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Australia?

An international comparison of policies and strategies that support same-sex attracted and gender-diverse students

Michelle McCormack

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Eric Pearson  
Study Grant 2016

FOR THE NSW TEACHERS FEDERATION

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# FOREWORD

Governments, private school administrators, parent groups and student bodies have a fundamental duty of care to create an environment of physical and emotional safety for every student in school.

As a long-term advocate for social justice and equality for LGBTI+ members of the community, I am very much aware of the need for schools to provide safe environments for all students regardless of their religion, ethnicity, sexuality or gender identification.

When I was president of the Australian Medical Association in the first years of this century, we developed a ground-breaking position statement for the medical profession on sexuality and gender diversity. This recognised that despite strong advocacy and sacrifice and some progress there was still unacceptable injustice, prejudice, inequalities under the law, and serious health consequences as a result of homophobia.

Even when teachers and school leaders have their hearts in the right place, without specific training many schools lack the competence to handle these issues as they arise.

Unfortunately, there is a huge disparity between the need for resources and their availability.

Knowing the potentially devastating consequences of sexuality-based bullying on vulnerable children and adolescents it distressed me to see the Safe Schools Program initiated by the Australian government suffer from the consequences of hysterical misinformation and over-reaction, and the subsequent reactionary de-funding of the program. It is clear that just bundling LGBTI+ discrimination into other existing anti-bullying programs will result in the invisibility of LGBTI+ elements.

In her report, Michelle McCormack looks at international experience with schools-based LGBTI+ anti-bias programs and makes some practical recommendations for the direction of further research so that effective programs can be agreed upon and implemented in schools across Australia.

I congratulate Michelle on her initiative and commend her report to you.

*Professor Kerry Phelp AM*

# INTRODUCTION

In this report, the Safe Schools Coalition Australia (SSCA) was analysed in comparison to other models of support for same-sex-attracted (SSA), intersex and gender-diverse students in Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Safe Schools Coalition Australia is a national coalition of schools dedicated to creating safe and inclusive learning environments for SSA, intersex and gender-diverse students, school staff and families.

Through comparisons between various models and interviews with experts, educators and key stakeholders, this report will provide details and evidence that demonstrate which strategies and ideas work best and which do not.

This report will look at:

- state and federal recognition of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer students, teachers and children of same-sex families in school settings
- strategies and policies of support and change
- the actual active implementation of programs in schools
- teacher training and professional development opportunities and strategies
- funding models
- incorporation of safe policies. An integral part of this report was interviewing teachers, education experts, same-sex families and families with children who identify as SSA, intersex or gender-diverse. This provided great insight into the effectiveness of the various strategies and programs in place.

As an assistant principal with more than 20 years' teaching experience

in both rural and city schools I have seen first-hand the devastating impact of ignorance, homophobia and transphobic bullying and abuse on SSA, intersex and gender-diverse students and teachers.

As a lesbian with a wife and three young primary school-age sons, I found the Safe Schools Coalition initiative heartening: here, finally, was a program that would support students such as I once was and would support my sons as members of a same-sex family.

Shortly after I was awarded this study grant, the SSCA program was opposed by some religious groups, particularly the Christian Right. The Australian Christian Lobby and members of the Liberal and National Party have criticised the program and continue to do so.

In July 2015, the Australian Christian Lobby lodged a 10,891-signature petition with the Queensland parliament in relation to removing the Safe Schools program from Queensland schools.

A review of the Safe Schools Program was announced on 26 February 2016 after 43 Coalition backbenchers including former prime minister Tony Abbott signed a petition calling for the program's closure. The review *did not* find that any of the official resources were inappropriate and no harm was expected to come from primary school students viewing the material (Louden, William: 11 March 2016).

Despite the findings of this review it seems almost certain that the Safe Schools Coalition (SSC) program will be wound up this year with federal government funding due to cease on 30 June 2017.

NSW and Tasmania will drop the program after June and replace it with general anti-bullying programs. The Victorian and ACT governments will fully fund their versions of Safe Schools within their respective jurisdictions. In Western Australia, prior to the March 11, 2017 election which it won, the Labor Party confirmed that it would follow Victoria and the ACT and adopt the program if elected. There is uncertainty over future funding in the other states.

Studies tell us that:

- 10 per cent of students are SSA
- 4 per cent of students are gender-diverse or transgender
- 1.7 per cent of students are intersex.

(Hillier, L. et al. 2010)

We know that bullying and discrimination adversely affect the mental health of students and cause lower attendance at school, resulting in poor academic achievement.

As educators, we have a responsibility to care for the social, emotional and educational wellbeing of *all* our students and teachers.

We cannot simply ignore SSA, intersex and gender-diverse students or teachers at the whim of certain sectors in our community.

We must take up the cause and fight to retain the Safe Schools Coalition in Australia. We owe it to our SSA, intersex and gender-diverse students. We owe it to our students from same-sex families. We owe it to our questioning students. We owe it to our SSA, intersex and gender-diverse teachers.

We cannot afford to be quiet now — there are lives at risk, and the wellbeing of our nation's youth depends on programs such as the Safe Schools Coalition.

*"Violence against — denigration of — young people by virtue of their perceived or actual sexual orientation and gender identity/expression is perpetrated at alarming levels and it is always wrong. LGBT students report three times higher rates of violence with the threat and reality graver still for trans students... In some countries, 99 per cent of students report witnessing homophobic abuse..."*

*"Two very fundamental human processes accompany the journey from childhood to adulthood — a journey that we all made. These profoundly human processes — self-learning and self-realisation — are integral to human development and they intimately shape how we become as adults. It is what we learn and how we become ourselves over the course of our adolescence that shapes critical terms and conditions for the adult journey ahead of us..."*

*"So how can we tolerate, for even one more minute those norms, practices, laws or policies that render our most intimate selves — our innate and intimate identities — into a cause of self-loathing, a basis for ostracising, a reason for exclusion, an excuse for violence, make of consensual love and diverse gender identities a crime?"*

*"And yet, in this we are failing on a global scale — across Europe and the Caribbean. In the Pacific and the Middle East. In Africa, Asia and in the Americas."*

*"And for this, young people are paying with their lives."*

— *Kate Gilmore, Deputy High Commissioner, United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, at the International Ministerial Meeting on Education Sector Response to Violence based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression, 17 May 2016*

# AUSTRALIA

The first community-based LGBTIQ youth groups in the fields of social services were established in the United States in the late 1970s.

In Australia, the Safe Schools Coalition Australia (SSCA) provides resources as part of The National Safe Schools Framework, which deals with the wider causes of bullying.

This voluntary program, developed by the Safe Schools Coalition, commenced in Victoria on 21 October 2010.

Federal funding for the program was sought in 2013 by Senator Penny Wong, the ALP finance minister at the time. It was formally launched in June 2014 by the Abbott Coalition government.

The program is focused on challenging the bullying of and discrimination against the LGBTIQ community in schools.

The SSCA is a national network of organisations working with and within schools to create safer and more inclusive environments for SSA, intersex and gender-diverse students, staff and families.

The Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) is the national convener of Safe Schools Coalition Australia and has partnered with experienced organisations across the country to provide direct support for schools.

Australian schools value the health and wellbeing of students and we all agree that bullying of any kind is harmful and should not be accepted. Across religions and cultures there is a shared belief in the right of all people to be safe, happy and healthy and to be treated with dignity and respect.

