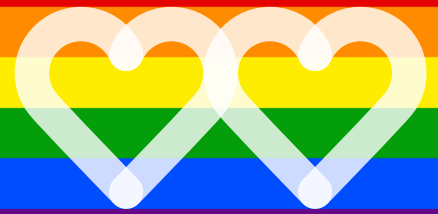


marriage equality

A human right for good health



Marriage Equality - Victorian Community Health Sector Joint Statement of Support

The recent decision of the Australian Government to conduct a survey to determine the level of support for the right of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people to marry, represents a significant risk to the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ Victorians.

As leaders within, and advocates for, the health of our communities we want our LGBTIQ clients, community, consumers, families and staff to know that we understand the sadness, anger and frustration this decision causes, and that we stand with you in our commitment to contribute constructively to this process. We believe the case for marriage equality has been accepted in Australia and the vast majority of like nations.¹

We consider that holding a popular vote on matters of equity is disrespectful and potentially divisive. For these reasons activists and advocates have worked strenuously to have this matter dealt with by the Parliament. Despite this, it seems possible that a postal survey may still proceed.

The benefits of equity to the health of communities are well established, as are the adverse impacts of discrimination.² As community and primary health organisations we will actively support individuals and communities to understand and participate in the survey process, and we will advocate for a YES vote in order to help achieve community equity.

We will promote the opportunity this debate presents to optimise the social inclusion of LGBTIQ people. We will share what we know about the vital role rights and participation play in supporting good health and health equity.

We will be alert and ready to address the potentially negative health impacts of stigmatisation, vilification and discrimination, particularly on young people, children, those without support and those with mental health support needs. Where we can, we will offer support to LGBTIQ organisations and individuals to manage any adverse impacts.

We are optimistic that this public discussion will amplify the voices of those seeking more equitable and healthier communities. We call on our colleagues, community partners, professional associations, families and friends to join us in making clear their support at this important time.

¹ <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2017/06/01/factbox-same-sex-marriage-around-world>

² http://www.acon.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Marriage-Equality-Evidence-Review_web.pdf

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2072932/>

