



## **Equality Tasmania's 2021 State Election LGBTIQ+ Survey**

Tasmania has some of the world's strongest and fairest relationship, discrimination and gender-recognition laws.

But we are trailing behind in other areas of law reform, and still have not adequately addressed LGBTIQ+ inclusion in education and higher rates of stigma-related mental health problems amongst LGBTIQ+ people.

This survey asks you, or your party, to commit to some of the key reforms and funding initiatives required to ensure LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians are equal and included.

You are welcome to answer the questions as you see fit, and to add further commitments if you wish.

Best wishes,  
Rodney Croome  
President, Equality Tasmania  
Rodney.croome@equal.org.au  
0409 010 668

# 1. Committing to urgent reforms

## Conversion practices

Background:

A growing number of states are prohibiting LGBTIQ+ conversion practices. Our concern is that Tasmania may become a haven for these practices if we do not act soon.

Question:

Will you vote for legislation to prohibit efforts to change or suppress sexual orientation or gender identity, including criminal penalties for persistent change or suppression efforts?

**Absolutely YES! I have already lobbied the Premier Peter Gutwein and the Deputy Premier Jeremy Rockliff on this matter which I find abhorrent.**

## Intersex surgeries

Background:

The Tasmanian Law Reform Institute has recommended a ban on non-essential (that is, other than life-saving) surgeries or medical interventions on infants and children with variations of sex characteristics.

Question:

Will you vote for legislation to prohibit non-medical surgeries on infants and children with variations of sex characteristics?

**Absolutely YES! I have met with many people who have been affected by such surgeries and understand the trauma inflicted on them. I find this type of surgery barbaric.**

## A Human Rights Act

Background:

LGBTIQ+ people have often experienced the violation of our basic civil and human rights, including the right to privacy, the

right to equality and the right not to face discrimination. Unfortunately, Tasmania has no comprehensive protection for human rights.

Question:

Will you vote for a Human Rights Act to protect the human rights of all Tasmanians including LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians?

**Absolutely YES. As Lord Mayor, I flew the biggest rainbow flag I could fly off the Town Hall to support the marriage equality debate. As Speaker of the House I crossed the floor numerous times to get action on the birth certificate reforms and recognition of the transgender community.**

## **2.Protecting existing reforms**

### **Discrimination and bullying**

Background:

There have been attempts locally and nationally to water down Tasmania's much-praised Anti-Discrimination Act, despite this Act promoting inclusion and equity in Tasmanian society. The focus has been on section 17 which is the state's strongest anti-bullying law and which has been incorporated into many state government anti-bullying policies.

Question:

Do you support the retention of the Anti-Discrimination Act in its current form, including

- a) the prohibition of discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people in faith-based schools, hospitals and other services, and
- b) section 17 which prohibits bullying conduct such as humiliating, intimidating, ridiculing, insulting others?

Will you speak out against any further attempt by the Federal Government to weaken section 17 or any other section of the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act?

Absolutely YES. I find the new amendments a threat to the hard fought for legislation Tasmanians have. I find the potential ramifications of this proposed legislation repulsive.

## **Gender recognition**

Background:

There have been calls to roll back Tasmania's ground-breaking gender recognition laws despite these laws having a positive impact on the lives of trans and gender diverse people. The laws have been endorsed by the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute. It found they have none of the feared "unintended consequences".

Question:

Do you support the retention of Tasmania's 2019 gender reforms in their current form, including the choice available to Tasmanian parents to include or remove gender on their child's birth certificate?

Absolutely YES. I fought hard for these changes and celebrated publicly their victory through the Tasmania Parliament. I will scream from the rafters should the government make any attempts to unwind them.

## **3.Enhancing deficient legislation**

### **Expungement of historical convictions**

Background:

An independent review has recommended a number of amendments to legislation regarding the expungement of historical criminal records in an effort to encourage victims of those convictions to seek expungement

Question:

Will you implement the recommendations of the review into the expungement of historical LGBTIQ+ criminal records, including compensation for those who were convicted?

