



## The Action Group

For 2017 we have a fresh vision:

**LGBTIQ+ students and allies are: welcome, safe and supported in reaching their full potential in all education settings in Queensland.**

To find out more and to read our goals for 2017, please go to the [Action Group website](#).

Our committee is a mix of parents and researchers, all of them enthusiastic and full of ideas. There is always space for more if you would like to work with us.

### **Needed - a treasurer!**

The Action Group could do a lot more if we became a registered not-for-profit organisation with the ability to apply for grants. Here are some of the things we would like to do:

- publish our own documents supporting LGBTIQ+ young people, their parents/carers and their schools in Queensland;
- network with other states by attending conferences and bringing ideas back to Queensland;
- support research conducted here in Queensland; and
- hold public forums and conferences in Queensland to spread the need for LGBTIQ+ student support in this state.

To register as a not-for-profit organisation we urgently need a treasurer on the committee. **If you have the ability and the enthusiasm to become treasurer for the Action Group please get in touch!**

## Queensland Department of Education

In 2012 a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) publication stated: "Inclusive education requires inclusive policies, school environments, curricula and training of teachers."

We know that homophobic and transphobic bullying is occurring daily in schools across Queensland. We know that many principals and teachers don't know what to do about it. We know that many schools still do not have an inclusive environment and children are suffering as a result.

During a recent meeting with the Queensland Department of Education the Action Group thanked them for revising their document on their website "[Diversity in Queensland Schools – Information for Principals](#)". The revised document now includes a recommendation that the curriculum should promote inclusion. This provides scope for principals and teachers to teach about diversity, including sexuality and gender diversity, in the classroom. However, the document is significantly lacking in practical on the ground strategies.

Queensland falls behind other states in their online support for LGBTIQ+ children and young people. For example, the [South Australia Department of Education and Childhood Development](#) has an excellent comprehensive guideline that spells out school and teacher responsibilities and allows parents and children to know what they can expect from their school.

## 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:

*“Term One has begun and our Safe Schools team have been busy with teacher training and parent/carer support. This year our team is fortunate to be joined by Nikki Whitmore, who is well respected in the area of LGBTIQ+ support. Nikki is in the role of ‘Project Coordinator – Gender and Sexual Diversity’. Nikki’s contact details are [nikki.whitmore@true.org.au](mailto:nikki.whitmore@true.org.au).”*

*At this stage neither Federal nor State Government has indicated ongoing funding will be available to continue our work on Safe Schools. We continue to work at maximum capacity and encourage schools to book with us prior to June 2016 if they require professional development and/or teacher support.*

*To request teacher training at your school or to ask about research partnerships, please contact [safe.schools@true.org.au](mailto:safe.schools@true.org.au) or call 3250 0240.”*

The Action Group will continue to lobby the Queensland Government to provide policies, guidelines and training for all schools, principals and teachers across Queensland.

## Research and Networking

A couple of members of the Action Group are reaching out to academics in Queensland to form a specialised research group. If you are an academic in the field and interested in forming a research collective in Queensland, please contact Dr Lisa van Leent at [lisa.vanleent@qut.edu.au](mailto:lisa.vanleent@qut.edu.au).

Queensland University of Technology is planning a research forum during ‘Queer Week’ in September this year. The idea is to showcase research in Queer Studies or LGBTIQ+ theme. . . . more details to come. If you are interested in being a part of the forum, please contact Dr Lisa van Leent at [lisa.vanleent@qut.edu.au](mailto:lisa.vanleent@qut.edu.au).

## Queensland drivers license change

Welcome news for Queensland’s transgender, gender diverse and intersex drivers (and boat license holders) is that Queensland licenses will [no longer display a gender marker](#). This change took effect from October 2016. Adult proof of age cards have not displayed gender since March 2016.

## Review of Births Deaths and Marriages Registrations Act 2003

The Action Group has received confirmation from the Queensland Attorney General’s office that the government intends to review the Births, Deaths and Marriage Registration Act this year.

This Action Group will make a submission to the review. We are particularly concerned that young people should be able to change their gender marker on their birth certificate and that a non-binary gender marker is permitted. Other changes should include being able to record a change in gender without medical or surgical requirements and without having to get a divorce.

## Great news about the “children’s gender clinic”

The Acting Coordinator at Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital Gender Service has provided some very welcome information about the expansion of the children’s gender service:

*“Children’s Health Queensland have put in place 2 psychologists and a psychiatrist, all experienced in the support of gender diverse children and young people, to support the Lady*

Cilento Children's Hospital Gender Service. This team have joined Professor Jennifer Batch and Dr Stephen Stathis who have pioneered care of gender diverse young people in Queensland for the last 10 years and had become overwhelmed with the referral numbers outstripping the available resources creating unacceptable wait times.

This expanded team have steadily been working through the waitlist in the last 10 weeks seeing dozens of families and expected wait times are greatly reduced (3-6 months). Queensland Department of Health has indicated recurrent funding commencing 2017/2018 financial year to support this service with details to follow in the coming months. A new email address has been created for enquiries and referrals can continue to be received by GP's via the LCCH website or by letter to this email address [LCCHgender@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:LCCHgender@health.qld.gov.au). Involvement of gender diverse children, young people and their parents in the development of their service is considered central and CHQ have contracted Evie Ryder to hold focus groups to inform the development of clinic resources."

## Family Court

The Action Group has written to the Federal Attorney General, George Brandis, asking for a review of the process that currently requires transgender young people to apply to the Family Court for approval for stage 2 treatment.

There are two stages of hormone therapy for the treatment of gender dysphoria in children. Stage 1 treatment involves suppressing the onset of puberty and stage 2 treatment is used to promote physical development in the affirmed gender. Stage 1 treatment is fully reversible, stage 2 is not. Currently, in Australia, a transgender child cannot access stage 2 treatment without an application first being made to the Family Court. For much more detailed information please read [Transforming lives](#) on the Law Institute Victoria website.

The Family Court process is onerous, costly and imposes additional stress and anxiety on a transgender child and their family. This situation must be addressed.

## What can you do to help?

- Ask your school principal to invite Safe Schools into your school before the end of June.
- Check that there are books in your school library that help children of diverse sexuality, gender or bodies. The [Rainbow Book List - GLBTQ Books for Children & Teens 2017](#) is now available.
- Talk to the P&C or P&F group at your school. The P&Cs Qld state organisation fully supports the Safe Schools program.
- Organise a LGBTIQ+/Allies group in your school.
- Start preparing for [IDAHOT day](#).

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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