

Pride Guide | Palau



The Australian Volunteers Program strives to provide a safe, supportive and equitable environment for LGBTIQ+ volunteers, approved accompanying dependents, partner organisations and all program staff. The Australian Volunteers Program has supported volunteers with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) in all program countries and has ongoing connections with community organisations in almost every country we work in.

Diverse SOGIESC program participants must be aware of the country context before undertaking an assignment. This guide is designed to introduce some key issues related to people with diverse SOGIESC and their participation in the program.

If you are a volunteer with diverse SOGIESC, you will need to:

- Do your own research. You will be required to follow the local laws, even if you disagree with them.
- Understand what the local law says you can and can't do when in-country;
- Be aware of what the legal protections are for LGBTIQ+ people in your destinations;
- Consider whether or not you are comfortable living and working in a place where you may be discriminated against and unable to live as openly as you can in some parts of Australia.

Language

Terminology may differ across urban and rural contexts, and across provinces or ethnic and cultural groups. Information sourced online can be outdated or inaccurate. For current and accurate information, please confirm with an appropriate diverse SOGIESC Civil Society Organisation (CSO) or ask your in-country team.

Legal and policy context

Same-sex sexual acts were decriminalised in Palau in 2014. However, an exclusionary national legal framework denies the equal rights and protections of diverse SOGIESC communities. Since 2008, same-sex marriage and civil unions are not recognised by the state.

In 2011, Palau became a signatory of the United Nation's Joint Statement on Ending Acts of Violence and Related Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. Decriminalisation of same-sex acts followed the Universal Periodic Review in 2011, where the Palauan Government accepted recommendations to decriminalise homosexuality.

In 2019, former President Tommy Remengesau declared his support for same-sex marriage, stating:

"Those who are different doesn't mean that they should be outcast, second class citizens, or that they can't contribute to the community. So I want to make it clear that I don't believe in the constitutional amendment that promote discrimination."¹

Discrimination

No legal protections exist for people with diverse SOGIESC in Palau. This includes a lack of constitutional protections and national laws that protect against SOGIESC discrimination, laws that protect against SOGIESC discrimination in employment, and laws that protect against hate crimes, incitement to hatred, violence or discrimination based on one's SOGIESC. There is no legislation that references inheritance, taxation or family rights for people of diverse SOGIESC.

Cultural and societal attitudes, health and wellbeing

There is limited information available on the cultural, societal, health and wellbeing issues impacting diverse SOGIESC communities.



¹Pacific Note, "Palau's leader backs same-sex marriage," published July 24, 2019, <https://www.pacificnote.com/single-post/2019/07/24/Palaus-leader-backs-same-sex-marriage>.