



# Rip & Roll Campaign

## Responding to Complaints

### About Healthy Communities

The Queensland Association for Healthy Communities is a not-for-profit health promotion charity for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities in Queensland. Formed in 1984 as the Queensland AIDS Council, we broadened our role to wider LGBT health issues and changed our name in 2006.

Healthy Communities receives the majority of our funding for HIV prevention and sexual health promotion from Queensland Health and the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (Office for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health). We also receive one-off funding for other issues from Queensland Health, other government departments and philanthropic grant providers. Healthy Communities also receives donations and bequests from the community.

### HIV in Queensland

In 2010 the highest number of people tested positive for HIV in Queensland than at any time since testing became available in the mid 1980s. There are more people living with HIV in Queensland currently than at any time before. HIV remains a non-curable disease that is usually transmitted through unprotected sex and sharing drug injecting equipment. Around 65% of new infections are among gay and other men who have sex with men.

Healthy Communities has been providing HIV prevention education and health promotion since 1984, and since 1988 with Queensland government funding.

### 'Rip & Roll' Campaign

'Rip & Roll' was originally developed by Healthy Communities in 2010 as a social marketing campaign reinforcing condom use as a community norm among gay men. It is funded through our main HIV prevention and sexual health promotion funding from Queensland Health.

A second version of the campaign was launched in 2011. The campaign consists of a series of black & white images of gay men, holding a condom wrapper (in colour). The phrase 'Rip & Roll' signifies ripping open a condom packet and rolling on a condom. The 'Rip & Roll' logo features a picture of a non-branded condom in its wrapper. The advertisements also feature the phrase 'a safe sex message from healthy communities [logo]' our website and phone number.

In 2011 one version of the campaign, 'couple,' has been placed as bus shelter and billboard adverts. It features a gay male couple in an affectionate embrace, with one man holding a condom packet.



# RIP & ROLL

A SAFE SEX  
MESSAGE FROM



1800 155 141 | [qahc.org.au](http://qahc.org.au)



Image: Rip & Roll couple billboard advert.

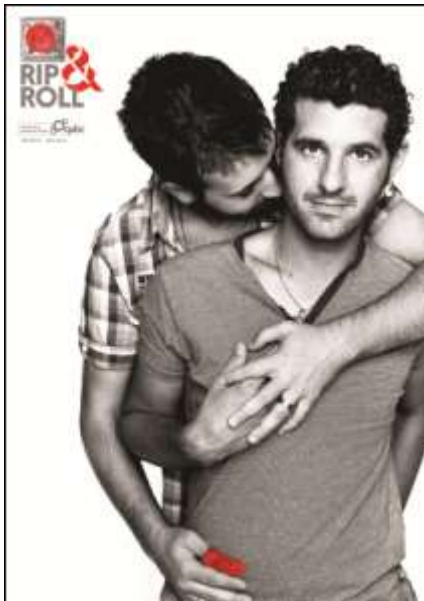


Image: Rip & Roll bus shelter advert.



Image: Photograph of Rip & Roll advert in situ (Fortitude Valley)

In designing this advert to appear in general settings we were careful to ensure:

- the models are fully clothed
- the picture does not depict or imply a specific sex act
- there are no rude or offensive words used
- the men are depicted in a non-discriminatory way

Gay men exist in all parts of Queensland, not just limited to inner city ghettos. Gay men are part of families, workplaces and neighbourhoods right across Queensland. Some gay men are highly 'attached' to the gay scene (meaning they use gay commercial venues, publications and social groups), while others live with little connection to the organised gay scene.

Healthy Communities nominated suburbs for the bus shelters and billboards to appear in conjunction with a media purchasing company 'Ikon', but placement in specific locations was done by AdShel based on availability of advertising space. Billboards are in the following locations:

- Fortitude Valley
- Southport
- Virginia
- Rocklea
- Cairns
- Townsville
- Toowoomba

Bus shelter adverts are in various locations across Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

The 'RIP & Roll' campaign appears as targeted executions:

- in gay press (e.g. Q News, Qld Pride)
- in mainstream press (e.g. Time Off)
- in gay commercial venues
- at gay social events (e.g. Pride-type festivals)
- in gay and mainstream community services
- as online advertising
- on promotion give-a-ways
- as a branded old-fashioned photo booth with hard copy print out and uploading to 'Rip & Roll' Facebook page.

## **Examples of Previous Outdoor Advertising**

Healthy Communities has used outdoor advertising for campaigns targeting gay men for several years. Please see below two examples from 2009/2010. Drama Down Under was used as bus shelters and Rip & Roll as bus shelters and billboards.



Drama Down Under



Rip & Roll (I)

The National STI testing campaign from the Commonwealth Government also used bus shelter advertising, along with a range of other promotional strategies. A local Queensland campaign by Family Planning Queensland and the Queensland Government placed advertisements in press and distributed posters and leaflets widely.



National STI Testing Campaign  
(Commonwealth Government)



'Safe Sex, No Regrets'  
(Family Planning Qld, Queensland Government)

We find it interesting that images of shirtless men *on their own or with a woman* with a similar or same message did not attract complaints. However an advert that features *a male couple* in an embrace has.

We can only conclude that the objections are based on discriminatory and homophobic attitudes towards gay men.

It should be noted that homosexuality is not illegal in Queensland and that it is illegal to discriminate against or vilify people on the basis of their sexual orientation.

We do not accept stigma or discrimination against gay men to be legitimate grounds of complaint against the 'Rip & Roll' advert.

