

‘Somewhere over the Rainbow’ - the Annual Report for 2011 of the Tasmanian Council for Sexual and Gender Diverse People Inc.

Over twenty local and regional representatives of the member organisations of the Tasmanian Council for Sexual and Gender Diverse People Inc (now incorporated as the Rainbow Communities Tasmania Inc) gathered in Launceston on the 17 March for the Annual General meeting.

Using the symbol of the Rainbow the retiring Chairperson Jo Goodman in her report expressed the strong connection between exclusion, discrimination and harassment and poor social/wellbeing indicators for the LGBTI Community.

Jo observed in her Report that the work of the four regional Coming Out Proud Community Liaison Committees in partnership with local Government, the Anti Discrimination Commission and the Social Inclusion Commissioner has enabled people to better represent and conduct their own affairs at state, national and sometimes international levels from a franchised and representative local and regional base upwards.

The Annual Report noted that in the last twelve months has seen a consolidation of the State Government governance policy and practice development arrangements with the LGBTI Community through the establishment of the State Government LGBTI Reference Group and review of the LGBTI Framework Agreement. The Council (TCS&GDP Inc) is a member to the State Government LGBTI Reference Group having worked for this meeting point over the last eight years. The Council (TCS&GDP Inc) is also a member of the three GLBT Reference Groups Police, Education, and Health & Human Services as well playing a significant role in Tourism.

The report notes the considerable work of the members of the Council (TCS&GDP Inc) at regional, state, national and international levels as follows;

- Kingborough/Huon COPP Community Liaison Committee (CLC)
- Greater Hobart COPP CLC Committee
- Greater Launceston COPP CLC Committee
- Cradle Coast COPP CLC
- League of Gentlefellows Regional Chapters
- State Outright Youth
- COPP Trust
- Latin American LGBTI Community

The following people were elected at the meeting to the Committee of management positions;

- Nigel Saunders elected as Chairperson following Jo Goodman’s four years of outstanding service in this position
- Deidre Murray as Deputy Chair
- Belinda Miller elected as Secretary
- Craig Jones as Treasurer
- Julian Punch was appointed as Public Officer and Jara Dean as Auditor

In her report, Jo noted her concern that the LGBTI community “is very complex in its difference and if we all speak with different voices this can create a veritable ‘babble’ when others try to listen to us. It can often be a case of emphasising difference rather than seeing the beauty of the Rainbow as also appreciating diversity. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex can be a complex spectrum of variance and differing opinion to the point of intolerance. When we also see the complex matrix of LGBTI people also intersected by racial/aboriginal, gender, disability and other attributes; cooperation, collaboration and coordination can become difficult. Let us not even start to talk about regional and distance differences.”

The Report also notes that the work in redesigning the organisation’s web site has led to an organisational discussion and review of it’s work and therefore a more appropriate name change. One of the organisations patrons Rod Anderson led a discussion at the AGM about our work and review the organisations name acknowledging, respecting and celebrating the diversity both within our defined and general community. There has been significant progress outlined in this report (including a complaints process) that details the strategies we deploy at local and regional levels to eliminate discrimination not only in the general community but also in our own diverse community between Lesbian, Gay, Bi sexual, Transgender and Intersex. In the Report Jo’s comments note that “if we expect equality and respect from the general community we must first lead with our own behaviour towards one another”.

JULIAN PUNCH AM
RAINBOW COMMUNITIES TAS INC
EMAIL JULIAN@RAINBOWTAS.ORG
PHONE 03 6239 6606 0429 396 605
WEB WWW.RAINBOWTAS.ORG