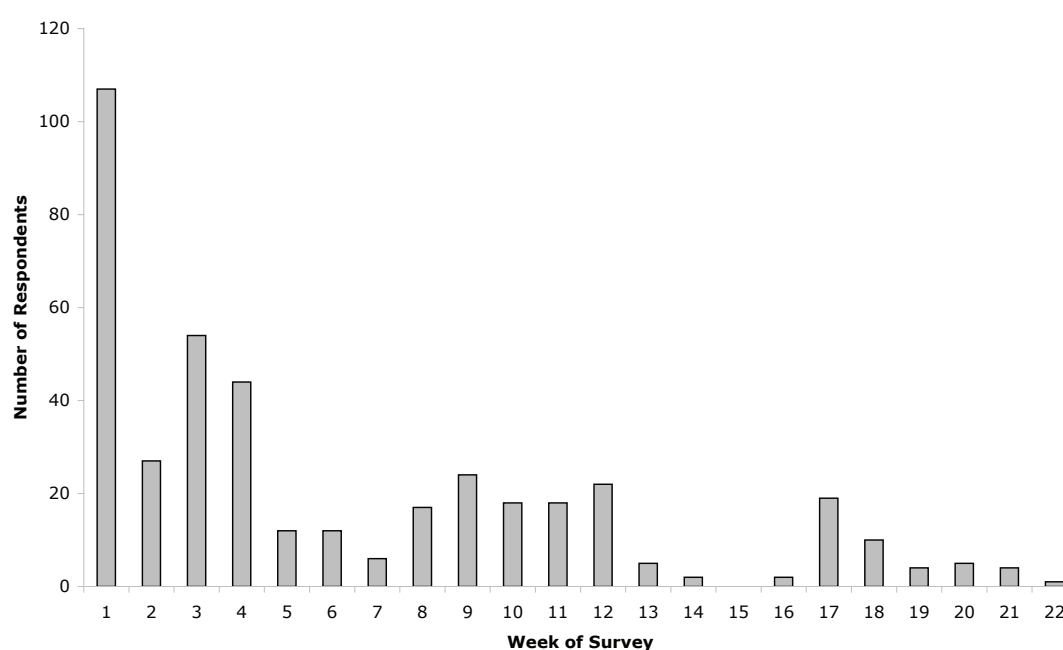


### 3 About the respondents

In total 414 people responded to the survey. Of those 24 were discounted either because they were not resident in Victoria at the time of completing the survey or they were under 14 years of age. The total number of respondents who were eligible and successfully completed the survey was 390.

The survey was launched on Friday 28 September 2007. Twenty six per cent of responses were received in the first week and 50 per cent by the middle of the fourth week. Response rates fluctuated over the following 10 weeks with an average weekly response rate of 12 over this period. The survey was kept open over the Midsumma carnival weekend and closed on Friday 22 February 2008.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 2 – Pattern of responses<sup>12</sup>**



<sup>11</sup> Midsumma Festival is Melbourne's annual gay and lesbian festival and runs over three weeks from mid January to February.

<sup>12</sup> Thankyou you to Jennifer Blackman for preparing the figures in this report.

## 3.1 Demographics

### 3.1.1 Distribution/Residence

**Figure 3 – Percentages of respondents by Victoria Police Regions**

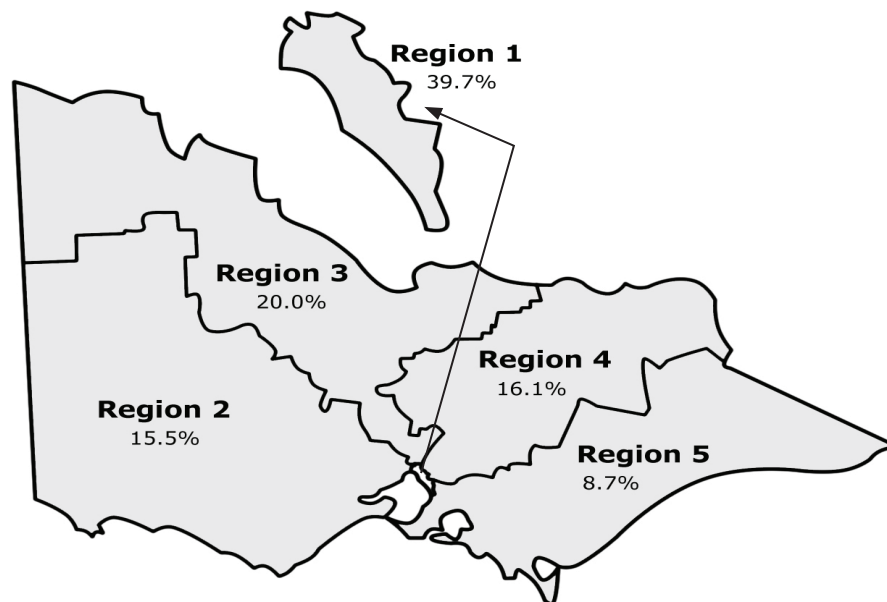


Figure 3 maps resident postcodes onto Victoria Police regions. Nearly forty per cent of respondents live in inner city Melbourne (Region 1). Another 27 per cent live in the suburbs that ring Region 1 (Divisions 1 and 2, Regions 2 to 5. See Figure 6 p.30). The remaining 33 per cent of respondents are spread unevenly across regional and rural Victoria. In Region 4 the majority of non-metropolitan Melbourne respondents are resident in Knox and Maroondah, shires bordering on Melbourne's outer eastern fringe. In Region 3 there is a concentration of respondents living in the Macedon and Greater Bendigo areas while in Region 2 there is a more even distribution across regional and rural areas.

The population distribution of the current survey sample is similar to that reported in the 2001 census where 66 per cent of the Australian population live in major cities, 21 per cent in inner regional Australia and 14 per cent in rural and remote areas (reported in Pitts, Smith, Mitchell & Patel, 2006:17)

### 3.1.2 Age of participants

Mean age of the total sample was 35.9 years (SD 12.0), median age was 35 years, and ages ranged from 14 to 65 years. Participants aged between 30 and 39 years accounted for 27.6 per cent of the total sample, with nearly 52 per cent of respondents aged between 19 and 49 years. Those over 60 years accounted for 4.1 per cent of the total sample (n=12).

### 3.1.3 Sex/Gender, gender identity and sexual orientation

**Table 1** - *Sex/Gender identity*

<b>Sex/Gender identity</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	237	60.8
Female	135	34.6
Transgender (M2F)	11	2.8
Transgender (F2M)	4	1.0
Other	3	0.8

Of the total sample, nearly 61 per cent were male, 34.6 per cent female, and 3.8 per cent transgender. "Other" included one intersex person, a respondent who identified "as a girl in public, but privately as a boy", and another who used the term "transmasculine".

The larger number of male respondents may reflect methodological biases in data collection and, in particular, the greater use of internet sites by men than women (Pitts, Smith, Mitchell & Patel, 2006:19). It may also reflect the larger percentage of men who identify as "gay/homosexual" than women ("lesbian/homosexual") (Smith, Rissel, Richters, Grulich & de Visser, 2003:138).

**Table 2** - *Sex or gender identity recorded against sexual orientation*

<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Sex/Gender identity(n)</b>			
			<b>male</b>	<b>female</b>	<b>TG (M2F)</b>	<b>TG (F2M)</b>
Gay	224	57.4	212	12	0	0
Lesbian	98	25.1	0	95	3	0
Bisexual	35	9.0	13	15	5	1
Heterosexual/ Straight	17	4.4	6	7	3	1
Other	16	4.1	6	6	0	2

Over 57 per cent of respondents identified as "gay". The majority of these were men (94.6 per cent). A quarter of respondents identified as "lesbian" (which included 97.0 per cent who were female and 3.0 per cent who were transgender (M2F)), followed by 9.0 per cent who identified as "bisexual". Proportionately more women than men identified as "bisexual" (11.1 per cent compared with 5.5 per cent respectively), a finding consistent with a number of other studies (Hillier, Turner & Mitchell, 2005; Pitts, Smith, Mitchell & Patel, 2006:19; Smith, Rissel, Richters, Grulich & de Visser, 2003:138). Transsexual and transgender respondents were more likely than male or female respondents to identify as "bisexual", with no



transsexual or transgender respondents identifying as “gay”. However, these results need to read with caution given the small numbers of transsexual and transgender participants.

Nearly 4.5 per cent of participants identified as heterosexual or straight ( $n=17$ ). This included four transsexuals or transgender people. The remaining 13 may include individuals who identify as heterosexual but nonetheless engage in sex with or are attracted to people of the same sex. As Smith et al. point out sexuality is a complex knot and involves identity, attraction and experience and for a significant minority all three may not line up neatly (Smith, Rissel, Richters, Grulich & de Visser, 2003:138). It is also possible that among the remaining 13 are a number of exclusively heterosexual individuals who nonetheless have been subject to heterosexist or homophobic discrimination. As Sedgwick and others have argued straight people who mis-perform their gender (effeminate men or masculine women) are often assumed to be homosexual and are subject to heterosexist harassment and abuse (Butler, 1991; Sedgwick, 1993).

“Other” accounted for 4.1 per cent of responses and included nine individuals who identified as “queer”, two who used the term “transgender”, and single responses including “pansexual”, “don’t use any of these labels”, “generally use same sex attracted” and “gay only under certain circumstances/contexts”.

### 3.1.4 Country of birth

The majority of respondents were born in Australia (87.7 per cent,  $n=342$ ), followed by the UK (5.5 per cent,  $n=21$  which includes combined figures for the UK, England and Wales), New Zealand (2.1 per cent,  $n=8$ ) and Canada (0.8 per cent,  $n=3$ ). Although less than 14 per cent of respondents were born overseas they were drawn from 21 countries. The percentage of survey respondents born in Australia is similar to that reported in *Private Lives* (87 per cent) but significantly higher than the Victorian figure of 70 per cent (Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2007:12).

### 3.1.5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Nearly 3 per cent of respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander ( $n=11$ ). Although the numbers are small the percentage is higher than that reported in *Private Lives* (2.0 per cent nationally) and considerably higher than the 2006 ABS Victorian census data (0.6 per cent, Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2007:11).

### 3.1.6 Language other than English spoken at home

Ninety-one per cent of respondents spoke only English at home. Of the remaining 9 per cent who spoke a language (or languages) other than English at home, 11 per cent spoke Greek, followed by 3 per cent who spoke Italian. Respondents spoke a total of 18 languages other than English at home.





### 3.1.7 Ancestry

Respondents were able to list up to two ancestries in response to the question “Which best describes your ancestry?” Three hundred and twelve respondents listed Australian as their sole ancestry, followed by German (n=31), Greek (n=15) and Italian (n=14). Of those who a listed a second ancestry in addition to Australian, 20 nominated Greek, 20 German, and 14 Italian. It is significant that under “other” respondents listed a further 22 ancestries. The range of responses reflects the ethic and cultural diversity of GLBT Victorians, and suggests that for many GLBT people ancestry is an important marker of identity.

### 3.1.8 Religious affiliation

Table 3 - Religious affiliation

Current religion	n	%
No religion	260	67.0
Catholic	41	10.6
Anglican (Church of England)	21	5.4
Buddhism	16	4.1
Greek Orthodox	8	2.1
Uniting Church	7	1.8
Baptist	6	1.5
Judaism	3	0.8
Wicca	3	0.8
Hinduism	1	0.3
Islam	1	0.3
Other	21	5.4

Sixty-seven per cent of respondents reported no current religion, 10.6 were currently Catholic, 5.4 per cent Church of England and 5.4 per cent a religion other than one of the options provided. These figures are similar to those reported in *Private Lives* and confirm that GLBT people are much less likely than the population at large to report having a current religion. In 2006, 68.4 per cent of Victorians aged 18 years and over reported a current religious affiliation (Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2007:11).

Of the 33 per cent who reported a current religion, the majority (70 per cent) did not “actively participate” in that religion. Lower rates of religious association combined with lower rates of participation for those

who report having a current religion may reflect as one respondent put it, a lack of “Positive religious support from all Churches”.

### 3.1.9 Disability

Eleven and half per cent of respondents reported having one or more disabilities (n=45). Of these, 24 reported having a physical disability only, 19 a psychiatric disability only, and four a cognitive disability. Nine reported having both a physical and psychiatric disability. According to ABS data approximately one in five Australians experience some form of disability. The most recent *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* found that 6.3 per cent of Australians were severely or profoundly limited in at least one of the core activities of self care, communication and mobility (ABS, 2003). *Private Lives* did not include a question on disability.

Thirteen respondents listed a range of other disabilities (all single responses) including HCV, HIV, hearing loss and Post-traumatic Stress. One respondent wrote,

*Due to my intersex condition I am sterile, have osteoporosis, am sexual dysfunctional and require lifelong hormone treatment.*

### 3.1.10 Education and employment

Just under a quarter of respondents were currently attending a school or educational institution (n=90). Two-thirds of these were attending university (n=61), 34 part-time and 27 full-time. Sixteen percent were attending secondary school.

**Table 4 - Education levels**

Education level	n	%
Primary school	1	0.3
Part secondary school	49	12.6
Completed secondary school	69	17.7
Tertiary Diploma/Trade Certificate	72	18.5
University Degree	111	28.5
Postgraduate Degree	88	22.6

Fifty per cent of respondents had a university degree and 69 per cent had completed secondary school. Nearly 70 per cent of the survey sample had at least one non-school qualification compared to 49 per cent of the Australian population aged 16 to 64 years (ABS, 2003). These figures are almost identical to those reported in *Private Lives* (Pitts, Smith, Mitchell & Patel, 2006:22).

Nearly 88 per cent of respondents were currently employed (n=337) and 73 per cent of these were in full-time employment (n=244). Of the 12 per cent of respondents who reported not being currently employed (n=48), 61 per cent were unemployed (n=28), 22 per cent were involved in volunteering (n=10) and just over 17 per cent reported doing unpaid household duties (n=8).

Of the respondents who were employed, just over 43 per cent recorded their occupation as “Professional” (n=146), nearly 17 per cent as “Manager” (n=56), followed by “Clerical, admin” (n=31), “Sales” (n=24), “Community/Personal service sector” (n=21) and “Other” (n=44).

### 3.1.11 Pension/Benefit

Sixteen per cent of respondents reported currently receiving some form of pension or benefit (n=61). Of these, half reported being on a disability pension (n=25), 16 per cent on a youth allowance, including one respondent on Aus Study (n=10), 13 per cent on a carers allowance or pension (n=8) and 11.5 per cent on Newstart (n=7).

## 3.2 Relationship history

### 3.2.1 Current domestic relationship/s

Table 5 - Current domestic relationship/s\*

Domestic relationship (type/status)	n	%
Live with partner only	161	41.3
Live alone	104	26.7
Live with housemates or friends	70	17.9
Live with parent/s	56	14.4
Live as a single parent	33	8.5
Live with a partner and one or more children	24	6.1
Live with a partner and one or more parents	6	1.5
Other	8	2.1

\*Multiple responses possible



Forty per cent of respondents currently lived with their partner only (n=161), 6 per cent with their partner and one or more children, and 27 per cent lived alone (n=104). These figures are similar to the national averages reported in *Private Lives* in which 40 per cent of GLBT respondents were living with a partner and a quarter were living alone (Pitts, Smith, Mitchell, & Patel, 2006: 25).

