

# PFLAG Newsletter

February/March/April 2016

## Welcome!

Welcome to the February/March, April 2016 edition of our PFLAG Newsletter!

Our first meeting for the year was extremely successful. We met new parents who came along to listen to Dallas Pitt from Relationship Australia talk about a new group for young trans\* children to give them the opportunity to interact with each other.

Additionally, He was most helpful when generally discussing emotions and concerns for parents of trans\*, children and adults.

I would like to thank Dallas for giving up his Saturday afternoon and coming along to support the PFLAG parents, especially those with trans\* children.

If anyone wants to contact Dallas for individual support 1300 364 277



### Coffee mornings at McDonalds



The next Coffee morning will be held at 10am on 12<sup>th</sup> March at McDonalds Newmarket.

PFLAG mum, Belinda will be the facilitator.

If you have any queries please make contact with Belinda on [limbel65@hotmail.com](mailto:limbel65@hotmail.com)

## Happy Mardi Gras!

Did you know that the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras is one of the largest annual parade and pride festival for the gay and lesbian community in the world? The first one was held on June 24, 1978 and was actually a protest march.



### Have you visited our website yet?

All our resources have been updated and are available to download now. The site also has links to our previous newsletters, community services and other websites families may find helpful <http://www.pflagbrisbane.org.au>



## PFLAG HELP LINE

*I have been in the LGBTIQ community since 1998 and in this time I have seen so much change for the trans\* community.*

As most people are aware we have a helpline mobile 0400 767832 and it is interesting to note that the main calls received are from parents seeking information and support for their trans\* children, from the very young to adult.

Up until the last ten years they had minimal rights. Now they have protection in State schools with policies outlining how they can live their best lives, legal and health services have been improved to assist them with transition and to minimise problems that may arise.

Support groups for young people:

Ages 6 -11 years contact Dallas Pitt at Relationship Australia ph: 1300 364 277

12 – 18 years Open Doors ph: 3257 7660

Over 18 years Relationships Australia

ATSAQ 3843 5024

Many Genders One Voice for over 18years old [www.manygendersonevoice.org](http://www.manygendersonevoice.org)

Qld AIDS Council for more support groups and assistance with services available ph 30171777

Or please call PFLAG on 0400 767 832 and perhaps we can be of further help,

## Myths debunked here...

Myth: Transgender people are confused.

Fact: Just because a person is different, doesn't mean they don't know who they are.

Trans people have a sex. They are females, males, and intersex.

Trans people have a gender. They are men, women, queer, and other genders.

They know their sex and they know their gender.

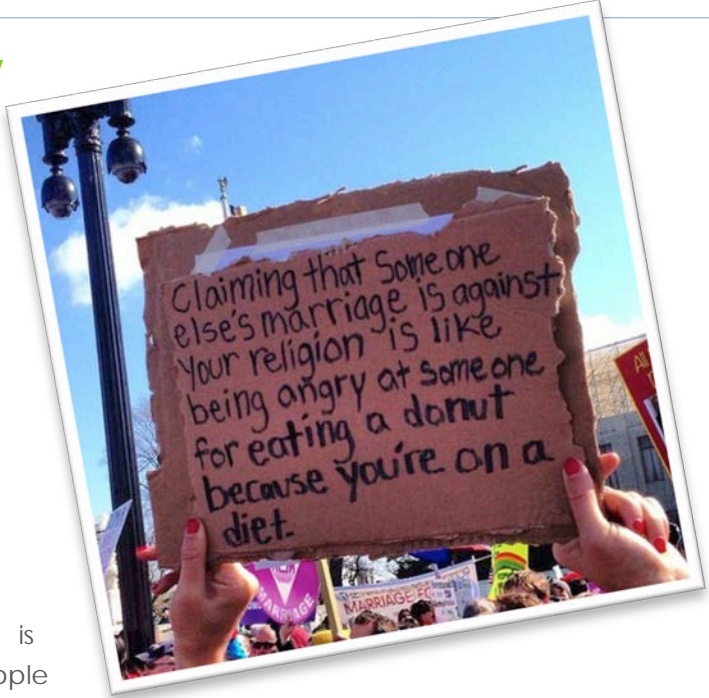
This can be confusing to us who inhabit more traditional gender roles, but to the transgender person, it is not confusing. It is just who they are.

That said, coming to the realization that you are trans, and coming out publically as trans, in a society that doesn't accept or understand you can be very confusing and hurtful. Many transgender people have experiences of feeling "defective" or "wrong." This is a social problem, not a gender identity problem.



# Marriage Equality

Last month PFLAG President Shelley Argent spoke at an Australia Marriage Equality (AME) forum at the Powerhouse about our projects and initiatives. PFLAG has been very busy encouraging a Free Vote



I spoke about the Christmas Cards we sent to all Federal MP's and Senators,

A booklet named, "[Marriage Matters](#)" which explains why a Plebiscite is not necessary or beneficial in any way. If you would like to read this it's on our website [www.pflagbrisbane.org](http://www.pflagbrisbane.org).

