



Action Group

It was terrible to read about Tyrone Unsworth, the 13 year old Brisbane boy who was bullied for years for being gay before taking his own life. We send heartfelt condolences to his family.

In 2017 we must ALL do more to stop homophobic and transphobic bullying, make all schools safe and save the lives of our LGBTIQ children and young people.

This Action Group believes:

- 11% of Australians are LGBTIQ (<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/face-facts-lesbian-gay-bisexual-trans-and-intersex-people>) so there will be LGBTIQ children and young people in almost every school and classroom. Therefore **the Safe Schools program needs to be delivered to all schools** to keep all these students safe.
- All principals and teachers need to have an educated understanding about lesbian, gay, transgender and intersex people. **Understanding and empathy is at the heart of Inclusion.**
- At present there is barely any mention of diverse sexuality, sex or gender in **pre-service teacher training** at Universities in Queensland. It must be introduced.
- The Safe Schools program is the only **in-service training** available at present. The Federal Minister for Education, Simon Birmingham, has indicated that he will not provide funding for the Safe Schools program after June 2017. We expect that the Queensland Minister for Education, will step in to ensure continued delivery of Safe Schools in Queensland.

Research at Queensland University of Technology

There is research being undertaken at QUT that will provide invaluable information to support the LGBTIQ community in Queensland in the future. If you would like to follow up on any of this work please contact Lisa van Leent who is a member of our Action Group on lisa.vanleent@qut.edu.au

Project A: Queer Leadership in focus

This project is concerned with unravelling the experiences of queer leaders in schools and exploring the affordances and barriers to supporting or participating in a social equality agenda for the LGBTIQ+ community in education.

Project B: Same-sex parented families

Project B is interested in exploring same-sex attracted parents' experiences in primary schools.

Project C: School and community service providers

The researcher on this project is interested in understanding the stories of social workers and their experiences with supporting LGBTIQ+ students in high schools in Queensland.

Project D: Tertiary Education and the 'inclusion' of gender and sexuality education for initial teacher education courses

This project is interested in understanding the power relations of the institution and how it influences the work of teacher educators in the tertiary sector.

Project E: Primary school teachers' work

The aim of this study is to understand how texts-in-use coordinate the social construction of gender and sexualities through the intersection of policy, practice and the everyday lives of teachers.

Project F: Recommended texts in the Australian Curriculum: English

The purpose of this work is to explore how gender and sexuality identities are represented in the recommended reading list for the senior school English curriculum.

Project G: Australian Curriculum: English

This project is interested in introducing and extending the work of English teachers as social justice advocates to explore the affordances of the Australian Curriculum: English for teaching about gender and sexuality equality.

Meeting with the Education Department

The Action Group has just had another meeting with the A/Executive Director, State Schools Operations at Queensland Education Department. We heard that they are developing sustainable systems, teacher training programs and website documents to encourage schools to be inclusive and support their LGBTIQ young students. We look forward to hearing more about this during our meetings with the Department in 2017.

Safe Schools Coalition Queensland

In Queensland, [Safe Schools Coalition](#) is being delivered by [true Relationships and Reproductive Health](#) and they have provided an up to date report:

“Safe Schools Coalition Queensland recently collated statistics and we can celebrate 1700 teachers trained in the past 6 months! Together with those trained in the previous period, the total is now about 3000. Many thanks to Education Queensland and the Queensland Teacher’s Union for their ongoing support. Our professional development calendar is booking up for term one but we are still taking bookings for term two next year. If anyone has enquiries they can contact 3250 0240 or safe.schools@true.org.au.”

The Federal Minister for Education, Simon Birmingham, has indicated that he will not provide funding for the Safe Schools program after June 2017¹. The Queensland Minister for Education, the Honourable Kate Jones therefore needs to step in to ensure continued delivery of this program in Queensland schools. Queensland should consider following the example of Victoria and deliver the Safe Schools program to all schools.

Transgender and intersex children and sport

School sports are an important part of student health and wellbeing. All students, including transgender and intersex, should have both the opportunity and encouragement to participate in sporting activities and events. In fact, because gender diverse and intersex young people face significant stigma and challenges, it would be particularly harmful to exclude them from the substantial physical, mental and social benefits that young people gain by playing recreational sports.

The *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)* **prohibits discrimination** on the grounds of sex and gender identity. An exemption in the Act allows someone to restrict participation in a competitive sporting activity on the basis of gender identity for those over the age of 12 years if the restriction is reasonable having regard to the strength, stamina or physique requirements **of the activity**.

The Action Group believes it is most important that the Education Department, schools, principals and teachers encourage participation in sport and discourages discrimination.

Gender identity discrimination and birth certificates

The Queensland Attorney General, Yvette d'Ath announced (at the LGBTIQ Forum held at Queensland University of Technology on 14 September) that her department plans to conduct a review of the Births Deaths and Marriages Registrations Act 2003 next year. You can see a video of her speech [here](#).

We have written to the Attorney General asking whether a commencement date has been scheduled for the review of the Act and what the procedure will be for public submissions.

We are waiting for a reply from the Attorney General.

Health support for transgender children

The Action Group has written to the Minister for Health, Cameron Dick, about the unbelievably long waiting time for children and adolescents who are gender dysphoric or gender fluid to get an appointment at the Children's Gender Clinic. They now have to wait almost two years to see the experienced paediatric psychiatrist and endocrinologist.

We are waiting for a reply from the Minister.

Please share this newsletter with your family, friends and work colleagues. If you would like to be added to the mailing list please contact:

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