

## LGBTI Taskforce - Health & Human Services Working Group

### Communiqué – Meeting One

On 23 February 2018, the new formation of the LGBTI Taskforce - Health and Human Services Working Group held its first meeting.

The Working Group is Co-Chaired by Ruth McNair and Gabrielle William MP with members Asiel Adan Sanchez, Jacqueline Tomlins, Jax Jacki Brown, Jeremy Wiggins, Karen Field, Keri Alexander, Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, Craig Comrie, Rebecca Dominguez, Simon Ruth, Tori Berquist and Minto Felix.

LGBTI Taskforce community members, Brenda Appleton, Anna Brown, Jamie Gardiner, Greg Philips and Aram Hosie are *ex-officio* members of the Working Group along with Ro Allen, Commissioner for Gender and Sexuality and Philip O'Meara as the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) representative.

The Co-chairs welcomed the membership of the Working Group and thanked them for their willingness to work alongside the Victorian Government and DHHS. Members were provided the opportunity to outline their aspirations and key areas of interest for the Working Group, and these included:

- LGBTI inclusive practice and cultural safety within mainstream services
- Mental health supports in response to the prolonged impacts of the marriage equality debate, particularly on young and trans and gender diverse community members
- Challenges with access to IVF and reproductive services for LGBTI people
- Over representation of LGBTI young people who are homeless, particularly trans and gender diverse
- LGBTI and family safety
- Intersectionality, with a focus on LGBTI people living with a disability, and multicultural, multi-faith community members
- Alcohol and Other Drugs

The dedication and achievements of the previous formation of the Working Group was acknowledged and the outgoing members were thanked for their commitment and contribution.

Other key areas of discussion for the Working Group included:

#### **Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey**

The Working Group discussed the significant and ongoing impact to the LGBTI community as a result of the public debate surrounding the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey. It was noted that while the result was in favour of marriage equality, the process has had, and continues to have a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of LGBTI people, particularly trans and gender diverse and LGBTI young people.

The additional mental health and community support provided by the Victorian Government during the public debate was acknowledged by the Working Group.

The Working Group identified the need and importance of ongoing mental health support for the community, capacity and resilience building and the prolonged impact on those who have not “come out” or those that are still developing their sexual identity and diverse cultural backgrounds.



### **Intersex Policy and Resource Project**

DHHS updated the Working Group on the Intersex Policy and Resource Project which includes the development of a suite of resources regarding the health and wellbeing of people with intersex variations.

The policy and resource suite will respond to the changing field of health-related services for children and adults with intersex variations and their families, including the 2014 Australian Senate Inquiry report *Involuntary or coerced sterilisation of intersex people in Australia*, and new legislation, policy and sociological data at state and national levels.

The suite components include policy and technical information, resources for the health sector as well as parents and families, and a Future Directions paper outlining challenges and system needs in legal and health services and providing guidance on short and longer-term action.

The Working Group recognised and acknowledged the importance of this work and highlighted the need for information and support for medical staff in public and primary health.

### **Trans and Gender Diverse Service System Development Project**

The Working Group were updated on the Trans and Gender Diverse Service System Development Project currently being undertaken by DHHS.

The project will propose a new statewide service model for the delivery of gender identity and gender affirmation-related services to trans and gender diverse Victorians. The methodology includes extensive statewide community consultations and focus groups to inform the development of a directions paper and then the final report.

The Trans and Gender Diverse Expert Advisory Group (TGD EAG) has been engaged in the development of the consultation tools and engagement plan and consultation process.

The Key Directions Paper will be published mid-March with the commencement of secondary consultations. Following secondary consultations the final report outlining the proposed new service model will be delivered to DHHS mid-April.

### **Rainbow eQuality**

Rainbow eQuality, an online guide to assist mainstream health and community service agencies was launched by the department in June 2016. The guide supports services to identify and adopt inclusive practices and become more responsive to the health and wellbeing needs of LGBTI individuals and communities.

Following the Rainbow eQuality Peak Bodies and Community Organisations forum held in 2017, the Working Group has identified the need for this resource to be updated to ensure that it is reflective and responsive to best practice across all work areas and sectors.

A number of members of the Working Group agreed to assist the department in reviewing and updating Rainbow eQuality.



### **Hospitals Forum**

The previous formation of the Working Group had tabled a forum with hospitals as an effective way to seek input in identifying ways to support hospitals to develop and implement LGBTI inclusive practice such as those promoted in the Rainbow eQuality resource.

The Working Group felt it important to proceed with the forum with the scope to include public hospitals and private hospitals including faith-based services.

A number of members of the Working Group agreed to assist the department in looking at the development and delivery of a program for the Hospitals Forum. The forum will be scheduled to take place in the first half of 2018.

### **Next meeting**

The Working Group will next meet on Friday 20 April 2018.