The data suggest multiple and complex domestic relationships and living arrangements with just over 8.5 per cent of respondents living as a single parent (n= 33), nearly 15 per cent living with one or more parents (n= 56), and a small number (n=6) living with their partner and one or more of their respective parents. Nearly 18.5 per cent recorded living with a housemate or friends (n=70).

### 3.2.2 Marital history

Nearly 24 per cent of respondents reported having previously been married (n=91). Women were 2.4 times more likely than men to have been previously married. Almost 9 per cent of respondents were currently married (n=34) again with women approximately 1.5 times more likely than men. Thirty percent of respondents who reported they were currently married identified as gay (n=10), 6 per cent as lesbian (n=2), and 27 per cent as bisexual (n=9). Eight transsexual and transgender respondents reported being previously married, with only one respondent currently married.

These findings mirror those of *Not Yet Equal*, a 2005 report on same sex relationships in Victoria in which 25.5 per cent of GLBT respondents had been previously married, with women twice as likely as men to have been married or in a heterosexual defacto relationship in the past (McNair & Thomacos, 2005: 29).

### 3.2.3 Same sex relationships

Just over half the sample were currently in a same sex relationship (n=199). Women were approximately 1.5 times more likely than men to currently be in a same sex relationship. A third of transsexual and transgender respondents were currently in a same sex relationship (n=5). Only 11.5 per cent of respondents had never been in a same sex relationship. These results are similar to those reported in *Private Lives* where the percentage of respondents in a same sex relationship fell just short of 50 per cent (Pitts, Smith, Mitchell, & Patel, 2006:26).

Of the over 91 per cent of respondents who reported having been in a same sex relationship, 22 per cent reported having had three previous same sex relationships (n=85), 18 per cent two (n=68), almost 16.5 per cent one (n=31), 12.5 per cent four (n=48) and 8.1 per cent five (n=31). These figures are almost identical to those reported in *Not Yet Equal* (McNair & Thomacos, 2005:30). At the top end one respondent reported having been in 50 past same sex relationships while another recorded having been in 1000!



### 3.2.4 Children

*They rent my house at a very reasonable rate.*

Of the almost 16 per cent of respondents who reported having children or step children (n=63), 27 per cent recorded having one or more children under 12 years, 21 per cent children between 12 and 20 years, and 8 per cent children between 21 and 30 years. Sixty-three per cent of respondents who reported having children or step children were currently in a same sex relationship (n=40).

Just under half the respondents who reported having children/step children recorded that they were the primary care giver (n=31). Nearly 21 per cent of respondents described themselves as having “shared parenting responsibilities” while less than 0.5 per cent said they provided “financial support” only (n=3). The levels of parental responsibility or contact reported in this survey are slightly lower than those reported in *Not Yet Equal*. Eighteen and half per cent of GLBT respondents in *Not Yet Equal* reported living full-time with their children, 14.3 per cent part-time, and 11.5 per cent only on weekends or holidays (McNair & Thomacos, 2005:42).

There were a number of combined responses indicating the diversity and complexity of same sex parenting arrangements. Responses reported under “other” included “There when I am needed” and “Both children are foster children”.

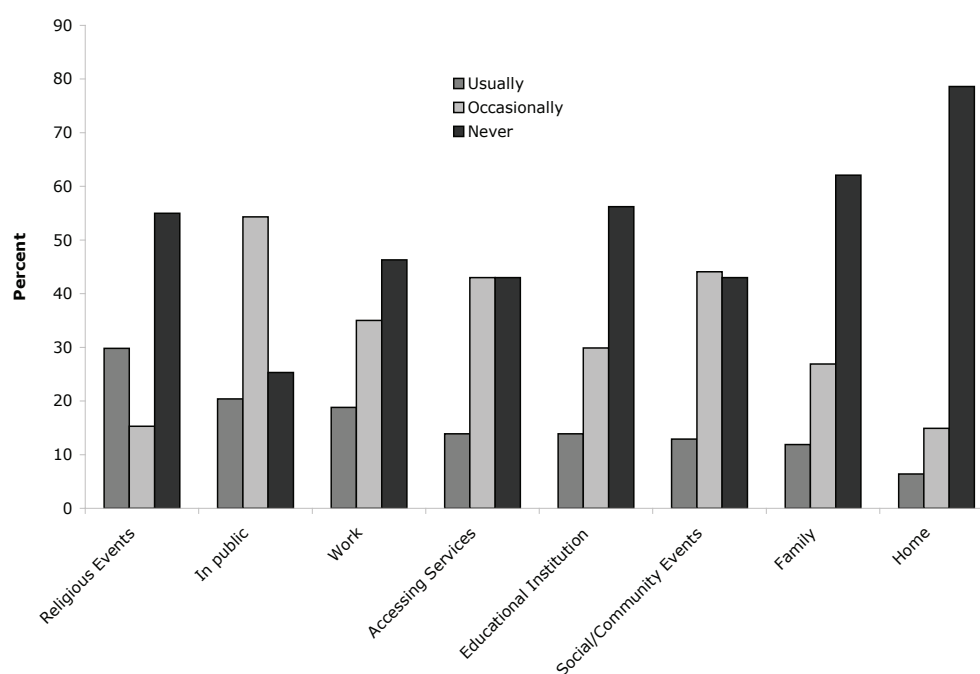


# 4 Heterosexist violence

## 4.1 In hiding

A number of surveys have documented the ways in which GLBT people hide their sexual orientation or gender identity for fear of heterosexist abuse. According to the findings of the NSW report three-quarters of gay men and lesbians modify their behaviour in various ways to avoid homophobic violence (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003:x). *Private Lives* found that 90 per cent of GLBT people had at some time avoided expressions of affection for fear of prejudice or discrimination (Pitts, Smith, Mitchell & Patel, 2006:48).

**Figure 4 - Have you hidden your sexual orientation or gender identity?**



For four of the eight locations listed in Figure 4 a majority of respondents reported that they never hid their sexual orientation or gender identity. Numbers were particularly high for “Home” and “Family”, spaces that might be characterised as private. Nonetheless, the data show that a significant percentage of respondents *do* hide their sexual orientation and gender identity in these private domains.

The 55 per cent of respondents who reported never hiding their sexual orientation or gender identity at religious events is likely to reflect low levels of religious affiliation among participants rather than high levels of religious acceptance. That “religious events” are also the site where the largest percentage of



respondents reported usually hiding their sexual orientation or gender identity supports this conclusion. It also hints at the pressures faced by GLBT people who are religiously affiliated and why less than a third of this cohort actively participates in their respective religion/s (see Section 3.1, Religious affiliation p15).

The four locations where a majority of respondents usually or occasionally hide their sexual orientation and gender identity are the public and semi-public spaces of the street, work, and social and community events. That 43 per cent of respondents occasionally hide their sexual orientation or gender identity when accessing services raises serious concerns about GLBT people's access to and use of services and reduced standards of care due to a person's unwillingness or inability to disclose. The data also suggest that GLBT people perceive public space as inherently unsafe, reflecting the random and ubiquitous nature of much of the heterosexist violence and harassment documented in this and other research.

Young GLBT people aged 14 to 24 were more likely than any other age group to hide their sexual orientation or gender identity across all the locations listed in Figure 4. Sixty per cent of 14 to 24 year olds usually or occasionally hide their sexual orientation or gender identity from family compared to 36 per cent of 25 to 39 years olds while 80 per cent reported hiding their sexual orientation or gender identity in public compared to 73 per cent of 25-39 year olds. Over seventy per cent of 14 to 24 years olds reported that they usually or occasionally hide their sexual orientation or gender identity at an educational institution.

Nineteen additional responses were listed under "other". These included two respondents who hid their sexual orientation or gender identity when applying for work and two when attending the gym. One respondent wrote "99% of the time" and another "when I feel it [is] detrimental to my success".





## 4.2 Levels and types of violence

### 4.2.1 Violence experienced by GLBT people

**Table 6** - Experience of heterosexual abuse, “ever” and “in the past two years”.

Type of heterosexual abuse <sup>13</sup>	Alone				Same sex couple				Group			
	Ever		Past 2 yrs		Ever		Past 2 yrs		Ever		Past 2 yrs	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Verbal abuse (including hateful or obscene phone calls)	177	45.4	91	23.3	145	37.2	63	16.2	92	23.6	39	10.0
Threats of physical violence	139	35.6	62	15.9	65	16.7	28	7.2	56	14.4	25	6.4
Harassment such as being spat at and offensive gestures	132	33.8	62	15.9	89	22.8	39	10.0	71	18.2	33	8.5
Received written threats of abuse including emails and graffiti	99	25.4	45	11.5	24	6.2	11	2.8	16	4.1	6	1.5
Physical attack or assault without a weapon (punched, kicked, beaten)	80	20.5	25	6.4	12	3.1	6	1.5	6	1.5	3	0.8
Sexual assault	45	11.5	18	4.6	3	0.8	3	0.8	1	0.3	1	0.3
Deliberate damage to property or vandalism - Car	38	9.7	14	3.6	23	5.9	7	1.8	7	1.8	2	0.5
Deliberate damage to property or vandalism - House	36	9.2	15	3.8	16	4.1	5	1.3	2	0.5	1	0.3
Theft - Money	29	7.4	14	3.6	3	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Theft - Property	29	7.4	10	2.6	5	1.3	2	0.5	1	0.3	1	0.3
Physical attack or assault with a weapon (knife, bottle, stones)	29	7.4	9	2.3	4	1.0	2	0.5	4	1.0	2	0.5
House – break in	17	4.4	5	1.3	9	2.3	0	0.0	1	0.3	0	0.0
Deliberate damage to property or vandalism - Work	14	3.6	3	0.8	1	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Theft - Car	12	3.1	4	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
None of the above	58	14.9	114	29.2	42	10.8	77	19.3	42	10.8	78	20.0
Other (please specify)	14	3.6	9	2.3	6	1.5	2	0.5	-	-	-	-

<sup>13</sup> The 14 types of abuse listed in Table 6 are a reworked amalgam of those used in the NSW survey and the types of homophobic offences reported to Victoria Police including theft and property damage.

**Coming forward** The underreporting of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse in Victoria **23**



Nearly 85 per cent of respondents had been subject to heterosexist abuse while alone at some point in their lives and nearly 90 per cent had been subject to such abuse as part of a same sex couple and as part of a group. These results suggest that the behaviours or look of same sex couples and groups may be more obviously or unambiguously non-heteronormative than those of GLBT individuals. The potential perpetrators of heterosexist violence may not recognise GLBT individuals as *GLBT* because their look and behaviours conform to standard gender norms (e.g. women who dress and act in stereotypic, feminine ways). However, they are more likely to recognise physical intimacy between same sex couples such as holding hands and kissing or the social and physical dynamics of non-heteronormative groups as unambiguous signs of their homosexuality or alternative gender identity.

Patterns of abuse are similar across both time periods ("ever", "Past two years") and across status types ("alone", "couple" and "group"). The most common type of abuse reported by respondents was non-physical, from verbal abuse, to harassment and threats of physical violence, to written abuse. Nearly half of all respondents reported having been subject to heterosexist verbal abuse while alone at some point in their lives, nearly 40 per cent as part of a same sex couple and nearly a quarter as part of a group.

The second most common type of abuse was physical assault without a weapon (n=80) followed by sexual assault. Nearly 12 per cent of respondents reported having been sexually assaulted while alone at some point in their lives (n=45), while approximately 5 per cent reported being sexually assaulted while alone in the past two years (n=18). Sexual assault accounted for 5.2 per cent of all heterosexist abuse reported by women in the past two years and 4.8 per cent by men. The reported incidence of sexual assault was much lower for the other status types.

Damage to property (house and car), theft (money or property) and physical assault with a weapon were the fourth, fifth and sixth most common forms of abuse reported. Approximately 9.5 per cent of respondents had experienced property damage or vandalism in their lifetime (n=37) while 7.4 per cent had experienced physical assault with a weapon (n=29).

These findings are consistent with those of the NSW report which showed that 87 per cent of gay men and lesbians had been subject to verbal abuse at some time and 48 per cent in the past year. The next most common reported homophobic abuse in the past year was harassment (24 per cent), followed by threatened or attempted physical attack (10 per cent) and property damage (7 per cent). Eleven per cent of respondents in the NSW survey reported having at some time experienced assault or attack with a weapon and 1 per cent reported being sexually assaulted in the past 12 months (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003:35-36).

Twenty respondents reported having experienced a range of other types of heterosexist abuse at some time in their lives or in the past two years.

*Dominant heterosexist culture: it is okay to be a psychopath but as a faggot you are at the back of the bus.*





*A rock thrown through the back window of my car which displayed a rainbow sticker...*

*Threat of being outed by someone who stole my wallet, car keys and mobile phone when out at a beat.*

#### 4.2.2 Abuse by association

*(Christian straight) friends are under a lot of pressure from extended family to keep us away from their kids who think of us as grandparents. Many threats and shouting. We heathen sinners just keep babysitting.*

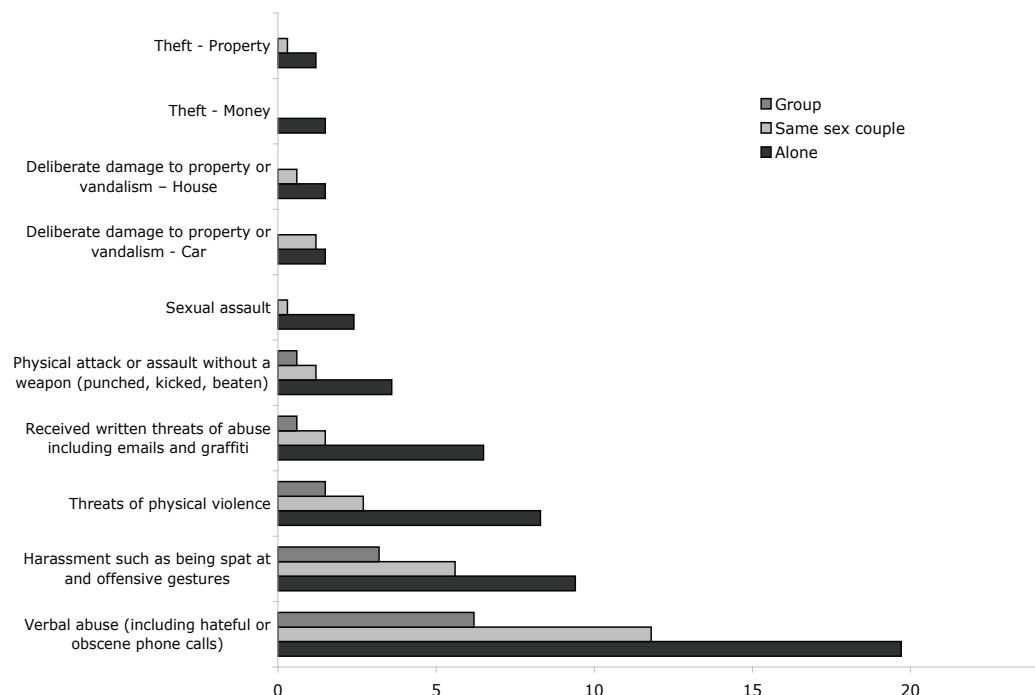
Eleven per cent of respondents reported that over the past two years family, children or friends had been subject to abuse because of their association with someone known to be GLBT (n=42). Just over 35 per cent didn't know whether family, children or friends had been subjected to such abuse. Of the 11 per cent that reported "collateral heterosexist damage", 15 reported abuse directed at friends, eight toward children or stepchildren and seven toward family members.

