



Summary for Australia on Homophobia in Sport

Out on the Fields is the first international study and largest conducted on homophobia in sport. Nearly 9500 people took part including **3006** lesbian, gay, bisexual and straight **Australians**. The study focused on issues of sexuality in team sports and the English speaking countries. Repucom conducted the research with the study being initiated by Bingham Cup Sydney 2014 and supported by a coalition of sports organisations. **The study methodology and results were reviewed by a panel of seven academics from six universities including Victoria University (Australia), Penn State University, University of Massachusetts (USA); Brunel University (UK); University of Winnipeg and Lavel University (Canada).**

KEY FINDINGS

Sport Participation

- The majority of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) participants said they played a wide variety of Australian sports, particularly in their youth (under 22)
- 1 in 5 (22%) gay men did not play youth team sports. Many of these men cited negative experiences in school PE class (43%) and fear they would be rejected because of their sexuality (36%) as reasons

Sporting Culture

- **45% of all participants and 57% of gay men believed LGB people are 'not accepted at all' or only 'accepted a little' in sporting culture**
- 56% of all participants and 72% of gay men believe homophobia is more common in Australian sport than the rest of society

Homophobia and Discrimination

- **80% of participants witnessed or experienced homophobia in sport (both straight and LGB)**
- Participants were more likely to have witnessed homophobia than experienced it personally. Half of gays and lesbians and more than one in four (28%) straight men said they had personally experienced homophobia

Of those who have been personally targeted:

- **27% of gay men and 17% of lesbians said they have received verbal threats of harm**
- 34% of gay men and 19% of lesbians have been bullied
- 15% of gay men and 9% of lesbians have been physically assaulted
- 85% of gay men and 84% of lesbians have received verbal slurs such as "faggot" or "dyke"

Research Conducted by

Study Initiated and Managed by

REPUcom



Full report at www.outonthefields.com

Youth Sport (under 22)

- **70% believe youth team sports are not safe or welcoming for LGB people**
- 87% of gay youth and 75% of lesbian Australian youth said they were at least partially in the closet, keeping their sexuality secret from all or some of their teammates
- Many cited fears of discrimination as the reason for remaining in the closet, for example 55% of gay youth feared they would be bullied and 37% were worried about discrimination from coaches and officials. Meanwhile, 48% of gay youth and 44% were worried about being rejected by teammates

Spectator Stands

- **75% of Australians believe an openly gay, lesbian or bisexual person would not be very safe as a spectator at a sporting event**
- Australian participants believe spectator stands (48%) followed by school PE class (13%) are the most likely locations for homophobia to occur

How Australia Compares to other English Speaking Countries

- Australia ranked in the middle on many measures, though quite poorly on some key measures such as whether gay athletes feel they are welcome in sport and feel safe to be open about their sexuality
- Australia had the highest number of gay men (13%) who felt they were “not accepted at all” in sporting culture which was nearly three times as high as Canada (5%)
- Australia also had the second highest number (87%) of young gay athletes who remain in the closet (after New Zealand) and the highest number of gay youth who stay in the closet because of a fear of bullying (55%) and discrimination from coaches and officials (37%)
- Spectator stands were a major concern to Australians, with nearly half of all participants saying this is where homophobia in sport is most likely to occur. This was the second highest number after the UK (49%)
- The vast majority of Australian (75%) participants also felt LGB people are not very safe as spectators at sporting events, though they were less likely to believe this than those in the UK (85%)

SOLUTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants were asked to select a range of possible solutions or could submit their own. The top three solutions selected were:

1. Start early with schools, coaches and parents taking homophobia and bullying seriously in sporting environments
2. National sporting organisations need to adopt and promote clear anti-homophobia and LGB inclusion policies for professional and amateur players
3. More LGB professional sporting stars need to come out of the closet to set an example

Recommendations from Researchers

- In many parts of the world PE teachers receive no training about homophobia or supporting LGB athletes. Coaches, physical education teachers and sport officials need mandatory training on how best to support LGB athletes
- Sporting organisations, schools and teams need to adopt a zero tolerance for players and fans who engage in homophobic behaviour

About the study

The data for Out on the Fields was collected through a 10-15 minute online survey with recruitment focused primarily on the UK, USA, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and Ireland. The study focuses on issues of sexuality, not gender, which is why LGB is used rather than the now standard LGBTI. People from all sexualities took part, including nearly 25% heterosexual.