Research tells us that thousands of young people across Australia experience homophobic and transphobic behaviour, discrimination and isolation in schools. These ex-

periences can and do have serious consequences for their health and wellbeing and their academic achievement (Newman, 2014).

The SSCA offers a range of free resources and support to equip school staff with knowledge, skills and practical ideas to create safer and more inclusive school environments for same-sex-attracted, intersex and gender-diverse students, staff and families.

SSCA works with schools from a range of diverse contexts including government and independent schools, schools in diverse geographic locations and faith-based schools.

School membership and engagement with Safe Schools Coalition Australia is voluntary and school principals and teachers make professional judgements about accessing support and resources to suit their school.

Schools can request support in the following key areas:

- **Tailored professional learning** for teachers and other school staff. Sessions can be adapted to the needs of the school and range from introductory sessions through to in-depth training around more complex issues. Training materials draw upon national and international research and feedback from schools to give school staff insight, ideas and confidence.
- SSCA expert staff are available to provide **guidance and consultation** to support school leaders and teachers with advice on inclusive practice across the school's operations. SSCA staff also assist school communities that request support in the process of affirming the gender identity of a transgender or gender-diverse student at the school.

SSCA has a range of high-quality **resources for school staff** to respond to homophobic and transphobic behaviour and actively support and include gender diversity, intersex and sexual diversity in school communities. They also have an age-appropriate teaching and learning resource aligned to the Australian Curriculum for school teachers to use.

The program has run in every state of Australia and the ACT.

As of mid-February 2017, the Safe Schools Coalition website ([safe-schoolscoalition.org.au/](http://safe-schoolscoalition.org.au/)) states that 304 schools were members of the program and 177 organisations were supporters of the coalition. A total of 18,128 staff have been trained and there are 403,392 students in member-schools.

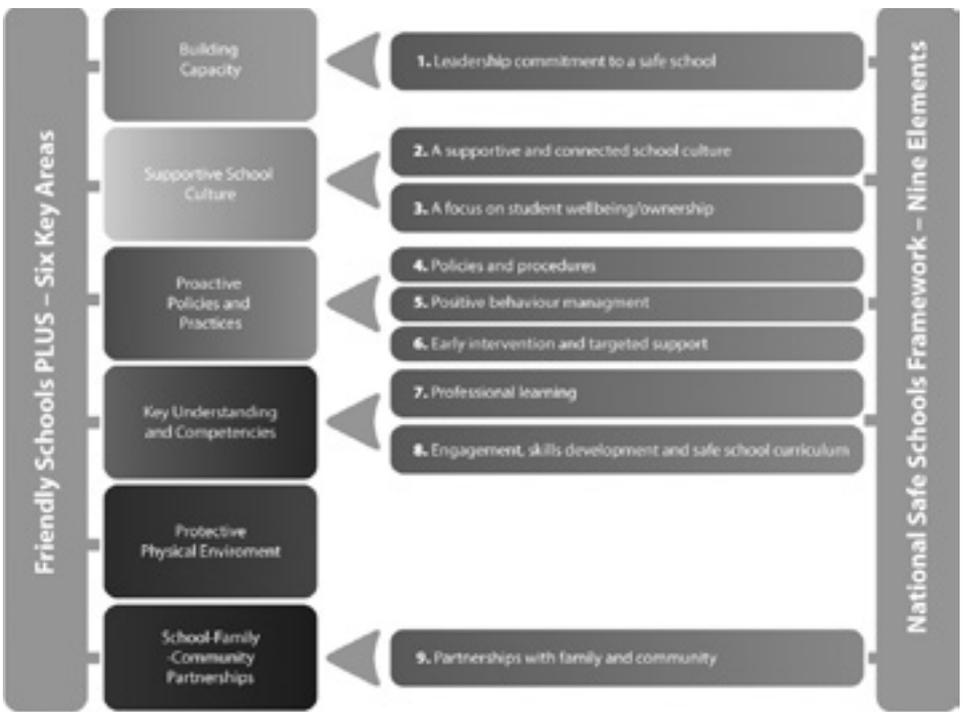
**National Safe Schools Framework**

The Safe Schools Coalition Australia (SSCA) aligns with the National Safe Schools Framework, which assists Australian schools to develop safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning communities that promote student wellbeing.

The National Safe Schools Framework provides schools with a vision and a set of guiding principles and practical resources and strategies that assist school communities to develop and promote inclusive well-being policies for students.

Building on the original 2003 framework, a revised framework was endorsed by all ministers for education in December 2010. The federal government collaborates with state and territory governments to support the framework as part of a national approach to make sure our school communities are safe and supportive.

The following are guiding principles for safe, supportive and respectful school communities.



# AUSTRALIA



Australian schools:

- affirm the rights of all members of the school community to feel safe and be safe at school
- acknowledge that being safe and supported at school is essential for student wellbeing and effective learning
- accept responsibility for developing and sustaining safe and supportive learning and teaching communities that also fulfil the school's child protection responsibilities
- encourage the active participation of all school community members in developing and maintaining a safe school community where diversity is valued
- actively support young people to develop understanding and skills to keep themselves and others safe
- commit to developing a safe school community through a whole-school and evidence-based approach.

### Safe Schools Coalition Victoria

Late in 2016, the Premier of Victoria, Daniel Andrews, announced his government would overhaul Safe

Schools and cut ties with the SSCA founder, Roz Ward. Soon afterwards, he announced that the Department of Education would run the program in Victorian schools.

The Victorian government insisted the overhaul would not result in Safe Schools being watered down and that it is committed to rolling it out by the end of 2018 to the remaining 40 per cent of public schools yet to sign up.

Victorian State Education Minister James Merlino has said that the Safe Schools Program will continue to be offered to primary-aged children despite the prospect of a backlash, telling parents he is personally invested in ensuring all LGBTI students are properly supported.

Safe Schools Coalition Victoria (SSCV) work also supports schools to make sure they comply with anti-discrimination legislation as well as Department of Education and Training policies and guidance.

By mid-February 2017, according to the SSCV website, 286 schools were members, 12,264 teachers had been trained and there were 44 supporter organisations.

*"It is because of all the support and care from Safe Schools that*

*my little princess is able to be her true self not only at home and with friends but at school. We are truly forever grateful for everything you do. Thank you so much.” – Parent, Victoria, safeschoolscoalition.org.au*

### Louden Review

On 26 February 2016, the federal government announced that there would be an independent review of the current resources provided to schools under the SSCA program. Conducted by the University of Western Australia’s Professor Bill Loudon, the aim of the review was to:

1. Advise the extent to which (the resources) are:

- consistent with the intent and objectives of the program
- a suitable and robust resource for schoolteachers and students
- age-appropriate
- educationally sound
- aligned with the current Australian Curriculum.

2. Review the extent to which parents and school communities are consulted about the use of these resources and the adequacy of such consultation.

The review involved interviews with a small sample of schools that use the Safe School Program, and interviews with students, principals, health education and curriculum area leaders.

The review did not find that any of the official resources were inappropriate. It found that the content in guideline documents was consistent with the aims of the program and that the language and content was suitable.

All lesson plans were found to be consistent with the aims of the program as were all of the posters.

No harm was expected to come from primary school students viewing the material. The review commented that these students might not comprehend some terms such as transphobia or homophobia.

The level of interaction between schools and parents was found to be appropriate.

