

Submission No. 54
(youth violence)
A.O.C. Date: 2/12/2009



November 2009

Submission to the Inquiry on the Impact of Violence on Young Australians

Rainbow Network Victoria welcomes the opportunity to make a brief submission to this enquiry. We have a particular interest in the impact of violence on same sex attracted and transgender young people and on the impact of homophobia and transphobia on violence against young people in general.

About Rainbow Network Victoria

Rainbow Network Victoria is a statewide network for anyone who works with same sex attracted, bisexual, queer, or transgender young people in community or school-based settings. There are currently 114 members including teachers, youth workers, health workers, researchers, community workers, and more.

The main activities of the Rainbow Network are;

- To exchange ideas, information and resources to support SSAT young people and challenge homophobia and transphobia.
- To provide a platform to discuss issues that may emerge when working with SSAT young people, their families, schools and community agencies.
- To provide information to members and the wider community about the latest research, government initiatives or community information.
- To advocate for same sex attracted and transgender young people, particularly in regards to public policy, funding, and anti-discrimination work.
- To develop partnerships between agencies and schools aimed at empowering young people to participate in decision making and community development.
- To deliver training and professional development to those working with young people – including school staff, youth workers, social workers, housing workers etc.

The network aims to support GLBTI young people by educating and supporting those who work with them to provide more inclusive general services, run more effective specialist services, and to challenge homophobia and transphobia both within their organisations and with their client groups.

Support for other submissions

We would like to strongly endorse the submission made by the *National LGBT Health Alliance* and their recommendations.

We would also like to support the submission made by *OUTthere*, the Rural Victorian Youth Council for Sexual Diversity and echo their personal stories in the stories told to our members by the young people they work with.

Strategies to reduce violence and its impact on young Australians

As presented in detail within the *National LGBT Health Alliance* submission, we know that significant violence against young people in Australia is associated with transphobia and homophobia. This has a major impact on the mental health of young people who are same sex attracted or transgender. Therefore, the government must take action to combat transphobia and homophobia in society as well as supporting



the provision of specialist services that work with this group of particularly vulnerable young people.

Rainbow Network Victoria recommends:

- That recurrent public funding is provided to specialist same sex attracted and transgender youth groups and projects.
- That training and development opportunities are provided to youth services to make them more inclusive of same sex attracted and transgender young people, and to help them tackle homophobia and transphobia.
- That frameworks such as the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood's 'Supporting Sexual Diversity in Schools' be extended and developed across Australia as a mean of empowering schools to tackle homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- That further support is given to the development of peer support models for same sex attracted and transgender groups within schools, such as Gay Straight Alliances and Diversity Groups.
- The any research into the impact of violence on young people includes particular consideration of the experiences of same sex attracted and transgender young people.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide further detailed information on our work, on the research conducted at La Trobe University in this area, and on our ideas for reducing the impact of homophobia and transphobia and violence against young people in our community.

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