*At work friends of mine were typed as degrading themselves for hanging around with a poofter.*

*[My] son bullied and harassed at school because he has two mothers.*

### 4.3 Most recent experience

Figure 5 - Most recent experience of heterosexist abuse





Overall 60 per cent of the 339 respondents who answered this question reported that they were alone at the time of their most recent incident of heterosexual abuse, 27.5 per cent they were part of a same sex couple and 12 per cent that they were a member of a group. These percentages differ significantly from those documented in the NSW report. In the NSW survey, 34 per cent of respondents reported being alone at the time of their most recent homophobic incident, 45 per cent that they had been with one other person, and 20 per cent that they had been in a group (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003: 41). However, the ranking and incidence of different types of abuse are almost identical in the two reports (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003:38-41).

Verbal abuse was the most common form of abuse reported across each of the three categories (19.7 per cent alone, 11.8 per cent as part of a same sex couple, and 6.2 per cent as a member of a group). This was followed by harassment, and threats of physical violence. Actual incidents of physical assault (including assault with and without a weapon) were the fourth most common type of abuse and accounted for 4.4 per cent of abuse reported while alone and 1.5 per cent as a part of a same sex couple. Nearly 2.5 per cent of respondents reported an incident of sexual assault as their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse (n=9).

Table 7 looks at heterosexual abuse within each of the three status types. It divides the abuse listed in Figure 5 into four categories: physical violence and threat of (physical attack with and without weapon and threat of); non-physical abuse (verbal and written abuse); damage to property (including theft) and sexual assault.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 7 - Type of heterosexual abuse recorded against status**

Type of abuse	Alone N=207		Same sex couple N=89		Group N=43	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Non-physical abuse	121	58.5	64	71.9	34	79.1
Physical violence or threat of	43	20.8	14	15.8	8	18.6
Theft or property damage	24	11.5	7	7.8	0	0.0
Sexual assault	8	3.9	1	1.1	0	0.0
Other	11	5.3	3	3.4	1	2.3

Non-physical abuse accounts for the majority of heterosexual abuse experienced by GLBT respondents, from 80 per cent of incidents reported in a group to 60 per cent while alone. Physical violence or the

<sup>14</sup> Although the overall number who reported incidents of sexual assault are small, given the link between gender and sexual violence it had been included as a separate category.





threat thereof is the second most common form of heterosexual violence within each of the three status types. Incidents varied between 21 per cent of heterosexual violence while alone to 16 per cent as part of a same sex couple. Theft or property damage is the third most common form of abuse, followed by sexual assault. However, sexual assault constitutes a significantly larger percentage of reported incidents while alone than as a part of a couple or group. Patterns and rates of abuse (while alone) are similar to those reported in *Private Lives* with the exception of physical attack and the threat attack of which are considerably higher in *Private Lives* at 41 per cent (Pitts, Smith, Mitchell, & Patel, 2006:50)<sup>15</sup>.

### 4.3.1 Accompanied by heterosexual/homophobic language

Of the 339 respondents who recorded details of their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse, 202 responded to the question “Was that most recent incident accompanied by homophobic language?” Eighty-five per cent reported that the incident was accompanied by homophobic language (n=172). The percentages were similar for men and women (85 and 87 per cent respectively), and slightly lower for transsexuals and transgender people (75 per cent). However, transsexual and transgender figures need to be read with caution given the small number of respondents in the survey sample and the absence of “transphobic language” as an option. The UK report found that in 88 per cent of cases homophobic abuse is “accompanied by insults and harassment” (Dick, 2008:9).

### 4.3.2 Contributing factors other than sexual orientation or gender identity

Participants were asked whether they believed factors other than their sexual orientation or gender identity contributed to the abuse they suffered. Participants could make multiple responses. Of the 339 respondents who had reported on their most recent experience of heterosexual violence, 70 reported that they believed their gender was a contributing factor, 10 their disability, four their race and one their ethnicity. Thirteen recorded “other” contributing factors (all single responses) including “HIV status”, “being fat”, “Perhaps my partner’s race” and “previous religion”.

The NSW report includes the results of eight focus group discussions with groups of Indigenous, Asian and older gay men and lesbians. These discussions provide a much more detailed picture of the ways in which heterosexism interacts with other identity-based forms of discrimination. In particular, the NSW report highlights the ways in which racism interacts with homophobia resulting in quite distinct patterns and types of discrimination. The report concludes that anti-homophobia initiatives may “need to be specifically tailored to ‘subgroups’ within the broader gay and lesbian community” (Attorney General’s Department of NSW, 2003:xi). Unfortunately the report did not include a focus group of gay men and lesbians with disability, the second most common “compounding factor” identified by respondents in this survey.

<sup>15</sup> If we compare rates of abuse across the categories common to both reports, the most common type of abuse reported, while alone, in *Private Lives* was personal insult of verbal abuse (59.3 per cent), followed by physical attack and the threat of (41 per cent), property damage (8.5 per cent) and sexual assault at (3.5 per cent).





### 4.3.3 Single event or ongoing

Two hundred and one out of a possible 339 respondents answered the question “Was your most recent incident of heterosexual abuse a one-off event or ongoing?” Of that 201, 75 per cent reported that their most recent incident was a single or one-off event (n=147). Twenty-seven percent reported that the incident was one in a series of repeat offences (n=54). Twenty-nine per cent of lesbians compared to 26.5 per cent of gay men described their most recent incident as ongoing. Eight transsexual and transgender respondents reported that their most recent incident was a one-off event and one that it was ongoing.

These are similar to the NSW figures with 80 per cent of abuse one-off, and 20 per cent repeat or ongoing. According to the NSW report 21 per cent of lesbians and 16 per cent of gay men described their most recent incident of homophobic violence as ongoing (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003:38).

### 4.3.4 Incident resulted in

Two hundred of a possible 339 respondents provided an answer to the question “Did the incident result in....?” Respondents could tick multiple options. Of the 88 per cent who reported one or more harms resulting from their most recent incident of heterosexual abuse, nearly 8 per cent reported that the incident resulted in a physical injury, with an additional two respondents reporting loss of consciousness. Nearly all of those who reported suffering a physical injury also reported experiencing emotional or psychological distress (81.3 and 87.5 per cent respectively). Twelve per cent reported that the incident did not result in any form of injury or harm (n=23).

Just over 70 per cent of respondents reported experiencing emotional distress as a consequence of their most recent incident of heterosexual abuse (n=141), with nearly half of these reporting that they also experienced psychological distress. Of the 12 per cent who listed “other” (n=24): 15 reported some form of depression or anxiety, ranging from “chronic depression” to “self-loathing”; two reported experiencing agoraphobia with one of these also suffering “a heart attack and panic attacks”; and one reported “6 months [of] neurological treatment including CAT scans and drug therapy”.

#### » Did the incident require medical attention?

Of the 201 respondents who provided an answer regarding the consequences of their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse, 14 per cent reported requiring some form of medical attention (n=28). Seven per cent reported requiring medical or outpatient attention (n=14), 4 per cent basic first aid (n=8) and 3 per cent hospital admission. Women were more likely than men to report requiring some form of medical treatment, 18.9 per cent and 13.2 per cent respectively. Eighty-six per cent of respondents did not require medical assistance (n=173).



» Did the incident result in taking time off?

Just over 15 per cent of the 201 respondents who reported on their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse took time off work as a consequence (n=31). Nearly 4 per cent reported taking time off study (n=8). Nearly 80 per cent of respondents took no time off work or study following their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse.

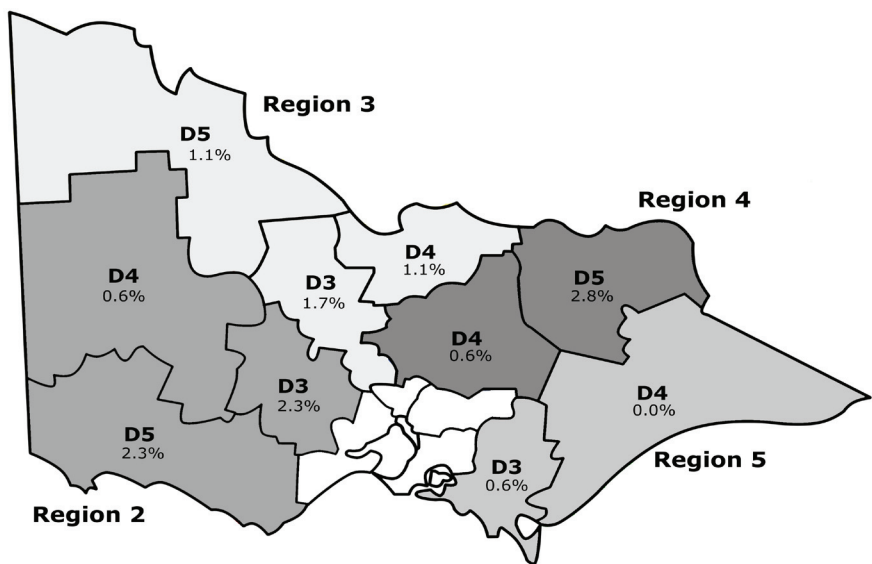
Of the three respondents who ticked “other” one reported that “[The] car needed to be sprayed to cover over the writing scratched on it” and another “Had to leave home to find somewhere safe”.

4.3.5 Where did the incident take place?

» By postcode

Of a possible 201 respondents, 196 provided an answer to the location (town, suburb or postcode) of their most recent incident of heterosexual abuse. A number of respondents reported their most recent experience of abuse at a location outside Victoria (n=15), including five in Sydney, two in Brisbane and one in Belgium. One respondent “couldn’t remember” while another recorded “the net”. The total number of respondents who recorded a Victorian location as the site of their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse was 179. A postcode was assigned to 178 of the 179 responses and mapped onto Victorian Police boundaries (Figures 6 & 7)<sup>16</sup>. This provided a means of identifying any hot spots and comparing the location where respondents live (Figure 3 p12) with the location of their most recent incident of heterosexual abuse.

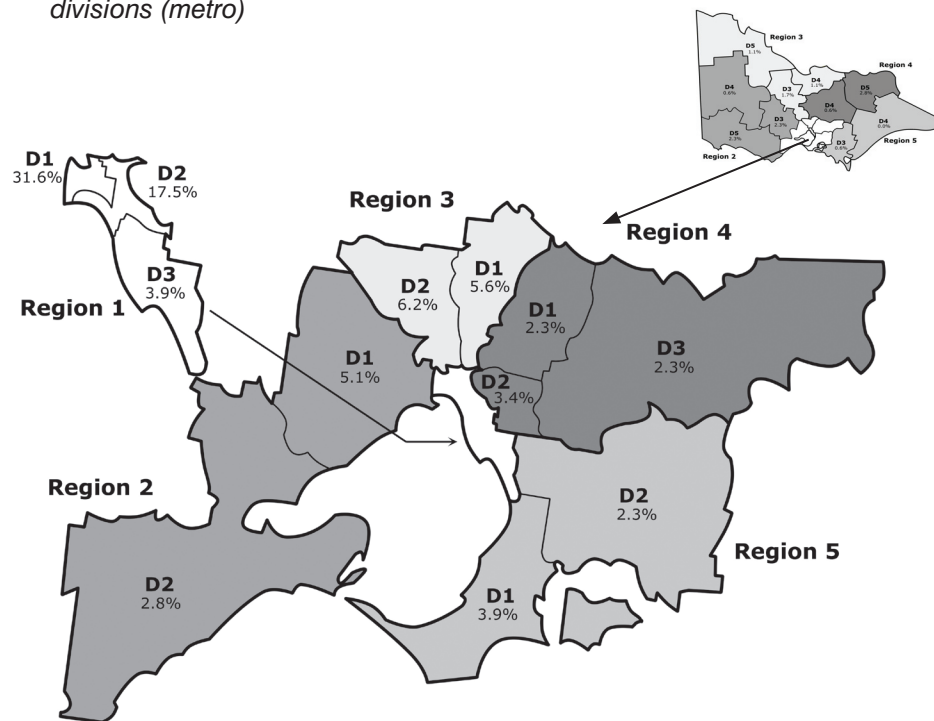
**Figure 6 – Percentages of most recent experience of heterosexual abuse by Police regions and divisions (rural)**



16 A single response listed “Northern suburbs” for which a postcode could not be assigned.



**Figure 7 – Percentages of most recent experience of heterosexual abuse by Police regions and divisions (metro)**



Nearly half of respondents reported that their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse occurred in inner city Melbourne (Region 1, Divisions 1 and 2). This area includes postcodes 3000-3003, St Kilda, Prahran and South Yarra (suburbs bordering Divisions 1 and 2). The figures reflect the large percentage of participants who live in this region (40 per cent, Figure 3 p.12). They are also consistent with NSW data showing that the majority of homophobic incidents occur in Paddington and Newtown, inner Sydney suburbs where there are not only large gay male populations but also high concentrations of gay and lesbian venues (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003; Flood, & Hamilton, 2005). Prahran, South Yarra and inner city Melbourne (including Collingwood and Fitzroy) are sites of GLBT social and night-life, including clubs, pubs and sex on premises venues (SOPVs). Both the high concentration and visibility of GLBT people and venues make these areas targets for heterosexual violence and abuse.

Seventeen per cent of most recent incidents of abuse occurred in Region 3, Divisions 1 and 2, and Region 2, Division 1. Again, these figures reflect the large numbers of survey participants living in these areas, and in particular Northcote/Thornbury and Footscray/Yarraville. Approximately 14 per cent of incidents occurred in rural and regional Victoria, varying between 0 and 3 per cent per police division. The data show regional hot spots with relatively large numbers of incidents of heterosexual abuse reported in the Geelong (n=6) and Warrnambool areas (n=4) areas.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> In May 2006 the *Geelong Advertiser* ran a series of articles condemning men who do beats. Anecdotal reports to Victoria Police suggest that incidents of violence against men doing beats along the river and in other areas of Geelong increased following these media reports. Communication Manager Gay and Lesbian Advisory Unit, Victoria Police 2008.



» Space and place

**Table 8** - Location of most recent incident of heterosexual abuse

Location N=202	n	%
On the street	66	32.7
Your house	27	13.4
At or near a gay and/or lesbian venue	22	10.9
Work place	19	9.5
Beach or park (not beat related)	7	3.5
Licensed premises (other than gay or lesbian)	7	3.5
School or place of study	7	3.5
Someone else's house	7	3.5
At or near a community event (other than gay and/or lesbian)	5	2.5
Other retail	4	2.0
A beat	3	1.5
At or near a gay and/or lesbian community event	3	1.5
Perpetrator's house	3	1.5
Train station	3	1.5
Tram/tram stop	2	1.0
Other (please specify)	17	8.4

Nearly 32 per cent of respondents reported that their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse occurred on the street (n=66), followed by 13.4 per cent at the respondent's house (n=27), 10.9 per cent at or near a gay or lesbian venue (n=22), and 9.4 per cent at work (n=19). Significant levels of abuse were also recorded at a beach or park, someone else's house, and at school or place of study (all 7 per cent). Men were more likely than women to report their most recent experience of heterosexual violence occurring at or near a gay or lesbian venue or on the street (14.8 versus 5.8 per cent, and 36.0 versus 27.5 per cent respectively).