*“I just wanted to say that I really appreciate what you guys are doing. I wish this was around when I was in high school and I hope the government funds your organisation.*

*“During my school years, I was excited about the High School formal, graduating & going to Uni, but ended up leaving during my HSC year because of bullying and threats because of my sexuality. The school did nothing to support me even after I spoke to my year advisor and principal. Was told to stop ‘faking it’ and to ‘change’ so life would be easier for me.*

*“With your program, you will be able to reach out to future students to stop this from happening.”*

*Keep it up.” - Student, NSW, safeschoolscoalition.org.au*

### 2016-2017 developments

The Turnbull government has made dramatic changes to the Safe Schools anti-bullying program that have been described by some as “gutting” its content.

The changes drastically reduce the lesson content, restrict it to secondary schools, shift the program to a government website, remove all links to other material and sites and add a requirement that students get parental consent and schools get parent-body consent before opting to use its materials.

The federal Education Minister, Simon Birmingham, said this was a “strong but measured response” to the concerns raised by Christian groups and conserva-

tive MPs who have demanded the program be defunded.

Opponents of the SSCA argue that the program’s core aims — to give support and guidance to students struggling with questions of sexual identity and to allow them to feel safe at school — remain intact. By reducing the content in the SSCA program and materials, however, it is in fact leaving these students more vulnerable and more at risk of not being able to access that support and guidance.

So, what we are seeing into 2017 is that by “gutting” the content of the Safe Schools Program, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and the Coalition federal government are effectively throwing LGBTIQ students and teachers under the bus without a care for their wellbeing or safety.

# SINGAPORE

LGBTIQ people in Singapore lack many of the legal rights of non-LGBTIQ residents. Same-sex relationships are not recognised under the law and adoption of children by same-sex couples is illegal. Male same-sex sexual activity is illegal although the law is generally not enforced. No anti-discrimination protection exists for LGBTIQ status.

I searched extensively online for any type of affirmative action programs for gender-diverse, intersex or SSA youth and their families — time and time again my searches showed up nothing.

Whilst in Singapore, I was able to interview Benjamin Farr, who teaches at the British International School.

I asked Ben what policies, legislation, charters, etc. are available to address recognition and in what terms gender-diverse, intersex and SSA youth and their families are recognised.

He commented that there was little or no support for LGBTIQ students in Singapore. Many students are from religiously conservative families (Muslim, Christian and Hindu) and there is very much a secret LGBTIQ subculture existing within Singapore.

At the British International School, staff are able to draw upon the strategies and policies provided by the UK government to provide support and cultural change for gender-diverse, intersex and SSA students.

Of the situation generally in Singapore, Ben stated, "To be honest, I genuinely don't believe the rights of LGBTIQ students are on the radar of teachers generally. It is not usually talked about and therefore it's still very 'silent' in terms of providing support." Commenting on his workplace, Ben said, "Our school library has LGBTIQ fiction and non-fiction, and there have been members from local gay organisations who have spoken to teachers about how best to provide support for these students."

Ben is not aware of any school-based policies in Singapore that provide a framework to support gender-diverse, intersex and SSA students, nor of any documents or policies that specifically identify gender-diverse, intersex and SSA students.

At Ben's school, safe student principles and policies are embedded within the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) curriculum and policy documents. The school has a policy whereby it recognises gay couples and provides a married couple status for those who have been in a relationship longer than one year, and it has held a professional development workshop for teachers on SSA students.

Ben is unaware of any policy that specifically deals with bullying and suicide of gender-diverse, intersex and SSA youth and their families.

There is a general consensus that Ben's school doesn't have a bullying issue and therefore it's not high on the agenda. Therefore, there is no known strategy to identify isolation and bullying as a cause of ill-health or suicide among SSA, intersex or gender-diverse youth.

As it is illegal to normalise or promote homosexuality in Singapore, Ben is doubtful that local schools would address these issues or concerns.

Complaints or concerns from gender-diverse, intersex and SSA students or their families in Ben's school are dealt with through the general channels (complaint to teacher and escalation to head of year or head teacher if necessary).

In order to address complaints or concerns from the school body and community that promote negativity towards gender-diverse, intersex and SSA students or their families, Ben said his school had held a one-off, limited training session for staff that most teachers were not invited to attend.



**SOME BOYS  
LIKE BOYS, AND  
SOME GIRLS  
LIKE GIRLS.  
SOME LIKE  
BOTH.  
K THANKS.**

**[MINUS18.ORG.AU/STANDOUT](http://MINUS18.ORG.AU/STANDOUT)**

**MINUS18**  **FOR MORE INFO:**

**Singaporeans need to feel empowered to form structures such as Minus18, Australia's largest youth-led network for gay, lesbian bi and trans teens**

In Singapore, no professional development opportunities exist for teaching, school and district/area staff in relation to inclusiveness and support for gender-diverse and SSA students and for their families.

There is no funding available for implementation of student and staff development in relation to programs that address inclusiveness and sup-

port for gender-diverse and SSA students and their families.

The limited support structures in place in Singaporean schools presumably, given the results of overseas studies, result in poorer psychological wellbeing and increased absenteeism of gender-diverse, intersex and SSA students in that country. Overseas studies show that

students who have been harassed over their sexual orientation have lower educational aspirations and reduced school achievement (Newman, 2014).

For all students (including gender-diverse, intersex and SSA students) to feel safe and valued and to reach their full potential, schools must provide an inclusive and positive school experience.

# UNITED KINGDOM

Today, LGBTIQ citizens in the United Kingdom have most of the same legal rights as non-LGBTIQ citizens, for whom the UK provides one of the highest degrees of equality in the world. In the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Association (ILGA) Europe's 2015 review of LGBTI rights, the UK received the highest score in Europe, with 86 per cent progress toward "respect of human rights and full equality" for LGBT people, 92 per cent in Scotland alone.

*The School Report: The Experiences of Gay Young People in Britain's Schools in 2012*, a survey by Cambridge University, commissioned by the UK LGBT rights charity, Stonewall, of more than 1600 lesbian, gay and bisexual young people, found that:

- more than half (55 per cent) of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people experience homophobic bullying in Britain's schools
- 99 per cent hear the phrases "that's so gay" or "you're so gay" in school
- more than half (53 per cent) of lesbian, gay and bi young people are never taught anything about lesbian, gay and bisexual issues at school.

*The Teachers' Report* (2014), also put out by Stonewall, found that:

- nine out of 10 secondary school teachers say students in their schools are bullied, harassed or called names for being – or being perceived to be – lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Additionally, *Metro Youth Chances* (2014), a survey of more than 7000 young people including 956 transgender young people, found that:

- three-quarters of trans young people say they have experienced name-calling and 28 per

cent have experienced physical attacks

- 32 per cent of transgender young people say they have missed lessons due to discrimination or fear of discrimination
- 27 per cent of transgender young people have attempted suicide.

As is the case in Australia, research has shown that bullying has a severe impact on the wellbeing, academic achievement and aspirations of LGBTIQ students. Seven out of 10 students who have experienced homophobic bullying say it has affected their schoolwork; half say they have skipped school to avoid bullies. In some cases, the exclusion of LGBT people from the curriculum and the reinforcement of negative messages around sexual orientation and gender identity can severely affect self-esteem.

