

# Guide for media – reporting on gender identity

<b>Do</b> 	<b>Don't</b> 
Use terms like 'transgender', 'trans' or 'trans and gender diverse'*	Use terms like 'tranny', 'transgendered' or 'transgenderism'
Ask for a person's pronoun (for example, he/him/his)	Assume a person's pronoun
Respect that some people have gender neutral pronouns (for example, singular they/them/their)	Question or 'correct' their pronoun (the singular 'they' dates back to the 14th century) 
Only use the name and pronoun the person provides	Use the person's former name or the wrong pronoun (unless they give you explicit permission)
Talk to trans and gender diverse people, listen to their experiences and include their perspectives in your articles	Silence or ignore trans and gender diverse people by only including the perspectives of those with no experience of being trans or gender diverse
Ask questions in a respectful manner	Ask about someone's genitals or surgery (unless they give you explicit permission)
Use 'transgender' or 'trans' as adjectives (for example, a trans man) 	Refer to people as 'a transgender' or 'transgenders'
Remember that sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, and intersex* are separate concepts	Combine or conflate any of these terms/concepts
Acknowledge the diversity of male, female and non-binary* gender identities	Only concentrate on or represent trans women
Acknowledge the varied life experiences of trans and gender diverse people	Assume the trans and gender diverse community is homogeneous or of one mind, or represent it as such 
Remember that trans and gender diverse people are people first	Describe or define people by their gender identity unless it's relevant
Represent trans and gender diverse people fairly	Sensationalise on the basis of gender identity
Represent trans and gender diverse people with respect	Treat trans and gender diverse people as objects or curiosities
Research the basics before interviewing or writing 	Expect trans and gender diverse people to act as teachers, or to answer questions on behalf of all trans or gender diverse people.
Keep an open mind	Judge

**'It might seem like a small thing, but it makes a huge difference to people in LGBTI communities when the media represents them accurately and respectfully.'**

– Kristen Hilton, Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner

**'All we need is respect – use the correct pronoun, if you don't know, ask. If you get it wrong (sometimes I do as well) apologise and move on. It's not difficult, and it makes a big difference to people.'**

– Ro Allen, Gender and Sexuality Commissioner



**Victorian Equal Opportunity  
& Human Rights Commission**

\* To learn more about terminology and language, you can read the Victorian Public Sector's inclusive language guide at [www.vic.gov.au/equality/inclusive-language-guide.html](http://www.vic.gov.au/equality/inclusive-language-guide.html) or GLAAD's language guide for media at [glaad.org/reference/transgender](http://glaad.org/reference/transgender)