

# QAGLS Newsletter

## February 2018

### Core Group Queensland Action Group for LGBTIQ+ Students

The core group of the Queensland Action Group for LGBTIQ+ Students had a very cheerful and animated Christmas lunch on 5 December in Toowong.

The gathering celebrated the end of our year's activities, as well as the results of the Same Sex Marriage Survey announced on 15 November.

For our regular meetings QAGLS uses Zoom teleconferencing, which allows people to join in from all parts of Queensland; for locals, it avoids the problems of driving and parking.

It would be wonderful to have people from more places in Queensland, not just Brisbane! If you would like to join the core group, please email the chairperson, Dr Janet Berry, at [janet\\_berry@bigpond.com](mailto:janet_berry@bigpond.com) or phone her on 0428 536 618.



## QAGLS Diary

### The End of Safe Schools?

*Safe Schools in Queensland ended on 31 October 2017 after two years of delivery by True. Many teachers in many Queensland schools received training, although we have not been able to ascertain the final figure.*

*What is certain is that many teachers still have not been trained to understand and support LGBTIQ+ students. Many schools remain heteronormative and lack an inclusion policy.*

*Notwithstanding the same-sex marriage survey vote and the passing of legislation, many of QAGLS' goals (see page three) are still to be met.*

*There are many young children questioning their gender and many sexuality diverse young people who still don't feel welcome and safe at their school.*

*Many parents of these children don't know what they can expect or ask of their school in the way of support for such students.*

*During 2018 the Action Group plans to collect stories and experiences of parents, to be able to know what is happening right across Queensland.*

### January

Planning and circulation of a **submission** to the national Inquiry into Religious Freedom chaired by the Hon. Philip Ruddock (see page three for details). And at our **planning meeting** we mapped out activities for the year. More to come!

### February

9: Rebecca and Janet met with Gayle Walters, the **President of P&Cs Qld**. Rebecca organised this - thanks Rebecca. Gayle welcomed us to make a presentation to their next board meeting and to attend their conference later in the year, so there is lots of work ahead!

23: A second meeting with John Ryan at **Queensland College of Teachers** is scheduled. Lisa, Al and Janet attending.

### March

8: Presentation to the Queensland Catholic Education Commission Wellbeing Network. Janet and Rebecca will be talking to this state-wide network.

15: Presentation to the Department of Education at the **University of the Sunshine Coast**. Lisa and Janet are making the trip for this one.

Next meeting:

10 am Wednesday 28 February

## New Minister for Education in Queensland

After the State Government election in November 2018, the Honourable Grace Grace was appointed Minister for Education. The Action Group has written to Ms Grace asking to meet with her and the Assistant Minister for Education, Mrs Brittany Lauga. We particularly want to make sure they are aware of the following:

1. It has long been established by research in this country that comprehensive and visible State Government policy is critical in keeping LGBTIQ+ students safe at school.

The two page document [Diversity in Queensland Schools - Information for Principals](#) currently on the website of the Department of Education is insufficient to reassure parents and students that they will be welcome and safe at their school, wherever that is in Queensland.

2. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (2011), in support of the Melbourne Declaration (2008) and in line with Commonwealth and State anti-discrimination legislation, state that teachers should know and understand students and employ inclusive strategies that engage and support all students.

The Safe Schools program provided training to many teachers in Queensland but did not reach all schools. The Department of Education must ensure that all teachers are trained in understanding and respecting diversity of sexual orientation, gender identity and diverse bodies among students.

## *Breakthrough!* *Teacher Education in Sexuality and Gender Identity*

At the end of last year the Action Group met with the Queensland College of Deans. We took the opportunity to put the case to Deans of Education that subjects or units addressing sexuality, gender identity and diverse bodies should be included in all initial teacher education degree courses in Queensland.

Since then we have heard that Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is developing a unit in sexuality, gender and respectful relationships as part of their primary school teacher course. The unit will be compulsory.

This progressive development by QUT Department of Education sets a gold standard for all other universities in the state. In our further meetings with the Deans of Education this year (see 'Diary', p.1), we will be sharing the news and encouraging all to provide student teachers with this essential training.

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The Queering Queensland Education Consultative Committee is working in consultation with the Department of Education and Training (DET) on the following:

- Informing the Minister for Education of the activities of the Committee;
- Conducting workshops to develop comprehensive policy feedback to the Department;
- Developing a research grant application to support the needs of the DET.

Lisa van Leent, QUT

## *National No-Bullying Day*



*On Friday 16 March 2018, Australian schools will stand united in their communities to celebrate the eighth National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (NDA).*

*Is your school registered? Check the [Bullying No Way website](#).*

## Training Programs: Gender, Sexuality, and Inclusivity for Teachers and Students

Safe Schools might have ended (see page one), but there are still principals, teachers, and other school staff who do not understand what it feels like to be an intersex, gender questioning or same-sex attracted person.

We have sourced two organisations that are delivering LGBTIQ+ awareness training in Queensland. This training can help teachers understand how to support diverse children and young people.

The Queensland AIDS Council (QuAC) offers a range of training packages designed to help health and community services 'build an open and inclusive rapport with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex clients'.

The training ranges in level from a four-hour (half-day) 'Basic Awareness' program to a formal accreditation program, for those organisations that want to elevate and demonstrate their commitment to developing a fully inclusive workplace.

The Basic Awareness program gives information on sexuality, gender identity and intersex status; the impact of discrimination on young people; and social pressures, and the impact on LGBTIQ+ health.