Stonewall – formed in 1989 and named after the Stonewall Inn of Stonewall riots fame in New York City's Greenwich Village in which spontaneous demonstrations occurred against police harassment – is now the largest LGBT rights organisation not only in the UK but in Europe. It was started by political activists and others lobbying against section 28 of the UK Local Government Act and its founders include Sir Ian McKellen. Section 28 – later repealed – banned the promotion of homosexuality or teaching in schools of homosexuality as an accepted family relationship.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) language and bullying are widespread in UK schools, affecting young people's wellbeing as well as their attendance and attainment. Celebrating difference and tackling bullying is crucial to making all children feel welcome and enabling them to learn how to accept others for who they are.

Stonewall delivers training to teachers through Train the Trainer courses. These courses give executive staff or other interested staff in schools the knowledge, tools and confidence to train their colleagues on tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

It also helps them to understand how to support lesbian, gay, bi and transgender young people.

The *Stonewall Getting Started Toolkit (Secondary Schools)* provides a framework and a set of practical tools to help tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. It is based on five key steps to enable schools to embed work to tackle this bullying across the school's policies and procedures. Each step includes a set of tools, templates and checklists to help accomplish this.

The "Moving Further" section of this toolkit provides a set of simple, practical steps that schools can take to embed work on LGBT issues across the curriculum and celebrate diversity across the whole school community.

I met Cheryl (name and school withheld), who teaches in a large, mixed comprehensive secondary school with 1200 pupils. She has also volunteered for Stonewall.

I asked whether her school had had any involvement with Stonewall.

In 2013, the school joined Stonewall's School Champions program and planned assemblies, events and an awareness week on homophobia. The school decided this was a priority even though there was some resistance from staff and pupils; the resistance was put down to ignorance rather than blatant homophobia.

When staff were asked to volunteer to participate in the Stonewall training Cheryl put up her hand



iStock/Tomazi



Top: Same-sex traffic lights in London; bottom left: The Mendip School; bottom right: a Stonewall poster



## UNITED KINGDOM

and was excited by the challenge. She attended the Stonewall Education Conference then returned to school, co-wrote a policy and commenced some staff awareness training. The message was filtered out to the pupils through a series of assemblies and in-class workshops.

Similar to Australian schools, the phrase "that's so gay" is commonly used amongst pupils as an insult. Cheryl and other staff decided that they wanted to raise awareness of the negativity of this phrase and to try and eliminate it from the school. She reports that they have been able to reduce the use of the phrase and are still working towards elimination.

Cheryl has taken part in a Train the Trainer course run by Stonewall and gave her view that it was well-resourced and challenging.

In 2017, the school is planning more community conferencing involving students, parents, teachers and relevant community support agencies. This will foster these relationships and provide even more resources and support for LGBT students in the school.

Cheryl remarked that the Stonewall training has been by far the most valuable professional development of her career.

Ian Martin is head teacher of the Mendip Partnership School in Somerset, England. The Mendip School is an alternative to mainstream schooling for vulnerable and at-risk secondary school students.

The school has a Sex and Relationships Policy that is a stand-alone policy and comes under the umbrella of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) in the school.

There is an understanding among staff and the school community that the school provides its students with a Sex and Relationships

program suited to specific ages or year groups of students. This gives students the personal resources to make positive and informed choices about their sexual and emotional health.

The school is committed to working closely with parents and carers.

The Mendip School proudly supports several gay and lesbian students and students from same-sex families. It thus aims to ensure that the needs of all students are met. Homophobic bullying is not tolerated and is addressed through the school's Behaviour Policy.

Ian also stated that all teachers had received some level of training around LGBTIQ students and that he considers all staff to be well informed. Ian found Stonewall teacher training to be extremely beneficial although he did comment that it might be considered expensive and therefore prohibitive as a measure for every school.

Ian states that the Mendip Partnership School uses a very fair, honest and open approach when it comes to dealing with gender diversity and sexuality issues. This includes teachers, students and their families.

The *Stonewall Getting Started Toolkit (Primary Schools)*, similar to the toolkit for secondary schools, provides a framework and a set of practical tools to help tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying in primary schools. It is based on the same five key steps in order to enable schools to embed work to tackle HBT bullying across the school's policies and procedures.

Primary schools such as The Jenny Hammond Primary School in London, St Keyna Primary School near Bristol and Holbrook Primary School in Wiltshire, have all adopted the Stonewall program.

Some of the similar problems the schools encountered were parent questioning and resistance to the program, as well as staff reservations about parent concerns.

Nevertheless, they all reported positive outcomes including the creation of a network of supportive schools and stronger anti-bullying programs and messages. Perhaps most significantly, there emerged a greater awareness of issues affecting GLBT students and a committed effort to safer, happier and more inclusive schools.

It is very clear, through this small amount of research, that England certainly delivers far superior programs and reaches more students and teachers than Australia.

Stonewall offers outstanding programs and support to students, teachers and schools. Stonewall has worked with more than 12,000 schools from across England, Scotland and Wales. Compare this with the 304 member-schools of the Safe Schools Coalition in Australia — we have a lot of work to do here.

A win for LGBTIQ students and teachers in England.



Top: Stonewall research on homophobia in primary schools; bottom: Stonewall calls for unflinching acceptance

# SCOTLAND

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) rights in Scotland are generally slightly superior to the rest of the United Kingdom and are now regarded one of the most progressive in Europe.

In both 2015 and 2016, Scotland was recognised as the “best” country in Europe, ahead of England and Wales, for LGBT legal equality. This superiority is due to the legal protections it offers LGBT people.

As well as Stonewall, which services the entire United Kingdom, Scotland also has LGBT Youth Scotland.

LGBT Youth Scotland is the largest youth and community-based organisation for LGBT people in Scotland.

The charity’s mission is to: “Empower lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people and the wider LGBT community so that they are embraced as full members of the Scottish family at home, school and in every community.”

LGBT Youth Scotland has four strategic outcomes for its work over the next three to five years.

## **Outcome 1: Young People**

LGBT young people will have good opportunities to meet and socialise with their peer group in a safe, friendly and informal environment, with access to non-formal learning opportunities.

## **Outcome 2: Schools, Community Learning (CLD) and colleges**

Schools and the wider learning community are safe and welcoming environments for LGBT young people in order that they can become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

## **Outcome 3: Capacity building**

Organisations and professionals will understand the rights of LGBT people and have the skills and knowl-

edge to develop more inclusive services.

## **Outcome 4: Effective charity**

LGBT Youth Scotland is an effective and enterprising charity, sustaining good practice in leadership and management.

Of particular relevance to this report is the Strategic Outcome 2 is: Schools, Community Learning (CLD) and Colleges. As outlined in the *LGBT Youth Work Scotland Youth Work Strategy 2014-2018*, the following outcomes specifically aim to:

- ensure that curriculum areas adequately reflect LGBTI identities and experiences
- improve the skills and confidence of schools staff through CPD (Continuing Professional Development) and training
- create programs that allow straight allies within schools to take action and to be part of the change in school environments
- develop strategic relationships with local authorities and cement LGBT Youth Scotland’s position as the lead organisation in this area of work
- ensure that there are increased opportunities for young people to become involved in peer education sessions within schools.

To achieve these goals, LGBT Youth Scotland has formed strong relations with Education Scotland, the Scottish government’s Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) Team, Community Learning and Development (CLD) Standards Council, local authorities and schools.

With the support of Stonewall these partnerships, policies, strategies and programs provide some strong support for LGBTI students in Scotland.

