



Strategies to be more inclusive

The start of the year is an opportunity to reflect on and create new teaching programs and practices with simple steps to make classrooms and schools safe and inclusive places for all students regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Regardless of the stage you teach there are a number of strategies you can apply to be more inclusive. These include:

- teaching respect, fairness, empathy and social justice
- role-modelling appropriate language and behaviour
- fostering inclusive classroom practices that celebrate diversity
- using resources and teaching practices that acknowledge diverse sexes and genders
- naming homophobia when it occurs and addressing it explicitly in school policies
- recognising bias or discrimination as it occurs and responding sensitively and appropriately to stop bullying, exclusion, teasing and/or gender stereotyping
- being visible as an ally, which can be done through the display of GLBTI-inclusive material such as posters and other resources
- knowing where and when to refer students for information or support regarding GLBTI issues such as local groups for GLBTI young people, and Twenty-10.

Calendar entries

The following significant dates can provide an opportunity for your educational community to raise awareness of GLBTI issues or perspectives, or to celebrate GLBTI people and communities:

- Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade — Saturday March 1
- International Day of Families — Thursday May 15
- IDAHO (International Day Against Homophobia) — Saturday May 17
- Wear It Purple Day — Friday August 29
- Human Rights Day — Wednesday December 10

Fair Day

Fair Day is the biggest and one of the most loved events on the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras festival calendar. Federation had a stall at the event again this year which was well received by the GLBTI community and gave teachers the opportunity to promote our campaigns. TAFE was well supported by the community with many people signing up to the Stop TAFE cuts and Gonski campaigns.



Relieving Industrial Officer Jen Dive speaking to members of the community.

'Growing up Queer' research released

A new study from the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre and the University of Western Sydney has 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 have harmed themselves as a result of widespread homophobic and transphobic harassment and violence.

More than 1000 young people aged between 16–27 years of age participated in the national research study, with almost two-thirds reporting homophobic or transphobic harassment or violence across different aspects of their lives, including in schools, families, the workplace, the streets and other public sites such as sporting events.

The research also found:

- Homophobia and/or transphobia has a serious impact on many young people's educational experiences, with some changing schools multiple times and others dropping out of school altogether.
- Young people frequently witness other students who "come out" at school being bullied and this results in many students keeping their sexual diversity or transgender status a secret, with long-term effects on these young people's mental health and wellbeing.
- Sexuality education in schools does not respond to the needs or experiences of young LGBTIQ people, exposing them to a range of social and health risks.
- Rejection by families can lead to homelessness, economic instability and/or destitution for some young people, particularly

in families of different cultural or religious affiliations.

- Growing up in rural and/or isolated communities exacerbates some young people's feelings of being alone, with access to support services often limited or non-existent in these areas.

High-profile Australians from the LGBTIQ community, including former High Court Judge the Hon. Michael Kirby, actor Magda Szubanski and comedian Tom Ballard, lent their support at the launch of this report.

Magda Szubanski commented, "People often ask if things are especially tough for young LGBTIQ people — the answer is **yes**. And here we have the study that proves it. Now let's just hope that adults do something to improve these dreadful statistics and the lives of our young people."

Lead researcher Professor Kerry Robinson of the University of Western Sydney said: "For many people we spoke to, while peers were most frequently the source of homophobia and transphobia, it was the homophobia and transphobia perpetrated by some teachers that had the most profound impact on their lives."

"This research clearly demonstrates the need for greater community education, training of educators, doctors and health professionals about the health and wellbeing issues facing young Australians who are gender-variant and sexuality-diverse," she said.

The report can be accessed via the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre website.

IDAHO

Throughout the last year, there have been reports of countries (Russia and some African nations) that have legislated to further deny the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. It is acts such as these that highlight the discrimination faced by GL-

BTI people around the world.

While progress has been made in Australia over the years, discrimination still exists and IDAHO (the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia) is the day to raise awareness of this issue, to fight against the

homophobic and transphobic laws that many people live under.

May 17 is the date on which in 1990 the World Health Organisation decided to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder. As such it is an appropriate day for people take action to raise the profile of homophobia and transphobia as ongoing concerns.

