

Community comes together to end homophobia and transphobia

On 17 May True Colours in Bunbury celebrated the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) by asking local businesses, High Schools and community service agencies to pledge their support to stamp out discrimination.

As a part of these celebrations, the young people from the True Colours peer support group in Bunbury asked local government, agencies and the general public to sign a pledge of support against homophobia and transphobia. Students from local High Schools also held IDAHOT pledge days to encourage staff and students to pledge their support for the 10% of their school community who were diverse in sexuality, sex and/or gender.

In total, 15 community agencies made pledges; 86 signatures were collected from the general public, and 26 people committing to their own personal pledges. Bunbury High and Newton Moore College collected hundreds of signatures in support of the initiative over the week leading up to May 17th.

“By signing a pledge of support, agencies and individuals are actively involved in promoting a safer and more inclusive community for people experiencing diversity in sexuality, sex and/or gender,” said Sue Ash Chief Executive Officer at UnitingCare West.

Leading by example, UnitingCare West CEO Sue Ash pledged, “UnitingCare West accepts and celebrates diversity and actively works to make UnitingCare West a place that is safe for all people and free from any form of discrimination or harassment. We stand against homophobia and transphobia and will continue to develop inclusive policies and practices in line with our working ethos.”

UnitingCare West would like to thank the following organisations who made a personal pledge in support of the IDAHOT initiative: Mission Australia, Relationships Australia, Investing in Our Youth, Headspace, Youth Wellbeing Project, Community Training Australia, Phoenix Rising Psychology, Everything Bunbury, Promote You, State School Teacher's Union of WA, Benesse Coffee and Kitchen, Mind and Heart Psychology, D-Ranged Shop and Body Piercing and the Happy Herb Shop.

In addition the following local businesses supported by allowing the community to place pledges at their premises: Red Cross Blood Service, Collins Bookstore, Pleasures, Bianco Gourmet Pizza Cafe, Bunbury Medical Services, and The Creamery.

True Colours is a service offering regional support for young people with diverse sexuality and gender, as well as their families. It also provides training workshops for allied service providers. Operating in Bunbury, it is aimed at reducing the emotional and social isolation of young people who are identifying as gay, lesbian, bi or transsexual.

The service also offers social support groups for young people aged between 12-25 years, in addition to advocacy, counselling referrals and opportunities for young people and families to be involved in peer education.

IDAHOT is the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia and is recognised in over 60 countries around the world. Celebrated annually, the international community recognises the 1990 date when the World Health Organisation removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.

More information on IDAHOT celebrations around the world can be found at <http://dayagainsthomophobia.org/>



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