Whilst in Edinburgh I was fortunate enough to gain a parent’s perspec-



Scotland nails its colours to the mast by flying a gay pride flag alongside national flags

tive of what school is like for their children.

I interviewed a lesbian couple, Lee Cockburn and Emily Noble, both employees of the police service of Scotland and the parents of two boys aged six.

“Even though our boys are only six the school is supportive in relation to our family and it offers positive behaviour management in relation to anything from bad behaviour, acceptance, understanding, preventing racism or issues with all families that might be a little difficult,” Emily Noble said.

When asked what strategies and policies there are to support gender-diverse, intersex or SSA students they replied that there were none. They have not suffered or been exposed

to any issues in relation to their family set-up and believe that they are treated like everyone else.

They haven’t been made aware of any policies specifically for gender-diverse, intersex or SSA students and their families. The school hopes to uphold a general anti-bullying policy to attempt to prevent any individual being bullied for any reason, and Lee and Emily support this: they don’t think there needs to be a specific policy to address bullying of LGBT students as they feel that this in itself would be alienating for such students.

They have seen no examples of any strategies or policies implemented to support them as a family. They feel that they are considered a legitimate couple in the school community in every right and accepted 100 per

cent as positively as any other and that this negates the needs for any special strategies and policies. The real issues would potentially come from individual parents and their beliefs and opinions, inbred into their children, of narrow-mindedness.

Lee believes, as an officer of the law, that complaints or concerns about gender-diverse, intersex or SSA students and their families are treated very seriously and she would expect the school to do the same but she hasn’t needed to put relevant policies to a test.

Lee and Emily would take the matter to the highest level if they thought the school supported or promoted any sort of negativity towards them or their family – or towards anyone else, for that matter.

## SCOTLAND

I also spoke with Mrs Lesley Sharp, a primary school classroom assistant.

She said her school looks to promote all as equals and part of society. Families are recognised by their individuality and their unique set-up and all are celebrated and embraced. Each individual pupil's family set-up is discussed and shared through "Circle Time" and a weekly "Me Museum" so that everyone receives equal focus on them as individuals and to feel valued.

All support mechanisms (strategies and policies) for gender-diverse, intersex and SSA students and their families are embedded in the school's general Anti-Bullying Policy: none are stand-alone as that defeats the purpose of acceptance, tolerance and living as one.

The Anti-Bullying Policy is how the school provides support and cultural change for all. Self-evaluation of "How are we doing?", "How do we know?" and "What are we going to do next?" supports this policy and keeps it evolving as required.

Starting from first contact, the school believes that it is important to establish as much information as is willing to be shared in order to have good knowledge and understanding about a child's family network and what children have been raised to believe is the norm.

Any complaints or concerns are dealt with in the standard format as no complaint should be treated differently with regard to the gender of pupil's parents or sexual orientation. The school comprises quite a diverse set of pupils and parents who have been together through this journey from Primary 1 to Primary 4 and are very accepting of each other and share in many different traditions and cultures at each other's homes away from the school. Lesley feels proud to say that these children form the future generation.

The school provides opportunities through continuous professional development and all staff are encouraged to apply for courses that they are interested in. Some courses are compulsory. Some staff attend in-person courses that can be interactive, with around 30 persons present, while others complete online courses (compulsory or voluntary) that go towards professional development, thus ensuring staff have a good understanding of any changes in policy or strategies.

The Local Government and Local Council provide for funding within each financial year for training in relation to programs that address inclusivity and support for gender-diverse, intersex and SSA students. There are also a number of "inset or in-service" days set aside when the pupils are off but the teachers are in for training purposes. These are set into the school terms and the parents are provided a schedule of these days plus the usual school holiday dates at the start of term for the coming year.

Seona Fleming, a police constable in Scotland who specialises in work in diversity, alerted me to a relatively new organisation called Time for Inclusive Education (TIE). Founded in 2015, TIE is a Scottish campaign group that aims to combat homophobia, biphobia and transphobia with inclusive education.

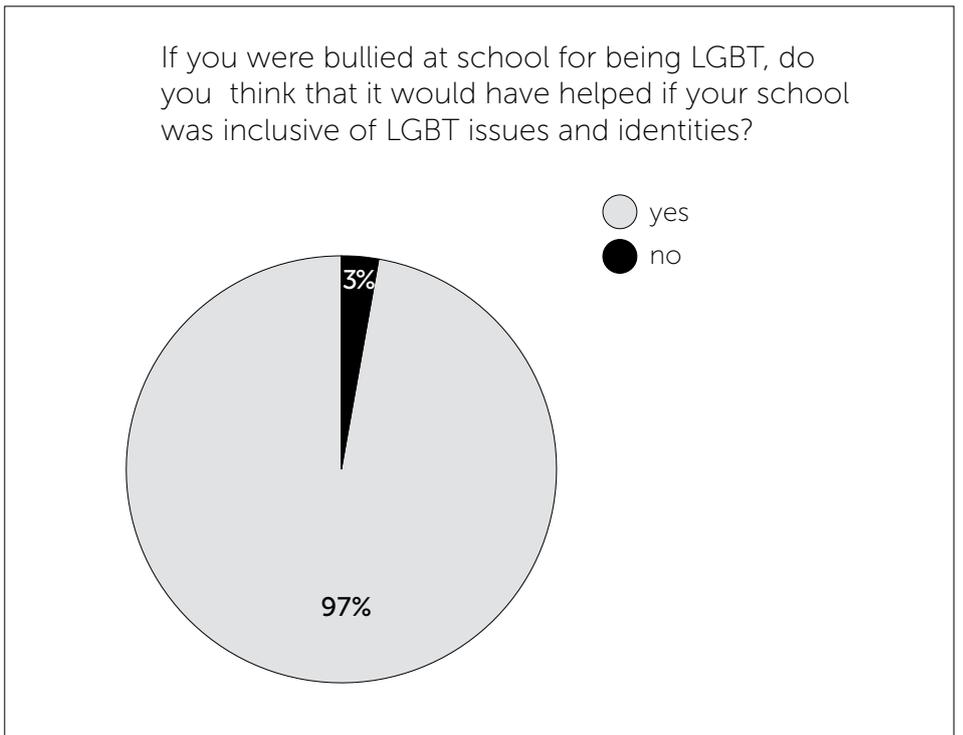
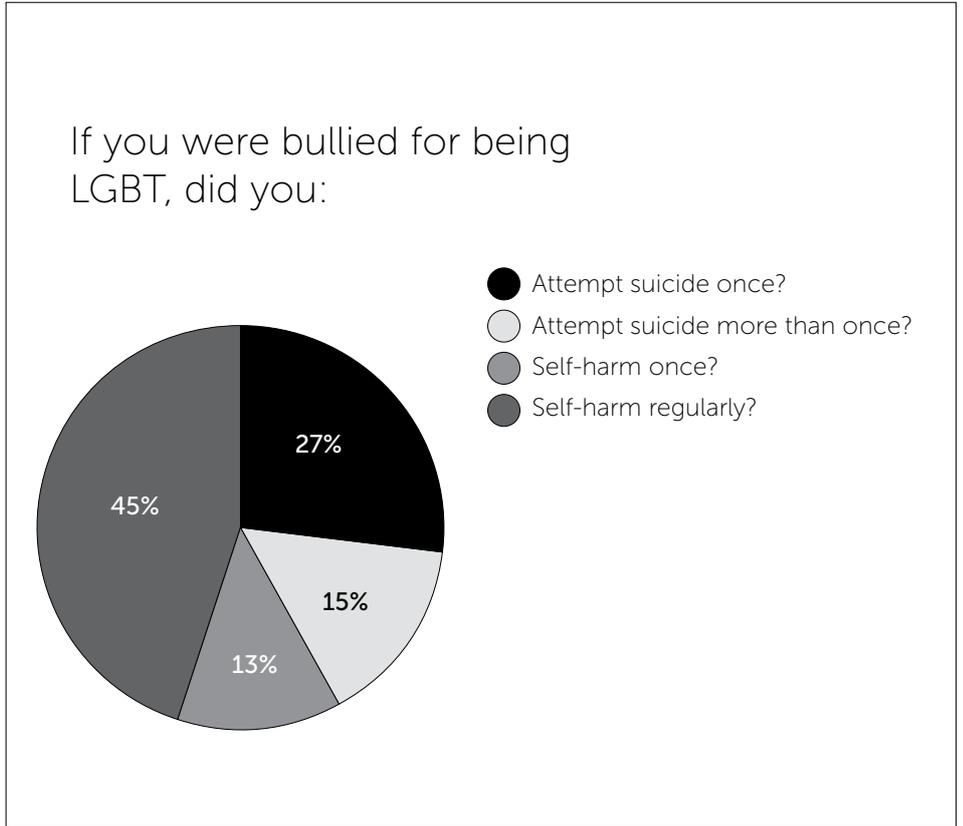
The majority of members of the Scottish parliament support the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) issues in the school curriculum.

