

working it out



*tasmania's gender, sexuality and intersex
status support and education service*

*Building individual resilience, community capacity
and a more just society*

WordsOut Autumn 2017

Welcome to the first WordsOut for 2017.



L-R: Susan Ditter, Executive Officer; Anna Cooper, LGBTI Support; Dean Munday, SSCT Project Officer until June 2016; Sue Newman, Aged Care Training; Andrew Badcok, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention; Xris Reardon, SSCT Project Officer; Chris Brophy, Service Development; Don Pitcher, LGBTI Support; Jane Oakley-Lohm, LGBTI Support; Liv Hogarth, Communications; and Lucinda Shannon, Community Development. Photo taken early 2016.

I would also like to thank Lucy Shannon for her years of hard work in the north and northwest as Community Development worker, and Tamara Reynish for her work in in the north and northwest of the state. We say goodbye as both these workers move on to other opportunities.

We also say goodbye to Chris Brophy who has been with the team many years with lots of hats and most recently that of Organisational Development. Chris thank you for all you have done for the organisation and for us as a team!

Thank you all for your commitment and support of this unique organisation, its values and origins. The Team now welcomes Claire Johnston who will be based in the north and work across to the northwest. Claire will be supported by Sue Newman and Xris Reardon in her new role.

In saying goodbye, it is important to remember the commitment and dedication of those who have and are working for this organisation. I am

particularly aware of the challenges in the north and northwest when the majority of the team are based in the south, as is the case for many other support services. This can be an extremely demanding and isolating job with many hours on the road. WIO is funded to support those negotiating their gender, sexuality and/or intersex status, wherever they are across Tasmania. It is vital to remember this in managing our work-load. We provide professional learning to mainstream organisations in other areas to enable us to refer people on to other inclusive services for assistance with housing, shelter accommodation, crisis and emergencies, mental health, counselling or financial support.

In 2017 we complete three national projects and embed the focus on LGBTI young people at school, elderly people, and people experiencing mental ill-health in all our work. The opportunity to be a partner of the National LGBTI Aged Care Training, the MindOut Mental Health Project and Safe Schools Coalition Australia has changed the lived experience of many LGBTI people and families in aged care, those experiencing mental ill-health and those still at school. These three projects have also enabled far reaching exposure and additional visibility of our work.

In this summer edition of WordsOut there is information on all three national projects, an introduction from several of our volunteer Board members, and news about two new projects for young people - Leadership 2020 and regionALL from Heywire - so please read on!

Susan Ditter, EO

Recognising Excellence In LGBTI Inclusive Practice and Service Delivery in Tasmania



The Working It Out Dorothies Awards 2017

On May 17th 2017, Working It Out – Tasmania’s gender, sexuality, and intersex status support and education service - will present *The Dorothies Awards* to organisations demonstrating excellence in the provision of inclusive mental health services to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex, and other gender and sexuality diverse (LGBTI) Tasmanians.

As many Network MindOut subscribers know, LGBTI Australians are at heightened risk of experiencing mental ill-health due to experiences and fear of discrimination, prejudice, social isolation and family rejection. Although most LGBTI Australians live healthy happy lives, research has found significantly higher rates of poor mental health outcomes within LGBTI populations. (*Champions of Inclusion: A Guide to Creating LGBTI Inclusive Organisations*, National LGBTI Health Alliance, 2014.)

Our aim this year is to increase awareness of the need for inclusive services for LGBTI people to confidently access mental health services knowing their needs will be respected and understood.

In determining the winners of the awards, the judging panel consider which nominations most strongly demonstrate evidence of:

1. Outcomes, successes, commitment and positive impact on the advancement of LGBTI visibility and inclusiveness in their practice or organisation.
2. Understanding of, and commitment to, addressing discrimination and prejudice in mental health service delivery based on sexuality, gender identity and intersex status.

3. The organisation's policies, culture and continuing implementation of the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act.

Winners will be announced by Georgie Harman, CEO of *beyond blue* at Working It Out's annual breakfast for IDAHO (the international day against prejudice & discrimination towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans* people and people with Intersex characteristics). This event attracts allies and leaders in organisations, governments, and services to celebrate achievements and recognise change the additional work to be done.

