

Inclusive language

Use inclusive and respectful language. Avoid generalisations about groups of people. When referring to people, mention gender, race, age or disabilities only if that fact is an essential part of your message.

Be inclusive of everyone wherever possible, use written examples and images that show different gender identities and ethnicities, disabled people and people of different ages. We do not stereotype anyone. Our approach is generally to use the language preferred by the relevant community. We acknowledge that not everyone in every community will agree with our choice of terms, and the lists aren't exhaustive, but we are always happy to reconsider or include more information – just get in touch.

Out of scope



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Gender identity, diversity and pronouns

We respect a person's pronouns and use them wherever they have identified them (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc). If you're uncertain about someone's pronouns, or if you're referring to a hypothetical individual, use 'they/them' as the gender-neutral option, e.g. "Someone dropped their wallet on the ground."

Term	Explanation
cisgender	Those who identify with the sex / gender they were assigned at birth.
gender	Socially constructed characteristics such as norms, roles, relationships of and between groups, that can assign a person to

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	particular roles or identities as considered widely appropriate by a society or culture.
gender diverse	A person whose gender identity or gender expression differs from a given society's normalised gender concepts. Gender diverse refer to those who are transgender, nonbinary, genderqueer, or have other identities outside the gender binary framework. 'Irahuhua' in te reo. Hyphenated when used as an adjective.
gender identities	Gender identities refer to a sense of one's own self, regardless of what may be expected of a person according to their sex as assigned at birth.
hinehua	Similar to the Western notion of 'trans woman', these are terms that some Māori people may use to describe their feminine gender. This term does not have a direct Western equivalent but is usually translated to mean 'in the manner of a woman'. It is best understood within its cultural context and may mean something different to each individual.
intersex	The term intersex is used to describe a person born with natural variations of sex characteristics such as chromosomes, reproductive anatomy, genitals, and hormones. People are sometimes born with these variations, or they may develop during puberty. There are up to 40 different intersex variations. Do not use 'hermaphrodite'.
LGBTQIA+	An acronym to refer to the Rainbow community; anyone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, aroace, and other identities that would not be considered cisgender or heterosexual.
MVPFAFF+	MVPFAFF+ stands for the names of the broad gender spectrum from across the Pacific region: mahu (Tahiti and Hawaii), vakasalewa (Fiji), palopa (Papua New Guinea), fa'afafine (Samoa), akava'ine (Cook Islands) fakaleiti (leiti) (Tonga) and fakafifine (Niue).
non-binary	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit in either 'man' or 'woman'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.

Term	Explanation
sex	The system for assignment and classification of people, typically as male or female. This can include: 1) sex assigned at birth – based on imprecise perceptions of an infant’s sex characteristics, generally only the external genitalia; 2) legal sex – generally based on a person’s legal identity documents, for example a passport or birth certificate (though these do not always match); 3) perceived sex – the sex a person is seen as and treated as socially. Sex is not fixed or immutable. Neither anatomy nor physiology are defined by a single criterion such as genitals, chromosomes, hormones, or fertility.
SOGIESC	Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics. Spell out in full the first time the term is used, and consider spelling it out in full if it has not been used frequently in a document.
tāhine	A relatively new Māori term, loosely translating to non-binary (a portmanteau of ‘tāne’ and ‘wahine’). This term is used broadly so it can be used to describe a transgender woman, a transgender man, or a non-binary or genderfluid person.
taihemarua	Te reo Māori for intersex, although Māori who are intersex may identify in a variety of ways.
takatāpui	Māori LGBTQIA+, Rainbow communities. A traditional Māori word that means ‘intimate friend of the same sex’. It has since been embraced to encompass all tāngata Māori who identify with diverse genders, sexualities or variations of sex characteristics.
tangata ira tāne	Similar to the Western notion of ‘trans man’, this is a term some Māori use to describe their masculine gender. This term does not have a direct Western equivalent but is loosely translated to mean ‘in the manner of a man’. It is best understood within its cultural context and may mean something different to each person.
transsexual	An older term that originated in the medical and psychological communities. As the gay and lesbian community rejected homosexual and replaced it with gay and lesbian, the transgender community rejected transsexual and replaced it with transgender. Some people within the trans community may still call themselves transsexual. Do not use transsexual to describe a person unless it is a word they use to describe themselves.