



Magda Szubanski is the new Twenty10 Patron

Comedian Magda Szubanski has joined Twenty10 as its patron and led the service's float at the Mardi Gras parade as well as joining other high-profile GLBTI community members including former High Court judge Michael Kirby and comedian Tom Ballard to support action on the findings of the *Growing Up Queer* report.

"Our organisation could not be happier to have the support of such a loved, talented and admired public figure," said Twenty10 co-chairs Cristyn Davies and Atari Metcalf.

Twenty10, incorporating GLCS NSW, is a community-based non-profit organisation working with and supporting people of diverse sexes, sexualities and genders, their families and communities. It recently amalgamated with the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service of NSW to meet the needs of all age groups in GLBTI communities.

Ms Szubanski said, "I can clearly see that Twenty10 is doing work that I care passionately about, and I want to do what I can to reduce the stigma and discrimination that many LGBTIQ people still experience".

The *Growing up Queer* research report re-



Magda Szubanski

leased last month found that 16 per cent of young people who identify as Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Intersex or Queer (LGBTIQ) have attempted suicide and 33 per cent had harmed themselves as a result of widespread homophobic and transphobic harassment and violence. The full findings can be downloaded at <http://www.youngandwellcrc.org.au/>

Brett Paradise, Executive Director of Twenty10, stated, "The team at Twenty10 incorporating GLCS NSW is ecstatic to have Magda lend her support to the work we do."

Twenty10 supports young people and schools through statewide programs. For further information visit <http://www.twenty10.org.au/>

High Court ruling on third category of sex

On April 2 the High Court decided that the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995 (NSW)* recognises that a person may be neither male nor female and so permits the registration of a person's sex as "non-specific".

In its judgment, the High Court commented that, "For the most part, the sex of the individuals concerned is irrelevant to legal relations" (with the exception of the Marriage Act).

So what does this mean and why is it an issue? For many people their gender identity (a social construct and how they identify inter-

nally) matches their defined sex (their physical sex, determined by their genitals). This is not, however, the case for some people whose identity does not match their ascribed sex or those who are born with an indeterminate sex (commonly referred to as intersex).

Most people working in the field of sex and gender have argued that the male/female classification is false as that there is a continuum of biological features between male and female, with research suggesting that one in every 100 people have bodies that differ from

standard male or female (Intersex Society of North America <http://www.isna.org/faq/frequency>)

While there is some scope for people who do not fit the male/female binary to register their sex as an alternative, this is only the case in some organisations and is not the norm. Often, people are forced to identify as one or another by business, government, schools, medical practices etc. This is a constant confrontation of who they are and how they identify.

Several years ago, Federation adapted membership forms and systems to include an indeterminate/unspecified/intersex classification for members. Federation has also sought changes from the DEC on student enrolment forms to enable students and parents to identify their sex/gender as is most appropriate. To date this has not occurred, with the DEC maintaining it will not make changes until

required by NSW law. Given the recent judgement, Federation will again call on the Department to make changes to their systems to include other classifications of sex/gender.

Federation has also called on the DEC to update its policies to explicitly make reference to transgender and gender diverse students, and to include suggested best practice for schools in matters relating to supporting people of diverse sex, sexuality and gender.

While the DEC has a number of policies supporting the rights of all students to be treated equitably, recent research (*Growing Up Queer* (February 2014) and *Writing Themselves In 3* (2010) indicates that previous policies have been largely ineffective in supporting students who are gender variant and/or sexually diverse as the numbers of those reporting being victims of homophobia and transphobic bullying has risen.

Special Interest Group

The Gay and Lesbian Special Interest Group (SIG) is open to any interested member of the New South Wales Teachers Federation. It is concerned with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) issues and how these issues affect teachers and schools.

Meetings take place in Sydney, with the next one scheduled for **12.30pm. on Saturday May 31 at Teachers Federation House, 23—33 Mary Street, Surry Hills**. The meeting gives members the opportunity to discuss relevant GLBTI issues, inform Federation of specific areas of concern and provide advice to Federation on policies relating to GLBTI issues. Teleconference facilities will be available for those who

are not able to be at the meeting in person. To RSVP to the meeting and gain teleconferencing details please email glbti@nswtf.org.au

The SIG welcomes new members. To join the Gay and Lesbian SIG please contact Federation on telephone (02) 9217 2100 or email glbti@nswtf.org.au. Teachers can also access information on GLBTI issues by accessing Federation's website at <http://www.nswtf.org.au/my-interests/special-interest-groups/gay-lesbian.html>

Beyondblue resources for young people

Beyondblue maintains a website with resources dealing with depression and anxiety in young people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex (www.youthbeyondblue.com), as well as for older people (www.beyondblue.org.au).

The site recognises that GLBTI people are more likely to experience depression and anxiety

due to the discrimination faced by gender and sexually diverse people. It contains information regarding same-sex attraction and gender identity as well as discussing the impact of homophobic and transphobic abuse.

Both Beyondblue and the youth focused site promotes the Stop. Think. Respect. and Left Hand campaigns.

Stop. Think. Respect.

Beyondblue, in collaboration with LGBTI communities and the Movember Foundation, has produced a national campaign to improve public understanding of discriminatory behaviour and the impact it can have on the mental health of LGBTI communities.

In its Left Hand campaign Beyondblue asks

Wear It Purple

On Friday August 29, school students and workplaces across the country will wear purple to show support for same-sex attracted and gender questioning (or “rainbow”) young people.

The message behind the day to young people is that: “You have the right to be proud of who you are.”

While the day is a celebration to affirm and support sexuality and gender diverse young people, their families and communities, Wear It Purple has also acknowledged that one day of celebration may raise the profile of this issue but they seek to make more permanent change. Therefore it is important to talk about why people are wearing purple, the impact of homophobic bullying and how to combat it. Additionally, Wear It Purple has created school based programs and workshops that are available throughout

Library resources

Federation’s library currently has a number of GLBTI resources for teacher reference or for classroom use. Resources can be found by visiting the Federation website (under the tab “My Services”) and accessing the library catalogue (<http://www.nswtf.org.au/pages/nsw-teachers-federation-library-catalogue.html>).

Library bulletins on GLBTI topics are available with the classroom resources bulletin set out in stage appropriate format for members’ convenience. Resources range from those for 4-8 year olds featuring GLBTI families to resources that deal with sexual identity and positive self-image for all age groups. DVDs for classroom, as well as sample posters are also available.

readers to “imagine being made to feel like crap just for being left handed Being gay, lesbian, bi, trans or intersex is no different to being born left handed. It’s just who you are.” The campaign asks people to stop and think because the things they say can cause depression and anxiety.



the year to assist schools in creating safe environments and supporting sexuality and gender diverse students.

To host a Wear It Purple Day event in your school, TAFE or other educational setting, and to access resources available, register with Wear It Purple at <http://wearitpurple.org/>

Recent additions to the library collection include:

- Peter Dewitt’s *Dignity for all: Safeguarding LGBT Students*, which provides professional development ideas and real-life vignettes that will help educational leaders foster a more caring culture for not only LGBT students but all students.
- *For today I am a boy* by Kim Fu is the fictional tale of a boy named Peter, who is believed by his father to embody power and masculinity as the only son of four children. Peter is certain that he is a girl.

Professional Development Training: 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 course 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 run on **Friday May 9**, 9am to 5pm at Chippendale. Registrations close on April 30.

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

Feedback

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

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