Nominate an Organisation

If you would like to nominate a Tasmanian organisation or an individual who has demonstrated excellence in LGBTI inclusive service delivery, download a nomination pack from: www.workingitout.org.au/thedorothies/

Alternatively, if you have any queries, please call Working It Out on (03) 6231 1200 or email exec@workingitout.org.au

Nominations close: 5pm April 21st 2017

Winners will be announced at the Working It Out 2017 IDAHO Breakfast on May 17th 2017

In Tasmania, Working It Out delivers the MindOut National LGBTI Mental Health Project. We have:

- Established a Tasmanian LGBTI Mental Health Professional Network
- Supported organisations to become Champions of this space
- Engaged the Tasmanian community and service organisations into events
- Provided Professional Learning sessions.

SignPost is now state wide!

SignPost is a website for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, & Intersex Tasmanians and their families and friends. SignPost provides accurate, up-to-date, constructive and positive information, resources, support and answers.

SignPost creates pathways to find organisations who wish to promote their LGBTI-inclusive services and safe environments.

Working It Out aims to make this the go-to space for you to get information, resources and identify services you need. We also aim to list the great things the Tasmanian Government is doing with the support of LGBTI individuals and organisations including the Whole-of-Government Framework for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Tasmanians.

Finding the right information and support is essential, but it has not always been simple. SignPost asks that those services that wish to be added to the site explain how they demonstrate their inclusivity. If you know of an organisation that should be listed on SignPost tell them, tell us, or both.

SignPost provides links to:

- information & resources
- individual & peer support
- health & wellbeing
- community networks & groups
- education & professional learning
- anti-discrimination & human rights legislation



Signpost was initially created by the Cradle Coast Authority and Rainbow Communities Tasmania.

LGBTI Support

with Anna Cooper, LGBTI Direct Support

Accessing support

LGBTI support is provided by Working It Out to provide sound and up to date information and resources and to answer questions from LGBTI Tasmanians and families. We continue to provide support to those in all regions across the state. WIO in consultation with other organisations, services and service users is adding skype and facetime to provide additional opportunities and more accessible support to those who, for a variety of reasons, cannot meet with a support worker face-to-face. We recognise that out time can be better used talking to people using new technology rather than driving long distances as this uses precious time and resources. We would like to hear your suggestions and ideas as we move to increased use of email, phone and Skype. What can we do to make this really work for you when you choose from our menu of support being email, phone, (where we offer call back or you can call us), text, skype and face-to-face, in addition to our peer support groups. If you have any recommendations or suggestions we would really appreciate it.

Peer Support Group for Partners

An emerging group seeking support has been individuals whose partners are transgender or identify as gender diverse. It is exciting and positive that individuals and families are more able to find support and are prepared to share and talk with others. In response WIO has started up a monthly Partner Support Group. The group aims to provide friendship, and support, as well as information and resources to support people on their journey. It is a safe space that can provide comfort through connection and combined experience. The group is also planning an online private space to increase accessibility across the state. Anyone who would like further information about the Partners' Peer Support Group can contact Anna Cooper (LGBTI Support Worker) via anna@workingitout.org.au or call the WIO office on 6231 1200.

Parents Peer Support Group

In recent months WIO has also had increased contact with parents of same-sex attracted young people who are wanting to talk with other parents in similar situations. Consequently, if there are enough parents out there who would like to meet up either occasionally or on a semi-regular basis WIO would like to hear from you. We can organise this and provide a safe and friendly space to meet. If you know of any parent(s) or carer(s) who may be interested, please contact us directly or feel free to pass on our details.

Safe Schools Coalition Tasmania

Diversity Awards 2016



Safe School Coalition Tasmania Project Officer, Xris Reardon supported schools and students to create and attend the inaugural Diversity Awards Ceremony on December 6th 2016. In their time as SSCT Project Officer in Tasmania, Xris has worked with a number of schools to provide students, be they allies or LGBTI students, with an affirming and safe space. Bill Linton (Assistant General Manager, Learning Service, Southern Region, Department of Education) was invited to open the Awards Ceremony and this is what he said.

