

# LGBTI+



Fostering an inclusive culture and workplace, allows people to thrive in an environment where they , regardless of their backgrounds and differences, can thrive.

By creating secure spaces for the LGBTI+ community, we are providing a supportive workspace which is, after all, mutually beneficial, as an inclusive workplace allows employees to give of their best, be productive and contribute fully to the prosperity of an organisation.



Shell believes in raising awareness about LGBTI+ issues. While acknowledging that individual beliefs may not change, Shell considers that providing an understanding of the LGBTI+ problem is about creating a culture of embracing diversity. It is through re-enforcing our value of respect for people that equal opportunities for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, will be achieved.

Following an awareness process that was introduced over a period of time, Shell became one of the first companies in South Africa to introduce a company-wide LGBTI+ Network, which it launched in 2015. Leading South Africans who had publicly acknowledged their status were invited to Shell to address aspects of diversity and inclusion, and its importance within a corporate space. External specialists in awareness training about LGBTI+ issues were also included in the process and complemented the awareness drive.

The Shell South Africa LGBTI+ Network is a volunteer organisation that provides support to LGBTI+ employees and associates. Its mission is to champion an inclusive work environment where all people of the LGBTI+ community are celebrated and afforded equal opportunity to reach their full potential regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

“The long-term objective of the programme is to allow LGBTI+ staff to be their ‘authentic selves’ at work without having to undergo the anxiety involved with concealing their sexual orientation or gender identity from colleagues,” says Shell LGBTI+ Network Chairperson, Linda Mayekiso.

The success of the awareness campaigns has come through a move from ‘tolerance’ of members of the LGBTI+ community to ‘acceptance’ and allowing people to be themselves at work.

Economic empowerment to ensure equality for those who have been disadvantaged due to their sexual orientation or gender identity is further addressed through external mechanisms such as participation in the PLUS LGBTI+ Business Network, and LGBTI+ Business Summit.

Enabling LGBTI+ small organisations, introducing mechanisms such as business incubator programmes and making these enterprises part of the supplier development programmes, also becomes a focus of the Business Summit to change the social and economic fabric of the country.

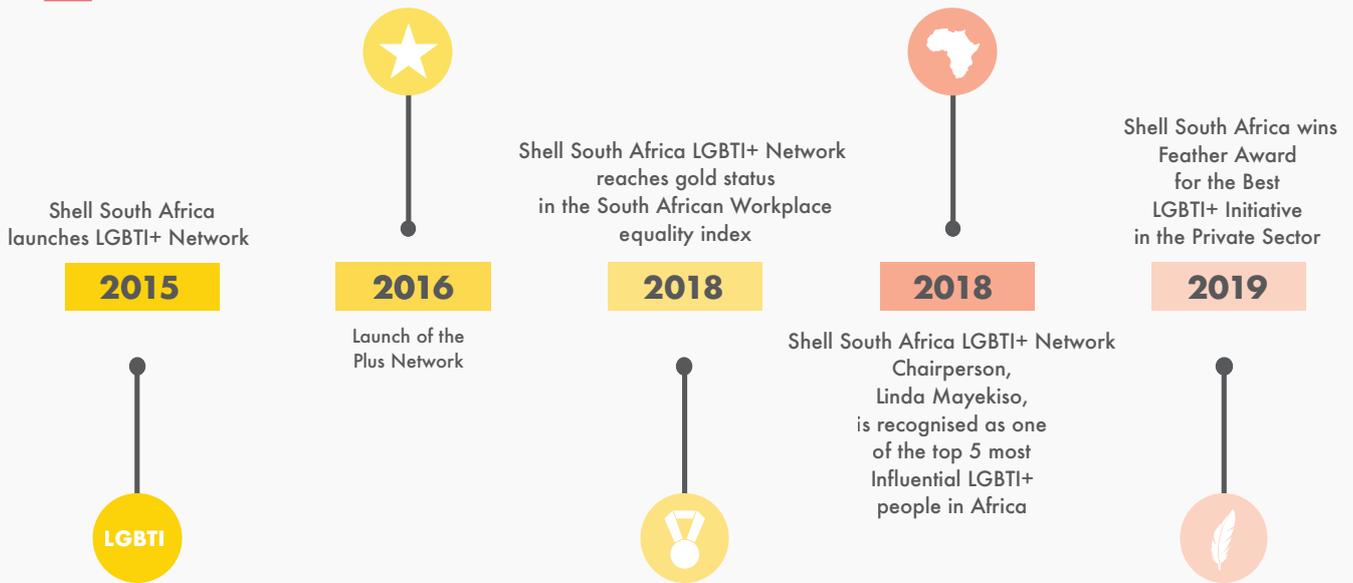
Ensuring equality involves having company policies that acknowledge the rights of LGBTI+ employees and places their needs at the same level as others. Parity and equality mean introducing human resource policies that make provision for all to enjoy the privileges the company offers.

Examples of policies that have to be examined and changed are, for example, maternity and paternity leave for parents who adopt.

Accepting diversity within the company has meant making sure that ‘male and female’ policies are changed to reflect roles played by primary and secondary caregivers. The benefits of this re-examination of traditional roles has been that more liberal and diverse policies have been introduced.



**Shell South Africa LGBTI+ Network Milestones**



As a pioneer in its sector, Shell can also proudly point out that its initiatives in addressing LGBTI+ issues have resulted in positive influence within the corporate sector. A 'round-table' initiative which began with Shell approaching four other companies, has grown within 12 months to become a consultative body involving representatives from 25 leading businesses.

Quite simply, taking a proactive approach to issues surrounding diversity and inclusivity, ensuring the welfare of all and encouraging understanding is the right thing for leadership to do. Adopting a corporate position that 'our people are our greatest asset' ensures that people are the best they can be.

At Shell South Africa, we are striving through a holistic approach to employee issues to ensure that in our company, everyone has equal opportunities to build meaningful careers. We will continue to regard inclusivity and diversity as essential areas of activity that play an important role in our ability to grow and prosper.

