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In Australia, while some schools provide curriculum content which is inclusive of gender and sexuality diversity (GSD), such schools are the exception, not the rule. Silences prevail, in part, due to notable absences of overt, clear references to GSD within the Australian national curriculum. In various Australian states/territories and at various times, more inclusive curriculum resources and teacher training have been available; however, the current educational landscape is dominated by – what we have called – a *culture of limitation* (Ferfolja & Ullman 2020). We argue that this culture is the product of complex histories which position GSD as ‘Other’, as always sexualised and as risky knowledge for young people.

The public demise and political disavowal of the *Safe Schools Coalition Australia* initiative (2014-2017), Australia’s first national program supporting gender and sexuality diverse students and their families and offering relevant teacher training and resources, spotlighted this culture of limitation. The media-fuelled moral panic focused on the rights of vocal conservative parents with little consultation with the broader Australian populace. During the years which have followed, a few pivotal indicators have pointed to Australian’s broad acceptance of GSD, including the national vote endorsing Marriage Equality, passed in December 2017, with over 60% of Australians voting ‘yes’, and the nationally-representative *Generation Z* Study which found that 86% of Australian teens aged 13-18 support secondary school students’ rights to learn about GSD at school (Singleton, Rasmussen, Halafoff & Bouma 2019). Yet, little information is available which focuses on how parents view school curriculum which is inclusive of GSD, and – with little formal guidance or affirmation across the country as a whole – many teachers err on the side of ‘caution’. As evidenced, little has shifted over multiple iterations of Australia’s largest national survey of Australian secondary students (Fisher et al. 2019); most still fail to receive formal relationships and sexual health education that acknowledges diverse sexualities and genders.

As researchers who have been exploring questions of in/visibility and the silencing of GSD in schooling for decades, we decided to tackle what appeared to be the most pressing, underlying issue: the assumption that the majority of Australian parents would not approve of GSD-inclusive education across the primary and secondary school curriculum. We received Australian Research Council funding to conduct a three-year project, including a national survey of Australian parents, exploring these central questions: Should GSD be included in the curriculum and, if so, at what ages? Who should deliver relationships and sexual health education? What should inclusive education cover and what topics should be avoided, if any?

What would be the benefits of a GSD-inclusive curriculum and what would be the risks? Additionally, we were particularly interested in the experiences of parents of gender and sexuality diverse children and how such parents negotiated school/family relationships on behalf of their children.

While we are still in the preliminary phases of data analysis, some initial trends are apparent. By and large, Australian parents support a national GSD inclusive curriculum for the public/government sector. Merely 5% of our sample of more than 2400 parents felt that relationships and sexual health education should promote abstinence before marriage as its central goal, pointing to the fact that parents are not as conservative as departmental documentation and media discourses might have us believe. Likewise, on our original measure of supports and barriers to GSD inclusive education, parents were far more supportive of such a curriculum than they were to endorse various barriers to inclusivity such as religious opposition and ideas about young people's sexual 'suggestibility' – that is, the idea that talking about such issues will make a student 'gay'. In these initial stages of analysis, it seems that parents support inclusive education because of their ideas about equality, wanting to counter historical oppression, and their desire to support students who might identify as gender and sexuality diverse. Importantly, parents overwhelmingly felt that relationships and sexual health education should be taught via a whole-school approach and include choice, consent and acceptance of diversity alongside reproductive biology and safety.

Further explorations via interviews with parents of gender and sexuality diverse-identifying children highlighted the critical importance of staff training in this area, particularly around sensitivities related to peer cultures and student gender transition. These parents likewise spoke of the tremendous positive impact of GSD-inclusive lesson content for their children's wellbeing and its potential to counter stigma and foster school community connection.

These findings bring data to a space in which assumptions have historically dominated. We believe that the outcomes of this research will support policy and curriculum development that is aimed at equitable outcomes and access for all students in public education.

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