The DOE takes great pride in supporting and honouring the work that has been done in our schools to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity that our schools capture.

These awards are an acknowledgement of the work that is being done in schools to combat inequality, and celebrate and support diversity. They are also a celebratory outcome of the cooperation between Working It Out and the Department of Education. Thank you to you Susan and your team. Your team's provision of professional learning and support for students and families is valued and much appreciated.

On reflection, the Department of Education has achieved significant progress in the last 4 years through our values, particularly "equity" and from this the development of our Respectful Schools framework and Respectful Relationships program.

The development of the guidelines for supporting sexual and gender diversity in schools and colleges has been critical in promoting and validating the discussions and support for all students and staff identifying as LGBTI. The guidelines provide information on how Tasmanian schools and colleges can make a real difference through the development of inclusive learning and teaching practices, and the provision of a supportive school culture.

*The Department's **Combating Bullying** initiative supports professional learning activities and provides access to best practice resources to support safe and*

inclusive environments where diversity is valued and all members of the community feel respected.

We need to consider the simple things that show our respect for diversity. Critical to this is the language we use, as it plays a powerful role both in contributing to diversity and in eliminating discrimination.

We know that language is a universal form of communication (despite different languages) that allows us to share ideas that without words could go unsaid but still felt.

If I look back 40 yearsI never had heard the word "intersex." I therefore couldn't validate or support a peer.... I didn't know and could not have communicated how I felt; equally the peer may have lacked the language to identify their own feelings and be able to describe them to me. Creating a language to enable communication is a real positive.

Our choice of words is critical in conveying our feelings or values.

- *Is it a "problem" or a "challenge?"*

The choice of words can sometimes be seen as restricting and closing off conversation such as "problem" think of the word "challenge" and it actually opens up possibilities and promotes discussion,.....this is the wonder and power of language.

The department's Guidelines for Inclusive Language play an important role in acknowledging everyone and treating all people equitably and with the sensitivity and respect to which they are entitled.

I would like to acknowledge and celebrate the great work a number of our schools are doing in this space, including:

- **Clarence High School** which has focused on diversity for the last two years, running diversity days, BBQs and activities as well as starting a Diversity Group and safe space for LGBTIQ students.
- **Rose Bay High School** that has created a safe school culture and promoted supportive and inclusive language across the school.
- **Jordan River Learning Federation, Gagebrook** which celebrated Wear it Purple Day and has reiterated inclusive language throughout the school.

*Our schools are committed to providing a **safe and supportive environment** for all students and staff, including those who are same sex attracted, gender diverse or intersex, and the department believes **safe, respectful and inclusive schools and colleges are critical to achieving staff and student wellbeing and high-quality educational goals and targets.***

So again thank you for allowing us to be a part of this most important occasion, recognising the trailblazing work that our students are undertaking.....another way of creating a supportive and inclusive Tasmania.

Working It Out would like to thank everyone who participated in last year's **LGBTI Diversity Awards**. The teachers, principals, assistant principals, nurses, school psychologists, social workers, parents, organisational representatives and their support, love, vision and leadership, made this year's activities not only possible but a great success. People took time from busy schedules to attend the awards, and acknowledge the work of over ten school Diversity groups.



Diversity groups include **student leaders**, who as allies, seek to create greater safety in schools through ensuring the inclusion of LGBTI students. The Diversity groups in the south participated in awareness raising activities in and out of school including Diversity Days, and attendance at the annual International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia breakfast hosted by Working It Out. At this event students sat at the Education Department table as guests of the Department. The audience heard from guest speakers from Beyond Blue and Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria

who spoke of their work to create inclusion.

Other Diversity group activities included attending a Youth Ethics workshop hosted by the Youth Network of Tasmania, poster making workshops, and engaging in public speaking activities at school assemblies. Several groups

walked in the annual TasPride Parade and other events during that week.

The Diversity Awards Ceremony was affirming, courageous and powerful and this was a message not missed by the Education Department and other students in attendance, who are undoubtedly our future leaders. The importance of their work is clearly articulated in a student's personal story about the value of the Diversity group's work at their school.