In February 2017, TIE announced that 66 Scottish parliamentary MPs from all parties had signed its pledge to back training and curricular guidance for teachers and a national strategy on homophobic bullying. This means that should the matter come to an official vote, Scotland would be the first parliament in Eu-

rope to express majority support for inclusive education in schools.

TIE research shows that 42 per cent of students who said they were bullied for being LGBT had attempted suicide at least once or more than once; 97 per cent of students said that they believe that if their school were inclusive of LGBT issues and identities that would have helped them.

At a time when the Australian government is withdrawing funding for Safe Schools, I believe we need to look to countries like Scotland that are clearly leading the way in this area. They are funding the research and gaining the support to give LGBTI young people equality and respect, which is their right.



# UNITED STATES

LGBT rights in the United States vary from state to state. As of June 26, 2015, all states license and recognise marriage between same-sex couples but the United States still lacks a federal law outlawing discrimination nationwide, leaving many states without any protection from this discrimination.

LGBT Pride Month, which has been celebrated since June 1970, comes from the anniversary of the riots that occurred in 1969 at The Stonewall Inn in New York City. Stonewall was an LGBTIQ bar where predominantly trans women of colour experienced police violence. Although LGBT activism began before this, much of the movement rose out of the outrage from this incident.

On Saturday, 28 June 1969, the patrons of the Stonewall Inn fought back against police harassment. The LGBTIQ community around the world recognises that historic time at The Stonewall Inn by holding pride parades. Those celebrations of gay pride are to recognise how far we have come, to remember those less fortunate who came before us and to remind those who may have grown complacent how far we still must go to achieve true equality.

Whilst visiting the United States I made a visit to the National Education Association (NEA) in Washington DC and met with Paul Sathrum, Senior Policy Analyst, NEA Human and Civil Rights. Paul spoke about three main programs used in schools in the US. Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) and Welcoming Schools, a project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) was founded in 1990 by a small but dedicated group of teachers in Massachusetts who came together to improve an education system that too frequently allows its lesbian, gay, bisexual,

transgender, queer and questioning students to be bullied, discriminated against, or fall through the cracks.

Now, more than 25 years later, that small group has grown into the leading national education organisation focused on ensuring safe and affirming schools for LGBTQ students.

On its website, GLSEN states:

"At GLSEN, the aim is that every student, in every school, is to be valued and treated with respect regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. All students deserve a safe and affirming school environment where they can learn and grow.

"GLSEN accomplishes its goals by working in hallways across the country — from Congress and the Department of Education to schools and district offices in communities — to improve school climate and champion LGBT issues in K-12 education.

"GLSEN conducts extensive and original research to inform evidence-based solutions for K-12 education.

"GLSEN authors developmentally appropriate resources for educators to use throughout their school community.

"GLSEN partners with decision-makers to ensure that comprehensive and inclusive safe schools policies are considered, passed and implemented.

"Every day, GLSEN works to ensure that LGBTQ students can learn and grow in a school environment free from bullying and harassment. "

Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) is a student-run club, typically in a high school or middle school that provides a safe place for students to meet, support each other, talk about issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and work to end homophobia and transphobia.

Developing out of similar programs dating from the mid-1980s, GSA groups have cropped up at hundreds of schools across the US and the world. In a school environment where LGBTQ students are often scared for their safety in class, GSAs provide the student body with organised advocacy efforts, including bullying prevention, awareness-raising, and in generally providing a place where queer students can feel safe. Having a GSA in schools has demonstrated a positive correlation to the wellbeing of LGBTQ students.

Welcoming Schools, a project of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, is a comprehensive approach to improving school climate in elementary school environments with training, resources, and lessons to help schools in:

- embracing family diversity
- creating LGBTQ-inclusive schools
- preventing bias-based bullying
- creating gender-expansive schools
- supporting transgender and non-binary students.

To create safer elementary school climates, HRC Welcoming Schools Facilitators provide professional development training to schools and districts across the nation, equipping adults with tools they need to help elementary students succeed.

In 2004, Greater Boston PFLAG (a group of parents, families, friends and LGBTIQ people) called together a group of community members, including an elementary school principal, a social worker, teachers, same-sex parents, safe school trainers and a social-emotional program consultant to look at how LGBTIQ topics affected elementary students.

Simultaneously, in 2005, the Human Rights Campaign realised that the organisation also needed a public education and outreach component

to increase understanding of LGBTQ people and the importance of LGBTQ-inclusive policies and practices; this became the HRC Foundation.

Whilst in the United States I had the very good fortune of meeting Aimee Gelnaw MEd, a founding member of the Welcoming Schools Committee (2004). She is currently a member of the Welcoming Schools National Advisory Council, which serves as a key advisor in the development and implementation of the Welcoming Schools initiative, a program of the Human Rights Campaign, and provides leadership in educating the broader educational community about the importance of supporting LGBTQ students and families.

Aimee Gelnaw began her LGBTQ activism in 1990 when she was instrumental in founding Lambda Families of New Jersey, a statewide social and educational support network for LGBT families.

It was at this time that Aimee also began to advocate for LGBT families in early childhood programs and schools. She co-founded Family Week in Provincetown, Massachusetts, a weeklong social and educational event now annually hosting approximately 450 families. She expanded her focus and advocacy as a member of the national board of directors of the only national non-profit group dedicated to advocacy, education and support of LGBT families (first named GLPCI – Gay Lesbian Parents Coalition International, then Family Pride Coalition, and currently Family Equality Council).

After chairing the board for several years, Aimee was appointed as executive director of Family Pride Coalition where she served from 2001-2005. During her tenure, Aimee continued general advocacy while still maintaining her passion and commitment to assuring safe and welcoming schools for children and families.

