

**LGBTQ+ teachers in Australian rural, regional, and remote areas:
Experiences and possible futures**

QUT Ethics Approval Number 4914

Research team

Principal Researcher: Dr Michelle Jeffries
Associate Researcher: Professor Martin Mills

**School of Teacher Education and Leadership
Faculty of Creative Industries, Education and Social Justice
Queensland University of Technology (QUT)**

Why is the study being conducted?

This research project is being undertaken by Dr Michelle Jeffries and Professor Martin Mills. Michelle belongs to the LGBTIQ+ community and brings to this project a passion for education and schools as inclusive spaces. She taught in state primary schools for more than ten years in both Brisbane and remote north-west Queensland and so brings to this project an understanding of some of the challenges that can be faced by LGBTIQ+ teachers in schools and within the broader community. Michelle's doctoral study focused on the experiences of gender and sexuality diverse parents in navigating their children's primary schools. Martin is a Research Professor in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at QUT. He was previously the inaugural Director of the Centre for Teachers and Teaching Research at the Institute of Education, University College London, and prior to that worked at The University of Queensland for 23 years. His work has principally focused on social justice issues in education. These areas have included: teachers' work and pedagogical practice, alternative education, and gender and education.

The purpose of this project is to provide new knowledge about the experiences of LGBTQ+ teachers who work and live in rural, regional, and remote areas of Australia. We are particularly interested in understanding teacher experiences since 2016 as we understand that since this time there has been significant media and political debate nationally about LGBTQ+ inclusion in schools (such as that which has occurred in relation to Safe Schools, same-sex marriage, increasing recognition of gender diversity, and the Religious Freedom Review/Religious Discrimination Act). We want to better understand if and how this context impacts/has impacted on teachers as they live and work in their local communities. We are also interested in better understanding how LGBTQ+ teachers envision inclusive schools, so that we can consider possibilities and alternate futures in school spaces. We acknowledge the importance of recognising intersections of identity in this space.

You are invited to participate in this research project because you identify as an LGBTQ+ teacher and you either work, or have worked at some time since 2016, in a rural, regional or remote Australian school.

What does participation involve?

Your participation will involve an interview conducted by phone or zoom that will take approximately one to one and a half hours of your time. This interview will need to be audio recorded for transcription purposes. To ensure any device failure will not lead to data loss, this recording will occur across two audio devices. It is not possible to participate without being audio recorded so it is important to consider if you are comfortable with this in deciding whether you'd like to take part in the project.

The interview will be conversational in style, formed around several prompts. Prompts may include:

- I'm interested in hearing about the experiences of LGBTQ+ teachers in rural/regional/remote schools in Australia. Do you have any stories you can tell me about that?
- I'm also interested in hearing about the experiences of LGBTQ+ teachers living in their communities. Do you have any stories that you can share about being an LGBTQ+ teacher living in rural/regional/remote areas where you teach?
- Can you tell me about how you envision schools as spaces of safety, inclusion and belonging for LGBTQ+ teachers, students, and families?

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. If you do agree to participate you can withdraw from the research project without comment or penalty. You can withdraw anytime during the interview. If you withdraw within four weeks after your interview, on request any information already obtained that can be linked to you will be destroyed. Your decision to participate or not participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT.

What are the possible benefits for me if I take part?

It is not expected that this project will benefit you directly, although you may enjoy speaking about your experience of working and living in rural, regional and/or remote communities with an interested person. The outcomes of the research, however, may benefit LGBTQ+ teachers generally as the purpose is to generate greater understanding of the experiences that LGBTQ+ teachers have as they live and work in rural, regional and remote communities. Additionally, it may benefit schools, school communities and those involved in education policy in developing strategies and policies that support LGBTQ+ inclusion in schools. You can request a brief summary of the outcomes of the study by providing an email address on the consent form.

What are the possible risks for me if I take part?

There are some risks associated with your participation in this research project. You will be giving up some of your time. To address this, the interview/s will be arranged at a time that is suitable to you.

It is possible you will feel some discomfort produced by being asked questions about your experiences in schools and community. Also, given that many in the LGBTIQ+ community continue to be subject to discrimination in some spaces, it is acknowledged that it is possible that difficult situations may be touched on during the interview process.

To minimise these risks, please note that there is no need to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer during interviews, and if you wish to stop audio recording during the interview, you just need to ask and the recording will be ceased immediately. Additionally, we will contact you within 1-3 days of the interview and you can ask us to delete anything you feel uncomfortable about from the interview transcript at this time. We will also de-identify data within interview transcripts.

QUT provides for limited free psychology, family therapy or counselling services for research participants of QUT research projects who may experience discomfort or distress as a result of their participation in the research. Should you wish to access this service please call the Clinic Receptionist on **07 3138 0999** (Monday–Friday only 9am–5pm), QUT Psychology and Counselling Clinic, 44 Musk Avenue, Kelvin Grove, and indicate that you are a research participant. Alternatively, Lifeline provides access to online, phone or face-to-face support, call **13 11 14** for 24 hour telephone crisis support. If you are aged up to 25, you can also call the Kids Helpline on **1800 551 800**. Additionally, QLife provides a peer support service between 3 pm and midnight every day if you would talk to an LGBTIQ+ specific service following the interview. To contact QLife, please call **1800 184 527**, or alternatively this service provides an online chat option at <http://qlife.org.au>.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

All comments and responses will be de-identified and coded. A re-identifying code stored separately to personal information (e.g. name, address) will only be accessible to the research team, and the code plus identifying information will be destroyed five years after the last publication of the study.

When findings are reported, we will ensure any data are shared in a form that minimises chances that you are identifiable within reports, publications and other forms of presentation. For example, only relevant parts of quote/s will be included, names of people and locations will be changed, and specific circumstances of narratives may be excluded in some instances. While unlikely, there is a small possibility that someone who knows you well may be able to identify you. We will do all that is possible to ensure that your identity is not likely to be recognised.

Any data collected as part of this research project will be stored securely as per QUT's Management of research data policy. Data will be stored for a minimum of 5 years, and can be disclosed if it is to protect you or others from harm, if specifically required by law, or if a regulatory or monitoring body such as the ethics committee requests it.

As the research project involves an audio recording:

- You will not have the opportunity to verify your comments and responses prior to final inclusion.
- It is not possible to participate in the research project without being audio recorded. The audio recording will be retained for the minimum retention period of 5 years after the last research activity.
- The recording will not be used for any other purpose. However, please note that the data may be used for comparative purposes in future research by the researcher.
- Only the named researchers will have access to the recording.

How do I give my consent to participate?

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate.

What if I have questions about the research project?

If you have any questions or require further information please contact one of the listed researchers:

Michelle Jeffries	m.jeffries@qut.edu.au
Martin Mills	m.mills@qut.edu.au

What if I have a concern or complaint regarding the conduct of the research project?

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. If you wish to

discuss the study with someone not directly involved, particularly in relation to matters concerning policies, information or complaints about the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Advisory Team on +61 7 3138 5123 or email humanethics@qut.edu.au.

Thank you for helping with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.