Other people shared the following reflections about the day:

"I never really knew that people really felt so alone until I heard one of the students speak. It was affirming to know the work matters".

"Back a generation ago you were only allowed to be straight and couldn't be LGBTI, but diversity groups make it more accepting at school".

"I know you have talked about other LGBTI diversity groups but I didn't really know, know that there were any".

"I have seen that there are so many more students getting support. I know that in my school having more visibility meant teachers stepped up to make sure people didn't treat me as badly. It's so good to know other students have groups too".

"It's allowing us to understand we are connected to a community of support within and outside of school".

"It was great to be recognised for the work we have done".

"This is the first time I have been accepted in a social thing. It felt accepting of me, really accepting and I felt very important"

"So much support, affirmation and understanding".

"It felt really informal though formal – it was a really optimistic atmosphere".

"I loved it when the student speaking ditched the script and just talked to us".

"It was so good to know that there is such overwhelming support, and that the Education Department was there to see and find out about what we do, what we are about".

"Really liked the social time".

"I loved the Sushi – it was the first time I had eaten Sushi"

This year we know these schools will continue to support the work of their school (LGBTI) Diversity groups, and that the numbers of groups will grow. In addition, we plan to welcome these students involvement in a LGBTI youth leadership summit to be held in second term. A call for participants will go out in mid first term.

Thank you to those who contributed to the day: Paul Mabb and A.J from Jordan River Learning Services who did the acknowledgement of country, the Education Department for the venue, Bill Linton, Assistant General Manager Learning Service, Southern Region for his generous words, and to Phoebe Adams for their amazing art work, and superb miniature desk trophies. And always the amazing team at WIO!!!

Xris Reardon
SSCT Project Officer

Safe Schools Coalition Tasmania

Professional Learning for school chaplains and nurses

Two professional learning sessions were held in early 2016 by the Department of Education for school chaplains and nurses. These were led by Matt Glover, who in 2012 was awarded **Freedom 2b's** "*Most significant contribution to increasing understanding between the LGBTI community and people from faith backgrounds.*"

As a former Baptist Minister who specialises in providing LGBTI awareness training, Matt focused these sessions on supporting school chaplains and nurses to further develop understandings about the intersections between duty of care, faith, and supporting LGBTI students. Also invited into this space were the Safe Schools Coalition Tasmania workers who spoke about the role of Safe Schools Coalition Tasmania and the partnership with professional leadership teams in Tasmanian schools.

Opening the session, Matt presented evidence from the *Writing Themselves In* research regarding the wellbeing of same-sex attracted and gender questioning young people. Matt then asked chaplains and nurses to consider the definitions of spirituality and scriptural texts related to the workshop. One mother also spoke to the group of her experience as a parent of a transgender child, giving participants the opportunity to ground the research with lived experiences in Tasmania.

Participants appreciated the opportunity to ask questions freely, and by inviting Safe Schools and Matt Glover into this space it allowed a more organic exploration on a range of other religious questions or concerns that Matt was able to address based on his wealth of knowledge and pastoral background. These sessions ultimately facilitated relationships which resulted in two more schools signing on to the Safe Schools Coalition Tasmania at that time.

Tasmanian schools wear it purple!

Students around Tasmania came together at the end of August for Wear It Purple Day to publicly celebrate inclusive support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and intersex status students.

Wear it Purple Day is an Australian student-created day to support young people identifying as same sex attracted, transgender or gender non-binary. Each year seeks to raise awareness about the lived experiences of LGBTI young people and the need to eradicate bullying based on sexuality and gender identity. This is done by wearing the colour purple.

LGBTI young people are at higher risk of mental ill health due to the issues of stigma, community attitudes, and difficulties of safe disclosure. It is NOT because of their sexuality or gender identity. These events grow in importance and size every year, as more young people recognise the significance of schools and services recognising the day.

In Tassie, a number of schools held their own activities. In one high school, students started a cupcake stall where baked-goods were sold at recess and lunch and raised \$500. Other events in schools included a prize for the student who wore the most purple, and a raffle, which raised \$100 for donation to the organisation SHE.

