# Joanne Forster

My name’s Joanne Forster. I work in our Business and Strategic Services section through the Information Management Branch and the Chief Data Officer Division. I’m a Senior Project Officer and I’ve worked for the department for 17 years and I identify with the LGBTI+ community.

I certainly think that as a department we need to mirror the community-base and in our community there’s a range of diversity in the community and as a department we need to embrace that within as well, so we are able to service our customers.

Before I joined the department, I purposefully wanted to find a department that had a good ethical framework, that was open to diversity inclusion, because previously in my youth growing up I had been bullied due to my sexuality and also in previous workplaces, so I purposefully set out to look for a department that I knew I would feel safe in.

So, I’ve worked for the department for 17 years and in that time, I can personally say I’ve never been bullied over my sexuality, which is, I think, a great testament to the department.

The Inclusion and Diversity team with their Yammer network is the first time I’ve felt completely belonged, it’s brought me back to that place of feeling I have a community and belonging, and I’ve met so many people through that platform.

I also think that an inclusive workplace means a happier workplace, so people will come to work feeling worthy that they’ve got a place to come to, they’ll be happier, they’ll be more productive in the long run which will benefit the department as well.