

Impact Case Study

Repairing Historic Injustice Against LGBTIQA+ Communities

Introduction

For decades, same-sex intimacy and gender diversity were policed as criminal or moral offences in Victoria. While Victoria has taken important steps to atone for this, many LGBTIQA+ Victorians continue to experience the legacy of surveillance, stigma and diminished trust in institutions.

The *Transitional Justice and Historic Repair for LGBTIQA+ Communities in Victoria* report was led by Dr Jeremie Bracka from RMIT University's School of Law. The Career Reignite funded project explores what 'historic repair' could look like for LGBTIQA+ communities who were once criminalised, policed and stigmatised.

Background

This report looks back at how laws, policing and public institutions in Victoria produced and reinforced harm against LGBTIQA+ people over many decades – from criminalisation and surveillance to violence and neglect – and why those impacts can persist long after the laws change.

The state has since taken important steps to reduce harms and improve circumstances for LGBTIQA+ Victorians – Including decriminalisation, expungement legislation and formal apologies.

However, the damage of these historical harms extends beyond legislative reforms and apologies. How do we translate acknowledgment into durable institutional change?

Transitional justice provides a coherent framework for a society to respond after serious wrongdoing, particularly when the harm was supported or enabled by laws, governments or other institutions.

The transitional justice model brings together practical steps that align acknowledgment, accountability and institutional reform.



The Research

Roundtable discussion

This project convened a roundtable in November 2025 in collaboration with the Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ communities, Joe Ball.

The roundtable consisted of leading advocates, legal experts and policymakers to consider how Victoria might reckon with its history of criminalisation, discriminatory policing, violence and institutional prejudice directed at LGBTIQA+ communities.

Participants recognised that Victoria's response to historical anti-LGBTIQA+ harm remains incomplete. Participants expressed strong support for the development of a structured and consultative roadmap, and for progressing practical pathways in partnership with government and community stakeholders.

Put into practice, these pathways would help remedy the historical harm done to LGBTIQA+ Victorians.



Comparative models

The report also conducts analysis of reparation efforts across Australia and the world.

By delving into the work done in NSW, Tasmania, New Zealand and Europe, the report offers design lessons for how Victoria could structure its approach to transitional justice.



Overview of the impact

This research identifies and advances practical, evidence-based solutions capable of informing government-led legislative reform.

The report opens avenues for discussion around how Victoria could move from recognition toward substantive justice. It offers illustrative cases, comparative analysis and practical options designed to support government and community in taking the next steps.

Several recommendations have been put forward for further consideration and consultation by Government bodies.

Historical Harm Inquiry

1. Establish a Board of Inquiry
2. Ensure an appropriately broad mandate.
3. Provide statutory authority and investigative powers
4. Integrate intersectional perspectives

Expungement and Legal Reform

5. Expand eligibility for expungement
6. Review the expungement application model

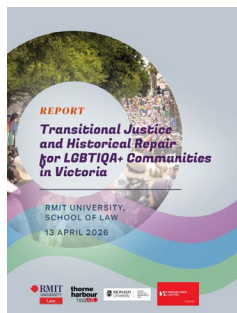
Redress and Reparations

7. Take steps to introduce a redress scheme
8. Link redress to expungement

Memorialisation and Public Education

9. Establish public memorials acknowledging historical harms
10. Support community education and engagement

While the report is newly released and its full impact is yet to be realised, its influence will be driven through targeted next steps that translate its findings into concrete policy, scholarly and community outcomes.



Funding and support

This project was funded by RMIT's Career Reignite Program.

The research was a collaboration with academics, experts and representatives from:

- Monash University
- Dowson Turco Lawyers
- La Trobe University
- Thorne Harbour Health
- Equality Australia
- Victoria Police.

Media

- *Should We Compensate LGBTQIA+ Victorians Who Are Victims Of Historic Gay Hate Crimes?*, Star Observer (14 April 2026)
- *Interview with Jeremie Bracka*, JOY Media (18 April 2026)



Next Steps

RMIT's School of Law will make submissions to the current *Inquiry into anti-LGBTQIA+ hate crimes in Victoria*, advocating for an expanded mandate to address historical harms, including a state-led truth-telling process and a redress scheme (as established in NSW and Tasmania, respectively).

These efforts will be supported by further research toward a peer-reviewed journal article examining the role of transitional justice in Victoria, alongside continued community engagement to support uptake and implementation of the report's recommendations.



[Click here or scan to read the full report](#)