Support and events happen on other days of the year as well. Students have held Pride Week or Diversity Day activities making badges and handing out student-led information on relevant LGBTI topics, or attending events such as the TasPride Parade or Trans Day of Remembrance, demonstrating their driven passion for inclusive spaces.

Many of these events for 2016 would not have occurred without leadership from adults within the schools, and their support is vital and always welcome.



Rainbow nights for young people in Launceston and Hobart

In April 2016 Tasmania's first "Rainbow Youth Night" was held in Hobart at the Youth Arts and Recreation Centre as part of 2016 National Youth Week in Tasmania. Rainbow Nights have been a tremendous success in fostering greater social connections for students and other young people aged 12-25 in all parts of Australia. This is particularly important and exciting for young people who have previously felt isolated and excluded.

Over 80 young people attended, with \$340 raised through ticket sales which has since been invested into other LGBTI youth night events. The success from the April event led to Rainbow Proms being held in November in Launceston and Hobart, with attendance at a high 130 for the southern event.

When students spoke of the lack of events specifically for young people who are LGBTI, gender or sexuality diverse, or allies to diversity, people took action. The large attendance numbers make it clear that the rainbow young people of Tasmania have a voice and a desire to connect with other young people, and that it is now up to the youth services and schools of Tasmania to support those opportunities.

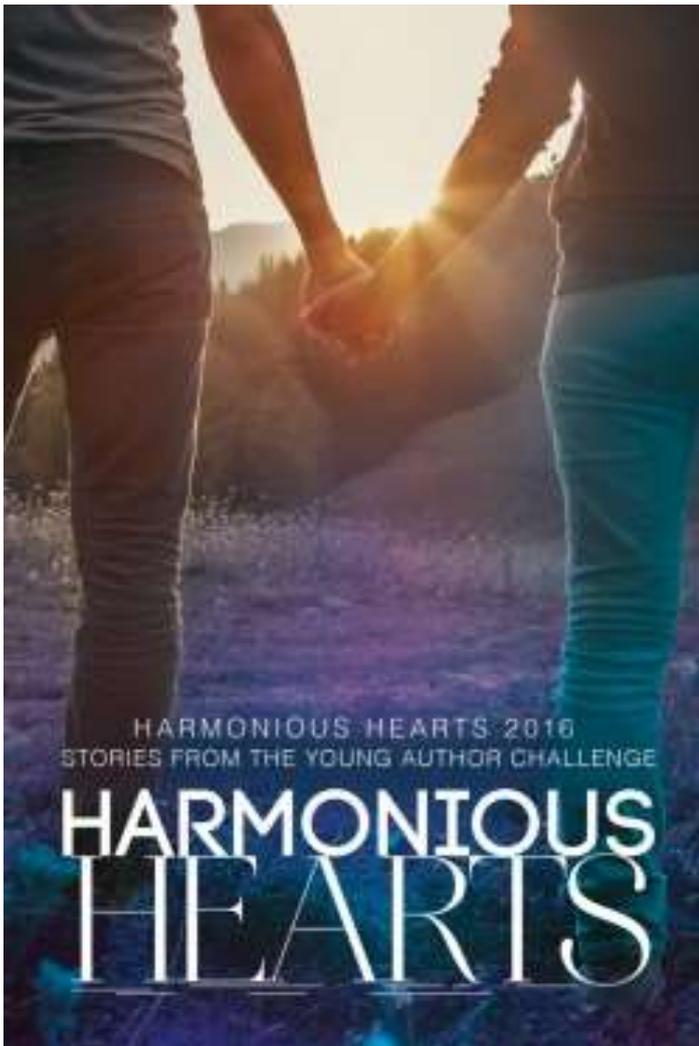
"Thank you so much for organising such a wonderful night! It was a safe, inclusive space, which was free from judgement and bias. Everyone who attended was accepting of others, and I'm quite confident that no-one felt isolated or alienated. It was made evident that even with our varied identities, we are all equal, and most importantly, we are all human beings. Thank you for allowing us to be ourselves - without any fear of prejudice. Again, thank you Working It Out and Youth Arc (and all the other people involved in making this night occur) for a lovely Rainbow Prom." Feedback from a young person.