## **Young People and Sexual Health**

While the target group for the adverts is not young people, we recognise that young people may see them. Sexuality is a normal part of human development, including homosexuality. To promote good sexual health in the population, people need to be able to talk openly and honestly about sexuality, without shame or fear.

Research demonstrates<sup>1</sup> that sex and relationship education programs are more effective when given before young people become sexually active and when the programs emphasise social norms and skill development. It is also important to acknowledge that sex and relationships education does not encourage increased or early sexual activity. Comprehensive sexuality education programs have been shown to help delay first intercourse, and increase the adoption of safer sexual practices in sexually active youth

In a study of secondary school students and sexual health<sup>2</sup>, the majority (78%) had experienced some form of sexual activity, with 27% of year ten students and 56% of year 12 students having had experienced sexual intercourse. 6% of students were attracted to people of their same sex or opposite sex and 1.8% weren't sure. 49% of sexually active students sometimes or never used condoms in the previous year.

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<sup>1</sup> Grunseit, A. & Kippax, S. (1997). *Impact of HIV and sexual health education on the sexual behaviour of young people*. New York: UNAIDS.

Mueller, T., Gavin, L. & Kulkarni, A. (2008). The association between sex education and youth's engagement in sexual intercourse, age first intercourse, and birth control use at first sex. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 42, 89-96.

<sup>2</sup> Smith A, Agius P, Mitchell A, Barrett C, Pitts M. 2009. Secondary Students and Sexual Health 2008, Monograph Series No. 70, Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University.

Condoms are a health enhancing and at times life-saving device, preventing STI and HIV transmission and unwanted pregnancies. Denying young people knowledge of life saving devices threatens the health and wellbeing of young people.

Condoms are sold openly in supermarkets, chemists and at service stations. Young people will encounter images and discussion of condoms in many different settings. The promotion of condom use on the 'Rip & Roll' advert will unlikely by the first and certainly won't be the last time young people are exposed to condoms and sexual health messages. This campaign can be an important opportunity for parents to talk to young people about condoms, sexual health and sexuality.

Most parents want their young people to be educated about sex and relationships. A summary of research on parent's views on sex and relationships education<sup>3</sup>, prepared by Family Planning Queensland shows that:

- 98% of Queensland parents agreed that young people need to be provided with information about sexual relationships before they engage in sexual relations
- a majority of parents believe sex & relationships educations should begin from kindergarten onwards
- 97.4% of Australian parents overall supported the provision of sex & relationships education in the school curriculum
- 79% of Queensland parents would be concerned if sex & relationships education was not taught at school

Discussion of sexual health with young people is a normal and expected part of life.

### **Community Attitudes to Homosexuality**

Some of the complainants claim that representations of gay men are not suitable for viewing by the general public.

Representations of gay and lesbian people and relationships are common place in Queensland society. Soap operas (e.g. 'Home & Away' and 'Neighbours') have had story lines with gay or lesbian characters. Popular television dramas (e.g. 'Glee') feature prominent, out gay and lesbian young people. Reality shows (e.g. 'Australian Idol') have out gay or lesbian contestants. Sporting heroes (e.g. Matthew Mitcham) are out and proud.

A telephone survey of the general population in Queensland by Galaxy Research in 2008 found that 96% of people agreed that schools should actively try to prevent bullying of lesbian and gay young people (100% among 16-24 year olds), 60% agreed that same-sex couples should be able to enter into a civil union (74% among 16-24 year olds) and 67% of people believed that both parents in same-sex headed families should be recognised by the law (84% among 16-24 year olds).

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<sup>3</sup> FPQ (2011) *Evidence briefing: Parent's views on sexuality and relationships education*. Brisbane, Family Planning Queensland.

This research clearly shows that the majority of Queenslanders support lesbian & gay rights, and the vast majority of young people support them. Queensland's young people are leading the way in accepting lesbian & gay people and in some cases have a greater and more sophisticated understanding of sexuality than their parents do.

It should be recognised that young people may themselves be gay, have gay or lesbian family members and friends or have friends who have gay or lesbians parents. Young people will be exposed to homosexuality in a variety of settings. Featuring a male couple on the 'Rip & Roll' advert will unlikely be the first and certainly won't be the last time young people are exposed to gay people.

Being gay is not something to be ashamed of and is not something to be hidden away behind closed doors. These stigmatising attitudes do more harm to LGBT people, those exploring their sexuality and their families.

### **In summary:**

- HIV prevention social marketing is needed now more than ever with high rates of HIV transmission.
- Gay men remain the group most affected by HIV and hence the major target of HIV prevention campaigns.
- Gay men exist in all parts of Queensland and outdoor advertising is an ideal way to reach them (especially those not strongly attached to the gay community).
- The 'Rip & Roll' adverts feature fully clothed men, in a non-sexual position and don't use rude or offensive words.
- Previous HIV or STI prevention campaigns targeting gay men using a single male figure have not attracted complaints.
- Stigma and discrimination against gay men is not acceptable grounds for a complaint about the advert.
- Many young people are sexually active and in need of sexual health messages. The overwhelming majority of parents support and expect their young people to receive sex and relationships education.
- The general Queensland community is accepting of lesbian & gay people and representations of gay men are common place.

Prepared by Healthy Communities  
31<sup>st</sup> May 2011

Contact:  
Paul R Martin  
Executive Director  
07 3017 1791 or 0407 376 540  
[pmartin@gahc.org.au](mailto:pmartin@gahc.org.au)