



# glbti newsletter

August 2012

## Special Interest Group

The Gay and Lesbian Special Interest Group (SIG) welcomes new members with an interest in this topic. To join the Gay and Lesbian SIG please telephone the Federation on (02) 9217 2100 or email [glbti@nswtf.org.au](mailto:glbti@nswtf.org.au). Linked to the SIG is the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (GLBTI) Restricted Committee. This committee

consists of six members who were elected at Council and who contribute to the publication of this newsletter. The GLBTI Restricted Committee members are:

<b>Jen Dive</b>	Liverpool Boys HS
<b>Waine Donovan</b>	Country Organiser
<b>Kat Hand</b>	Moorebank HS
<b>Russell Honnery</b>	Moree East PS
<b>Jenny Moes</b>	Wadalba Community School
<b>David Wynne</b>	Trade Union Training Officer

The Federation Officer attached to the committee is Mel Smith.

## Wear It Purple

September 7 is Wear it Purple Day. The event is a student led initiative designed to combat homophobic and transphobic bullying. You can support your students who may be same sex attracted or gender or sex diverse, or have family or friends who are same sex attracted or gender or sex diverse, by participating in this event.

Wear it Purple states that "You have the right to be proud of who you are."

The organisation maintains that who you love and how you define yourself does not change that, and want same sex attracted and gender diverse young people everywhere to know that:

- they are **not** alone
- they **are** unique, precious and worthy of love
- they should not be subject to bullying, belittling, discrimination or invalidation
- they **are** worth fighting for.

To get involved you could:

- encourage all staff to wear purple on



Friday September 7;

- hold a mufti-day for student to wear purple. Students could make a gold-coin donation towards a youth organisation that supports young people of diverse sex, sexuality and/or gender;
- put up the poster promoting Wear It Purple Day and advertise the event and the reasons for it;
- visit the website [wearitpurple.org](http://wearitpurple.org) to register your school's support of the event or to get further information.

# Twenty10 — Here and Now

Here And Now is a one-day practical workshop from Twenty10's core training package, for building confidence in working with young people of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities wherever they are. It offers participants the opportunity to consider how they can best provide a safe and welcoming environment where young people feel safe to be themselves. The package introduces participants to the latest research and thinking around sexual and gender identity and makes some helpful suggestions around what people can do when working with young people of diverse genders, sexes and/or sexualities.

The next course will be run on **Thursday August 23**, 9am–5pm at Twenty10, Belford Street, Newtown. The course fee is \$130 per person which includes all materials and catering (\$110 for each additional person from the same place). The course will also run on Friday December 7.

For more information visit the Twenty10 website: <http://twenty10.org.au/family-community/here-and-now>

## Annual Conference

Federation's Annual Conference was held during the July school holidays. One item on the agenda was to update conference on the Gender, Sexuality and Identity Kit and report on the actions that have been undertaken as a result of last year's Annual Conference decision on gender, sexuality and identity.

The report informed Conference that Federation has written letters to the Minister, the Board of Studies, the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) and the Office of the Attorney General and Justice on a range of matters concerning GLBTI issues and education. Additionally, Federation

has repeatedly brought up the need for the DEC to update policies and advice to workplaces that address issues related to people of diverse sex, sexuality and gender, and to provide relevant training and support to staff. The Department maintains that this will be part of the implementation of the Proud Schools program — a program to address homophobia in schools that the DEC is trialling in 12 schools in the Sydney and Hunter/Central Coast regions. The issue has also been raised with TAFE which has indicated that currently relevant policies are in place. However, improved access to the policies for staff and students is an area that should be addressed.

## Resources

Federation has developed a range of resources to help members address homophobic and heterosexist behaviour and language in the workplace. The Gay and Lesbian page under My Interests on Federation's website directs members to a range of resources to support teachers. A Welfare and Information leaflet has been developed to support teachers experiencing homophobia, biphobia or transphobia. The Gender, Sexuality and Identity Kit provides a range of support for teachers. Hard copies of the kit were sent to all workplaces. It is also accessible online at <http://www.nswtf.org.au/pages/gender-sexuality-identity-kit.html>. Additionally, forums which raise homophobia and provide strategies to address homophobia and heterosexist behaviour have been run by Federation at our conferences, and courses, as well as a public forum at Mardi Gras last year.

Federation has also been collaborating and co-operating with GLBTI community groups to support people of diverse sex, sexuality and gender in educational settings, and has received support from the GLBTI community for our own campaigns such as Invest in TAFE and Schools Funding Review/I give a Gonski.

# What toilet should a trans student use?

Terence Humphreys

It's no surprise that teachers and other school staff are bamboozled when they come across a student who presents as gender questioning or transgender for the first time. The views around gender in our society are very narrow and rigid, and when a student in your school identifies as gender diverse, it may challenge a lot of assumptions, rules and guidelines you have in place, especially around uniforms, toilets and change rooms.

**If your school has a uniform, trans students should be allowed to wear the uniform that matches their gender identity.** Ideally schools will also have a gender-neutral uniform option as this may be the most appropriate uniform and preferred option for some trans students.

**Trans students should also have the choice of using a toilet that matches their gender identity.** This can be an important way to support a trans student's sense of identity and wellbeing. For example, fa'afafine, whakawāhine or male-to-female (MtF) trans girls identifying as female should be able to use the female toilets, if that is their preference. A unisex or disability toilet can be a good alternative for a trans student. Other options include using toilets in a sick bay/health centre or alternative toilets.

Other students may initially be uncomfortable sharing toilets with a trans person. It can help to explain that privacy and safety are important for all students when using bathroom facilities, and that any form of harassment will not be tolerated. If these students are still uncomfortable about using the same toilet blocks as trans students, they could also be offered the use of a unisex or disability toilet.

**Trans students should have the choice of using the changing area that matches their gender identity.** Many trans students will feel vulnerable having to change clothes in front of other students. Creating a private area in the changing rooms can be very useful for trans students. This might involve adding a curtain or a cubicle door. Other options include allowing trans students to use a unisex, disability or alternative toilet as a changing area.

Confidentiality around a student's gender diversity is always important (unless the student wishes other students to know). Even if the school responds pro-actively and confidentially, if students learn of another student being gender diverse, they can use this as a springboard to homophobic and transphobic comments, abuse and bullying. Every student in your school has the right to attend the school safely, so responding to abuse for a gender diverse student is a matter of student welfare and safety, not special treatment for trans students.

Case study supplied by Twenty10. Terence Humphreys is the Capacity Building Manager at Twenty10. For more information contact Twenty10 at: <http://www.twenty10.org.au> or phone (02) 8594 9555 or 1800 65 2010. Additional information about supporting trans students in school can be found in the Twenty10 booklet included in Federation's Gender, Sexuality and Identity Kit which can be found online at <http://www.nswtf.org.au/pages/gender-sexuality-identity-kit.html>

# Federation website

Federation's website has a Gay and Lesbian page under My Interests which can be found at <http://www.nswtf.org.au/my-interests/special-interest-groups/gay-lesbian.html>. It is often updated and currently has general information for teachers, as well as links to factsheets, worksheets and activities, training, research and community organisations.

# Feedback welcome

If you have feedback in relation to the newsletter or website, or information regarding GLBTI issues please contact Mel Smith, NSW Teachers Federation, Newcastle Regional Office at (02) 4920 9833 or via [glbti@nswtf.org.au](mailto:glbti@nswtf.org.au)

# Support

If you, or a colleague, is experiencing homophobia, discrimination or harassment contact your local Organiser for advice, or alternatively you can call our Communications Room on (02) 9217 2487 or 1300 654 367.