The young people involved were very proud of the outcome and the environment they were able to create for other rainbow young people with a hope to do something like it again in the future. Such feedback demonstrates how important safe spaces are for LGBTI students, and how diversity groups in schools have a unique role to enrich the learning environment for all young people.

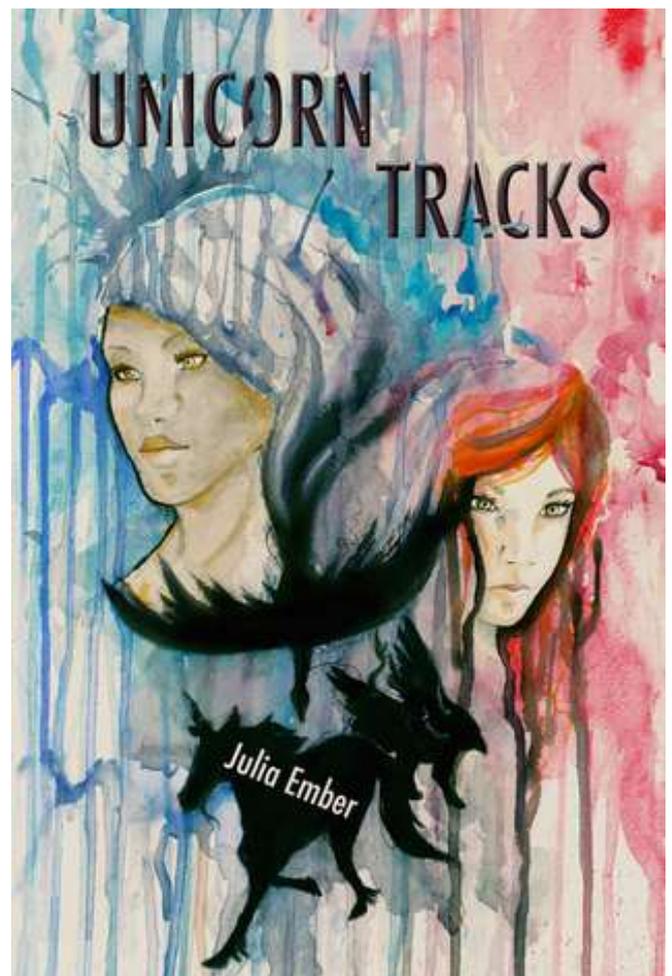


LGBTI Fiction for Young People

Once again, the very generous folk at Harmony Ink Press in Florida have sent us more wonderful LGBTI+ teen and young adult fiction to add to the existing titles in the WIO library. Please feel free to come in and borrow any of these great stories that cover a wide range of genres including fantasy, mystery, paranormal, romance, science fiction, and more.



Two of the books we have on our shelves from Harmony Ink Press.



International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia Breakfast

As an international day against prejudice & discrimination towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Trans people and people with Intersex characteristics, IDAHO is an annual event to recognise the challenges these communities face and to celebrate a drive for change on May 17. May 17 in 1990 was the day that homosexuality was removed from the International Classification of Diseases of the World Health Organization (WHO), and for this reason the day is symbolically chosen.

Here in our state, Tasmania's gender, sexuality, and intersex status support and education service Working It Out hosts a series of events once a year which are embraced and attended by community leaders in organisations, governments, and services all coming together championing this cause. At one of these events, usually the Hobart IDAHO Breakfast, WIO also presents The Dorothies Awards to services who display excellence in the field of LGBTI inclusion. Previous year categories for the award have included schools, aged care services, General Practitioners, and workplaces. This year's will be Mental Health Care.

At last year's breakfast three students were sponsored by the Department of Education to attend and had the opportunity to sit with community leaders. Student feedback highlighted how important it was for them to feel validated in a space with adult community leaders, with all of the students appreciating being about to meet and talk with members from the Department of Education about their experiences at school. These sponsored places were in addition to those provided by headspace each year as part of the OUTspace partnership.