Overall the geographic spread and incidence of heterosexual/homophobic abuse is similar in Victoria and NSW. According to the NSW survey, the majority of homophobic abuse occurs on the street (29 per cent) while 13 per cent occurs at respondents' work or place of study. However, the levels of homophobic abuse reported at or near gay and lesbian venues are considerably higher in NSW than in Victoria (23 per cent compared with 10.9 per cent). This difference may reflect both the high density of gay men living in inner city Sydney and the social prominence and visibility of the Oxford-Street gay commercial precinct (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003:39).

While the majority of heterosexual abuse occurs in public spaces, including the street, public transport and recreational sites such as the beach or park, the levels of abuse in private and semi-private spaces are also significant. The actuality and threat of violence and harassment cut across all areas of GLBT people's lives, from work, to home and family, and recreation. Research has documented the effects this continuous and unrelenting threat has not only on GLBT people's health and wellbeing, but also on their sense of social belonging and their willingness and ability to participate openly in social, cultural and political life (Banks, 2001; Florida, 2002; Leonard (Ed.), 2002; Pitts, Smith, Mitchell & Patel, 2006). Furthermore, whereas members of other minority populations subject to public abuse may seek respite and support at home, this is not the case for many GLBT people and in particular young people. For many GLBT young people home and family are themselves major sites of heterosexual violence and abuse (Hillier, Turner & Mitchell, 2005).

#### 4.3.6 When did the incident occur?

One hundred and twelve out of a possible 338 respondents provided a period of the day or an exact time when their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse occurred.<sup>18</sup> Of these, 45 per cent reported that their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse took place in the evening to early morning (between 8pm and 4am). However, significant numbers of incidents were reported at all times of the day, and on both weekdays and weekends underscoring the randomness and spread of heterosexual abuse.

#### 4.3.7 What happened?

*Name calling. Threats. Telling me I don't deserve to live. I'm a worthless piece of crap.  
Just a lot.*

*Just the usual crap from work, all verbal*

*One person took me to HR claiming harassment because I had a photograph of my  
same sex partner on my desk.*

One hundred and eighty three of a possible 339 respondents provided a description of their most recent incident of heterosexual abuse. It is impossible to capture in summary the experiences and emotions of those 183 voices. However, the incidents described ranged from verbal abuse shouted on

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<sup>18</sup> In all 219 respondents answered this question. However, over a hundred provided a date only and these responses were not included in the analysis.





the street or from passing cars, to harassment and discrimination at work and school, to sexual assault and rape. These descriptions add qualitative weight to the quantitative data presented in this report. Three respondents recorded their inability or unwillingness to provide descriptions of their most recent experience of abuse, “Sorry, just can’t”, “Don’t want to go into it” and “[I] wish not to disclose this”. These responses suggest that some of the 156 participants who did not provide a description of their most recent experience of abuse chose not to because that experience was too painful to revisit.

The majority of the incidents described involved verbal abuse. Although some of this abuse was from work colleagues, fellow students and family, much of it was random, in public and delivered by strangers. “Poofter, lezzo and faggot” were common terms of abuse often preceded by expletives and accompanied by threats of physical violence.

*When waiting for the taxi we ordered at 1am, two young men jumped in...and threatened to rape me when I challenged their behaviour. They called me a “filthy dyke” and a “fucking lesbian”.*

*...two guys came out of [the] flat and walk[ed] behind me and started calling me names, fag, poof...insinuating I wanted to “get fucked” and was a “slut” and that poofs and fags should be bashed. They followed me until I arrived at the venue and were threatening me the whole way.*

A number of respondents described being afraid that verbal abuse was a prelude to physical assault.

*A speeding car with 3 men drove by and they all leaned out the window and started yelling homophobic abuse....The driver slammed on the brakes and turned around and pulled the car close to me and they all kept yelling abuse at me. I thought they were going to get out of the car and beat me.*

Eighteen per cent of abuse described by respondents was verbal abuse yelled from passing cars (n=33). In NSW this figure is even higher with nearly a third of recently reported incidents of homophobic abuse verbal abuse from “carloads of men” (Attorney General’s Department of NSW, 2003: 39).

More than one in eight respondents described incidents of physical violence, ranging from what some described as minor incidents—“throwing eggs”, “banging on windows”—to bashings, sexual assault and rape.

*[They] tried to drag me from the front of the car while punching me in the side of the head and threatening to kill me.*

*Bashed black and blue.*

*...after a while my friend told him that I was a lesbian and later on I went to the bathroom and he walked in after me and sexually assaulted me.*

Approximately 5 per cent of respondents described incidents involving damage to property, again many of these involving cars.





*Someone scratched my car and a sticker on the back window which was of gay orientation.*

In a number of cases damage to property involved graffiti scrawled on houses, fences and cars.

*The rear of the house fence which faces onto a major road was covered in homophobic graffiti.*

Much of the abuse described by respondents—from verbal insult to sexual assault—was a reaction to what might be called “non-heteronormative” public behaviours or self-presentations. The perpetrators of the abuse took these behaviours as signs of the victim’s homosexuality or transgender identity. They included: normative gender mis-performance (effeminate behaviour by men or masculine behaviour by women); displays of intimate, physical contact between two people of the same sex; being part of a non-heteronormative group; and displaying GLBT images or logos.

*A car of young men stopped at the traffic lights and clearly couldn't decide if I was male or female. They laughed and said “what are you?” When I ignored them they said “fucking faggot” then laughed and said “fucking dyke shemale”*

*[I] was picked as being gay by the way I dressed and had insults yelled at me in the city mall.*

*I was verbally attacked by a guy in a straight venue for being gay or at least appearing to be gay. He simply said we don't like your kind and you should ‘fuck off’ to your own clubs*

*[My] partner and I [were] confronted by two middle-aged men after embracing in the street. [We] proceeded to flee, were pushed to the ground [and] kicked by both men several times.*

*Our hubcaps were stolen and the rainbow sticker pulled off the rear bumper of our car.*

It is clear from the above examples that almost any sign of non-heteronormative behaviour, whether individual or as part of a couple or group, can be used as an excuse for heterosexist violence and abuse.<sup>19</sup> Research documents the strategies that GLBT people deploy in public to minimise the likelihood of abuse, from invisibility and varying degrees of self-censorship, to the continuous monitoring of social spaces and the people in them to determine how GLBT-friendly and safe they are (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003:32; Dick, 2008:31-32; Pitts, Smith, Mitchell, & Patel, 2006:48-51). Such strategies are understandable, given the high levels of heterosexist abuse documented in this and other reports. However, they also have the effect of deflecting attention and responsibility from the perpetrators to the victims and *potential* victims of such abuse. This leaves GLBT people in an ambiguous and finally untenable position, denying who they are in public to protect themselves from abuse even as that denial reinforces heterosexist discrimination and prejudice. This ambiguity is captured in the following response

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<sup>19</sup> The UK report talks of non-heteronormative behaviours as “triggers” for heterosexist violence (Dick, 2008:16-19). “Triggers” suggests that legitimate expressions of intimacy between GLBT people and alternative ways of “doing gender” illicit or draw out a violent response. Once again this deflects responsibility from the perpetrators to the victims of prejudice-related violence. This report argues that the triggers for targeted acts of violence against GLBT people are heterosexism and the prejudice and hatred it engenders.





*Walking with my partner, not showing any signs of affection or being a couple; 2 men...shouted abuse at us calling us dykes...We didn't believe that we even looked like dykes at the time as there was nothing obvious in our dress or mannerisms.*

#### 4.3.8 Perpetrator data

Of the 201 respondents who reported on their most recent incident of heterosexual abuse in the past two years 64.2 per cent reported that multiple offenders had been involved (44.3 per cent reported two or three perpetrators, 19.9 per cent four or more).<sup>20</sup> Twenty-nine per cent reported that one perpetrator had been involved and 6.5 per cent said they didn't know the number of perpetrators.

Men were more likely than women to report one perpetrator only (31.1 versus 23.5 per cent), and women more likely than men to report two or three perpetrators (50.0 versus 41.0 per cent). In 72.3 per cent of cases the perpetrator/s was identified as male only (n=146). Nearly 8.5 per cent of respondents reported female only perpetrator/s while 13.7 per cent reported that the perpetrators included men and women (n=27). These figures are very similar to those reported in the NSW survey (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003:43).

The percentage of respondents who reported that the perpetrator was a stranger or that they had had no prior relationship (n=136) was higher among women (70.6 per cent) than among men (64.5 per cent). Similarly men were more likely than women to report that the perpetrator was a casual acquaintance, 10.7 per cent versus 2.9 per cent respectively. These results differ from those reported in the NSW survey where more men than women reported that they did not know the perpetrators, 81 versus 68 per cent respectively (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003:44). Eight and a half per cent of respondents reported that the perpetrator was a work colleague, 3.0 per cent a neighbour and 3.0 per cent a student, and 1.0 per cent a sibling and 1.0 per cent a client. Fourteen respondents listed "Other" (all single responses) including "Husband" and "Police Officer". Overall, these figures are similar to those reported in the NSW survey (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003:44).

<sup>20</sup> These percentages are consistent with Victoria Police data on homophobic assaults from 2001-2006 in which multiple offenders were involved in 57 per cent of reported assaults. In one incident it was reported that 12 offenders were involved. Communication from Manager Gay and Lesbian Advisory Unit, Victoria Police October 2008.





# 5 Reporting heterosexual violence and accessing services

## 5.1 Seeking assistance

One hundred and ninety-nine of a possible 339 respondents reported on whether they had sought “informal assistance” following their most recent incident of heterosexual abuse in the past two years. Just over 57 per cent of respondents reported that they did not seek assistance, with the percentage higher among men (64.9 per cent) than women (52.2 per cent). Thirteen and half per cent of respondents sought help from their partner, 12.6 per cent from a friend, and 4.0 per cent from family or relatives. Respondents who had suffered a physical injury including loss of consciousness were 1.6 times more likely than those who had experienced a non-physical injury to seek assistance from partner, family or friends.

Seventy percent of the 199 respondents did not report the incident to police or to any other official body or organisation (n=139). This is similar to levels of (under)reporting documented in the UK survey (Dick, 2008:20). Only 28 per cent of those who sought informal assistance also reported the incident to police (n=24).

Of the 43.7 per cent of respondents who did seek informal assistance following their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse in the past two years (n=85), 70.6 per cent also sought help from or reported the incident to an official agency or organisation (n=60). Of these, 40 per cent (n=24) reported the incident to police, 40 per cent to a counsellor, and small but significant numbers to a lawyer (n=10), VEOHRC (n=6), a GLBT organisation other than the VAC or Switchboard (n=6) and Switchboard (n=5). However, if we sum responses for VAC, Switchboard and “other GLBT organisations” the percentage of respondents reporting an incident to a GLBT organisation was 23 per cent (n=14).

Respondents had the opportunity to list all of the official organisations they reported to or sought help from following their most recent incident of heterosexual abuse. Table 9 lists those respondents who in addition to reporting the incident to Victoria Police also reported or sought assistance from one or more of the other agencies listed.

Table 9 - Organisations contacted in addition to Victoria Police\*

	GLLO	Lawyer	VEOHRC	GLBT orgs.	CHS	Work-cover	Counsellors	Help-line	VACP	Other
n	6	6	2	6	2	2	9	1	1	7

\*Multiple responses possible

Table 9 suggests complex patterns of reporting for the small percentage of GLBT people who reported or sought professional assistance. It shows the wide range of organisations contacted. It also shows that a small but significant number of respondents who reported the incident to police contacted more than one other (and more than one other type) of organisation.

### 5.1.1 Why they did not seek help or report

*Happens all the time no use reporting it.*

Survey respondents were more likely to seek informal assistance following their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse than formally report that incident or seek professional help. This may reflect respondents’ estimation that the incident was not serious enough to warrant being reported and that informal support rather than professional assistance was all that was required.

Half of the respondents did not report their most recent experience of abuse because they believed it was minor (n=100). However, of this 50 per cent, a number also reported that one or more other factors influenced their decision including: they did not believe they would be treated fairly, or they would be met with homophobia (n=12); they feared being outed (n=8); and they didn’t know where to go for assistance (n=7). This suggests that the decision not to report even minor incidents is, for a significant minority of respondents, implicated in heterosexism and the actuality or fear of further discrimination and abuse.

This is clearer if we look at those respondents who did not include “minor” as a reason for not formally reporting or seeking professional assistance following their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse.

**Table 10 - Reasons for not reporting/seeking professional assistance for most recent experience of heterosexual abuse**

	Being outed	Unsure where to go	Being treated unfairly	Fear of further discrimination	Perceived homophobia of the organisation	Previous negative experience	other
n	9	9	11	10	6	9	15

For a significant number of respondents the decision not to report incidents of abuse is a direct consequence of heterosexism. Nine respondents out of 69 feared being outed, while a similar number didn’t know where to go for assistance. Again, these figures mirror those reported in the UK survey (Dick, 2008:23). A slightly higher number reported fear of further discrimination, while six believed the relevant organisation/s to be homophobic. For nine respondents these beliefs were grounded in previous negative experiences. There was little variation according to age in reasons for not reporting. However, there was one notable exception with 18 per cent of 14 to 24 year old respondents (n=10) compared to one single respondent 25 years and over (1.1 per cent) reporting not knowing where to go as a barrier.





Respondents were asked to list other reasons for not reporting or seeking professional assistance. Although a number of these could be coded under the categories provided, they may be better placed under “Not taken seriously”. They express respondents’ frustration and disappointment at the ways in which heterosexist abuse and its effects are ignored or trivialised.

*A combination of factors – there was no actual physical damage etc & [I] didn’t think the Police would take it seriously or if they did would not be able to do much*

*Did not believe reporting it would have any effect. ...I perceived it as a minor incident at the time, but really, I think that any homophobic attack is serious*

*I’m not sure that reporting it would achieve anything...How can you stop these kind[s] of events?*

### 5.1.2 Agency selection

*A friend told me that the Police Gay and Lesbian Officer might be helpful – initially I had contacted the Police and I found them to be disinterested.*

Ninety percent of respondents who had reported their most recent experience of heterosexist abuse to the authorities and/or had sought professional assistance described how they selected that authority (n=54). The responses varied markedly with some describing the basis for their choice, others simply noting the need to act (without actually nominating who they contacted). As one respondent put it “I was in fear of my life and turned to anyone that might help”.

**Table 11 – Agency selection**

<b>Basis of choice N=54</b>	<b>Contact/ Assistance</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Referral n=15	Friends	5	9.3
	GP	5	9.3
	Police	2	3.7
	Work	2	3.7
	Other	1	1.9
Nature of the incident n=14	Police	11	20.4
	VEOHRC	2	3.7
	Union	1	1.9
Previous experience n=5		5	9.3
Self-initiated n=4	Internet	2	3.7
	Phone book	1	1.9
	Other	1	1.9





Table 11 groups the responses under “Basis of choice” and lists the first point of contact where given. Twenty-seven and a half per cent of respondents were referred to a relevant authority following their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse. Friends and GPs provided the majority of referrals (9.3 per cent each) followed by Police and work (3.7 per cent each). The next most common basis of choice was “the nature of the incident” (26.0 per cent of respondents), “previous experience” (9.3 per cent) and “self-initiated” (7.5 per cent).

