



## Safe Schools Coalition Queensland continues until 31 October

The Action Group has heard the very good news that the Safe Schools Coalition program will continue to be delivered by [True Relationships and Reproductive Health](#) in Queensland until 31 October 2017 (at the time of our last newsletter we were under the impression that the funding would cease at the end of the financial year).

True offers face to face Teacher Professional Development in schools and Education Queensland Regional Offices. Safe Schools Coalition [webinars](#) will continue, with dates extended until October. True are also starting a range of new LGBTIQ+ professional development courses for:

- [Clinicians](#)
- [Parents/carers](#)
- [Community workers](#)

## Queensland Department of Education

The next meeting between the Queensland Action Group for LGBTIQ+ Students and the Education Department is in early June.

At the top of our list of requests is a comprehensive government policy that makes it mandatory for all state school principals and teachers to recognise the needs of LGBTIQ+ students and provide a safe and inclusive school environment.

The [Writing themselves in 3](#) survey found that LGBTIQ+ students in schools not covered by policy were less likely to feel safe at school, felt less confident about their diversity, were more likely to be physically abused, and at greater risk of self-harm and suicide.

## What happens after Safe Schools?

The Action Group has written to the Minister for Education to ask whether the government will provide funding to allow *True Relationships and Reproductive Health* to continue the training program they have developed in order that all schools and all teachers across Queensland can receive training.

If not, does the Education Department have a plan to ensure ALL principals, teachers and school staff can access in-service training in understanding LGBTIQ students and how to care for them?

## Queensland Youth Strategy

The Queensland Youth Strategy has been launched by Honourable Shannon Fentiman MP for Waterford, Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. “The strategy will pave the way for addressing many of the significant challenges and opportunities facing young Queenslanders, and will set the standard for government’s engagement with young people.”

The Action Group is very pleased to see there is section specifically supporting LGBTIQ young people on page 15 of the Queensland Youth Strategy. To find out more and download the Queensland Youth Strategy go to [this page](#) on the Queensland Government website.

## Initial teacher education programs should include LGBTIQ+ material

In classrooms in Queensland issues are arising around the topics of same-sex attraction, gender identity and intersex. Research here in Queensland has shown that teachers don't know what to do when these situations arise. Some teachers ignore, some don't see it as a priority, some maintain home and school boundaries, some protect students and bullies, and some embrace the topic.

In Australia the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 requires schools to provide education without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity/expression or intersex status.

In other states initial teacher education programs now include, as part of the accreditation process, content that addresses diverse gender and sexualities and intersex topics. But not in Queensland.

The Queensland Action Group for LGBTIQ+ Students has embarked upon a campaign to have LGBTIQ+ issues included in initial teacher education programs in Queensland.

## The Lady Cilento Children's Hospital Gender Service

The Action Group has received a reply from Cameron Dick, the Minister for Health confirming that \$1.117 million over four years has been provided to the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital to enhance the children's gender clinic and reduce patient wait times from three years to three months.

Further funding is to be provided to ensure the statewide delivery of services to children and young people with gender dysphoria or gender variance. This great news recognises that these young people live everywhere in Queensland, not just the south-east.

## Family Court

The Action Group has received a reply from the office of George Brandis, the Australian Government Attorney General, saying that the Government is aware of the concerns of transgender teenagers and their families who currently need to apply to the Family Court for stage two treatment. The letter confirms that the Australian Government is actively considering options for reform.

A recent ABC News item quoted the Chief Justice of the Family Court, Diana Bryant as saying "the system is underfunded and letting people down".

The Action Group will continue to lobby for a review of the law in order that Family Court approval for stage 2 treatment of transgender young people will no longer be required.

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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