Another project begun through



Top: The author (right) and her wife, Lynne, at their wedding in New York City, with sons Tom, Angus and Finlay; middle: The National Education Association office in Washington DC; bottom: a GLSEN poster for IDAHOT, the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

# UNITED STATES

grant funding during Aimee's tenure was the development of the college course curriculum, "Making Room in the Circle: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Families in Early Childhood Settings". This course is ongoing at City College of San Francisco and Wheelock College in Boston and has been offered at University of North Carolina, Greensboro and Chabot Community College in Hayward, California.

Aimee has engaged in extensive consultations with GLSEN, Chicago Children's Museum, Welcoming Schools, the New York City Literacy Assistance Centre and countless other organisations and schools.

Aimee has a Master's degree in early childhood development and is currently pursuing a second Master's degree in social work.

Some of the pivotal research Aimee has undertaken could be considered for the Australian context and for the recommendations implemented in Australian schools.

The following titles are just a small sample of the work, throughout her activism, Aimee has authored and co-authored, related to creating welcoming and safe schools for LGBT families:

- *Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Environments for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Families in Early Childhood Settings*
- *Belonging: Including Children of Gay and Lesbian Parents in your Program*
- *Opening Doors: Lesbian & Gay Parents and Schools*
- *Opening More Doors: Creating Policy Change to Include Our Families*
- *The Compassionate Conversation At-a-Glance Strategies and Solutions for Addressing Bullying in Schools*

Families want their children's

schools to be safe and welcoming places that respect them. "Extensive research shows that children thrive when their families are involved in their education and when a positive relationship exists between schools and families" (Galinsky and Weissbourd 1992; Redding et al. 2004; Caspe and Lopez 2006; Weiss, Caspe, and Lopez 2006).

Aimee described seemingly simple strategies to achieve this, whether it be by engaging community members (counsellors, coaches, doctors, politicians, law enforcement, etc.), implementing professional development, instituting developmentally appropriate program at all grade levels, providing ongoing professional support for assessing, evaluating and revising approaches and practices, incorporating accountability and celebrating differences, outcomes, commitments and progress.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to making schools safe and inclusive for LGBTIQ students or students from same-sex families. It is people such as Aimee Gelnaw who are driving policy change, providing training, enabling teachers, helping families and taking these steps towards inclusivity.

So, what we see as a result are programs in action in schools, the development of policies, research that has been undertaken and actioned, teachers empowered and school communities engaged. Perhaps most importantly, LGBTIQ students or students from same-sex families are feeling safe and welcome in their schools.

In New York, I met with Patty Tomaszewski, original founder and former executive director of the Upper Delaware GLBT Centre, now known as TriVersity.

Patty has spent more than four decades in the human services field.

She has delivered countless LGBT Cultural Competency workshops and training to schools, human services agencies and universities and colleges. She is a member of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families LGBTQ Youth Committee.

Triversity was founded by Patty in 2009 to serve the needs of the GLBT communities in the tri-state areas of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

TriVersity's mission is to provide a space and programs that welcome, support and empower the LGBTQ community living in and visiting the tri-state region; to promote acceptance of LGBTQ individuals through education and; to be an advocate for social change that embraces diversity and eliminates oppression based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Triversity presents events started by Patty such as the now well-known Ally Prom dinner dance which, she said, "provided an opportunity for LGBTQ students to be themselves, to be with whom they wanted and to express themselves in a way that they felt comfortable. It was our way of letting them know that we are there to support their journey to becoming happy and healthy adults."

This ongoing event is a legacy Patty will leave knowing she has helped countless GLBTQ students and their families. A simple idea for Australian schools perhaps?

In New Jersey, I spent some time with lesbian couple Kathryn Oldfield and Karin Nieuwenhuis, who have two young adult children, Tess and Tim.

Kathryn and Karin have been together for 25 years and provide a perspective of schooling from a same-sex family experience. Along with their knowledge of GLSEN, GSA and Welcoming Schools they also made mention of four other smaller but significant organisations:

1. COLAGE: Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere. The organisation was founded in 1988 by a group of young people who had Gay or Lesbian parents. COLAGE holds an annual event in Massachusetts called Family Week, where same-sex families congregate for a week of fun, workshops, socialising, swimming and love. COLAGE has a strong online community that provides a forum to ask questions, share stories, post videos or related articles. In these spaces, members are from all over the country and world and often don't have any other ways to access families such as theirs. This way, they can create community, support each other, and become strong advocates for themselves and their families.
2. OLWEUS: A whole-school, bullying prevention program that has been proven to prevent or reduce bullying throughout a school setting. The OLWEUS program was developed by Dr Dan Olweus and designed to be a long-term, system-wide program for change. The program is targeted at four levels: classroom, school, individual and the community.
3. *Stopbullying.gov*: A US federal government website managed by the US Department of Health and Human Services. It provided services, contacts and resources to help identify, educate about and prevent bullying.
4. Teaching Tolerance: A project of the Southern Policy Law Centre. This very comprehensive website provides educational materials based on school climate, classroom strategies and reflective teaching. It includes film kits, links to relevant publications, and teaching tolerance webinars and publishes a quarterly magazine, *Teaching Tolerance*.



Top to bottom: Aimee Gelnaw; Patty Tomaszewski; Michelle McCormack (second from left) and wife, Lynne (left) with Kathryn Oldfield and Karin Nieuwenhuis

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Derman-Sparks and Edwards (2010) have stated that there are Four Core Goals of Anti-Bias Education:

1. each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride and positive social identities
2. each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity, accurate language for human differences and deep, caring human connections
3. each child will increasingly recognise unfairness, have language to describe unfairness and understand that unfairness hurts
4. each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

This is the basis on which we should be operating in Australia.

Given that the Safe Schools Program is being defunded by the federal government and that there are only 304 member-schools of the program nationwide Australia needs to look at other ways of engaging and providing for our LGBTIQ students, teachers and students from same-sex families in our schools.

Steps 1-3 involve undertaking some new research to work out exactly where our strengths and weaknesses lie as a nation.

## Step 1

Undertake research in Australia that is similar to Stonewall's 2012 *School Report* (2012) a study undertaken by Stonewall and the University of Cambridge. In it, 1614 respondents from England, Scotland and Wales completed an online survey. This survey provided responses of young LGBTIQ students in British schools, particularly in the areas of bullying, school responsiveness, what measures work well and what the consequences are for LGBTIQ pupils. The

report then provided a series of recommendations to schools and key partners.

## Step 2

Undertake research in Australia that is similar to Stonewall's *The Teachers Report: Homophobic Bullying in Britain's Schools* (2014).

Teachers and schools are the most powerful tool in the fight against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

The research saw 1832 teachers from primary and secondary schools across Britain, interviewed. Like *The School Report*, this report then provided recommendations to primary schools, secondary schools and key partners.

## Step 3

Undertake research in Australia that is similar to Stonewall's *Different Families* report in 2010, when researchers interviewed 82 children and young people between the ages of 4 and 27 about their experience as children from same-sex families. The study provided insight into the existence of homophobia in schools and it demonstrated clearly that schools do not deal with these issues effectively.

Steps 4 and 5 involve the replication of proven successful programs in Australia.

## Step 4

A project similar to Stonewall's *Role Models* would be an encouragement to LGBTIQ youth in Australia and should be undertaken without delay. It is a booklet that focuses on role models from the LGBTIQ community and is all about celebrating differences and finding inspiration in other people's stories, lives and actions.

