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For immediate release



Media Release

350,000 Forgotten Voters

350,000 Queenslanders have been forgotten in this year's state election campaign.

Both the Australian Labor Party and Liberal National Party are ignoring the needs of the state's 350,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) voters.

In Queensland LGBT people are not equal before the law, with no civil partnership registration, no recognition of the non-biological parent in a same-sex headed family, no adoption or surrogacy laws and an unequal age of consent. Yet neither party has made any commitments to address these issues.

60% of LGBT Queenslanders have faced personal insults and abuse related to their sexual orientation or gender identity and 15% have experienced physical violence. 43% of LGBT seniors had a negative experience when accessing aged care services in the past year. 81% of LGB young people have been bullied at school because of their sexuality. Yet there are no plans to combat stigma, discrimination and violence against the LGBT community.

LGBT people suffer higher rates of mental health issues, higher use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, higher rates of sexually transmitted infections including HIV, higher risk factors for breast cancer and lower access to health services, including cervical screening. Yet neither party has put forward any plans to address the health disparity of LGBT Queenslanders.

"LGBT Queenslanders pay taxes, we are part of families and workplaces and make a contribution to the life of Queensland, yet our political leaders continue to ignore us" said Mark Morein, President of the Queensland Association for Healthy Communities (QAHC).

"QAHC has outlined a range of health and wellbeing issues affecting the LGBT community and has put forward practical suggestions for addressing these, but we've had no response from the parties in this election." (see www.qahc.org.au/election09 for details)

"A majority of Queenslanders support further reform on lesbian & gay issues" says Paul Martin, QAHC General Manager. *"Both parties lag behind the views of the Queensland community and there is no excuse for their silence and inaction."*

* Galaxy Poll conducted in December 2008 showed 60% of Queenslanders believe that same sex couples should be able to have a civil union with the same legal rights and responsibilities as marriage, 67% believe that the non-biological parent in a same sex headed family should be legally recognised and 96% believe that Queensland schools should actively prevent bullying of lesbian & gay children. See www.qahc.org.au/election09 for more details.

For further information or to arrange interviews contact Paul Martin, General Manager on 3017 1791, 0407 376 540 or pmartin@qahc.org.au or Mark Morein, QAHC President on 0438 727 981.