

Coming Out Proud & Outright Youth

For many Australians, coming out is a very difficult part of one's life. It can be stressful, scary, and may well end in disaster, but in many cases has been very positive. Why is coming out so hard for some people to do? Is it the fact that so many Australians are extremely judgemental, discriminative, narrow minded, or maybe just scared of difference?

Well the Coming Out Proud Program is determined to try and make things as easy as possible for the Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgender, and Intersex (GLBTI) people of Australia. We don't want coming out for Australians to be the worst experience of their life, we don't want coming out to be difficult, we don't want it to result in depression, we don't want it to result in suicide. Many people have tried, and some have committed suicide due to the lack of acceptance, and support related to coming out. We want to put a stop to this difficulty; we want people to feel they can be a part of the community as a fully respected member.

We have seen that many young and some older GLBTI people of Tasmania have had to leave the regions in which they live due to the local prejudice; and as I mentioned just before, some have even suicided or attempted to do so. We have also recognised that 'hate crimes' are still present in Tasmania against GLBTI people.

A group within the Coming Out Proud Program is the Outright Youth Program, which offers support for the development of a plan to rid of all bullying and hate crime against young people in schools. Outright Youth aims to achieve equality and respect for sexual and gender diverse young people through peer group support as assisted by teachers/social workers at the participating school, but in some cases assisted by students that are prepared and happy to do so.

On that subject, myself and Brooke are prepared and very happy to start up a peer support group for the GLBTI people of Rosny College. We would be delighted to help the rainbow people of Rosny College in any way possible. We would be very grateful towards anybody that would be interested and would love to help with this group. If you just want to come along to hang out with other GLBTI people and to talk to others in the same situation, feel free to come along. We would like to help GLBTI students to feel that they are and always will be a fully respected member of the community. Outright Youth aims to make a change, to make a difference in the community. We will work for acceptance, we will work for equality, and we will work for friendship.

If teachers or students want more information, feel free to see myself (Brayden Witcombe-Keep) or Sandy Verrier.

Brayden Witcombe-Keep, Brooke O'Neil