The “Nature of the incident” included four incidents of serious assault all of which were reported to the Police. As one respondent wrote “The police was the most logical agency...to contact”. If referral and nature of incident figures are combined, over a quarter of respondents chose the police as their first point of contact following an incident of heterosexual abuse. This highlights the important role police play not only in the reporting of abuse but also in providing initial support to GLBT victims. However, six of the 13 respondents who recorded the police as their first point of contact were critical of the response. The criticisms range from the police’s stated inability or reluctance to pursue the matter—“They [the police] told me that I could press minor charges but it may be better for me to leave it and not provoke them [the perpetrators] any further”—to suggestions of serious mistreatment, “I began with police, was treated horrifically, then went further”. The data also indicate the importance of GPs and informal networks in directing GLBT people to appropriate authorities or agencies following an incident of heterosexual abuse.

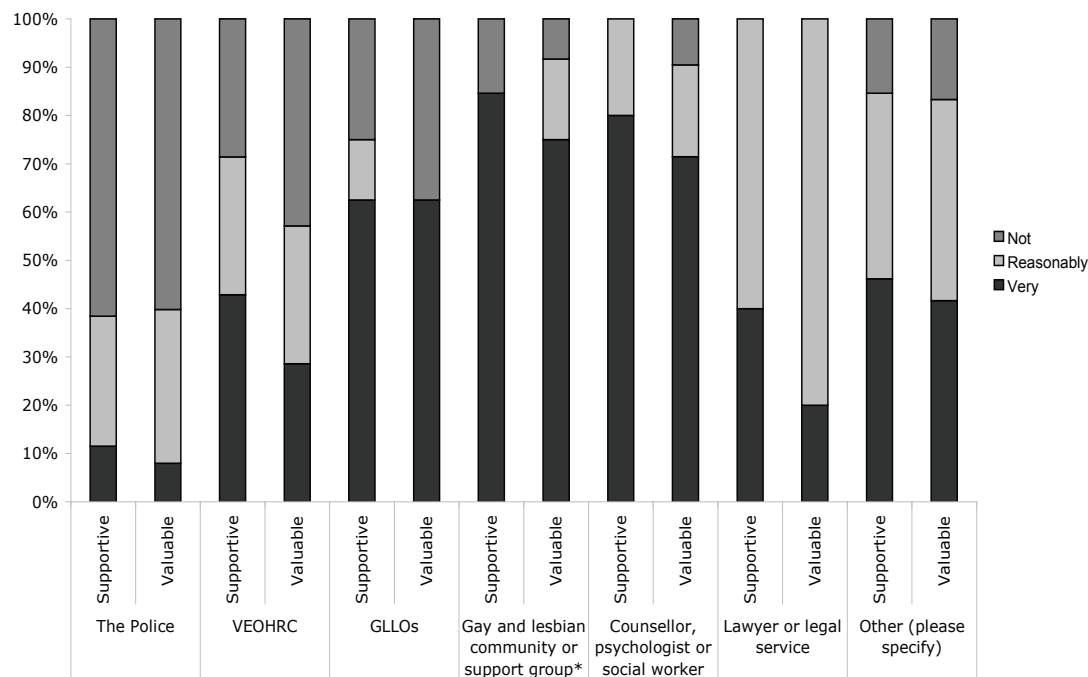
Of the 30 per cent of responses that are not included in Table 11 the majority did not directly answer the question. However, two respondents listed confidentiality as a major factor behind their choice, while another stated “[The] only service available in [a] small country town...”.



## 5.2 Service access and quality

### 5.2.1 Levels of support and value

Figure 8 – Levels of professional support and value



\*This includes combine figures for Switchboard, Victorian AIDS Council, & Other Gay and lesbian community or support group

Of the 60 respondents who reported their most recent incident of heterosexual abuse or sought professional assistance a number recorded accessing more than one service. However, for many of the services the total number of responses is too small to draw conclusions regarding the quality of assistance provided. Only those agencies with a response rate of seven or more have been included in Figure 8.

There was very little difference between respondents' assessment of the support provided by, and the value of, any given service. VEOHRC was the only exception with a higher number of respondents reporting that the service was "reasonably" or "very supportive" than those reporting it was "reasonably" or "very valuable". For most of the services listed, the majority of respondents reported that they were either "reasonably" or "very supportive/valuable". Three quarters or more of respondents who contacted a Gay and Lesbian Community or Support Group found the service both very supportive and very valuable. Respondents who visited a counsellor, psychologist or social worker and those who accessed a lawyer or legal service reported similarly high levels of service satisfaction.

While the majority of respondents reported reasonable to high levels of service satisfaction there was one notable exception. Only 11.5 per cent of respondents who contacted police found them "very



supportive", even less, 8.0 per cent, found the service "very valuable". If we include "reasonably supportive" and "reasonably valuable" these figures remain well below 50 per cent, at 38.4 and 40 per cent respectively. These findings do not compare favourably with those from the NSW survey. While only 48 per cent of respondents in the NSW survey found the police "reasonably" or "very valuable", 60 per cent found them to be "reasonably" or "very supportive" (Attorney General's Department of NSW, 2003: 48-49). These findings are worrying not only because of the significant numbers of respondents contacting police (n=25/26) but also because they suggest that mainstream police are insensitive to the situation and needs of GLBT victims of heterosexist abuse. Although the number of respondents who reported contacting the GLLOs is significantly lower than the number who contacted mainstream police, the reported levels of support and service value provided by the GLLOs were much higher at 75.0 and 62.5 per cent respectively. This suggests that GLBT victims of abuse who do not have access to a GLLO may be receiving reduced support and a less valuable service than those who do.

## 5.2.2 Comments on quality of service received

*I was left with the feeling I was regarded as in some ways deserving of my treatment.*

Twenty nine of a possible 60 respondents provided written descriptions of their experiences of any or all of the services they accessed following their most recent incident of heterosexist abuse. Many of the 29 respondents did not comment directly on why they did or did not use particular services.

Eight of the 29 respondents documented positive experiences in dealing with a range of services.

*Counselling through the Employment Services Program was surprisingly helpful... although I was disappointed that I was never asked if I believed the hostility toward me was related to my sexuality.*

*Legal advice expensive, counsellor fantastic*

*[Name] at Family Planning is great...He is great to turn to when I need someone to talk to if I don't wanna turn to my friends*

Twelve of the 29 respondents commented on their interactions with the police; the majority expressed frustration with the service provided.

*Despite 4 individual requests for a GLLO officer, one was never provided and excuses kept being made.*

*The police did not want any involvement even though the perpetrator knew my home address...I was humiliated by police as well.*

*The police didn't give any indication that they were in any way relating the incidents to our sexuality, although both of us attended the station to report and we said we were partners and lived together.*

This is in contrast to the single respondent who commented on their experience of contacting the GLLOs, "[The] GLLOs were very supportive".



## 5.3 Reporting to police

Twenty-five of the 26 respondents who had reported their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse to police answered a series of questions regarding the police's handling of their complaint. Eleven respondents notified police by phone, seven reported that police attended the incident, and six reported the incident at a police station. One respondent recorded that "the complaint was against the police".

Twelve respondents recorded that police had taken a written report of the incident, nine that no written report was taken, and four didn't know whether or not a written report had been taken. Of the 12 cases where a written report had been taken, six respondents recorded having been provided with a copy, six that no copy had been provided, and one who didn't know.

Of the six respondents who were given a written copy of the incident report by police, four reported that police also provided them with a copy of the *Victim's Guide to Support Services and the Criminal Justice System*, one that police did not provide a copy and one who didn't know. More than half of the respondents reported that the police did not take the incident any further (n=13). In only five cases did police pursue the incident. The remaining seven respondents didn't know if the police had taken further action.

All 13 respondents who reported that the police did not investigate the incident further answered the question "What reasons had the police given?" Seven of the 13 respondents reported that police advised them that in the absence of witnesses or other independent evidence there was no point proceeding with the case. In part this was due to the nature of the abusive incident.

*There was no physical harm done therefore they [the police] were not able to proceed with the matter.*

*Couldn't get witnesses, allowed...harassment to continue.*

*...that the action the police took was relative to the incident.*

There is the implication in the majority of police responses that heterosexual harassment is a minor offence and difficult to prove. In at least two cases the police suggested that responsibility for ensuring an end to the harassment rests with the victim, "They advised me to sell my property" and "just lock your door".

Two out of the 25 respondents who reported their most recent experience of heterosexual abuse to police reported that police had taken out an intervention order on their behalf. Three of the 25 incidents reported to police went to court.



## 5.4 Proceeding to court

Only three respondents reported taking their most recent incident of heterosexual abuse to court. Two respondents had their cases heard in the Magistrates Court while the third was unsure of the Court in which the case was tried. Two of the respondents said they would go through the process again while the third was an emphatic “no”.

*The police made me feel like a criminal for being assaulted. Like it was my fault. Why bother??!*

The number of respondents is too small to comment on whether heterosexism played a part in the way they were treated by court-related personnel. The very small number of GLBT litigants recruited in the survey raises complex methodological questions about how to contact a significant percentage of a small subgroup (GLBT victims of heterosexual violence who have taken a case to court) within an already marginal population (GLBT people as a whole). It also raises questions about the degree to which current legislation provides redress for the most common types of heterosexual abuse experienced by GLBT people. The results to the previous question show that non-violent forms of heterosexual abuse are difficult to prove and that they are not understood as serious offences by either the authorities or under current Victorian legislation (Gray, Leonard and Jack, 2006).



# 6 Same sex partner abuse

## 6.1 Levels and types of abuse

Just under a third of participants reported having been in a same sex relationship where they were subjected to abuse by their partner (n=120). Women were more likely than men to report having been in an abusive relationship (35 per cent versus 29 per cent) with the percentage jumping to 42 per cent for women who identify as lesbian. These figures are similar to those reported in *Private Lives* (41 per cent of women and 28 per cent of men, Pitts, Smith, Mitchell, & Patel, 2006:12). Respondents who had been subject to abuse were asked to list the type or types of abuse they had experienced. Respondents could provide multiple responses.

**Table 12 - Incidence of same sex partner abuse.**

Type of abuse	n	%
Emotional abuse	93	77.0
Psychological abuse	70	58.3
Physically attacked or hit	68	56.7
Regularly insulted	62	51.4
Injured or bruised	52	43.3
Isolated from family and friends	46	38.3
Sexual abuse	31	25.8
Deprived of financial independence	28	23.3

A majority of respondents reported having been subject to forms of non-physical abuse. However, over half reported having been attacked and over a quarter having been sexually abused. A significant percentage of those respondents who had been physically attacked or hit reported suffering other types of abuse.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Private Lives* used a different typology of "intimate partner abuse" which does not allow for a comparison with *Coming Forward* data.

**Table 13** - *Additional abuse suffered by respondents who reported having been physically attacked or hit by their same sex partner.*

Type of additional abuse N=68	n	%
Emotional abuse	47	69.0
Injured or bruised	46	66.0
Regularly insulted	41	60.3
Psychological abuse	37	54.4
Monitored or checked all the time	31	45.6
Socially isolated	30	44.1
Sexual abuse or forced to have sex	21	30.1

Over 50 per cent of respondents who reported having been physically attacked also reported being subject to one or more of the following; emotional abuse; injury or bruising; regular insult; and psychological abuse. Just over 17.5 per cent of those who had been physically attacked had suffered an injury that required medical attention (n=12). The 10 responses under “other” included “forbidden access to my child”, “She often hurt herself as a way of manipulating situations, particularly when I was trying to end the relationship” and “threats against my family and friends if I left”.

Nearly half of the respondents who had been subject to same sex partner abuse reported taking time off work as a consequence (n=58). Twelve and a half percent reported having taken time off study (n=15). Of those who had taken time off work six had also taken time off study.

Nearly 87 per cent of respondents who had been subject to same sex partner abuse reported that they were no longer in that relationship (n=103). However, 13.4 per cent reported that they were still in that relationship (n=16).

One hundred and four out of a possible 120 respondents answered the question “After the relationship ended were you subject to harassment from your ex-partner?” Nearly 62 per cent of respondents answered “yes” (n=64). Women were more likely than men to report ongoing harassment, 69 per cent and 57 per cent respectively.

Those who had been subject to harassment following the end of their relationship were asked to comment on the nature of the harassment. Respondents could provide multiple options. Just under 50 per cent of respondents reported their ex-partner making harassing phone calls (n=49), 32.7 per cent harassing text messages and 32.7 per cent being stalked, 27.9 per cent their ex-partner involving family,





friends or work colleagues, and 32.1 per cent being sent harassing emails. A significant number also reported that their ex-partner subjected family, friends and work colleagues to harassing behaviour (n=15).

Under “other” 15 respondents provided further examples of their ex-partner’s harassing behaviour (all single responses) including “broke into my property and attempted suicide”, “Clock up parking and speeding infringements in my name”, and “used his friend to harass me”.

## 6.2 Seeking assistance

Respondents who had been subject to abuse by their partner were asked to list the agency or agencies to which they reported that abuse. Just over 14 per cent reported the abuse to police (n=17), 13.3 per cent to a counsellor (16), 3.3 per cent to a lawyer (n=4) and 2.5 per cent to a GLLO (n=3). Of the 17 respondents who reported the incident to police, six also reported the abuse to a counsellor, four to a lawyer, three to a GLLO and two to a sexual assault service. Under “other”, 13 respondents listed further agencies or individuals they reported the abuse to. These included “ex-work boss” (n=2), “friends” (n=2), “hospital as was homeless after leaving” (n=1), and one respondent each “psychiatrist” and “psychologist”.

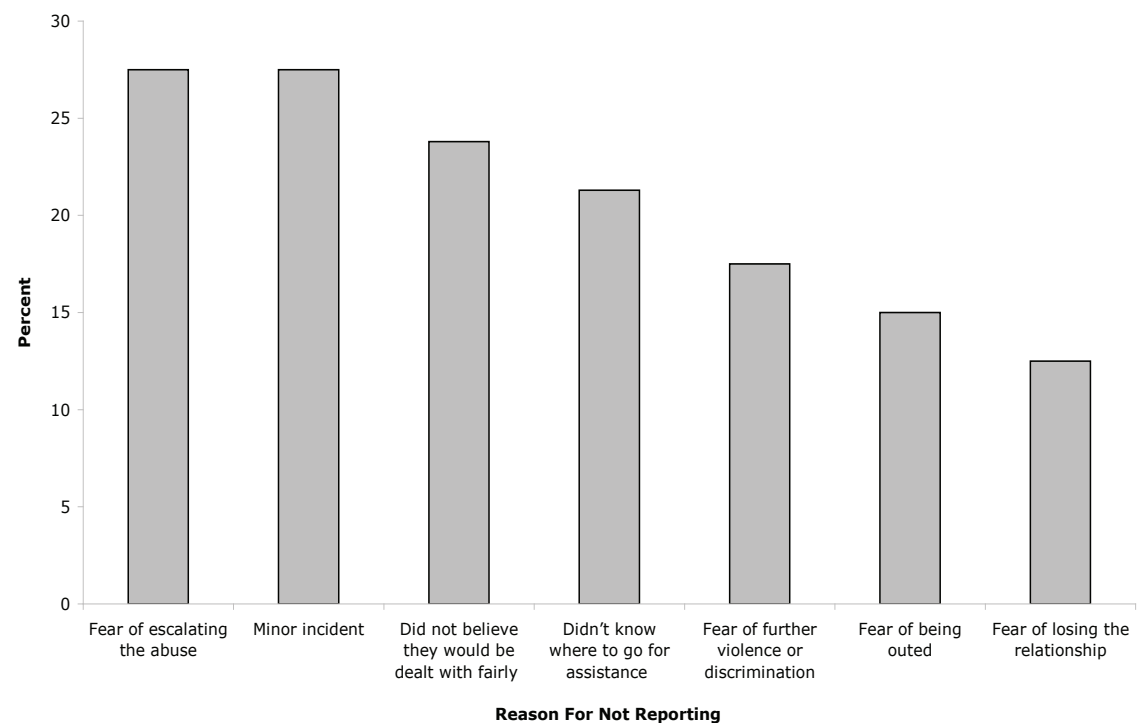
According to *Private Lives* data one in ten GLBT respondents who had suffered intimate partner abuse reported such abuse to police. Rates of reporting were considerably higher for those respondents who had suffered some form of physical abuse: 20.4 per cent of those who had been physically injured; 18.7 per cent who had been hit; and 17.9 per cent who had been forced to have sex (Pitts, Smith, Mitchell, & Patel, 2006: 52).

