



workshop
scenarios

PRIDE WORKSHOP

Balancing client prejudice
with a diverse workplace

scenario



themes



advice



scenario



Teleconference with client

A graduate, associate and partner are in a teleconference with a client.

The lawyers work for a big commercial firm with an active LGBTIQ+ employee network.

The graduate is bisexual - the senior associate knows this but not the partner.

The senior associate does not proclaim to be an Ally but understands it can be difficult for the LGBTIQ+ community.

The client proceeds to mock a 'gay lawyer' with an effeminate voice making derogatory comments. The graduate is visibly uncomfortable.

What would you expect the graduate, senior associate and partner to do in this scenario?

themes from the workshop



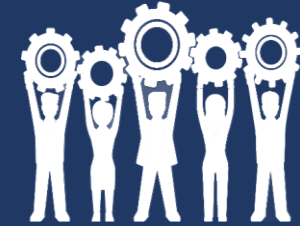
“The graduate is unlikely to take action – the obligation is on the senior staff to act.”

“Don’t assume the client representative speaks for the company.”

“It doesn’t matter if anyone in the meeting was offended – it is unacceptable behaviour.”

“How you respond will vary, depending on your relationship with the client”

advice



Partner and/or Associate

- Intervene and redirect the discussion to the relevant matter
- Acknowledge after the call that you don't support those views and intend to follow up with the client
- Follow up with a 1:1 conversation with the client that the comments were not welcomed or appropriate.

Associate

- Don't "out" the graduate, but make sure to follow-up with them later to check-in

Graduate

- Follow up with the Associate, Partner, LGBTIQ network member or Human Resources for advice.

scenario



Email complaint from client

One of your firm's biggest clients has posted clearly anti-LGBTIQ+ material and supported groups that discriminate against the LGBTIQ+ community.

That client has received an email from the firm saying that the firm (amongst other things) is an employer supportive of marriage equality and inclusion.

The client writes to the firm expressing their objection that *"the firm should keep its views to itself"* and stay out of people's personal relationships, in particular 'unnatural' ones.

The managing partner has sought the advice of the firm's LGBTIQ+ employee network.

What do you tell your managing partner to do?

themes from the workshop

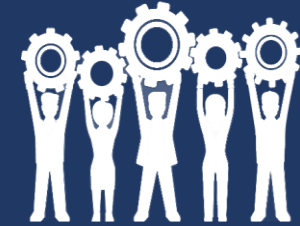


"If you want to be an inclusive firm that values diversity you have to be prepared to stand up for those convictions and values or lose face with your employees."

"We recognise we all have differing values and beliefs – respecting these differences is what inclusion looks like"

Seeking input and advice demonstrates good leadership from the Managing Partner – you don't have to have all the answers"

advice



- Don't compromise your values.
- Have a genuine and respectful conversation with the client about it – don't shy away from a conversation that could lead to a common understanding.
- Support your employees that don't feel comfortable supporting the client (regardless of how they identify)
- Be bold – stand for something and be willing to part ways if you can't reconcile your values with the clients.

scenario



Conversation at a client function

Two female lawyers attend a client function; one identifies at work as bisexual, the other is an ally.

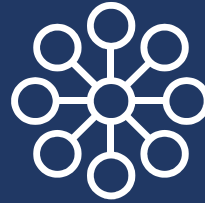
After a few drinks, the client starts talking about their dating life when they were the lawyers' age.

The client specifically asks the lawyers how many boyfriends they have had.

The bisexual lawyer is currently dating a female and is uncertain how to answer, having dated both men and women in the past.

What would you do or say in this scenario?

themes from the workshop



“LGBTIQ+ identifying members often find themselves in this scenario – they will often have their own way of handling it”

“Generally people don’t mean harm or offence and would be quite embarrassed for their comment”

“When this happens to me – if I feel comfortable I usually just tell the truth and think nothing of it”

advice



The Ally

- Read the cues from your colleague, they may be fine and comfortable in responding.
- Check in with your colleague and ask them how they would like your support in future.

The Lawyer

- If you haven't found yourself in this or a similar situation ask your LGBTIQ+ Network or a colleague for advice on how they would handle it.
- Be honest, be polite and be a role model by and using it as an educational opportunity.

scenario



Client education

A lawyer and partner meet with a client in person. The lawyer and partner work at a boutique firm with no committee supporting the LGBTI+ community. The lawyer is an Ally and the partner does not have much knowledge regarding the LGBTI+ community. There was recently a pride march so the client voices their support for the pride march saying they love their gay friends but they just do not understand or 'get' transgender people. The partner is keen to get the discussion back on track to the new matter.

What would you expect the lawyer to do in this scenario?

themes from the workshop

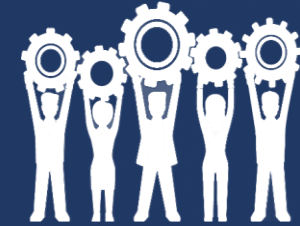


“That is the great thing about diversity – you don’t have to understand it, but you should respect it”

“You don’t have to be an expert – just open to learning”

“Smaller firms are unlikely to have an LGBTIQ+ employee network – there are external networks they can leverage for advice”

advice



The Ally could...

- Affirm their support for LGBTIQ+ inclusion also, and share an insight about transgender people.
- Acknowledge their own lack of knowledge and commit to finding out more and sharing with the client at a later date if they are open to it.
- Invite the client to an upcoming Pride event as their guest.
- Encourage the client to ask their friends about it.

WORKSHOP TEAM LEADERS

Anthony Schiavo, Partner and State Manager, Mercer
Clarissa Rayward, Lawyer, Brisbane Family Law Centre
Tim Longwill, Partner, McCullough Robertson
Dean Clifford-Jones, Principal Lawyer, Qld Government

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ABOUT PRIDE IN LAW

We are a not-for-profit LGBTIQ+ legal networking association based in Brisbane. We are Australia's first independent legal networking association designed to bring together the LGBTIQ+ legal profession across multiple disciplines.

Pride in Law is a non-political group, aimed at linking the LGBTIQ+ legal community and their allies. Pride in Law is not exclusive to any single area of legal discipline, which will co-ordinate monthly lawyer-to-lawyer meetings. In addition, Pride in Law holds larger social networking events throughout the year.



www.prideinlaw.org