Absolutely YES. Another repugnant part of our history. These recommendations need immediate implementation and I support compensation.

## **The Coroner's Act**

Background:

In 2015, Ben Jago was denied senior next-of-kin status by the Coroner, despite having that status under the Relationships Act. There was a similar case in 2011.

Question:

Will you amend the Coroner's Act to ensure there is a clear process for determining senior-next-of-kin and that same-sex partners are not treated differently to other partners in determining senior next of kin?

Absolutely YES. I found this case to be appalling!

## **4.Ensuring equal opportunity in education and health**

### **State schools**

Background:

Research shows LGBTIQ+ young people experience high rates of discrimination, exclusion and bullying at school. Tasmanian schools are currently benefitting from the state government-funded Valuing Diversity program which trains teachers in LGBTIQ+ issues and support LGBTIQ+ students and their families. However, funding does not meet demand.

Question:

Will you ensure there is sufficient funding to allow all teachers in state schools to have professional learning in LGBTIQ+ issues, and so all state schools can ensure their LGBTIQ+ students are supported?

**Absolutely YES.** It is a fundamental right and should be funded to stamp out bullying for any reason but particularly to support LGBTIQ students and their families.

## **Independent schools**

Background:

There is a growing number of reports about discrimination against LGBTIQ+ students in independent schools, despite the clear requirement under the Anti-Discrimination Act for schools to eliminate that discrimination.

Question:

Will you ensure that all independent schools are meeting their legal obligation not to discriminate against LGBTIQ+ students?

**Absolutely YES.** No exemptions.

## **Mental health**

Background:

Research shows LGBTIQ+ people experience high rates of mental ill-health due to discrimination and stigma. The state's Rethink Mental Health strategy has identified LGBTIQ+ people as one of three priority population groups. But there is insufficient funding to foster improvements. Research also shows mental health services to LGBTIQ+ people are best delivered by LGBTIQ+ specific organisations.

Question:

Will you ensure there is sufficient funding for address the much higher than average levels of stigma-related anxiety, depression and suicide ideation in the LGBTIQ+ community, with a focus on prevention and support?

Will you also ensure the bulk of this funding goes to LGBTIQ+ specific organisations?

**Absolutely YES.** I support increasing funding and that funding is targeted to where it is most required.

## **Health care**

Background:

Research shows many LGBTIQ+ people face discrimination in health care and have problems accessing adequate health care. Discrimination in health care can have devastating consequences.

Question:

Will you ensure there is professional development for all health care workers in Tasmania so they are able to meet the health needs of LGBTIQ+ people?

Will you also ensure health care facilities have a gender affirming health care policy?

**Absolutely YES and YES. We need greater awareness and acceptance by the whole community and especially those in front line services.**

## **5.Policy-making and representation**

### **Government reference groups**

Background:

Several government agencies have LGBTIQ+ reference groups allowing them to consult on policies and programs that impact on the LGBTIQ+ community. Most of these have existed for over twenty years and have strong track records when it comes to ensuring our community communicates to government about the impact of laws, policies and programs. There are reference groups in education, justice, health, police and across the whole of government.

Question:

Do you support retaining these groups and ensuring they are adequately resourced?

**Absolutely YES.**

## **LGBTIQ+ Framework**

Background:

The current state government has an LGBTIQ+ framework and has launched a survey of the LGBTIQ+ community to have input into updating the framework.

Question:

Do you support having an LGBTIQ+ Framework, updating it based on the findings of the current survey, and ensuring the Government response to the findings of the survey is properly funded?

**Absolutely YES.**

## **Peak body funding**

The LGBTIQ+ community is one of the few minority communities that does not receive government funding for a peak body to develop policy and represent it.

Do you support funding for an LGBTIQ+ peak body?

**Absolutely YES.**