The Australian role models would provide their personal story and advice and, quite simply, act as a visi-

ble presence in the community. The project could include media personalities, television personalities, sports stars, community heroes etc.

In 2012, the Safe Schools Coalition Victoria and Minus 18 compiled a similar publication that included statements by celebrities Matthew Mitcham and Ruby Rose. Perhaps it is time for an updated edition.

This would be a relatively simple project to undertake and complete. It would then provide inspiration and support to younger members of the LGBTIQ community.

### **Step 5**

The nation needs to take a good look at adopting a model such as the Human Rights Campaign, Welcoming Schools Project, a "comprehensive approach to improving school climate in elementary school environments with training, resources, and lessons to help schools in embracing family diversity, creating LGBTQ-inclusive schools, preventing bias-based bullying, creating gender-expansive schools, and supporting transgender and non-binary students" ([welcomingschools.org/](http://welcomingschools.org/)).

Aimee Gelnaw, a key advisor in the development and implementation of the Welcoming Schools initiative, would be an excellent advisor for Australia. The project has a comprehensive website that provides resources, books, lesson plans, definitions, challenging questions and school tips.

Dr Laura Szalacha from the University of Illinois at Chicago coordinated an evaluation of the Welcoming Schools Project in which 12 schools in five districts in California, Massachusetts and Minnesota participated.

Every school in the pilot program reported a positive difference in seeing that students of every age benefit from classroom discussions about gender roles and expression and

families with LGBTQ parents.

The results of this research provided compelling evidence that HRC Welcoming Schools is making a difference in children's lives and the lives of their families and communities.

What is needed in Australia is a comprehensive project such as this. A program backed by training, resources, and lessons that targets students from Kindergarten to Year 12, obviously with age-appropriate content.

There are many more ideas and recommendations that could be considered but we need to focus on setting clear, attainable goals for the short term. Steps 1-4 are achievable short term goals. Step 5 will take longer to achieve but will be driven by the results from Steps 1-4.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to everyone who worked with me on this report and to the NSW Teachers Federation for the opportunity.

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**Victoria Smith and Laurence Driscoll** for their wealth of knowledge of programs such as Stonewall and insight into the GLBTIQ communities in London and Manchester.

## SCOTLAND

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**Anne Robertson and Rose Byrne** for their advice and inside knowledge from a school perspective in Scotland.

**Lee Cockburn and Emily Noble** for sharing their family and the experiences of their children at school from the perspective of a same-sex family.

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**Mhairi Black**, Member of Parliament for Paisley and Renfrewshire South in Scotland, for her assistance in steering me in the right direction.

## UNITED STATES

**Aimee Gelnow** for her incredible wealth of experience and knowledge in this area and for her willingness to answer my never-ending questions.

**Patty Tomaszewski** for being a hilarious and super friend. Also for being a pioneer of the LGBTIQ community and a tireless champion for LGBTIQ children everywhere.

**Kathryn Oldfield and Karin Nieuwenhuis** for sharing their family and their friends with me. I am so thankful for their friendship. The respect for these women is widespread and the work they have done for the LGBTIQ community is immeasurable.

**Paul Sathrum** from the National Education Association (NEA) in Washington DC.

There are many other people I met along the way whilst researching and writing this report and it is impossible to name them all. Thank you to each of them.

## AUSTRALIA

**Professor Kerryn Phelps AM** for writing the Foreword, and hers and Jackie's supportive friendship. For their tireless work as pioneers and role models of the LGBTIQ community here in Australia.

My friend, **Yvette Novak**, for reading and re-reading my writing and being a critical friend.

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My wife **Lynne** and our boys **Tom, Angus** and **Finlay** for coming along on this journey with me. Also for their never-ending love and support. You are my everything.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

1. HRC Welcoming Schools [welcomingschools.org/](http://welcomingschools.org/)
2. Safe Schools Coalition Australia [safeschoolscoalition.org.au/](http://safeschoolscoalition.org.au/)
3. Stonewall UK [www.stonewall.org.uk/](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/)
4. LGBT Youth Scotland [lgbtyouth.org.uk](http://lgbtyouth.org.uk)
5. Time for Inclusive Education Scotland [ticampaign.co.uk/](http://ticampaign.co.uk/)
6. Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network [glsen.org/](http://glsen.org/)
7. COLAGE [colage.org/](http://colage.org/)
8. OLWEUS [violencepreventionworks.org/](http://violencepreventionworks.org/)
9. Teaching Tolerance [tolerance.org/](http://tolerance.org/)

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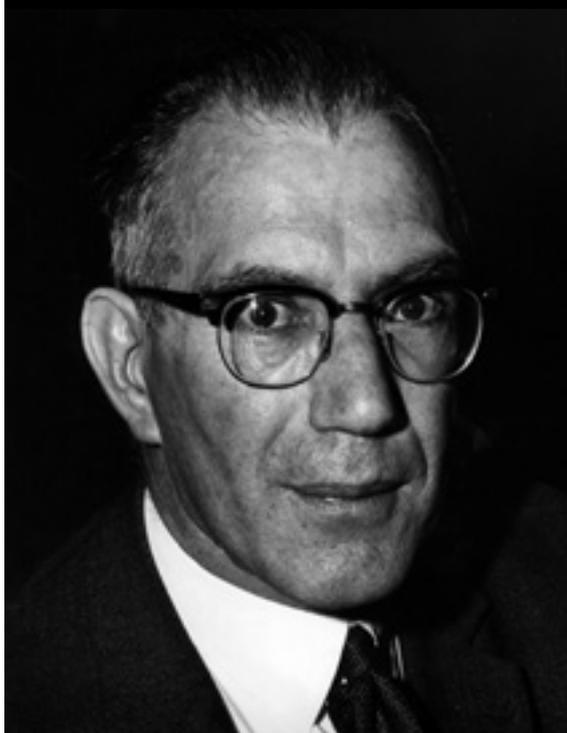
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# NOTES

# ERIC PEARSON STUDY GRANT

Eric Pearson was President of the NSW Teachers Federation from 1974 to 1975 and was also President of the Australian Teachers Federation. He had a distinguished teaching and lecturing career and was head of the Department of Education at Sydney Teachers College.

Mr Pearson commenced his teaching career in small country schools. When World War II broke out he saw active service in New Guinea and Borneo. After the war, he returned to teaching and undertook further study, gaining a PhD from the University of London. Eric Pearson died on June 8, 1977.



The Eric Pearson Study Grant, originally called the Eric Pearson Memorial Travel Grant, was established as a fitting tribute to his outstanding contribution as a scholar and unionist.

The investigations arising from the Eric Pearson Study Grant have contributed significantly to the work and ongoing development of the NSW Teachers Federation.

The first award was made in 1980 to Gus Plater, a teacher and activist from the Armidale Teachers Association, who investigated the social impact of micro-processor technology and its impact on schools and unions.

Areas of investigation have covered a range of contemporary issues affecting teachers and the role of the union. Examples include the study by Joan Lemaire (2009) into bullying, Kerry Barlow's (2007) comparison of professional learning in TAFE, Nicole Calnan's (2010) examination of the importance of professional learning in the work of teacher unions, Maurie Mulheron's report on the 30 year war against public education and Carly Boreland's 2015 report on the commercialisation of schools.



Eric Pearson  
Study Grant 2016

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FOR THE NSW TEACHERS FEDERATION