



STRATEGIC PLAN

16/19





“We see a key value of A Gender Agenda is it can influence our organisation in supporting pride and diversity. We would love to see A Gender Agenda supporting us to do our work better”

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW

Introduction

The development of a new strategic plan for A Gender Agenda (AGA) comes at an exciting time, with the ACT Government continuing to recognise the important and ongoing role for the organisation in creating a more accepting and diverse community. This has included a recent commitment to provide enhanced funding for the next three years. This has enabled AGA to develop a new strategic plan that includes a strengthened vision and mission, and a renewed level of stability and certainty.

Since its establishment in 2005, AGA has contributed to significant achievements in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the intersex, transgender and gender diverse community. It has also been instrumental in assisting to improve recognition of the community, remove discrimination and reduce stigma. Through its work, AGA has demonstrated its effectiveness, value and ability to work positively and constructively in an often challenging environment.

Nevertheless, there are still immense challenges in supporting the intersex, transgender and gender diverse community and advocating for change. The community still faces significant discrimination and barriers. While there is increased recognition of the need to remove discrimination by broad sections of the general community, there are still conservative elements that seek to roll back advances that have been made in law and policy reform. While there is more positive coverage of issues in the media, representations of our community are still often stereotyped and sensationalised.

This occurs at a time of significant change for the sectors in which AGA operates, both locally and nationally. These sectors are changing, and there are new expectations and requirements being placed on organisations working in these areas. AGA needs to continue to demonstrate its connection to the community, the impact of its work, how it is delivering effective and efficient services and how it is working to deliver long term sustainability.

How We Developed The This Strategic Plan

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN INCLUDED:

- an environmental and sector scan to identify key issues and trends;
- a review of organisational performance in areas such as finance, membership and activities;
- a stakeholder survey so members and other stakeholders could provide views;
- targeted focus groups with AGA members;
- stakeholder interviews with organisations who either had strong working relationships with AGA or were agencies that AGA wishes to build connections with;
- discussions with both the board and staff to get a sense of key priorities and issues.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the many people who provided input, perspectives and expertise in the development of this plan.

Who Is Our Community

AGA defines our community as people who are intersex, transgender and gender diverse, as well as their families, friends and allies.

Our vision

A world where intersex, transgender and gender diverse people live without discrimination or fear.

Our mission

Working with the intersex, transgender and gender diverse community, AGA seeks to remove discrimination and break down barriers.

WE DO THIS THROUGH:

1

Improving the mental health, physical health and wellbeing of intersex, transgender and gender diverse people through providing information, resources, social support and connections to services;

2

Improving the human rights of intersex, transgender and gender diverse people through law reform, and changing policies and practices;

3

Improving the understanding of the issues faced by our community through providing education and training to professionals and organisations that work with our community.

Inclusion, safety and respect:

AGA recognises and respects the diversity of individuals' experiences and perspectives. AGA is committed to welcoming and creating safe spaces for all people regardless of gender identity, intersex status, age, race, culture, sexual orientation, abilities and disabilities.

Pride and

ambition:

AGA believes our community has a right to a strong voice, support and representation. AGA is proud of the impact it has made to remove discrimination and improve the health and wellbeing of our community. AGA will continue to be ambitious in the goals that it seeks to achieve, and the positive impact it strives to make.

Our Values

Courage and resilience:

Our community has always existed and always will exist. AGA pays respect to the courage by which all our community members live their lives. We also acknowledges the resilience required to combat stigmatisation and discrimination. AGA draws on these community assets to create an organisation that is determined, bold and resolute.

Contribution and

agency:

AGA recognises the value brought by all members of the community, and the inherent dignity of individuals. AGA seeks to create an environment where our members are encouraged and empowered to improve individual and community outcomes.

Accountability and transparency:

AGA's core accountability is back to its community. AGA is committed to being professional, transparent and open.

How we work

- We recognise the central role of **lived experience** to our organisation, and utilise strategies such as peer-based approaches and volunteering as ways to access this expertise. We recognise the importance of embedding our work within the community and creating spaces that are safe and owned by the community.
- We work within a **human rights framework** that recognises that the health and wellbeing of community members is intimately linked to discrimination and the denial of these human rights. In particular, we recognise the significant mental health impacts on our community of discrimination and stigma.
- AGA works from a basis of recognising the **impact of the intersectionality of marginalisation** and the systemic structures that discriminate and connect all marginalised people. We recognise that many people in our community live under multiple forms of disadvantage which occur due to gender identity, intersex status, race, age, disability and sexual orientation.
- We use **community development and empowerment** models of working that recognise the significant assets that individuals and communities already have to respond to the issues they face. In working in this manner, we aim to be strengths-based rather than solely focusing on problems and issues.
- We recognise the importance of working at the individual, community and systemic level to **create long-term sustainable change**.
- AGA values **collaborative partnerships** and seeks to partner with those who share our values, vision and enable us to increase our impact and effectiveness.



Strategic priorities

1 OUR COMMUNITY'S MENTAL HEALTH, PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IS NURTURED THROUGH ACCESS TO SAFE AND WELCOMING PLACES THAT PROVIDE CONNECTION, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT.