A couple of students found the experience extra special when beyondblue's Former CEO and Board Director Leonie Young acknowledged the importance of these young people being included in spaces of affirmation such as this breakfast.

The sun-rising start of 7am simply emphasized the dedication of these students arriving down at Elizabeth Street Pier for the event.

COMING SOON

- Working It Out's sixth -

IDAHO breakfast

17th MAY 2017



Celebrating the international day against prejudice
& discrimination towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans*
people and people with intersex characteristics.

Practicing your Inclusive Language skills

Gathering the tools to promote inclusive language.

Inclusive language begins by understanding the meaning of the words we use or hear, and being confident to ask when we don't know.

For example, not all men who are into men are gay. Some are straight, some are bisexual, and some don't even see the need for a label at all. And some same sex attracted women use the word Gay to describe themselves. So when someone ignorantly gives you the wrong label, it has the potential to be hurtful. While we try to ensure we use language that's respectful, we don't get it right every time. Here's some quick suggestions to add to your toolbox of getting it right. Pass them on to that mate (or mother) who doesn't quite get it yet.

Firstly, grab the information from those in the know – aka the people who are part of these communities.



- The National LGBTI Health Alliance has an inclusive language guide that explores what inclusive language looks like - respecting people of intersex, trans and gender diverse experience. This language is important because it ensures all people are welcome to participate in everyday spaces at work, schools,

communities and services. Check it out here - lgbtihealth.org.au/resources/inclusive-language-guide

- At Working It Out, our beingproud.org.au website has information and

BeingProud
individual journeys, shared stories

resources for Tasmanian parents and families of young people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex,. WIO also provides support and cultural awareness training through the development and delivery of programs in schools, aged care and mental health.

- The Gender Centre is a NSW service committed to developing and providing services and activities that enhance the ability of people of diverse genders to make informed choices. Their website has a great list of resources - gendercentre.org.au



Now learn the terms. There are different identities that better define someone's lived experiences than others. For example, some people use bi, heterosexual, straight, queer, gay, lesbian, or pansexual when identifying their sexuality. Someone may describe their gender identity as trans, bi-gender, agender, sistergirl, male, non-binary, cisgender, genderqueer or female. If you don't know Google is a good place to start for definitions.

then, stand up for other mates who are LGBT or I. Hurtful statements do come from our own population groups i.e. LGBTIQ communities. If you hear hurtful or unkind statements about a mate who is bi or trans, stand up for them.

and, remember that everyone is different, and everyone's experiences are real. The words a person uses to describe themselves might be considered disrespectful or hurtful for someone else. Listen to how your mate describes themselves, do they use he or she or they as a pronoun? Do they describe themselves as a trans-man or just a man? Take their cues, and follow their lead, and you'll find that using inclusive language is a great way to learn.

*Andrew Badcock - MindOut Mental Health Project Officer at Working It Out.
Originally written for TasCAHRD's Man2Man's 2017 summer edition.*

Trans Day of Remembrance 2016

One of the significant annual events here at Working It Out, occurs right at the beginning of the summer period. The Transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20) is a time set aside to honour the lives of trans folk who have lost their lives as a result of transphobia and cisgenderism, and to raise public awareness of these experiences in the broader cisgender community as a way of creating social change.

WIO has for a number of years facilitated a remembrance ceremony that included the recognition of specific trans folk who have provided significant inspiration and support to the Tasmanian Trans and Gender diverse community.

2016's TDOR activities were significant in that for the first time, members of the trans community in Hobart took the message of TDOR direct to the public. A small group of wonderful and committed trans activists organised and staffed a stall in the Hobart Mall that provided the public with information about transphobia and the impact this has on trans people, as well as



tips about how cisgendered people can proactively act as allies alongside the trans community and to create a safer society for all. In addition, the group invited members of the cisgendered community to provide messages of support for the trans community that were later shared in the gender group at WIO.

These messages included:

"I honestly hope in my future career as a teacher that my GLBTQA students see me as an ally, as someone who accepts them as who they are for their time in my classroom." "I am sorry for all we have done to you. I am sorry you have to die before we take notice."

