

2009 State Election Inclusion of LGBT Queenslanders



The Queensland Association for Healthy Communities is a community based, not-for-profit organisation which promotes the health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Queenslanders and develops LGBT communities.

LGBT people make up 5% to 10%¹ of the Queensland population (over 15 years of age) and live in all parts of Queensland – urban, regional and remote. LGBT people are students & workers, family members, parents and community members. LGBT people are part of other communities – young people and seniors, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, men and women.

Key issues affecting the health and wellbeing of LGBT Queenslanders are summarised below, along with actions that we call on all parties to support in this election and implement should they form government.

Issue Whole of Government Response

- No formal consultative mechanism between government and LGBT communities exists.
- LGBT community largely absent from government policy & programs (apart from HIV and youth suicide).
- No positions across government specifically mandated to work with LGBT communities (apart from Queensland Police Service).

Actions

- Establish cross-government consultative mechanism with the LGBT community.
- Develop a whole of government LGBT policy (similar to Multicultural Policy).
- Develop a Social Inclusion Policy for Queensland that includes LGBT people.
- Formally recognise and prioritise LGBT communities and people in policy, strategies & programs.
- Review existing policy, strategies & programs for inclusion of LGBT needs and issues, particularly in the areas of:
 - community development
 - social inclusion
 - crime prevention & community safety
 - mental health
 - alcohol, tobacco & other drugs
 - sexual health
 - domestic & family violence
 - families
 - ageing/seniors
 - young people
 - disabilities
 - Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders
 - culturally & linguistically diverse peoples
 - rural & remote communities

Issue Health & Wellbeing

- As a population, LGBT people have higher risk factors including greater use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, greater mental health problems and delay accessing health and community services.
- Lesbians have higher risk factors for breast and cervical cancer and are more likely to be overweight or obese.
- Gay men have higher risk factors for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.
- Transgender (trans) people suffer poorer health on almost all measures and have complex health needs.
- These risk factors and poorer health outcomes are determined by the society in which we live, particularly stigma, discrimination and other forms of social exclusion.

Actions

- Continue the Queensland Health LGBT Health Issues working group.
- Provide recurrent funding to support priority LGBT health issues, including:
 - mental health
 - alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
 - sexual health (including HIV)
 - obesity and overweight
 - breast & cervical cancer
- Deliver LGBT awareness training to health and community workers to improve access and quality of service provision for LGBT people.
- Include sexual and gender identity questions in health research and monitoring statistics.
- Ensure sex & relationships education in schools meets the needs of same sex attracted and gender diverse young people.

Issue Community Capacity Development

- Only 2 organisations receive recurrent funding for LGBT work – QAHC (HIV prevention for gay men) and Open Doors (homelessness among under 18s in Brisbane (Commonwealth funding)).
- Most LGBT organisations and groups are unincorporated and unfunded.
- Less than 1% of philanthropic funding goes to LGBT causes.

Actions

- Funding for LGBT community development workers in regions across Queensland (similar to Local Area Multicultural Partnership workers).
- Funding for an LGBT community development grants program.
- Capital funding to allow expansion of LGBT community Resource Centres in Brisbane, Cairns and Sunshine Coast.
- Funding for a feasibility study into establishing LGBT community Resource Centres in other parts of Queensland.
- Project to recruit and train LGBT people as volunteers in LGBT and mainstream community organisations.

Issue Stigma, Discrimination & Violence

- 38% of Queenslanders believe homosexuality is immoral², rising to over 50% in regional areas and among older age groups (making Queensland the second most homophobic state in Australia).
- 25% of Australians would not want a gay neighbour³.
- 60% of LGBT Queenslanders have experienced personal insults or verbal abuse and 15% have experienced a physical attack or other kinds of violence⁴.
- 70% of LGBT Queenslanders, at least sometimes, modify their daily behaviour for fear of prejudice or discrimination.
- 35% of same sex attracted young people hurt themselves because of their sexuality⁵.

Actions

- Develop social marketing campaigns & strategies to reduce stigma and discrimination on the basis of sexuality and/or gender identity.
- Implement anti-bullying programs in all schools which are explicitly inclusive of sexuality & gender identity and LGBT people.
- Develop specific measures to reduce sexuality and/or gender identity related hate crimes.
- Reinvigorate the Queensland Police Service LGBT Liaison Officer program.
- Ensure all Queensland Government employee diversity training includes sexuality & gender identity issues.

Issue Legal Rights

LGBT people are not equal citizens under Queensland law.

Actions

- Introduce same-sex relationship recognition, including civil partnership/union register.
- Ensure rights for the non-biological parent in same-sex parented families.
- Equalise the age of consent for all (16 years).
- Allow adoption and surrogacy for same-sex couples.
- Fully recognise trans people, including issuing of Gender Recognition Certificate and continuation of existing marriages post-transition

1. 2006 Census puts Qld population, 15 years and over, at 3,097,997. Australian Study of Health & Relationships found 2.5% of men and 2.2% of women (16 years and over) identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual (giving minimum) and 9% of men and 15% of women had ever had a same sex attraction or sexual experience (giving maximum).
2. Flood, M. & Hamilton, C. (2005) Mapping Homophobia in Australia. The Australia Institute. (general population self-complete survey n=24,718)
3. Borooh, V. & Mangan, J. (2007) Love Thy Neighbour: How Much Bigotry Is There In Western Countries? University of Ulster, University of Queensland. (general population n=2048)
4. Source: Private Lives (2006) Qld sample
5. Hillier, L., Turner, A. & Mitchell, A. (2005) Writing themselves in again – six years on: the second national report on the sexuality, health and well-being of same sex attracted young people. Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University.

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