WE WILL SEEK TO:

- Secure appropriate, long term and welcoming premises that will enable the community to connect, share, engage, increase skills and understanding;
- Deliver programs that are based on a strong community engagement model that is inclusive and accessible;
- Provide information and resources for individuals, families, professionals and organisations regarding issues of relevance to the intersex, transgender and gender diverse community;
- Provide high quality and tailored programs and activities that respond to community need including peer based work;
- Provide advice, connection and referrals to professionals and organisations supportively and efficiently for members of the community;
- Enhance the ability of the organisation to appropriately engage in issues of relevance to the intersex community; and
- Undertake, facilitate and disseminate research that increases our understanding of our community, and the issues faced by members of our community.

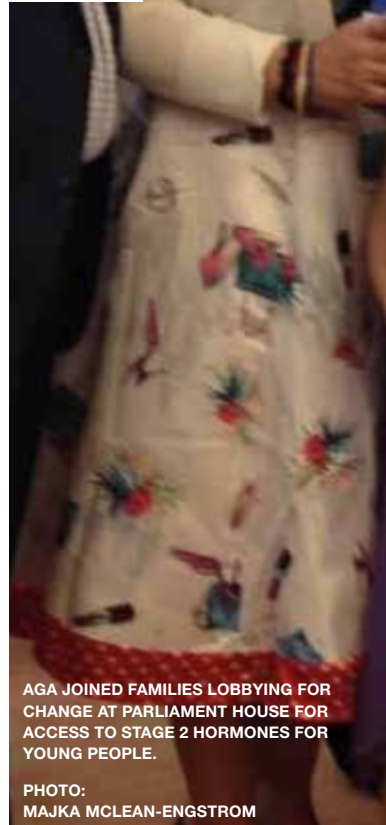


WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING THIS AIM WHEN AGA HAS:

- *secured appropriate, accessible and welcoming long term premises;*
- *achieved greater diversity in the people who are involved with AGA;*
- *delivered well attended and relevant community programs, opportunities for peer-based connection, and produced high quality information and resources;*
- *Supported our community to access relevant and appropriate services; and*
- *Provided access to relevant and locally based research about the community it serves.*

2

OUR COMMUNITY IS NOT SUBJECTED TO LAWS, POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT ARE DISCRIMINATORY.



AGA JOINED FAMILIES LOBBYING FOR CHANGE AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE FOR ACCESS TO STAGE 2 HORMONES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

PHOTO:
MAJKA MCLEAN-ENGSTROM

TO ENSURE THIS, WE SHALL:

- In collaboration with governments, partner organisations and our community, continue to advocate for law and policy reform in priority areas;
- Develop a policy platform that articulates the priority law and policy advocacy priorities of AGA;
- Continue to provide proactive and reactive policy advice to governments, organisations and other interested parties to improve the lives of our community; and
- Promote best practice models to other jurisdictions in relation to law and policy reform that have been achieved in the ACT.



WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING THIS AIM WHEN AGA HAS:

- *contributed to law reform and policy change in areas that have been identified as priorities;*
- *been identified by partner organisations and particular groups within our community as effective in achieving change at a legal and systemic level; and*
- *articulated our policy development processes and identified an ongoing platform of priority work in the areas of policy and law reform.*

“I think it is a huge task to cater for all groups and responsibilities and that AGA does a great work in our community and the broader community. Thank you everyone involved”

