



Travel advice for LGBTQ+ athletes, officials and staff

All travellers face risks overseas. These risks can be higher for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer/questioning, trans, non-binary or otherwise diverse in sexuality or gender.

This information has been prepared for LGBTQ+ athletes, officials and staff **representing Australia at the World Championships in Marrakech, Morocco, in September 2026.**

Morocco is a popular international tourism destination and Marrakech welcomes large numbers of overseas visitors. However, its laws and social attitudes relating to sexuality and gender are significantly different from those in Australia.

Be Prepared

Australian Government travel advice currently recommends that travellers exercise a high degree of caution in Morocco overall, due to the threat of terrorism. Travellers should also be alert to protests, petty crime, scams and harassment, particularly in crowded tourist areas.

There are additional considerations for LGBTQ+ travellers.

Same-sex sexual activity is illegal in Morocco. Article 489 of the Moroccan Penal Code provides for imprisonment of between six months and three years, as well as a fine, for same-sex sexual activity. Smarttraveller also advises that sexual activity outside marriage is illegal.

EqualDex reports that Morocco:

- criminalises same-sex sexual activity
- does not recognise same-sex marriage
- does not provide general discrimination or hate-crime protections based on sexual orientation or gender identity
- does not provide legal gender recognition for trans people, with only limited recognition available in relation to intersex status.

This does not mean LGBTQ+ people cannot travel to Morocco. It does mean that travellers should understand the local legal and cultural environment and make informed decisions about how openly they identify or behave while outside the protected environment of the Australian team and competition.

Be Smart

As in any country, levels of acceptance, tolerance and inclusion vary. Public displays of affection in conservative spaces may attract unwanted attention, particularly outside large cities.

Be respectful of local customs and laws, and ensure your behaviour complies with the Australian 8 Ball Federation Codes of Conduct.

If you choose to socialise or use LGBTQ+ dating apps, be aware that LGBTQ+ travellers in the U.S. have reported cases of targeted harassment and scams. Always meet new people in public places and tell someone from your team where you're going.

Moroccan social customs are generally more conservative than those in Australia. Smartraveller advises that standards of dress and behaviour are conservative in many parts of the country and that public displays of affection can cause offence.

For LGBTQ+ travellers, we recommend particular discretion with public displays of affection or behaviour that identifies you as being in a same-sex relationship, including in hotels, restaurants, bars, taxis and public spaces.

Avoid assuming that the more relaxed atmosphere of an international hotel, event venue or tourist district reflects the legal environment outside it.

If you use dating or social apps:

- be cautious about sharing your location, accommodation details or identifying information
- do not assume that another user's identity or intentions are genuine
- meet unfamiliar people only in public places
- tell a teammate or trusted person where you are going
- avoid bringing people you do not know back to team accommodation.

Smartraveller warns that Australians have been targeted through online friendship and relationship scams in Morocco, with some travellers subsequently becoming victims of robbery, assault or kidnapping.

Where possible, travel with teammates rather than alone, particularly at night. Petty crime, bag snatching and muggings occur, including in tourist areas and poorly lit streets.

Trans and Non-Binary Specific Advice

Morocco does not provide the same legal recognition of trans and non-binary identities available in Australia. EqualDex records legal gender change for trans people as unavailable and non-binary recognition as extremely limited.

Travellers whose gender presentation differs from the sex or gender recorded in their passport should therefore prepare carefully for travel.

Australian passports containing an 'X' sex marker comply with international passport standards, but the Australian Government cannot guarantee that every

country will accept an 'X' passport for entry or transit. Smartraveller recommends checking with the relevant embassy or consulate before travelling, including for any countries through which you will transit.

Before departure, trans and non-binary travellers should consider:

- checking passport and visa requirements with the Embassy of Morocco
- checking requirements for any transit countries
- carrying any medication in its original packaging with appropriate prescription or medical documentation
- keeping copies of important identity and medical documents separately from originals
- discussing any individual concerns confidentially with the team manager before departure.

Travellers should also be prepared for the possibility of misgendering, questioning or administrative difficulties when presenting identification or using gender-segregated facilities.

If a situation becomes uncomfortable or confrontational, prioritise your safety rather than attempting to challenge local practice at the time. Move to a safe place and contact your team manager or another designated support person.

Be Ready

Morocco's laws apply to visitors as well as residents. Australian consular officials can provide assistance if you experience difficulties overseas, but they cannot exempt Australians from local laws or secure your release if you are arrested.

Before travelling:

- subscribe to Smartraveller Morocco updates
- ensure your travel insurance covers your planned activities
- save your insurer's emergency contact number
- keep copies of your passport and travel documents
- ensure at least one team official has your emergency contact details.

Smartraveller also advises travellers to avoid demonstrations and protests, which can occur at short notice, and to follow instructions from local authorities. Sporting events and large public gatherings can also create security and transport disruptions.

Recognising the compounding impact of other characteristics - including gender, race, disability, religion and age - is also important when assessing your own safety and wellbeing while travelling.

Emergency contacts

Police / Fire / Medical emergency:

Dial 190. Smartraveller lists 190 for police, fire/rescue and medical emergencies in Morocco.

Australian Embassy, Morocco:

66 Avenue Mehdi Ben Barka
Souissi, 10000 Rabat
Morocco

Telephone: +212 5 37 54 33 66

Australian Government 24-hour Consular Emergency Centre:

+61 2 6261 3305 from overseas.

Ensure your travel-insurance provider's emergency number is also saved on your phone and that your teammates know who to contact if an emergency occurs.

Be Supported

Your team officials and support staff are available if you would like to have a confidential conversation before departure or at any time during travel or competition.

If you experience harassment, discrimination or a situation that makes you feel unsafe, remove yourself from the immediate situation where possible; contact a teammate or team official; and seek assistance from local authorities or Australian consular officials where appropriate.

The purpose of this guidance is not to discourage LGBTQ+ athletes, officials or staff from travelling or participating. It is to ensure everyone understands the local environment and can make informed decisions about their safety.

More information:

- Smartraveller – Morocco: <https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/destinations/africa/morocco>
- EqualDex – LGBT Rights in Morocco: <https://www.equaldex.com/region/morocco>
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Australian Embassy in Morocco: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/our-locations/missions/australia-embassy-in-morocco>
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Consular assistance: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/travel>

Note: Travel advice can change. Check Smartraveller again immediately before departure.

This information is provided as general guidance only and is not medical, legal or consular advice.

Laws, local conditions and travel advice can change at short notice and individual circumstances may vary.

pridein
sport