For more information you can email QuAC's Training and Development Co-ordinator, Ricki Menzies, at [training@quac.org.au](mailto:training@quac.org.au) or visit <https://quac.org.au/>

True – formerly Family Planning Queensland – has diversified and expanded, now being a provider of education and training in the areas of relationships and reproductive health. It also provides workshops to help organisations to develop LGBTIQ+ affirming policy and practice.

The True All School Program offers classes for students and training for teachers, which aims at 'respectful facilitation, free of discrimination and mindful of the diversity that exists in different relationships and families.'

True programs operate from seven regional centres across Queensland. For information, contact Nikki Whitmore, Project Co-ordinator, Gender, Sexuality and Diversity, email [nikki.whitmore@true.org.au](mailto:nikki.whitmore@true.org.au), telephone (07) 3250 0257, or visit the website at <http://www.true.org.au/Education/allschool>,

## Inquiry into Religious Freedom

The Action Group has made a submission to the [Review into Religious Freedom](#) currently being undertaken by an Expert Committee appointed by the federal government. The Inquiry has received more than 16,000 submissions!

In our submission we said that the human rights of all Australians, including LGBTIQ+ people, should not be violated by present religious freedoms in this country, and that any changes to religious freedoms must not impact further on individuals.

We focus on the religious discrimination that is permitted by the *Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act* (1991). Under this act, religious educational institutions (and other bodies established for religious purposes) are permitted to discriminate against their employees, including LGBTIQ+ employees.

This is not tolerable in today's Australia. Religious schools receive public funding and should treat all potential employees respectfully and equally, or they should forfeit any taxpayer money.

You can find our full submission on our [website: www.qldactiongrouplgbtiqstudents.org](http://www.qldactiongrouplgbtiqstudents.org)

### ***Our Goals***

- 1. All teachers and education personnel in Queensland receive training in LGBTIQ+ equity.*
- 2. Comprehensive LGBTIQ+ policy frameworks and guidelines are available in all educational settings in Queensland.*
- 3. Support services and systems for LGBTIQ+ youth are available within and external to educational contexts.*
- 4. Gender neutral and non-binary needs are recognised in all education settings in Queensland.*
- 5. Support for parents and carers of LGBTIQ+ children and young people is promoted within and external to educational contexts in Queensland.*
- 6. Research into LGBTIQ+ equity for students, educational personnel and allies is extended and promoted in Queensland.*
- 7. The work and reputation of the Action Group grows, both in Queensland and nationally.*

## *Recruiting Male Teachers to Primary Teaching*

The **Primary Masculinities** project being conducted in Queensland addresses the difficulties in recruiting and retaining male teachers in primary education.

The national average of teachers within primary education is 90% female and 10% male, with teacher education courses 80% female and 20% male (Queensland College of Teachers, 2013). This profile has been unchanged for the last 10 years.

The acknowledged gender imbalance in primary education has now become chronic, often being referred to as normal, even 'traditional', rarely as problematic, although it has been highlighted as one of the key factors contributing to a current teacher shortage.

A 2015 report commissioned by the Australian Council for Educational Research estimates that there is a need for 444 more primary classes every year for ten years, and well in excess of 100,000 places to be provided over the next ten years in Queensland alone (Wheldon).

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### *You might be interested in reading...*

the report by Queensland police officer Ben Bjarnesen, on the findings of his Churchill Fellowship project. Ben travelled the world to investigate police responses to domestic violence in the LGBTIQ+ community.

His report highlights the frequency of domestic violence across *all* communities; the difficulties of reporting violence for LGBTIQ+ individuals, due to mistrust of police, and/or fear of being identified; and the need to have dedicated officers to respond to LGBTIQ+ cases.

In passing, the report also comments on strategies for raising awareness of services like dedicated police liaison officers: newspapers, magazines, television, radio, social media, festivals, and merchandise are used by police in Washington DC, where all training incorporates LGBTIQ+ 'scenarios'.

For the full report, visit the Churchill Trust site: [https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/media/fellows/Bjarnesen\\_B\\_2016\\_To\\_enhance\\_police\\_response\\_to\\_LGBTI\\_domestic\\_violence.pdf](https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/media/fellows/Bjarnesen_B_2016_To_enhance_police_response_to_LGBTI_domestic_violence.pdf)

This surge comes at a time when there is a chronic problem in recruiting within this sector, particularly in attracting male teachers.

To date very little attention has been given within the Australian context about this slow but steady decline in males becoming primary school teachers.

In order to address this problem, we need to investigate the complex of reasons why male teachers are no longer choosing primary education as an option for their teaching career.

With so many demands being made on the primary sector in the next ten years we can no longer remain complacent with recruiting from sources that are, in any case, restricted.

Dr Ian Davis, Learning and Teaching Unit, Queensland University of Technology  
[Ian.Davis@qut.edu.au](mailto:Ian.Davis@qut.edu.au)

Queensland College of Teachers. 2013. *Attrition of Recent Queensland Graduate Teachers*.  
[http://www.qct.edu.au/pdf/Retention\\_Research\\_Report\\_RP01.pdf](http://www.qct.edu.au/pdf/Retention_Research_Report_RP01.pdf)

Wheldon, Paul R. 2015. *The Teacher Workforce in Australia: Supply, Demand and Data Issues*, ACER Policy Insights.



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friends and work colleagues.***

***If you would like to be added to the mailing list  
please contact  
Dr Janet Berry, Chairperson, Queensland  
Action Group for LGBTIQ+ Students***

***[janet\\_berry@bigpond.com](mailto:janet_berry@bigpond.com) or 0428 536 618.***



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