



Action Group

We now have a [website](#). Please let others know by linking to it through your own web pages and newsletters.

IDAHOT Day

The Action Group will be having a stall at the [International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia \(IDAHOT\)](#) event in Brisbane. If you are there please come and have a chat and share your stories.

Sunday 15 May - 11 am - Queens Park, George Street, Brisbane.

Look out for our new banner:



Meeting with the Education Department

During March Action Group representatives met again with Mr Bevan Brennan, Assistant Director General for State Schools – Operations. Here are some of the topics we discussed:

1. There is currently only one document on the Department of Education website that provides information and support for LGBTIQ young people in Queensland schools, '[Diversity in Queensland Schools – Information for Principals](#)'. Other states and territories have a wealth of information to help teachers, parents and students. Mr Brennan told us the document had been improved and was waiting for the approval of the Minister, Kate Jones before being published on the website.
2. The Minister, Kate Jones is committed to the Safe Schools Coalition program. It is being promoted to all school principals by Mr Brennan as he travels through Queensland. We explained that it is essential for teachers, parents and students to be aware of the program and for the department to publicly encourage all schools to engage in the program.
3. We raised several issues that cause considerable distress for transgender children and their parents. We were assured that unisex toilets are gradually being introduced throughout Queensland, particularly as new schools are built. Participation in school sports needs to encompass transgender children and Mr Brennan promised this would be followed up. We requested again that transgender children who have transitioned can provide documents other than their birth certificate at school enrolment (more on this below).

Recording the Gender of Transgender children

When enrolling at Queensland schools, parents must currently produce their child's birth certificate. The Department of Education will only record a child's gender as it is shown on the child's birth certificate. For a child that has transitioned this is no longer the correct gender. This has the potential to cause embarrassment and severe distress to these children. The Action Group has written to the Minister for Education, The Honourable Kate Jones requesting that alternative documents can be produced at enrolment to record a child's gender.

In Queensland, it is not possible for school age children to register the change in gender on their birth certificate. This is because the conditions required by the Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages include the person being over eighteen years of age and having had sex reassignment surgery. Both the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland have recommended the Queensland Government change the requirements for registering a change of sex and/or gender. The Action Group have written to the Attorney General, The Honourable Yvette D'Ath about this issue.

Queensland Police support LGBTIQ people and youth

At the March meeting of the Action Group, we welcomed Senior Sergeant Rodney Bell, the State Coordinator of the LGBTI liaison program. He told us that the Queensland Police Service is supporting the LGBTI community in three major ways:

The School Based Policing Program is a joint initiative between the Queensland Police Service and Education Queensland and contributes to a safe and supportive learning environment. The Safe Schools Coalition program has been delivered to the (approximately) fifty school-based police officers in Queensland in order that they can support LGBTI youth.

A number of police personnel are dedicated LGBTI liaison officers. These officers are located throughout the State and undertake the role in addition to their regular duties. Liaison officers provide support and assistance to LGBTI community members when dealing with police matters. The best way to contact this service is to call Policelink on 131 444.

Safe Schools Coalition Queensland

Contributed by Bonney Corbin from *true* Relationships and Reproductive Health. Bonney coordinates the Safe Schools Coalition in Queensland.

"It's been a busy start to the school year with increased calls and interest from schools across the state. We welcome a new project officer to Brisbane - Casey Northam. Casey will work with schools in the Brisbane/Ipswich/Toowoomba regions and support our regional staff who work across the state. Given recent media we recognise that the wellbeing of LGBTIQ communities are a priority, and we encourage people to support each other and offer referrals to support agencies where relevant. This context highlights the need for additional funds and resources to support LGBTI children and young people both inside and outside of school settings. We have a new email address for referrals - safe.schools@true.org.au. Thank you for your ongoing support."

Australian Council of State School Organisations

ACSSO, the peak national body representing the interests of the families and communities of over 2.4 million children in government schools lends its support for the Safe Schools Coalition program. Phillip Spratt, President of the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO), has joined the National Steering Committee of Safe Schools Coalition Australia.

Phillip Spratt has shared a strong message of endorsement for the program: "Safe Schools Coalition Australia does critical work with school communities to raise awareness and empathy, respond to bullying

and discrimination, and create learning environments that foster the positive values of respect and inclusion.”

ACSSO have produced a [media release](#) supporting Safe Schools Coalition Australia.

Are you being bullied?

Ian Thorpe is encouraging young people aged between 14 – 18 years of age and living in Queensland to take part in The Bully Project, a documentary being produced for the ABC. Find out more at their [website](#).

Upcoming meetings:

You are all very welcome to attend meetings of the action group which generally take place every six weeks. For those unable to attend in person teleconferencing is available, please contact Janet Berry (details below) for more information.

Next meeting: **Monday 06 June**
Time: 10am
Location: Milton, Brisbane

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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