We are in the process of publishing a Brag Book for Grandparents with genuine family photos of PFLAG families.

Our theory is when people are concerned about "the children" they are talking about our grandchildren, not our children.

[Our message is in all of our initiatives that the "children are OK" the same as their family and children.](#)

If you would like to make a donation to make costs less on a private donor.

Bank details are below.

Bank of Qld – Account Name  
"What about the Children?"

BSB 124-006

Account # – 2239 5649

I went to Canberra, once again to talk with MPs about a Free Vote. While there, I distributed the Marriage Matters to every MP and Senator. I also gave the letters from parents to Malcolm Turnbull about the Free Vote.

After Canberra, I flew to

Tasmania and spoke to very keen people from Cygnet about marriage supporters. I met LGBTIQ, their families and the general community who are interested in equality on so many levels. It is such a friendly and welcoming place.

## Civil Partnerships in Queensland

For all couples and interested families our sons and daughters can now have their ceremony from April. If you have more queries please contact Births Deaths and Marriages.

I am so pleased for our Queensland LGBTIQ sons and daughters they can now marry (with a ceremony) which are recognised in their home state and have babies.

Not perfect I know, but better than I could have hoped for under previous governments, regardless of Labor or LNP.





# Queensland Police

The Qld Police Service (QPS) is once again working to improve information and awareness about the LGBTIQ community, our sons and daughters. And, I spoke to the newest intake of police LGBT Liaison Officers in mid February.

They were keen to know about our service and how to be helpful and supportive.

I was also approached about PFLAG becoming a referral for the QPS.

Pre 1990 the QPS was most definitely not our sons



and daughters friends or allies. And, last September they marched in the Pride Fair March plus had a large positive presence at the Fair.

**Education:** In early February, Shelley Argent travelled to a regional state high school with someone from the Safe School Coalition (SSC) to encourage the school to have additional training about supporting our LGBTIQ children.



I spoke with a Mum about supporting her trans\* child. It can be very difficult for parents in regional areas due to the lack of services. The mother, like most wants the best for her child, but distance can be the worst enemy to achieving this goal.

I was also invited by a private boys' college to speak to their

Amnesty group about the history of homosexuality in Queensland. I spoke a little about the Bjelke-Peterson era, how their rights have improved in Queensland since 1990 and future equality.

It was just a general information presentation, but the boys were very interested with lots of interesting questions.

## Homophobia in the Workplace

Some may remember a few months ago where there was an incident at a Lend Lease construction site. So, one project for this year is to create a brochure that goes to worksites such as this one in the Valley.

We plan to do the brochure as a reminder to workers that this behaviour is no longer acceptable, funny or condoned.

If you have ideas or would like to be part of this project please let me know  
[pflagbris@bigpond.com](mailto:pflagbris@bigpond.com)



## Adoption News

The Qld Government is about to have an Inquiry into adoption which as most would be aware is State legislation, not Federal.

A submission from PFLAG has been submitted and we have been asked to be part of a project called Café Conversations to encourage understanding and support for same sex couples who may want to adopt.



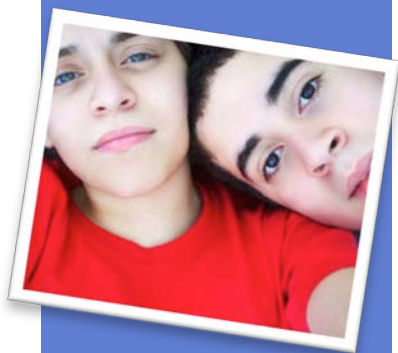
"Nature chooses who will be transgender; individuals don't choose this."

- Mercedes Ruehl



If Liza can marry two gay men, why can't I marry one?!

- Unknown



Gay teenagers are four times as likely to attempt suicide as straight ones. I wish they knew that there's nothing wrong with them; that they are just a different shade of normal.

- Jodi Picoult

## THE SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM

*"Bullying is incredibly destructive, we must do everything we can to ensure that students get the safe learning environment they deserve – regardless of their gender or sexuality."*

NSW Opposition Leader Luke Foley has added his voice to the Safe Schools debate by giving his support for the program.

"The Safe Schools program provides vital help to LGBTIQ students and should remain in schools," he told GNN.

The anti-bullying program, launched in NSW in July 2014, is now being reviewed at the request of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull following pressure from conservative MPs led by Senator Cory Bernardi.

Foley said it was unacceptable that a program that helps students has come under review.

*"No one can put a price on stemming statistics of self-harm, abuse and discrimination – and the Liberals and Nationals can't deny the good work the program is doing."*

NSW Education Minister Adrian Piccoli declined to comment with a spokesperson telling GNN it was a "federal program".