SURVEY PARTICIPANT

3

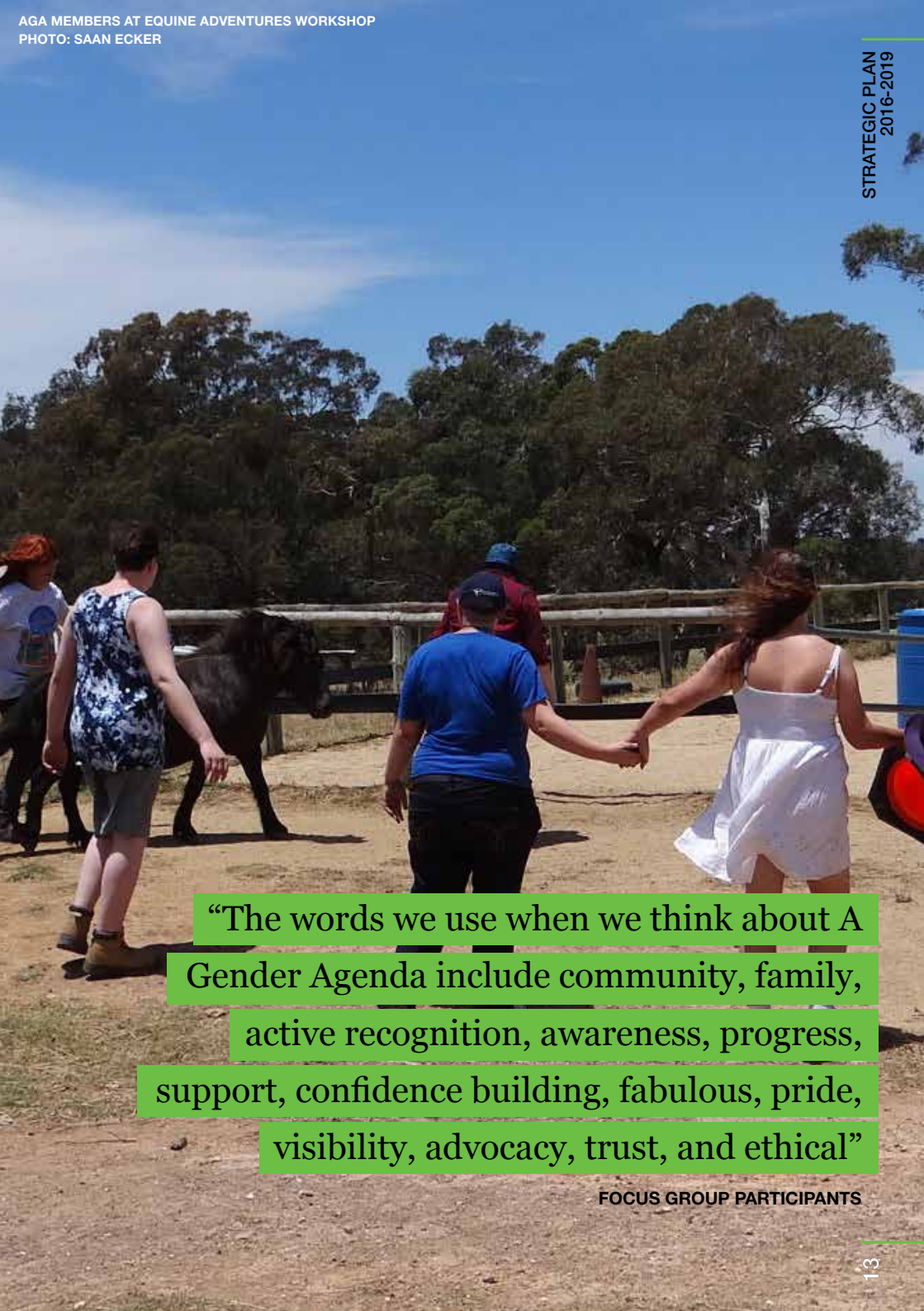
OUR COMMUNITY ACCESSES INFORMED AND RESPECTFUL SERVICES IN MENTAL HEALTH, HEALTH, EDUCATION, SOCIAL SUPPORT AND OTHER SECTORS.

TO ACHIEVE THIS, WE SHALL:

- Develop and grow the training and education program of AGA;
- Facilitate and support respectful pathways for counselling and mental health services for our community;
- Support networks of health professionals developing expertise that is relevant for our community;
- Engage with medical practitioners who are working with members of our community to improve access and health outcomes; and
- Engage with mainstream community and service organisations to ensure that our community is able to access support in areas of needs, such as housing and employment.

WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING THIS AIM WHEN AGA HAS:

- *developed a business plan to support its training and education activities;*
- *been recognised as a quality provider of training and education services;*
- *generated income through its training and education activities ;*
- *supported a number of professional networks/ communities of practice working with members of our community in areas including mental health, general practice and primary health; and*
- *witnessed an improvement in the level of service provided by mainstream services to members of our community.*



“The words we use when we think about A Gender Agenda include community, family, active recognition, awareness, progress, support, confidence building, fabulous, pride, visibility, advocacy, trust, and ethical”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS


4

OUR ORGANISATION IS SUSTAINABLE, CREDIBLE AND PROFESSIONAL, AND IS INFORMED BY THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF OUR COMMUNITY.

TO DELIVER THIS, WE WILL:

- Diversify and grow the membership of AGA to increase the impact and the reach of our organisation;
- Engage and empower members to contribute to the organisation through volunteering and other opportunities;
- Invest in partnerships with values-matched organisations to increase the impact and reach of our organisation and the achievement of our vision and mission;
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations including investing in appropriate systems and streamlining processes and procedures;
- Diversify and grow the income of AGA;
- Strengthen and invest in the governance of the organisation to improve the stability of the organisation and its accountability to members and stakeholders;
- Nurture and support a professional staff team that is empowered to implement the strategic directions of the organisation; and
- Seek opportunities to engage with the media and relevant community and social network to promote positive visibility of our community.





“Here at A Gender Agenda we are doing more than coming to work – we are building a community”

STAFF MEMBER INTERVIEW

WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING THIS AIM WHEN AGA HAS:

- *doubled the membership of the organisation;*
- *diversified the income of the organisation, so that no single source of income is more than 70%, and there are income streams separate from Government grants;*
- *negotiated effective collaborative partnerships with kindred organisations working on issues of relevance to the community;*
- *attracted a strong pool of members interested in participating in the governance of the organisation;*
- *doubled the volunteer engagement of the organisation;*
- *has maintained a stable core staff team;*
- *attracted increased interest by mainstream media, and increased engagement through social media platforms.*



A Gender Agenda

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