



# women\*scircus

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TRANS & GENDER DIVERSE  
INCLUSION POLICY

[www.womenscircus.org.au](http://www.womenscircus.org.au)



Women\*s Circus values each member's development, both creatively and personally, and recognises that self-identity may change over time.

In brief - Women\*s Circus welcomes any person to our organisation and to our training program who identifies as, or has lived as a woman\*, or identifies as non- binary.

For the purposes of abbreviation within this document 'women\*s' refers to all those who identify as the above.

As a pioneer in Feminist Social Circus, Women\*s Circus remains committed to its historic mission of providing access to training and opportunities for those affected by oppression and trauma.

We to continually address issues of diversity, inclusion and social justice through our presence and programming.

*We acknowledge the Kulin nations, the traditional custodians of the land on which the Women\*s Circus meets, trains, works and creates. We pay our respects to local Elders, past, present and emerging and to the Elders of all communities and cultures across Victoria.*

# Frequently Asked Questions



1. Is Women\*s Circus changing the fundamental nature of its mission as a women’s circus by admitting transgender members?

Women\*s Circus remains committed to its historic mission as a women’s circus. Yet, concepts of what it means to be a ‘woman’ are not static. Just as early feminists argued that the reduction of ‘women’ to their biological functions was a foundation for oppression, we must acknowledge that gender identity is not reducible to the body. Instead, we must look at identity in terms of the external context in which the individual is situated. It is this positionality that women\* share, and it is this positionality that is relevant when women’s organisations open their gates for those aspiring to live, learn, and thrive within a community of women\*.

Women\*s Circus is considered to be at the vanguard of feminist practice and social inclusion and we choose to consistently interrogate social conventions and engage in bold inquiry through our work. The Circus’s practices and policies should align with our core values around Empathy and Imagination; Risk, Inclusion, Excellence and Innovation.

2. Women\*s Circus' policy on the membership of transgender people states that it welcomes membership from any one who identifies as, or has lived as a woman, or identifies as non-binary. Can you clarify?

The following can become members of Women\*s Circus:

- Assigned female at birth; identifies as a woman
- Assigned female at birth; identifies as a man
- Assigned female at birth; identifies as other/they/ze/non-binary/gender diverse
- Assigned female at birth; does not identify as either woman or man
- Assigned male at birth; identifies as woman
- Assigned male at birth; identifies as other/they/ze and when "other/they" identity includes woman
- Assigned intersex at birth; identifies as a woman/they/ze/non-binary/gender diverse

The following cannot apply for full membership: Assigned male at birth; identifies as a man

3. Why is the Circus developing a policy about this now?

Increasingly, women's only organisations are being called upon to articulate their policies with respect to the inclusion of trans and gender diverse people. As a leader in our community and our practice, we choose to be proactive. We choose to define membership in a women's circus expansively, to be as inclusive as we can with respect to gender identity, while still fulfilling our mission as a women's circus.

4. Will Women\*s Circus require any statement beyond a member's gender self-identification? For example, would a transwoman need to establish that they have a history of identifying as female?

No. Whether a member transitions suddenly or has a long history with a particular gender identity will not have an impact on their ability to become a member.

5. If a transwoman decides, during their annual membership with Women\*s Circus, to transition to a male gender identity, will they need to withdraw from the Circus?

No. Once members have taken out annual membership they will continue to be able to access the services and support of the Women\*s Circus. The Circus supports them regardless of their gender identity, which is consistent with our current practice.

6. What is the Circus's position on diversity and inclusion?

Diversity and inclusion is about understanding our multiple identities through the lens of social justice education, ally development, and identity development. We embrace the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability, age, national origin, and religious/spiritual identities and the ways in which those identities move us to greater connection and communication.

We strive to create inclusive projects so that those who face barriers – of gender, age, experience, disability, cultural background, mental health, sexual identity – have the opportunity to access training, development and creative opportunities.

7. How does the Women\*s Circus know whether it has received a membership from a transgender student?

Women\*s Circus knows only if the member self-identifies as transgender or gender diverse.

8. Are membership applications from transgender applicants handled differently?

No.

9. How does Women\*s Circus support members who decide to transition once they've become members?

Every full Women\*s Circus member has equitable access to all programs, activities, and services provided by the Circus. Moreover, discrimination and harassment are strictly prohibited by the Circus's membership conduct code. Women\*s Circus will also take affirmative steps, with the member's approval, to provide support services to our members and recognise a transition. For example, Women\*s Circus is committed to using members' preferred names and pronouns and to providing access to education and support to our broader membership.

10. Why does Women\*s Circus start Term Classes with a Pronoun Circle

Creating space for members to share their pronouns is a small but very important way of making our classes and organisation more inclusive and supportive to our trans and gender diverse members. For this reason, each class will begin the term with an opportunity for members to share their pronoun with their classmates through a 'Pronoun Circle'.

Please note that Women\*s Circus acknowledges that gender identity politics is constantly changing and as such our 'Trans and Gender Diverse Inclusion Policy' is always open to revision to reflect those changes.

If you have any further questions, concerns or feedback we invite you to contact us at:  
[info@womenscircus.org.au](mailto:info@womenscircus.org.au)