

The evidence behind our work

Brita Johanson, Youth Housing Support Worker

The Castlemaine District Community Health (CDCH) Rainbow Tick committee asked staff to complete an anonymous LGBTI Inclusive Practice Survey in January 2017. This was to identify any gaps in our service and to guide our work towards meeting the Rainbow Tick accreditation standards. The survey design was based on a model that Cobaw Community Health have used in the past. All staff were asked to participate in this survey so CDCH could get a good understanding of staff knowledge and attitudes.

The survey found out what knowledge staff thought they had in relation to LGBTI issues, what CDCH staff did well, and what they felt needed improving. These results were then put together and discussed by the committee.

36 staff completed this survey. We found that staff were interested in training, and wanted better access to resources both for themselves and clients. They were also interested in making sure that all our services felt welcoming and inclusive for LGBTI clients.

Since then, staff have participated in an LGBTI Inclusive Practice training workshop, and another workshop will be offered to CDCH volunteers later in the year. CDCH also participated in International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia by flying the Rainbow flag and having a window display, and continue to update resources for both staff and client use.

Another survey found that our LGBTI clients feel comfortable asking questions and are always listened to and understood. CDCH recently participated in the Victorian Health Care Survey where 5% of our clients who completed this survey identified as being LGBTI. All who answered the survey (and this includes the LGBTI respondents), said they always felt comfortable raising issues or asking questions, and were always listened to and understood by health workers.



Brita Johanson works at Castlemaine Housing Service at Castlemaine District Community Health



Castlemaine District Community Health

Facilitating Better Health

Rainbow Edition

Our commitment to the LGBTI community

Anne Bates, CEO

I'm very pleased to be introducing this edition of CDCH's Health Promotion Newsletter which focusses on our organisation's commitment to providing a great service to our LGBTI community.

This edition is timely for CDCH as our Board of Management have recently approved the following value statement: *CDCH recognises and values the diversity of all people including but not limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people; people with a disability and culturally and linguistically diverse people.*

This edition also comes at a time of Parliamentary debate about marriage equality, and Castlemaine District Community Health offers counselling support for those affected by these tough times. CDCH has recently started working towards achieving Rainbow Tick Accreditation. Continuous improvement in the service we provide is important so that we can facilitate better health for all, particularly our LGBTI community.

Members of the LGBTI community are at increased risk for a number of health conditions when compared to heterosexual communities. Much of this is associated with social and structural inequities, such as the stigma and discrimination that LGBTI people experience.

CDCH is pleased to be shining more light on these issues and taking positive steps towards equity in service delivery for LGBTI people in our community. Enjoy finding out about our efforts to improve understanding and share information.

Inside this issue:

- Rainbow tick accreditation 2
- Staff training 2
- LGBTI specific services 3
- The evidence behind our work 4



Anne Bates is the CEO at Castlemaine District Community Health



Castlemaine District Community Health

13 Mostyn Street CASTLEMAINE 3450

Phone: 03 5479 1000

Fax: 03 5472 3221

email@cdch.com.au

www.cdchcastlemaine.com.au



Castlemaine District Community Health
Facilitating Better Health

If you would like to receive this newsletter by email, please provide your email address to CDCH: email@cdch.com.au

Rainbow Tick Accreditation

Liza Shaw, Health Promotion

Castlemaine District Community Health (CDCH) is working towards achieving Rainbow Tick Accreditation. Through this process, services can be formally accredited to show practices and service delivery that is inclusive for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex (LGBTI) people.

A committee of staff broadly representing CDCH meets monthly to work through six standards against which services are assessed. Leading the committee has been Sam Peavey, who has unfortunately left CDCH for another work opportunity. The committee will however continue working through the standards, which are:

1. Organisational capability
2. Workforce development
3. Consumer participation
4. A welcoming and accessible organisation
5. Disclosure and documentation
6. Culturally safe and acceptable services



Only 11 organisations in Australia have achieved this accreditation, and CDCH hopes to join this list.

If you identify as LGBTI and have feedback on how CDCH can be more welcoming and accessible for you, the committee would like to hear from you.

Phone Castlemaine District Community Health on 5479 1000.

Staff Training

Peter Hunt, Team Leader Counselling and Family Services

Staff at CDCH recently had the opportunity to access very high quality training from Mez Lannigan at Cobaw Community Health. To achieve Rainbow tick accreditation, CDCH staff need to understand the social and physical health needs of all clients who identify as part of the LGBTI community. The 3 hour workshop was delivered by Mez, the coordinator of the Way Out program for the Macedon Ranges. It provided an introduction to inclusive practice, and helped staff to have better awareness of the ways to acknowledge and respect sexual and gender diversity amongst colleagues and service users.

The workshop included:

- o Understanding and engaging positively with sex and gender diverse (LGBTIQ+) groups and individuals: why focus on this community?
- o Gender vs Sexuality: what is the difference, what is the link?
- o Treating people equitably i.e. not discriminating based on sexuality & gender and challenging negative stereotypes
- o Impacts of heteronormative/cisnormative approach
- o Exploring inclusive practice definitions/terminology: using everyday language that includes Same Sex Attracted, Sex or Gender Diverse experiences: labels vs experiences
- o Identifying gaps in individual, community and organisational practices
- o Sexuality, Gender and the law.

LGBTI Specific services

Heather Steele, Generalist Counsellor

There are no specific LGBTI services available in our shire but there are services in Bendigo, Daylesford, Kyneton and Gisborne; as well as a couple of key services.

In Bendigo, **Headspace** has a dedicated same sex attracted, sex and gender diverse support worker with the Health and Equal Youth Project. There are two support groups, a Diversity Group for anyone aged 12 to 25 “who may be Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans*, Intersex or not Mainstream and their friends” held every Thursday 4.30 to 6pm. Also headspace hosts a support group for parents and carers of transgender, gender diverse and gender questioning young people. **Contact Millee Rice on 5434 5345.**

WayOut Macedon Ranges is provided by Cobaw Community Health and offers a range of support groups. These are the House of Awesome (LGBTIQ+) at Kyneton, the Trans & Gender Diverse (TGD) Group in Woodend, a group for parents of TGD young people in Woodend, and School Pride Crews in Kyneton and Gisborne Secondary Colleges. **More information: 5421 1666.**

Chillout Festival Daylesford is hosted by a not for profit community based organisation dedicated to celebrating gay, bisexual, transgender and queer pride in regional Victoria. **More information:** <http://www.chilloutfestival.com.au>

Macedon Ranges Health offers a **Queer Youth Group** in Gisborne. **More information: 54280300.**

VA Country provide support, resources and information about LGBTI wellbeing, HIV, Hepatitis C and sexual health across the loddon Mallee. VA Country operates a Community Hub that provides a safe space for the LGBTI community to connect and access information, resources and referral services. **More information:** <http://vac.org.au/lgbti-health/vacountry>

Minus 18 is Australia’s largest youth led organisation for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans youth. They offer youth support, dance events, online support through resources and articles, youth mentoring, and they also develop campaigns and an online platform called MinusTV. **More information:** <http://minus18.org.au/>

QLife Switchboard counselling services are available 7 days a week, all year from 3pm to midnight Australia wide. Phone counselling (1800184527) and web chat services are provided by volunteers supported by a team of paid staff. Support via web chat and internet forum provides flexible and friendly access for people who prefer more anonymous interactions or for whom the phone is impractical. Qlife believes in providing a space which is inclusive and respectful of diversity in genders and sexualities including intersex or trans people who are heterosexual. **More information:** <https://qlife.org.au/>.