### 6.2.1 Why they didn’t seek help or support

Two-thirds of respondents did not report the abuse they received from their same sex partner (n=80). Figure9 presents the major reasons respondents gave for not reporting that abuse. Respondents could tick one or more options.



**Figure 9 – Reasons for not reporting same sex partner abuse**



For nearly all of the respondents who believed the abuse was minor this was the sole reason for their not reporting. However, of the 27.5 per cent who feared reporting would lead to an escalation of abuse, a number of other factors played a role in their decision not to report: 54.5 per cent believed they would not be treated fairly (n=12); 50.0 per cent believed reporting would lead to further violence and discrimination (n=11), and 41.0 per cent feared it would result in their being outed (n=9). Similarly, of the respondents who did not report same sex partner abuse because they believed they would not be treated fairly, 63.2 per cent also believed reporting would lead to an escalation of abuse (n=12), 36.8 per cent that it would lead to further violence or discrimination (n=7), and 36.8 per cent did not know where to go for assistance (n=7).

For those respondents who did not characterise the abuse they received from their same sex partner as minor the results suggest that heterosexism played a significant role in their decision not to report that abuse. This included a belief that relevant services were unsympathetic if not unsafe for GLBT people and a fear of being outed and its consequences. These results are similar to those for victims of serious incidents of heterosexist violence where heterosexism is implicated in the decision to remain “officially” silent. However, the results also suggest that heterosexism may play less of a role in the underreporting of same sex partner abuse than it does in the underreporting of heterosexist abuse.

Twenty-five per cent of respondents listed a number of other reasons for not reporting same sex domestic partner abuse (n=20). A quarter of these reported that they had not understood the significance or lasting effects of the abuse at the time. “Thought it was normal”, “At the time didn’t realise how bad it was” and “...did not realise the detrimental [e]ffect it had till much later”. Four respondents characterised

the abuse as a personal matter—“No one else’s business”—two seeking assistance from family and friends.

### 6.2.2 Agency selection

Thirty-one respondents provided an answer to the question “How did you decide on the agency or agencies you reported or sought professional assistance from, regarding your experience of same sex partner abuse?”

**Table 14 – Agency selection**

Basis of choice N=31	Contact/ Assistance	n
Referral n=9	Police	3
	Friends	2
	GP	2
	Other	2
Self-initiated n=9	Police	3
	Counsellor	2
	Victorian Legal Aid	1
	Other	3
Previous experience n=4	Counsellor	3
	Other	1
Nature of the incident n=3	Police	3
Other		6

Nine respondents reported that the police were their first point of contact for reporting or seeking assistance regarding same sex partner abuse. In a third of these cases this was more a matter of necessity than choice, dictated by the nature of the abuse. Two respondents reported choosing a GLBT-related authority or service, VAC and the GLLOs respectively, while another reported “I would have liked to go to [the] GLLOs but not sure how to access them”. The data also suggest that GPs and counsellors play an important role in providing assistance and appropriate referrals to victims of same sex partner abuse.

## 6.3 Service access and quality

### 6.3.1 Levels of support and value

Of the 31 respondents who reported or sought assistance for same sex partner abuse a number recorded accessing more than one service. Twenty respondents reported contacting the Police, 17 a Counselling Service and 11 a Lawyer or legal service. The numbers contacting the remaining services were too small to draw conclusions regarding levels of self-reported service satisfaction.

For four of the eight services more than half of the respondents who contacted that service reported that it was “reasonably or very supportive” (supportive) and/or “reasonably or very valuable” (valuable). Of the 11 respondents who reported contacting a lawyer or legal service, 10 found the service both valuable and supportive with similar levels of satisfaction reported for those who contacted a counselling service (n=14). Respondents who contacted Family Violence or the GLLOs also reported high levels of support and value.

For three of four remaining services—Sexual assault services, Victims of Crime Helpline and Victims Assistance Counselling Program— there was a large disparity between ratings of support and value. While the majority of respondents reported that the service was supportive half or more reported that it was not valuable. However these figures need to be read with caution given the very low numbers of respondents. The one exception is Victoria Police where 50 per cent of respondents who reported contacting the police found the service valuable and 55 per cent supportive.

The discrepancies between self-rated levels of service support and value are much higher for the reporting of same sex partner abuse than for heterosexual violence (see pp.41-42). These findings suggest that domestic and sexual violence services may not be meeting the needs of victims of same sex partner abuse. They also suggest that lack of GLBT-sensitive services may be a greater disincentive for victims of same sex partner abuse seeking assistance than for GLBT people who have been subject to heterosexual violence.

## 6.4 Reporting to police and proceeding to court

### 6.4.1 Reporting to police

All 17 respondents who reported abuse by their same sex partner to the police answered a series of questions regarding the police’s handling of their complaint. Six respondents reported in person at a police station, followed by five who reported that police attended the incident and a further five who notified police by phone. In one case the respondent reported in person to their “neighbour [who] is a police officer”.



Five respondents reported that the police had taken a written report of the incident. However, the number of respondents who reported that no written report had been taken was higher at eight. Four respondents didn't know whether a written report had been taken. Fifteen respondents reported that they were *not* provided with a copy of the *Victim's Guide to Support Services and the Criminal Justice System*, while one respondent didn't know.

Only one respondent reported that police had provided them with a referral to a counselling service and that the service provided was not appropriate:

*The police wanted me out of their office and gave me useless information to get rid of me.*

## 6.4.2 Intervention order

Of the 17 respondents who reported same sex partner abuse to the Police eight reported making an application for an intervention order and one reported that the Police made an application on their behalf. Of those respondents who reported that either they or the police had sought an intervention order, four did not receive any other assistance in making the application, two had been assisted by a friend, two by a relative and one by a lawyer. Under "other" one respondent reported assistance from "a housing support worker".

Seven of the eight respondents answered questions relating to their treatment by the police informant and relevant court personnel. Five respondents did not believe that the police informant kept them informed of court processes, treated them in a way that acknowledged the incident was prejudice motivated, or were sensitive to their situation as a GLBT person. Overall, respondents reported being treated in a more professional and sensitive manner by court personnel, prosecutor and magistrate. However, the number of respondents is too small to draw any significant conclusions about the differential treatment of GLBT litigants.

Five of the eight respondents reported that an intervention order was granted and three that an order was not granted. Three respondents reported that they would go through the process of seeking an intervention order again, two that they would not, and three that they were unsure. All five respondents who answered "no" or "unsure" provided written responses for their decision. Three respondents wrote that the process was too stressful, "the process was long and too emotional", one that they "didn't feel it was taken seriously enough" and another that "it was too easy for the perpetrator to break the intervention order".

## 6.4.3 Proceeding to court

Of the 17 respondents who reported same sex partner abuse to the Police only one reported that the police charged their partner with a criminal offence. A single response does not allow any conclusions to be drawn about the treatment of GLBT litigants by police and court personnel in pursuing criminal charges. However, the single respondent did report that they would be willing to go through the process again.





# 7 Victoria Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their knowledge of and access to the GLLOs.

## 7.1 Finding out

Nearly 83 per cent of respondents had heard of the GLLOs (n=321). There was little variation in knowledge of the GLLOs according to sex, sexual orientation or gender orientation. However, there was marked variation in knowledge according to age.

**Table 15** – Knowledge of GLLOs according to age

Age range	n	%
14-18	10	66.0
19-29	58	70.0
30-49	135	89.8
50-59	26	86.7
60 plus	12	100

Overall, knowledge of the GLLOs among survey respondents increased with age. Respondents aged 14 to 19 were least likely to have heard of the GLLOs, followed by those aged 19-29. All of those aged 60 plus who responded to this question had heard of the GLLOs. This suggests there is a need for increasing knowledge of the GLLOs and the services they provide among GLBT young people.

**Table 16** – Where respondents first heard about the GLLOs

Source of information	Respondents (N=321)	
	n	%
Gay media	106	33.0
GLBT community organisation	48	14.9
Community organisation	39	12.1
Gay publication	37	11.5
Police source	26	8.1
Friends	21	6.5
Website (other than police)	4	1.2
Police website	3	0.9
Family	2	0.6
Other	35	10.9



Of the 83 per cent of respondents who had heard of the GLLOs, nearly a third first heard of them through the gay media (n=106). However, if we include all GLBT-related contacts (including GLBT events listed under “other”), almost 62 per cent of respondents first heard of the GLLOs through a GLBT organisation or outlet (n=198). Just over 12 per cent of respondents first heard of the GLLOs from a community organisation, 8.1 per cent from a police source, and 6.5 per cent from friends. Very few respondents first heard of the GLLOs on line.

A significant number of respondents reported first hearing of the GLLOs through other sources (n=35) including work (n=7), a GLBT event (n=7), the mainstream media (n=5) and VEOHRC (n=2). One respondent reported “Boyfriend was a policeman”.

The results demonstrate a high degree of awareness of the GLLOs within the GLBT community. They show that while GLBT people learn of the GLLOs through a wide range of channels the majority first learn of the GLLOs through GLBT-media and community contacts. The results suggest opportunities for building on this high level of awareness, increasing GLBT people’s knowledge of the services provided by the GLLOs and encouraging increased reporting of heterosexual violence and harassment and same sex partner abuse. These opportunities include consolidating and extending links with GLBT media, community organisations and events and developing strategies for promoting the GLLOs on line, targeting GLBT-specific web sites.

## 7.2 Contacting the GLLOs

### 7.2.1 Numbers

Three hundred and twenty respondents answered the question “Have you ever contacted a GLLO?” Of these, 17.5 per cent answered “yes” (n=56) and 82.5 per cent “no” (n=264). Transsexual and transgender respondents were most likely to report having contacted a GLLO (43.0 per cent), followed by 18.4 per cent of men and 12.6 per cent of women. Nearly 61 per cent of respondents who answered ‘yes’ first contacted the GLLOs by phone (n=34), followed by 17.9 per cent in person at a community event (n=10), 16.1 per cent by email (n=9), and 1.8 per cent in person at a police station (n=1). One respondent wrote “Boyfriend, who was a policeman approached them [GLLOs]” and another “[At a] community committee meeting”.

Nearly all survey participants provided an answer to the question “Does the existence of the GLLOs increase the likelihood of your reporting an incident of homophobic harassment or violence or same sex partner abuse to the Police?” (n=387). Almost 79 per cent answered “yes” (n=305) and 21.2 per cent “no” (n=82). This is a significant finding and suggests that increasing the number of GLLOs (and their accessibility) is likely to lead to an increase in reporting of incidents of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse.





## 7.2.2 Preferred mode of contact

Respondents were provided with five options plus “Other” for their preferred method of contacting the GLLOs and asked to rank them in order from most preferred (1) to least preferred (6).

Just over 57 per cent of respondents reported that their preferred method of contacting the GLLOs was by phone, followed by 20.6 per cent by email, 14 per cent face-to-face reporting, 11.8 per cent filling out a web-based form and 7.6 per cent in person at a police station. If first and second preferences are combined, the two most favoured modes of contact remain unchanged with 71.4 per cent of respondents preferring phone followed by 47.9 per cent preferring email. These results suggest that a significant fraction of GLBT people prefer immediate forms of reporting but ones that do not involve face-to-face contact with police. This is supported when we look at the least favoured modes of contact with nearly 38.9 per cent of respondents ranking “At a police station” fifth and 30.1 per cent “face-to-face” fourth. Nonetheless, the figures suggest that the majority of respondents who prefer reporting in person would rather meet with a GLLO face-to-face than present at a police station.

Of the five named options web-based reporting was second only to “At a police station” as the *least* favoured mode of contacting the GLLOs. Unlike the other four named options filling in an on-line form doesn’t involve dealing directly with the police, nor does it necessitate an immediate response. This mode of reporting may appeal to GLBT people who wish to have a particular incident noted but don’t want it pursued and/or do not want face-to-face contact with police or the GLLOs.

Participants were asked to list other preferred ways of contacting the GLLOs. Of the 47 responses the two most common were “Community groups” (n=9) with four of these explicitly naming a GLBT organisation, “GLBTI support centre/VAC etc. – somewhere neutral”, and “At home” (n=6). One respondent wrote “You must be kidding. Like most gay people I avoid contact with the police”.



# 8 Coming forward

*It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.<sup>22</sup>*

*The subject who speaks hate speech is clearly responsible for such speech but that subject is rarely the originator of that speech.<sup>23</sup>*

## 8.1 Participant responses

Participants were asked two final, open questions, “What are the barriers to your reporting or seeking professional assistance following an incident of homophobic harassment or violence or same sex partner abuse?” and “What would increase your willingness to report or seek professional assistance following an incident of homophobic harassment or violence or same sex partner abuse?”

### 8.1.1 Barriers to reporting/seeking assistance

*Even if individual police are sympathetic the dominant culture is homophobic...*

*There wouldn't be any [barriers] really if the incident was serious enough*

Of the 390 survey participants 286 or 73.3 per cent of the total sample provided a written response identifying barriers to their reporting heterosexual and same sex partner abuse. The following discussion identifies a number of common themes. It is impossible to do justice to the range of issues and feelings expressed in these 286 responses. However, the thematic analysis gives a strong sense both of GLBT people's major concerns and how these concerns overlap.

#### » Not taken seriously

The major single barrier to GLBT people reporting or seeking assistance for acts of heterosexual violence or same sex partner abuse was the belief that crimes against sexual orientation and gender identity minorities are not taken seriously. Respondents believed this indifference ran from community attitudes, to service provision and the attitudes of individual service providers.

*Considered not unusual by some members in the community*

*Didn't think it would be taken seriously. I would be blamed because of the gay relationship I was involved in.*

<sup>22</sup> Jiddu Krishnamurti, Indian philosopher (1895 - 1986)

<sup>23</sup> Butler, 1997, p.34.



*Don't think any one cares or can help gay people*

*Expect that it won't be taken seriously and having the abuse trivialised would be worse than no recognition at all.*

*Fear of being laughed at or not take seriously, [of] wasting "valuable police time"*

A significant number of respondents reported "lack of" confidence, credibility, or knowledge of ..., as disincentives to reporting or seeking assistance.