To mark IDAHO in your school you can:

- implement a LGBTI-specific lesson plan about homophobia/transphobia
- create and display posters to develop awareness of homophobic/transphobic practices

Wear It Purple

Wear It Purple will take place on the last Friday in August (August 29) this year. Schools and TAFE campuses are encouraged to be part of the event to recognise and celebrate the diversity of “rainbow youth”. Last year, more than 80 schools took part, with more expressing an interest to be involved this year.

Wear It Purple recognises that challenging heterosexism and homophobia takes more than

and behaviours

- ensure your educational institution has books and other resources that are inclusive of GLBTI people and their families in its library and other resources
- hold an event to recognise the day — this could include inviting speakers from various organisations, or running activities throughout the day
- access professional development resources, of which Federation’s Library has some available (<http://www.nswtf.org.au/my-interests/federation-library/about.html>)

a celebration once a year, and consequently has developed student workshops, school presentations, student-leader training and staff briefings aimed at creating supportive environments that are inclusive of sexuality and gender-diverse students. These workshops are available to schools throughout the year.

To view details about these programs and activities visit <http://wearitpurple.org/>.

ReachOut.com Professionals

ReachOut.com Professionals <http://au.professionals.reachout.com/> is a partner service of the ReachOut.com online youth mental health service. It provides recommendations and advice for youth support workers and education professionals on a range of online interventions, tools and resources that can be used to support young people experiencing mental health difficulties and to build young people’s wellbeing and resilience.

Content and resources on ReachOut.com Professionals will help you to understand key mental health and wellbeing concepts, refer young people to appropriate services or online tools, and teach mental health and wellbeing skills in the classroom.

This site also includes information on gender and sexuality as well as a teaching and learning section where you will find resources and ideas to support your teaching.

To help support GLBTI young people ReachOut.com Professional lists the following suggestions:

- Make sure your workplace is friendly and visibly supportive towards sexuality and gender-diverse young people (through signage etc.).
- It is important to affirm to young people that gender and sexuality are always diverse and that gender and sexuality differences are normal and healthy.
- It may be helpful to reiterate to young people that no one else can dictate their gender and sexuality, and that they have the right to make their own choices regarding their gender and sexuality.
- It can be helpful to direct young people to support services that specialise in gender identity and sexuality support services that can be anonymous

<http://au.professionals.reachout.com/Gender-and-sexuality>

'We are Family' Photography Exhibition

The Australian Centre for Photography presents *We Are Family*, an official Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gay event, as part of its autumn season from March 1 to May 18.

The curator, C. Moore Hardy, describes this exhibition as "a celebration and realisation of just how far we have come, and the issues, joy, happiness and questions we still have to ask". *We Are Family* presents the artists' interpretations of family within gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (GLBTIQ) contexts. Hardy presents a platform to challenge the definition of family and broaden our understanding of the GLBTIQ community.

We Are Family showcases the photographic and installation works of emerging and estab-

lished female artists Michele Aboud, Deborah Kelly, Annie Magdalena, r e a, The Twilight Girls and Waded. The exhibition has evolved from guest curator C. Moore Hardy's work documenting the gay and lesbian community in the 1990s (City of Sydney ArchivePix online collection), and looks at the many forms family takes in today's society, whether pre-existing, chosen or created.

School tours are available at the gallery where students can roam their galleries and explore the world of photography. Alternatively, the gallery can cater to school excursions where students hear from their curators as they talk about their exhibitions and help students to develop an understanding of the process of photography and the artist behind the works.

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 courses will be run on Thursday March 20 and Friday May 9 from 9am-5pm at 45 Chippen Street, Chippendale NSW 2008. Registrations close two weeks prior to the date.

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

GLBTI Special Interest Group

The next meeting of the GLBTI Special Interest Group will be held at 12.30pm on Saturday March 15 at Teachers Federation House, 23-33 Mary Street, Surry Hills. The meeting provides members with the opportunity to discuss relevant LGBTI issues, inform Federation of specific areas of concern and provide advice to the Federation concerning policies relating to LGBTI 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 the details for teleconferencing, please email glbti@nswtf.org.au.

The SIG welcomes new members with an interest in this area. To join the SIG please email glbti@nswtf.org.au.

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