



Media Release

22 January 2009

Embargoed until 12:01am, 22 January 2009

New poll demonstrates support for further gay law reforms in Queensland

Lesbian and gay community advocates have welcomed the results of a new opinion poll demonstrating that Queenslanders support further gay law reforms. The Galaxy poll conducted in December 2008 found that a majority of Queenslanders support civil unions, marriage and full legal recognition of same sex parents.

“Despite being regarded as one of the most homophobic states in Australia, the majority of Queenslanders agree with further law reform to remove discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people”, said Louise DuChesne, spokesperson for Action Reform Change Queensland (ARCQ).

“Currently, Queensland law treats same sex de facto couples differently to heterosexual de facto couples when it comes to their children.

“Community advocates have been calling on the Bligh Government to recognise same sex parents and provide full entitlements for their children.

“This poll shows that law reform in the interests of children would be supported by at least two thirds of Queenslanders. It’s time for action from the Government.

“The Queensland Attorney-General, along with other state and territory Attorneys-General, supported recent reforms to federal family law to recognise non-birth parents in same-sex relationships. Why isn’t he making similar changes to the laws in this state as well?

“It’s crazy to have one set of rules at the federal level and another set at the state level. It’s time that the legacies of homophobia were removed in Queensland,” said DuChesne.

The poll also found that 60% of Queenslanders believe that same sex couples should be able to have a civil union with the same legal rights and responsibilities as marriage, while 54% of Queenslanders believe that same sex couples should be able to marry.

“There is no impediment to the Queensland Government moving ahead on civil unions”, said Paul Martin, spokesperson for the Queensland Association for Healthy Communities (QAHC).

“In the absence of gay marriage, which is in the federal jurisdiction, a Queensland-based civil unions scheme would provide documentation and certainty for same sex partners.

“Attorneys-General around Australia have agreed to put in place state-base schemes but we’ve seen nothing yet from the Queensland Government”, said Martin.

The call from lesbian and gay community advocates for further changes to Queensland laws comes after significant reforms to federal laws in 2008 which now recognise same sex couples and their children. The federal reforms were triggered by the recommendations of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission’s (HREOC) Same-Sex: Same Entitlements report in 2007.

“Queensland now lags behind the rest of Australia and we call on all parties contesting the Queensland election in 2009 to make a clear commitment to remove the remaining discriminatory state laws”, said DuChesne.

The report from the Galaxy Poll is available at www.qahc.org.au/election09

The poll was commissioned by a coalition of community groups and activists based in Queensland advocating for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights and funded by PFLAG Brisbane (Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays) and QAHC (Queensland Association for Healthy Communities).

For further information or interviews, please contact Louise DuChesne (ARCQ) on 0428 479 386 or Paul Martin (QAHC) on 07 3017 1791 or 0407 376 540.