*Lack of understanding of sexuality-based violence.*

A small number of respondents understood heterosexist harassment as minor and reported that GLBT people should "just live with it". A small number also reported that addressing claims of heterosexist harassment distracted police from the real, pointy end of police work.

*...as the police are busy, and I consider other people have more urgent matters for the police to deal with.*

However, the majority of respondents reported that indifference toward heterosexist harassment and other forms of non-physical abuse on the part of a range of service providers, particularly the police, was indicative of indifference toward crimes against GLBT people more broadly. Many respondents reported that while police were more likely to take violent incidents seriously this had less to do with a concern for the heterosexist motivations behind the violence than with the severity of the injuries sustained.

*[A] belief on [the] part of the organisation or individual I'm reporting to that if not a physical injury "homophobic abuse" is trivial and I should just "Get over it".*

## » Heterosexism/homophobia

A large number of respondents reported experiencing heterosexist and homophobic abuse from service providers when reporting or seeking assistance following incidents of heterosexist violence or same sex partner abuse.

*Harassment, misunderstanding, ignorance.*

*Homophobic police officers and their inability to keep their views to themselves.*

This included discrimination across a range of services and not, as one respondent put it, "just [from] the police".

*Prejudice is not just with the police...also amongst...medical workers including doctors.*

*Homophobia within the police force and other services*





Some respondents reported that this professional abuse added to the original heterosexist offence, and acted as a strong disincentive for reporting or seeking assistance in the future.

*Being judged and made to feel even worse*

*Police thought it was amusing (I was traumatised – this just added to the trauma of the experience)*

*You can't report it to the police because they make you feel 1000000000000000 times worse & make you feel like an idiot for even bothering*

A number of respondents reported that fear of being outed or of being open to further violence acted as disincentives to reporting. This was particularly the case for GLBT people resident in rural and regional Victoria.

*Further retribution (I live in a small town).*

*The stigma of being Gay in a small country town*

Although the question was open ended and did not pre-empt or limit the barriers that respondents might identify more than half the responses referred specifically to problems with the police. This is consistent with respondents' criticisms of mainstream police documented throughout this report.

## » Fear

The 286 responses to this question were listed alphabetically on the survey printout; most striking was the block of 17 responses which began with "Fear...". The word "fear" was central to six other responses while the related terms, "worried", "scared", "afraid" and "mistrust" appeared a further 20 times.

*Fear of hetero male ridicule*

*Fear of having my gender history made (more) public*

*Afraid of harassment/misunderstanding/ignorance*

*Being afraid of Police*

*...being outed to parents*

*Walking into a police station, not knowing what kind of reception you would get*

Nearly 14 per cent of all respondents, or one in seven of the GLBT people who answered this question, identified fear or something very close to fear, as a major barrier to their reporting acts of heterosexist violence or same sex partner abuse. This percentage might be even higher if more detailed coding of the data were carried out. In nearly all of the responses the content of what is fearful could be subsumed under one of the other categories ("fear of homophobic treatment", "fear of being outed" etc.). However, it is not only the content of that fear which is troubling. What is perhaps most shocking is that a significant percentage of GLBT Victorians continue to experience fear—fear of heterosexist harassment and violence—as a part of their everyday lives.





## » Other barriers

Significant numbers of respondents reported a range of other barriers to reporting or seeking assistance for heterosexual violence or same sex partner abuse including: shame or embarrassment in reporting; lack of privacy in reporting violent incidents in person or in writing; lack of knowledge or information on where to seek assistance; and difficulties in accessing services. Approximately one in nine respondents reported that there were no barriers to their reporting incidents of heterosexual violence or same sex partner abuse.

### 8.1.2 Increasing the likelihood of reporting/seeking assistance

*I think the police are probably doing a good job. Homophobia is a problem of society.*

*It's not the police's job to change social values...*

*...the fear of being persecuted by the very system that [is] supposed to protect us.*

Of the 390 survey participants 268 or 68.7 per cent of the total sample provided a written response identifying what might be done to increase the likelihood of their reporting incidents of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse. What is striking is both the range of responses and again the overlap between different types of responses. The following discussion draws out some of the areas where respondents believe change is needed, from social and legislative reform to the provision of GLBT-sensitive mainstream services, and concrete strategies for achieving these changes.

## » Being taken seriously

A quarter of respondents reported that knowing that their complaint or situation would be taken seriously would increase their likelihood of reporting or seeking assistance following an incident of heterosexual violence or same sex partner abuse. Thirty-one responses began with the words "Knowledge" or "Belief that". Increased certainty could take many forms. It moved from broad social acceptance of GLBT people, to evidence of successful prosecutions, to the provision of GLBT-sensitive resources, information and services.

*If I knew that they actually cared for the needs of our community.*

*People taking trans people seriously, and recognising how hurtful and emotionally damaging [and] scary verbal abuse can be.*

*More public information*

*Evidence that reports are not only treated seriously but followed up including evidence of convictions.*





## » Improving services

Just under a quarter of respondents suggested improving services as a way of increasing their likelihood of reporting or seeking assistance following an incident of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse. Recommendations ranged from GLBT-sensitivity and awareness training for mainstream service providers to increased provision of GLBT-specific services.

*Simple things like signage...showing that there is an ethos of "acceptability".*

*If a service promoted itself as queer friendly/queer literate.*

*A better understanding of transgender issues by members of the police and health care professions.*

*Having satellite services where you could report crime – like LGB support centres, and also LGB help lines.*

*An obviously lesbian-friendly support service.*

A significant number of respondents who called for the development of GLBT-sensitive mainstream services targeted the police with one respondent suggesting "GLLO training for all police". Nearly half of those who recommended improving services suggested increasing the number of and access to the GLLOs, including increased access to GLLOs outside police stations. As one respondent put it,

*[Make GLLOs] available outside police stations – doing the rounds of youth clubs, schools, mobile units etc.*

A small but significant number of respondents suggested other ways of improving service access for GLBT people including providing an "Interpreting service" and "A disability officer".

## » Social change

One in seven respondents suggested broad social change as a means of increasing their likelihood of reporting or seeking assistance following an incident of heterosexual violence or same sex partner abuse. Suggestions ranged from mainstream campaigns challenging heterosexism and homophobia run through TV, print and radio, to training aimed at changing the attitudes of service providers, to legislative reforms prohibiting not only violence against GLBT people but also harassment and vilification.

*A less homophobic society.*

*If there were more advertisements of it being illegal to discriminate on tv, radio and newspapers to get the message out that its not acceptable.*

*Perhaps public campaigns similar to the "Australia Says No to Violence Against Women" one.*





*A stronger government stance on 'hate' rhetoric and religious 'burn in hell' messages.*

*Better laws to make the harassment actually illegal rather than having to prove discrimination.*

#### » Improved reporting and confidentiality

A smaller but significant percentage suggested improved reporting, including third-party reporting and web-based options which would enable individuals to report and provide incident information without necessarily wishing to take further action.

*I would rather report an incidence to an impartial body – not the police.*

*A community safe centre counselling service that could delegate to police if need be.*

*If there was a website where people could anonymously, or not, note their experiences so they were not alone.*

Ten respondents reported that a guarantee of confidentiality on the part of police and service providers would increase the likelihood of their reporting or seeking assistance following an incident of heterosexual violence or partner abuse.

#### » Seriousness of the incident of abuse

A number of respondents reported that the more serious or violent an incident the more likely they were to seek professional assistance.

*How serious the incident was, if it was only minor like verbal I wouldn't care.*

*If someone was hurt/badly traumatised.*

This suggests that GLBT people balance the severity of a crime against the risks associated with seeking assistance when deciding whether or not to report that crime. As Limbrick puts it "crimes [against GLBT people] have to be very serious to outweigh concerns about going to the police" (Limbrick, 2002:6). However, two other respondents suggested much simpler, material inducements; the one "Winning lotto so I can move to Brazil", the other "A lot of beer".

While the majority of responses focus on concrete strategies for change those listed under "being taken seriously" do not. Rather, they express a deeply felt but unfocused desire that "the community" and "society" care about and care for GLBT people, "If I knew that they actually cared for the needs of our community". Like the word "Fear" in the previous question, the 31 responses that began with "Knowledge" and "Belief that" are a graphic reminder of how powerful the desire to be acknowledged and valued is and how such knowledge and certainty might counter the background fear that haunts the day-to-day lives of GLBT Victorians.







## 8.2 Recommendations

*...just so the rest of the world knows how often this happens.*

The following recommendations are aimed at challenging heterosexism and its effects and increasing GLBT people's reporting of heterosexist violence and same sex partner abuse. The recommendations are based on this report's research and findings and on respondent's suggestions for change. They are also informed by and consistent with the expectations of the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities* that all Victorians are able to live their lives free from the actuality and threat of violence, harassment and discrimination.

### 8.2.1 Challenging heterosexism and promoting sexual orientation and gender identity diversity

The report demonstrates that the actuality and threat of violence are part of GLBT Victorians' day-to-day lives. Individual acts of heterosexist violence may occur anywhere and at any time, ranging from verbal abuse, harassment and personal insult to physical injury and sexual assault. These individual acts are supported by the institutionalisation of discriminatory beliefs, policies and practices. They contribute to heterosexist prejudice and in so doing are part of the social machinery that sustains as it justifies the continued abuse of GLBT people.

Respondents recommended legislative and social reforms that challenge heterosexism and that provide full legal and social recognition of GLBT people.

#### » Legislative reforms

- The development and implementation of legal provisions against heterosexist violence, harassment and vilification
- The full legal recognition of GLBT individuals, same sex couples and non-heteronormative families
- The removal of exemptions from anti-discrimination legislation that allow discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

#### » Social reforms

- The development, implementation and evaluation of government-funded campaigns challenging heterosexism and homophobia run in partnership with GLBT community organisations and other relevant agencies. These should include:
  - ◆ Broad-based public education campaigns, and
  - ◆ Initiatives targeting those groups most likely to engage in heterosexist violence (e.g. young men)





- The development and implementation of government-funded campaigns that aim to increase the GLBT community's capacity to deal with the threat and effects of heterosexual violence
- The development of government-funded initiatives aimed at challenging institutionalised heterosexism and its effects. These should include:
  - ◆ Ongoing development and implementation of school-based policy, resources and training that challenge heterosexism and homophobia, and
  - ◆ Sponsoring a human rights dialogue between faith-based and GLBT organisations to address the social effects of religious intolerance and discrimination against GLBT people.

## 8.2.2 Capacity building

Respondents talked of the failure of mainstream services to deal with the needs of victims of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse. This related not only to a lack of expertise but also an unwillingness or inability of organisations and services to take GLBT issues and violence against GLBT people seriously. Respondents were particularly concerned about the response of mainstream police in the reporting of abuse and in providing initial support. Improving service access and quality depends on inclusive policy and increased resources and training.

### » Inclusive policy

- The inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity as part of anti-discrimination, social inclusion and diversity policies at all levels of government, Victoria Police and publicly-funded agencies that provide services to the victims of violence, and domestic and sexual abuse
- The inclusion of policy provisions that make it mandatory for relevant services to address the needs of victims of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse
- The provision of information and training for senior policy makers and heads of organizations on heterosexual violence and its effects and GLBT-sensitive models of service delivery and practice.

### » GLBT-sensitive mainstream service delivery

- In consultation with GLBT organisations, the development of best practice GLBT-guidelines and processes of service accreditation, and community listings of GLBT-accredited service providers
- The provision of government-funded resources and personnel to ensure that services can meet the needs of their GLBT clients in a timely and appropriate manner
- In consultation with GLBT organisations, the development and implementation of GLBT-sensitivity training and the development of information, resources and appropriate referrals
- The provision of in-service training of all staff on heterosexism and its effects, on GLBT issues and GLBT-sensitive practice and service delivery.





## » GLBT specialist services

- The development of GLBT-specific services where appropriate.

### 8.2.3 Improved reporting

Respondents suggested a number of changes to current reporting mechanisms and practices that would increase their likelihood of reporting heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse to police and other relevant agencies. The suggestions all rely on Victoria Police taking a lead role, working in partnership with government and GLBT community organisations where appropriate.

- The development of a Victoria Police communication strategy to promote awareness of the GLLOs and to encourage increased reporting of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse. This could include:
  - ◆ Greater use of web-based resources and GLBT sites, and
  - ◆ Initiatives targeting GLBT young people
- Increasing the presence of and access to GLLOs outside formal police settings including at GLBT organisations and community events
- The development of diversity and GLBT-sensitivity training for all police personnel that includes working with the victims of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse (see 8.1.2 above)
- The diversification of mechanisms for reporting heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse including anonymous online reporting for incident data collection
- The development of police information and referral protocols for victims of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse in partnership with GLBT community organisations and accredited mainstream services.

### 8.2.4 Research

There is a pressing need for improved and ongoing information and data on the incidence of different types of heterosexual violence including non-physical forms of abuse. At the same time little is known of GLBT people's experiences of pursuing cases of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse through the courts.

- The development and implementation of improved data collection on the incidence and types of heterosexual violence experienced by GLBT Victorians. This may include:
  - ◆ Government support to ensure that Victoria Police's data collection systems have the capacity to collect accurate and comprehensive data, and
  - ◆ A partnership between Victoria Police and GLBT community organisations to provide alternative, community-based options for data collection (and reporting)





- The development of government-funded research targeting cases of heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse that have gone through the courts. The project would gather information on complainants' experiences of taking cases through the criminal justice system with a view to improving the quality of services provided
- The development of research looking at how heterosexism intersects with other forms of identity-based discrimination including race, ethnicity and disability
- The monitoring and evaluation of data collection and of anti-heterosexist campaigns to determine whether or not they are leading to improved reporting of and are effective in reducing, heterosexual violence and same sex partner abuse.



# Appendix A

## Survey questionnaire

### Demographics

### Coming Forward

What is your age? (please type as number e.g. 58)

Are you?

- ☐ Male  
☐ Female  
☐ Transgender M2F  
☐ Transgender F2M  
☐ Other

Other (please specify)

Do you think of yourself primarily as?