Actions like this one are significant in the ongoing struggle to create equality for people of all gender identities and bodies. Thank you to everyone for all of the hard work you put in.

Don Pitcher, LGBTI Direct Support

What other Community Services are doing

A Fairer World

Diversity Education hits the mark

For the past three years or so, a local non-profit organisation called A Fairer World (AFW) have been delivering a program called “Let’s Get Together” at Rose Bay High School with the Year 7 students. The program aims to challenge all aspects of discrimination and increase the students’ understanding of diversity, and complements very well the hard work being done in the school by our Safe Schools Coalition project officer, Xris Reardon. Working It Out were part of the consultation when AFW was developing the program back in 2013, and have continued to participate in various ways including attending the NGO Expo they hold for the students, which allows them to meet with organisations working to support the disadvantaged and marginalised populations in Hobart. After a term or so of lessons, which the teachers are trained to deliver themselves, the students present a project which sees them addressing some area of concern that they have chosen at the culminating activity: the Action Day.



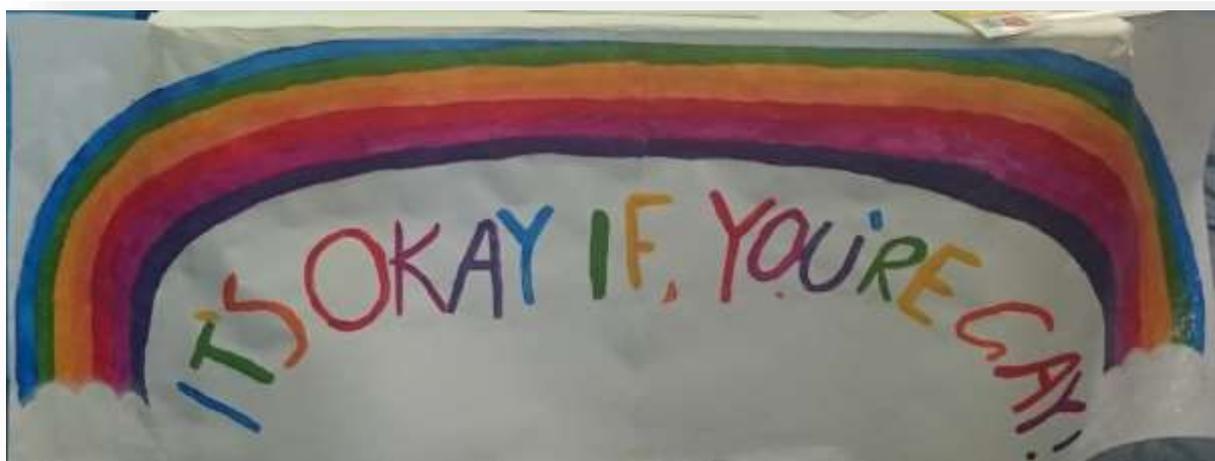
Last year’s Action Day saw a large number of groups choose to focus on mental health and suicide – many of the groups I spoke to had personal connections with these issues. About four groups chose to do topics such as Homophobia, LGBTIQ+, and Transgender. In the photos you can see one group who negotiated with the principal to have a set of outdoor stairs at the school painted in rainbow colours if they could get 200 signatures on a petition. They did it and were so proud and excited! The most excited was a group member who, in hindsight, identified himself as being a homophobe at the start of the

What other Community Services are doing continued...

program, until – with a teacher’s encouragement – he listened to some people’s stories and changed his thoughts and is now a firm ally, saying he now knows it’s not their ‘fault’, they’re just born that way. A very confident young person happy to speak out about his change of heart.

Another group spent the previous night making cupcakes to give-away to students if they could name what LGBTIQA meant, another had a t-shirt pledge for people to sign to end school homophobia, and another had blue, pink and white bracelets for people to wear and show their support for trans people.

It was awesome and something that’s going to continue to grow with two more schools delivering the program this year – Kingston and Huonville High Schools – and both schools are Safe Schools members working with Xris to create a safe and inclusive school community for sexuality, sex and gender diverse students and staff.



With thanks to Senator Nick McKim for the printing of this WordsOut Newsletter.