Currently Safe Schools is implemented in about 500 schools, all of which voluntarily signed up.

Shadow Minister for Education Linda Burney echoed Foley's calls for the program to stay, saying the government should be doing everything possible to stop any kind of bullying in schools.

The review into Safe School was prompted by Senator Cory Bernardi, who has said the program

could "indoctrinate children into a Marxist agenda of cultural relativism". Other conservative MPs have since come out against the program.

Burney said it was "disappointing that so much misinformation has been allowed to spread about this program".

"Safe Schools in NSW is about promoting acceptance in school communities and training teachers to deal with these complex issues," she said.

"I want to be clear, the program in NSW does not promote any overtly sexual practice, nor does it contain advice on sexuality of a prescriptive nature – this is all about preventing bullying. That can only be a positive thing."

Other state and territory governments from around the country have come forward to voice their disapproval of the Safe Schools review with Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews venting his frustration on social media.

*"Schools have to be a safe place for every kid – no exceptions.* Teachers have to be given the tools to deal with every situation – no excuses. There is



absolutely nothing wrong with this effective little program, which achieves the above two aims and nothing more," he said.

"I'm sick of Liberal politicians telling our kids that there's something wrong with them, when there isn't. I'm sick of Liberal politicians trying to push us all back, whenever we all take a few steps forward."

South Australian Education Minister Susan Close expressed her disappointment of the review.

"I am bitterly disappointed that the prime minister has raised questions about the merits of the Safe Schools Coalition," she told [The Guardian Australia](#).

*"This is a program devoted to countering the bullying of children whose emerging sexuality and gender identification can make them vulnerable, isolated and at times at risk of self harm."*

"Children in this situation deserve our support and protection, not more bullying by politicians." She said.

Openly gay ACT chief minister Andrew Barr has also taken to social media to voice his concern.

"80% of LGBTI students face verbal abuse and bullying at school. Bullying distracts students from learning and saps them of their potential," he said.

"Safe Schools is a vitally important program run by the Foundation for Young Australians. It has the full support of the ACT Government."

President of the Australian Council of State School Organisations Phillip Spratt has also said the program is

only positive.

"The Safe Schools program has made a considerable positive impact," he told The Guardian Australia.

Earlier this week, it was revealed a Victorian family support agency has had a 100 per cent increase in demand for support from LGBT youth since the Safe Schools program came under review and the plebiscite became a regular topic.

Drummond Street Services chief executive Karen Field said a growing number of young LGBT people are presenting with "anxiety, self-harming behaviours, and thoughts of suicide".

Students are currently moving between schools to find one that offers the Safe Schools program, the organisation said

Field said the program has been helping make an inclusive school environment and a review would have significant impacts on students.

"When there are attacks on the very structures created to support them, such as Safe Schools Coalition, it becomes very personal."

The independent review into the Safe Schools program is due to hand down its report in mid-march this year.

ARTICLE REPRINTED FROM: Gay News Network  
<http://gaynewsnetwork.com.au/news/victoria-copy/nsw-opposition-leader-luke-foley-says-safe-schools-should-stay-20497.html>

## COMING OUT: Some positive experiences from around the net

My mother said "now you don't have to lie about where you are going at night" and my dad said "You were so serious about us talking today that I thought you were going to tell me something important or bad like you are quitting college."

*When I came out to my mom, she was more supportive than I could've ever imagined. It was the scariest thing I ever had to do because my family is pretty homophobic. After we talked about it, she read my letter and told me nothing had changed. Before I left, she told me I was still the same bright girl as before and said, "You're going to have a good life, hun."*

**When I came out to my best friend, even though I knew she wasn't homophobic, I was scared she would see me differently and be more awkward towards me. I thought it would change everything - it changed nothing at all.**

*When I came out to my best friend by simply saying, "I'm gay" she had a look of disappointment. Not because I was gay but because she thought I was going to confess something more "badass" like being a convict or spy.*



## PFLAG wants to know: "How can we help you?"



- Do you need help with referrals for your child?
- Do you need help with schools that aren't supportive?
  - Do you need buddy support?
- What else (if possible) can we help you with?

Email: [pflagbris@bigpond.com](mailto:pflagbris@bigpond.com)

Mobile:

## PFLAG MEMBERSHIP FORM

First Name:	
Last name:	
Email:	

Type of membership

Individual / Family ☐ \$25

Corporate ☐ \$100

*Please make checks payable to: PFLAG Brisbane*

Address: **PO Box 1372, Eagle Farm BC QLD 4009**

*Or, you can transfer your membership directly into our bank account* **Bank of Queensland**

**BSB: Account#:**

Please reference your transfer as "PFLAG Membership" and your name

Would you like to receive e-newsletter? Yes ☐ No ☐

Would you like to receive emails letting you know about upcoming PFLAG events? Yes ☐ No ☐