- ☐ Gay  
☐ Lesbian  
☐ Bisexual  
☐ Heterosexual/Straight  
☐ Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Where you born in Australia?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

If no then what country

Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

Do you speak a language other than English at home? (Please choose one answer)

- ☐ No, English only  
☐ Yes, Italian  
☐ Yes, Greek  
☐ Yes, Cantonese  
☐ Yes, Arabic  
☐ Yes, Vietnamese  
☐ Yes, Mandarin  
☐ Yes, Other (please specify)

Yes, Other (please specify)

Which best describes your ancestry? (Tick up to two ancestries)

- ☐ Anglo  
☐ Italian  
☐ German  
☐ Chinese  
☐ Greek  
☐ Vietnamese  
☐ Maori  
☐ Lebanese  
☐ Philippines  
☐ Indonesian  
☐ Malaysian  
☐ Indian  
☐ Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)



**What is your current religion? (Please choose one answer)**

- ☐ No religion
- ☐ Catholic
- ☐ Anglican (Church of England)
- ☐ Uniting Church
- ☐ Presbyterian
- ☐ Baptist
- ☐ Greek Orthodox
- ☐ Buddhism
- ☐ Hinduism
- ☐ Islam
- ☐ Judaism
- ☐ Wicca
- ☐ Other religion (please specify)

**Other religion (please specify)**

Single line text input

**Do you actively participate in that religion?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Are you currently attending a school or other educational institution?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Yes (please specify)**

	Part-time	Full-time
Secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical or further education institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
University or other higher education institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other educational institution (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Other educational institution (please specify)**

Single line text input

**What is the highest level of formal education you have completed? (Please choose one answer)**

- ☐ Primary School
- ☐ Part Secondary School
- ☐ Completed Secondary School
- ☐ Tertiary Diploma/Trade Certificate
- ☐ University Degree
- ☐ Postgraduate Degree

**Are you currently employed?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Yes (please specify)**

- ☐ Full time
- ☐ Part time
- ☐ Casual

**No (please specify)**

- ☐ Unpaid household duties
- ☐ Volunteer
- ☐ unemployed

**What is your current occupation?**

- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Professional
- ☐ Technical/Trade
- ☐ Community/Personal Service Sector
- ☐ Clerical/Administration
- ☐ Sales
- ☐ Machinery Operator/Driver
- ☐ Labourer
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**Other (please specify)**

Single line text input

**Are you currently receiving a pension or benefit?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Yes (please specify)**

Single line text input

**What state/territory do you live in?**

- ☐ VIC
- ☐ QLD
- ☐ NSW
- ☐ ACT
- ☐ WA
- ☐ SA
- ☐ NT

**What is the post code of your current address?**

Single line text input

**Who lives with you? (tick all that apply)**

- ☐ Live alone
- ☐ Partner
- ☐ Children
- ☐ Parents/Relatives
- ☐ Housemates/Friends
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**Other (please specify)**

Single line text input

PAGE BREAK

**Relationship History**

**Have you ever been in a married /defacto relationship with someone of the opposite sex?**

- ☐ Yes, Previously
- ☐ Yes, Currently
- ☐ No

**Are you currently in a same-sex relationship?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**How many past same-sex relationships have you been in? (Please type in numbers only)**

Single line text input

**Do you have children or step children?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No



How many of your children and/or step children are:

Under 12 years of age

Between 12 and 20 years

Between 21 and 30 years

Over 30 years of age

What level of support do you provide to your children and/or step children?

Yes No

Primary care giver (children live primarily with you) ☐ ☐

Shared parenting responsibilities (children do not live primarily with you) ☐ ☐

Financial support only ☐ ☐

No support ☐ ☐

Other (please specify) ☐ ☐

Other (please specify)

PAGE BREAK

## Experiencing Homophobic Violence and Harassment

Are there situations where you hide your sexuality or gender identity for fear of violence or harassment (please choose for each location)

Never Occasionally Usually

At work ☐ ☐ ☐

At home ☐ ☐ ☐

With family members ☐ ☐ ☐

At an educational institution ☐ ☐ ☐

Accessing services ☐ ☐ ☐

Religious events ☐ ☐ ☐

Social/community events ☐ ☐ ☐

In public ☐ ☐ ☐

Other (please specify) ☐ ☐ ☐

Other (please specify)

Have you EVER experienced any of the following on the basis of your sexuality or gender identity (tick all that apply)

Alone As a same-sex couple In a group

Received written threats of abuse including emails and graffiti ☐ ☐ ☐

Verbal abuse (including hateful or obscene phone calls) ☐ ☐ ☐

Harassment such as being spat at and offensive gestures ☐ ☐ ☐

Threats of physical violence ☐ ☐ ☐

Physical attack or assault without a weapon (punched, kicked, beaten) ☐ ☐ ☐

Physical attack or assault with a weapon (knife, bottle, stones) ☐ ☐ ☐

Deliberate damage to property or vandalism - House ☐ ☐ ☐

Deliberate damage to property or vandalism - Car ☐ ☐ ☐

Deliberate damage to property or vandalism - Work ☐ ☐ ☐

Theft - Money ☐ ☐ ☐

Theft - Car ☐ ☐ ☐

Theft - Property ☐ ☐ ☐

House - Break in ☐ ☐ ☐

Sexual assault ☐ ☐ ☐

Other (please specify) ☐ ☐ ☐

None of the above ☐ ☐ ☐

Other (please specify)

In the PAST 2 YEARS have you experienced any of the following on the basis of your sexuality or gender identity (tick all that apply)

Alone As a same-sex couple In a group

Written threats of abuse including emails and graffiti ☐ ☐ ☐

Verbal abuse (including hateful or obscene phone calls) ☐ ☐ ☐

Harassment such as being spat at and offensive gestures ☐ ☐ ☐



Threats of physical violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical attack or assault without a weapon (punched, kicked, beaten)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical attack or assault with a weapon (knife, bottle, stones)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliberate damage to property or vandalism - House	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliberate damage to property or vandalism - Car	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliberate damage to property or vandalism - Work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Theft - Money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Theft - Car	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Theft - Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
House - Break in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

---

**Other (please specify)**

Space for 2 lines of text

**In the past 2 years have family, children, friends or associates of yours been subject to violence or harassment because of their association with you because of your sexuality or gender identity**

☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Don't know

**Yes (please specify)**

Space for 3 lines of text

**Which incident in the past 2 years was your MOST RECENT experience of homophobic violence or harassment? (Please choose one answer)**

☐ Written threats of abuse including emails and graffiti  
☐ Verbal abuse (including hateful or obscene phone calls)  
☐ Harassment such as being spat at and offensive gestures  
☐ Threats of physical violence  
☐ Physical attack or assault without a weapon (punched, kicked, beaten)  
☐ Physical attack or assault with a weapon (knife, bottle, stones)  
☐ Deliberate damage to property or vandalism - House  
☐ Deliberate damage to property or vandalism - Car  
☐ Deliberate damage to property or vandalism - Work  
☐ Theft - Money  
☐ Theft - Car  
☐ Theft - Property  
☐ House - Break in  
☐ Sexual assault  
☐ Other (please specify)  
☐ None of the above

**Other (please specify)**

Space for 2 lines of text

**Was the violence or harassment preceded or accompanied by homophobic language?**

☐ Yes  
☐ No

**Was the violence or harassment a single incident or was it part of an ongoing series of incidents?**

☐ Single incident  
☐ Repeated/Ongoing incident

**Did the incident result in:**

☐ Cuts/Abrasions  
☐ Broken bones  
☐ Loss of consciousness  
☐ No physical injury  
☐ Other physical injury (please specify)

**Other physical injury (please specify)**

Space for 2 lines of text

**Did the incident require medical attention?**

☐ Doctor/Outpatient  
☐ Hospital admission  
☐ Basic first aid by myself/other  
☐ No medical attention required







Where did that incident take place? (Please choose one answer)

- ☐ Your house
- ☐ Perpetrator's house
- ☐ Someone else's house
- ☐ Work place or place of study
- ☐ At or near a gay and/or lesbian venue
- ☐ At or near a gay and/or lesbian community event
- ☐ At or near a community event (other than gay and/or lesbian)
- ☐ Licensed premises (other than gay or lesbian)
- ☐ Other retail
- ☐ On the street
- ☐ A beat
- ☐ Beach or Park (not beat related)
- ☐ Train station
- ☐ Train
- ☐ Tram/tramstop
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Space for 2 lines of text

In what town or suburb did the incident take place? (include postcode if you know it)

Single line text input

How many perpetrators were there?

- ☐ One
- ☐ Two or Three
- ☐ Four or more
- ☐ Don't know

What was the gender of the perpetrator/s?

- ☐ Male only
- ☐ Female only
- ☐ Both male and female
- ☐ Don't know

Which of the following best describes the perpetrator/s relationship to you? (Please choose one answer)

- ☐ Stranger/no prior relationship
- ☐ Casual acquaintance
- ☐ Partner
- ☐ Family member (parent or sibling)
- ☐ Other relative
- ☐ Neighbour
- ☐ Work colleague
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Client
- ☐ Other (please specify)

other (please specify)

Single line text input

When did the incident take place? (Month, Day, Time of day)

Space for 6 lines of text

Please briefly describe what happened to you during the incident.

Space for 6 lines of text

Following your most recent experience of homophobic violence or harassment in the past 2 years, did you seek help from any of the following? (Please choose one answer)

- ☐ Partner
- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Family, relatives
- ☐ Passer-by
- ☐ Did not seek help
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Space for 2 lines of text

Following your most recent experience of homophobic harassment or violence in the past 2 years, did you report or seek professional assistance from any of the following? (tick all that apply)

- ☐ The Police
- ☐ Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLOs)
- ☐ Lawyer or legal service
- ☐ Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- ☐ Victims of Crime Bureau
- ☐ Switchboard (Gay and Lesbian Telephone counselling service)
- ☐ Victorian AIDS Council
- ☐ Other gay and lesbian community or support group
- ☐ Sexual assault service
- ☐ Community health service
- ☐ WorkCover
- ☐ Counsellor, psychologist or social worker
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ Did not seek help

Other (please specify)

Space for 3 lines of text

How did you decide on the agency or agencies you reported or sought professional assistance from following your most recent experience of homophobic harassment or violence in the past 2 years?

Space for 6 lines of text



For each of the services that you sought assistance from, how supportive were they?

	Not supportive	Reasonably supportive	Very supportive
The Police	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLOs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawyer or legal service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victims of Crime Bureau	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Switchboard (Gay and Lesbian Telephone counselling service)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victorian AIDS Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other gay and lesbian community or support group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community health service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WorkCover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Counsellor, psychologist or social worker ☐ ☐ ☐

Other (please specify) ☐ ☐ ☐

other (please specify)

Space for 2 lines of text

For each of the services that you sought assistance from, how valuable was the service they provided?

	Not valuable	Reasonably valuable	Very valuable
The Police	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLOs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawyer or legal service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victims of Crime Bureau	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Switchboard (Gay and Lesbian Telephone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

counselling service)

Victorian AIDS Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other gay and lesbian community or support group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community health service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WorkCover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counsellor, psychologist or social worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

Single line text input

Tell us more about your experiences of any of these services if you wish

Space for 6 lines of text

If you didn't report the incident to or seek assistance from a professional organisation why not? (tick all that apply)

- ☐ Minor incident
- ☐ Fear of being outed
- ☐ Didn't know where to go for assistance
- ☐ Did not believe would be dealt with fairly
- ☐ Fear of further violence or discrimination
- ☐ Homophobia of the organisation
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Single line text input

PAGE BREAK

### Experiencing Abuse within Same-Sex Relationships

Have you been in a same-sex relationship where your partner abused you?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No



In that relationship were you? (tick all that apply)

- ☐ Sexually abused or forced to have sex when you didn't want to
- ☐ Physically attacked/hit
- ☐ Physically injured/bruising
- ☐ Physically injured needing medical attention
- ☐ Regularly insulted
- ☐ Threatened with being outed
- ☐ Subject to having medications withheld
- ☐ Isolated from friends and/or family
- ☐ Monitored or checked-up on all the time
- ☐ Deprived of financial independence
- ☐ Ever in fear of your life
- ☐ Other types of abuse (please specify)

Other types of abuse (please specify)

Space for 2 lines of text

Are you still in this relationship?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

After the relationship ended were you subject to harassment from your ex-partner?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

After the relationship ended did your ex-partner: (tick all that apply)

- ☐ Stalk you
- ☐ Make harassing/threatening phone calls to you
- ☐ Send harassing/threatening text messages to you
- ☐ Send harassing emails to you
- ☐ Do any of the above to family, friends or work colleagues
- ☐ Involve your family, friends, or work colleagues in any other way
- ☐ Change your internet profile without your knowledge
- ☐ Create an internet profile about you without your knowledge
- ☐ Place graffiti in public places with your contact details
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ None of the above

Other (please specify)

Space for 2 lines of text

PAGE BREAK

### Responding to Same-Sex Partner Abuse

[Page shown when answer to question 'Have you been in a same-sex relationship where your partner abused you?' is 'Yes']

Did you report the abuse to: (tick all that apply)

	Yes	No
Police	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLOs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Lawyer of legal service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family violence service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victims of Crime Bureau	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify)

Single line text input

How did you decide on the agency or agencies you reported or sought professional assistance from, regarding your experience of same-sex partner abuse

Space for 6 lines of text

For each of the services that you sought assistance from, how supportive were they?

	Not supportive	Reasonably supportive	Very supportive
The Police	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Officers

Lawyer or legal service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family violence service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victims of Crime Bureau	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For each of the services that you sought assistance from, how valuable was the service they provided?

	Not valuable	Reasonably valuable	Very valuable
The Police	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawyer or legal service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual assault service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family violence service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Victims of Crime Bureau	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



- Counselling ☐ ☐ ☐
- Other ☐ ☐ ☐

If you didn't report the incident to, or seek assistance from a professional organisation why not? (tick all that apply)

- ☐ Minor incident
- ☐ Fear of being outed
- ☐ Didn't know where to go for assistance
- ☐ Did not believe would be dealt with fairly
- ☐ Fear of further violence or discrimination
- ☐ Homophobia of the organisation
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Space for 2 lines of text

PAGE BREAK

### Proceeding to Court

Have you taken a complaint of homophobic harassment or violence or of same sex partner abuse to court?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Were you treated with respect and your issues taken seriously?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

No (please provide details)

Space for 6 lines of text

PAGE BREAK

### Victoria Police Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit

Have you heard of Victoria Police's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLOs)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Where did you find out about the GLLOs? (Please choose one answer)

- ☐ Police source
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Gay publication
- ☐ Gay media
- ☐ Police website
- ☐ Other website
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Space for 2 lines of text

Have you ever contacted a GLLO?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How did you make contact with a GLLO? (Please choose one answer)

- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Email
- ☐ In person at a police station
- ☐ In person at a community event
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Single line text input

Does the existence of the GLLOs increase the likelihood of your reporting an incident of homophobic harassment or violence or same sex partner abuse to the Police?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How would you prefer to be able to contact a GLLO? (tick all that apply)

- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Website form
- ☐ Face to face
- ☐ At a police station
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Space for 2 lines of text

What are the BARRIERS to your reporting or seeking professional assistance following an incident of homophobic harassment or violence or same-sex partner abuse?

Space for 6 lines of text

What would INCREASE your willingness to report or seek professional assistance following an incident of homophobic harassment or violence or same-sex partner abuse?

Space for 6 lines of text

# Appendix B

## Steering group membership

Name	Position/Organisation*
A/Prof Anne Mitchell	Director, Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria La Trobe University
Sergeant Scott Davis	Manager, Gay and Lesbian Advisory Unit, Victoria Police
Maggie Durnick	Manager Victims Advisory Unit, Victoria Police
Fay Daniel	Senior Sergeant Family Violence Unit, Victoria Police
Liam Leonard	Research Fellow, ARCSHS, La Trobe University
Anne Goldsbrough	Supervising Magistrate, Crimes Family Violence and Family Law
Georgie Ferrari	Member Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby
Lyn Morgain	CEO, ALSO Foundation
Deb Pietsch	Manager ALSO Foundation Rural Network & Project Manager Human Rights Charter, DHS
David Arblaster	Manager, Diversity Issues Unit, DOJ
Jamie Gardiner	Member of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
Lauren Christopher	Member Transgender Victoria
Greg Adkins	Manager AVP Victoria

\*Position at time of appointment to steering committee





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