



glbti newsletter

february 2012

the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender (GLBT) Restricted Committee wishes you a Happy New Year and welcomes you to the 2012 school year. The committee consists of six members who were elected by Council at the start of 2011. The committee members are: Jen Dive (Liverpool Boys HS), Waine Donovan (Country Organiser), Kat Hand (Moorebank HS), Russell Honnery (Moree East PS), Jenny Moes (Wadalba Community School) and David Wynne (Officer). The Officer attached to the committee is Mel Smith.

policy

After Federation updated its *Gender, sexuality and identity policy* at 2011 Annual Conference in July, members of the GLBT Restricted Committee met to start putting into place actions from the policy.

Letters have been sent to the Department of Education and Communities, the Minister for Education and the Board of Studies seeking inclusive practices in classrooms and within the curriculum throughout the state. Further support for schools and TAFE to be inclusive and supportive environments for transgender and intersex students and staff has also been raised with the Department. Ongoing discussions will continue with the Department about these matters.

Documents are currently being developed to assist members in preventing or dealing with homophobia and to support members in issues related to people of diverse sex, sexuality and genders in education. Efforts are being made to develop a kit of information to be sent to workplaces later in the year to support members in dealing with, or supporting others in dealing with GLBTI issues in the workplace.

proud schools

Federation has also been involved in discussions with the Department about the development and implementation of the Proud Schools pilot program which is expected to be trialled in schools later this year. Federation supports the Proud Schools pilot which aims to build on the culture of understanding and respect in public schools by working with whole school communities in identifying and addressing homophobic attitudes.

website

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

Members can access the Federation Library's catalogue and resource guides at <http://www.nswtf.org.au/my-interests/>

federation-library/about.html or from the Federation's home page via the Services tab. The resource guides list resources on popular topics that are available for loan to members. Two resource guides on GLBTI issues are available: "GLBTI Resources for Teacher Reference" and "GLBTI Resources for Classroom Use" (which is divided into stages for easy use by teachers). Please contact the library to request resources, which can be posted to you.

Special Interest Group

Federation has a Gay and Lesbian Special Interest Group (SIG) which is concerned with GLBTI issues and how these issues affect teachers and schools. It is open to any interested member of Federation. Members are sent an email newsletter once or twice a term about training, events and relevant information. The Gay and Lesbian SIG also meets at least once a year in Sydney and may be trialling a videoconferencing arrangement later this year. To be involved and stay up to date on the latest information send an email to mail@nswtf.org.au requesting to be added to the Gay and Lesbian SIG.

The GLBTI Special Interest Group is now also accessible as a Facebook group for those members who are on Facebook. The group is called "GLBTI Special Interest Group — NSWTF" and can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/324945257525813/>. As it is a closed group people will need to be authorised to be included. Items will be posted to the group wall more regularly than the emails that are sent out, and news articles relevant to LGBTI and education issues are also posted to the wall.

Mardi Gras

Federation was once again involved in Fair Day, the launch of the Sydney Mardi Gras festival. A number of officers and members generously volunteered their time on the day to promote Federation and public education within our GLBTIQ communities. Many others stopped by the stall to seek support, share stories or to show their support for public education and the job we do.

Starting the school year off on the right foot...

While preparing for the school year, keep in mind the simple things you can do to ensure that your classroom or school is a safe and inclusive space for all students, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Regardless of the educational stage you teach, there are some easy steps you can take which include:

- challenging homophobic behaviour and remarks as they occur
- displaying GLBTI inclusive materials including posters, books etc
- incorporating GLBTI themed materials into the curriculum
- teaching about respect and fairness.

If you have issues or concerns in relation to GLBTI issues please contact Mel Smith, NSW Teachers Federation, Tamworth Regional Office at (02) 6766 9882 or tamworth@nswtf.org.au.

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.