



## **NEWSLETTER**

# **SEPTEMBER/ OCTOBER 2016**

### **Welcome**

The PFLAG committee is working well in 2016, as we would all expect. At our last meeting we did not have a guest speaker as such, but I thought it was time to give everyone an update about what is happening with State legislation and improving rights for our children and, of course the progress of marriage equality federally.

**I would like to thank Sharyn Faulkner**, a PFLAG Mum from Geelong for standing in for me in Canberra a few weeks ago while I was on holidays. Unfortunately, I have returned home with a broken foot, which shows that perhaps Canberra is less hazardous than I think. Ha! Ha!

### **Free Vote**

As many will be aware the government is working towards a Plebiscite to attain marriage equality. However, I and many people who work in the LGBTI community are very concerned about the possible negative impact it may have on us, the parents and our sons and daughters, especially when the negative campaign swings into action.

I met with George Brandis, the Attorney General mid-August and asked "If we must have a Plebiscite we have only one simple question with just a 'yes or no' answer, no federal funding for campaigns, voting be compulsory and removing the option for MPs to vote against or abstain from voting when the legislation goes back to Parliament to be enacted and not be deferred, like the national anthem was in the 1970's".

I also travelled to Melbourne to meet with Bill Shorten and Senator Di Natale to discuss the need for a Free Vote. So it has been a big month of travel.

We also initiated a campaign called **Make it Law**, which has a website for people to write a letter to their MP and Senators. There were also some adverts aired early September.

**Please let your federal MP and Senators of your State know that you want equality for your loved one [www.makeitlaw.com.au](http://www.makeitlaw.com.au)**

Presently, about 300,000 letters have been sent to MPs and Senators.

## **Surveys and Polls**

PFLAG have done three surveys, two were Galaxy that showed **overall 85 % of LGBTI people do not want a Plebiscite and over 60% would rather wait until we can have a Free Vote.**

The surveys also showed that people who initially wanted a Plebiscite changed their minds when they realised the cost of holding it and the result would be non-binding.

One survey interestingly showed people believed in a Plebiscite, but when asked if they would mind if people decided on their right to marry the person they loved, support once again dropped dramatically.

## **Adoption Act**

I was invited by Shannon Fentiman the Minister for Communities to attend the announcement of proposed legislation to be introduced later in the year. They will have community consultation so people if are interested, will have their opportunity to have their say.

## **Age of Consent**

**The age of consent has now been lowered to 16 years instead of 18 years for our gay sons.** The Anastacia Government has brought us into line with the rest of Australia. I remember more than 10 years ago writing letters along with others to achieve the legislative changes.

## **Pride Fair Day Saturday, 17th September**

This is always a fun day. A record number of people marched (about 2000) and the day was clear and sunny. This is always a great opportunity for parents to come along and see the LGBTI community at its best and having fun.

**Many thanks to those who volunteered on the PFLAG stall and those PFLAG-ers who marched.**

## **Great Bake Off**

**A big Thank You to the Sportsman's Hotel for this very traditional fund raising event.** We raised \$2500, which was very good for attending, selling raffle tickets and having fun.

## **Homophobia on Worksites Brochures**

We have had a new brochure printed, which is aimed at "Tradies" on building sites. Early this year there was a very nasty incident that occurred which we believe warranted this brochure.

We have used funds we received from St Peters Lutheran Social Justice Group and the Sportsman's Hotel to ensure this brochure's completion.

## **Referrals**

Always keep in mind if you are seeking additional support or referrals please make contact email: [pflagbris@bigpond.com](mailto:pflagbris@bigpond.com) or helpline 0400 767 832 it is never a problem for us to assist you.

## **Next PFLAG Meeting**

When: **Saturday, 1st October**

Time: **1.30 pm**

Where: **30 Helen St, Newstead**