



**t**he Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (GLBTI) Newsletter has been previously sent to Federation members in the Special Interest Group (SIG) and will now also be sent statewide to all workplaces. The SIG welcomes new members with an interest in this topic. To join the Gay and Lesbian SIG please contact the Federation by telephone (02) 92172100 or email [gltbi@nswtf.org.au](mailto:gltbi@nswtf.org.au). Linked to this SIG is the GLBTI Restricted Committee. This committee consist of six members who are elected by Council. The GLBTI Restricted Committee members are:

Jenny Moes	Wadalba Community School
Kat Hand	Moorebank High School
Russell Honnery	Moree East Public School
Jen Dive	Liverpool Boys High School
David Wynne	Federation Officer
Waine Donovan	Federation Officer

The Officer attached to the committee is Mel Smith.

## Caucus at Annual Conference

A GLBTI SIG Caucus lunch will be held at Annual Conference this year on Monday July 2. The venue and time of the lunch will be advised closer to the date of the conference via email to all SIG members. All SIG members, and any other interested Federation members are welcome to attend, regardless of whether they are attending Annual Conference or not. To send an expression of interest to attend the lunch please email [gltbi@nswtf.org.au](mailto:gltbi@nswtf.org.au)

## Women's Conference

Held at Teachers Federation House in Surry Hills on March 31 this year, Women's Conference was a statewide event that encouraged female members to be active in their union. The conference hosted a number of workshops including one on GLBTI issues which was conducted by Jen Dive and Mel Smith. The workshop was well attended and provided attendees with information as to why this is an important topic to address in our schools and learning activities undertaken in the workshops that could be translated to the classroom. The workshop facilitated the sharing of experiences, knowledge and ideas, and provided strate-

gies and resources to assist in addressing homophobia in the school environment.

## Federation website

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

## Facebook group

The Gay and Lesbian Special Interest Group is now 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, membership in the group will need to be authorised, so if your Facebook name is different to the one on our membership system please send a message when you add the group with your name and membership number. Items will be posted to the group wall more regularly than the newsletters.

## 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 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 service).

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

## Friday Forum

Federation hosted a Friday Forum on May 4 to launch our Gender, Sexuality and Identity kit and to discuss how to address the issue of homophobia in schools. Roz Ward from Safe Schools Coalition Victoria was the guest speaker on the night and discussed the need for schools to address homophobia directly. Roz introduced and discussed the success of Safe Schools Coalition Victoria which was launched in October 2010. 56 schools have joined the coalition so far and over 2700 school staff have been involved in professional development.

President Maurie Mulheron introduced the evening, providing his support for this important issue and the General Secretary, Jenny Diamond, launched the kit on behalf of Federation. The kit has been distributed to all workplaces and can also be accessed online in the "My Interests" section of Federation's website at <http://www.nswtf.org.au/pages/gender-sexuality-identity-kit.html>. The kit contains Federation's Gender, Sexuality and Identity policy; a poster; factsheets on the inclusion of anti-homophobia in schools' bullying policies, supporting people of diverse sexuality and genders in education, and dealing with homophobia, biphobia and transphobia; a glossary of GLBTI terms; a comic explaining the diverse nature and concepts of gender, sex and sexuality; advice in relation to supporting trans• students; and a library resource list.

The kit was prepared by the GLBTI Restricted Committee to inform and support members in working with student and communities to make schools and other workplaces welcoming and safe for people of diverse sex, sexuality and/or gender.



## IDAHO celebrated May 17

International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia is recognised in over 60 countries around the world. The day marks the date in which the World Health Organisation removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in 1990. This year marked the 10th annual campaign of IDAHO and the theme was "Sexuality diversity in the workplace, it pays off!" The focus was to highlight the positive aspects of sexual diversity in the workplace and focus on

its benefits for employers, companies, institutions and workers alike.

IDAHO is a great opportunity to challenge homophobia and transphobia and celebrate diversity. It provides an opportunity for schools, TAFE colleges and other workplaces to recognise the day and assist in ending homophobia and discrimination based on sexuality or gender identity.

## Marriage equality rally

Federation was a presence at the most recent rally for marriage equality in Sydney on May 12. The crowd met at Town Hall where comedians Tom Ballard and Claire Hooper addressed the audience encouraging them to confront discrimination and ensure equality. The crowd then marched to Taylor Square.

Across the country, rallies were held in Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra, Perth and Adelaide and organisers say more than 6500 people marched nationwide.



The sydney crowd sat down in Oxford Street.

## Challenging homophobia in a classroom discussion

Homophobic bullying and behaviours aren't "gay" issues; they are issues of safety and wellbeing for all students. Homophobic bullying is also not the same as other forms of bullying (such as picking on someone because of their height or the colour of their hair) because the arguments behind homophobia have been established and reinforced over centuries by some of our civilisation's most powerful institutions: medicine (homosexuality was considered a mental disorder until 1970s), law (male

homosexuality was illegal and punishable in NSW until the 1980s), and of course some religions (homosexuality as a sin). While many of these institutions have changed their approaches (decriminalisation, recognising same-sex attraction is not a disorder), homophobic beliefs still permeate our society. As the person in charge of your class, it's important to address any homophobic or transphobic behaviour in your class as you would sexist or racist behaviours or comments.

### Case study

The class is having an open discussion about the impact of World War II on Australia. A male student, Xav, refers to the specific challenges faced by many women at the time. One student, Noah, responds by saying, "He should know, after all he's a big girl himself". Many students laugh, one student mutters "fag", and Xav is mortified. Not all homophobia is explicit or direct. In this example, while one student uses explicitly homophobic language (the word "fag"), Noah uses the classic put-down of labelling a male student as a girl. The stereotype of effeminate men and masculine women being same-sex attracted is not new. Suggesting Xav is "a big girl" (being effeminate and/or gay) is implying that being so is to be inferior to masculine males. Homophobia is often directed at students who are not same-sex attracted, only presumed or suspected to be. Whether Xav is gay or not, the message being sent is that he is inferior and the message being sent to every other student in the class is that being gay is inferior and something to be ridiculed.

### Action

- Be prepared. Anticipate and be ready to respond to homophobic or transphobic statements in your class just as you would any other discriminatory language or any other behaviour which does not sit within your class room participation guidelines.
- Respond immediately to the incident. • Challenge the beliefs underpinning the homophobic or transphobic statement (rather than challenging the student personally).
- Acknowledge the homophobic or transphobic language as offensive (as you would if the statement had been racist).
- Use it as an opportunity to reinforce your class participation guidelines or rules and to raise awareness to the inappropriateness of homophobic or transphobic language (just as it would be if the statement was blatantly sexist or racist). Case study supplied by Twenty10. For more information contact Twenty10 at: <http://www.twenty10.org.au> or phone (02) 8594 9555 or 1800 65 2010

### Feedback and support

If you have feedback in relation to the newsletter or website, or information regarding GLBTI issues please contact Mel Smith, NSW Teachers Federation, Tamworth Regional Office at (02) 6766 9882 or via [glbti@nswtf.org.au](mailto:glbti@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.