



WA LABOR'S

Commitment to LGBTI Equality



WA Labor Policy

November 2016

WA LABOR'S COMMITMENT TO LGBTI EQUALITY

WA Labor recognises the benefit in increasing the general community's understanding of the experience and needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community. Better understanding will contribute to a safer and more secure community.

LGBTI people are 14 times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers¹ and rates of depression are over five times higher among transgender people and 3.5 times higher among lesbians, gay and bisexual people than in the general population.²

There is an urgent need to ensure that targeted services are available for the LGBTI community in areas of high priority, with a particular focus on education, mental health, health and policing.

WA Labor will ensure no legislation or government policies directly or indirectly discriminate against the LGBTI community, putting a stop to further isolation of an already marginalised community.



“I had a great time at Pride Parade with Rainbow Labor last year. I have heard first hand how we need to do more to support the LGBTI community and end any discrimination and prejudice they may face - particularly for young people who are especially vulnerable.”

Mark

STAY INFORMED:

markmcgowan.com.au/LGBTI

 Mark McGowan MP

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¹ Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care 2000

² Pitts M et al., 2006 Private Lives: A Report on the well-being of GLBTI Australians, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A McGowan Labor Government supports the LGBTI community and will:

- **Continue to review WA government policies and programmes to prevent any inadvertent discrimination and ensure they are in line with WA Labor principles of equality and inclusiveness with particular regard to the LGBTI community.**
- **Ensure WA public secondary schools can choose to participate in the Safe Schools program if the Federal funding is withdrawn.**
- **Introduce a category for 'Best LGBTI Employer of the Year' to promote great leadership in the area of diversity and inclusion as part of the annual Best Practice Awards.**
- **Make the necessary legislative changes and introduce a scheme to expunge historical convictions for homosexual activity that would not be a criminal offence today.**

WA LABOR'S COMMITMENT TO LGBTI EQUALITY

WA Labor has a strong record of reform in equal opportunity and discrimination. In 2002, the Hon Jim McGinty amended the Equal Opportunity Act when he introduced the Acts Amendment (Lesbian and Gay Law Reform) Act. The 2002 Act removed discrimination against gay and lesbian people from all Western Australian laws. It also amended the Equal Opportunity Act to include a new ground for discrimination; it became unlawful to discriminate against someone on the basis of their sexual orientation.

More recently in 2015, WA Labor successfully passed a motion through the WA Legislative Assembly calling on the Commonwealth Liberal-National Government to abandon its plans for a divisive plebiscite and instead introduce legislation allowing for marriage equality. Western Australia was the second State Parliament to pass such a motion, and others are expected to follow suit in the next twelve months. WA Labor will continue to advocate for marriage equality.

- **A McGowan Labor Government will continue to review WA government policies and programmes to prevent any inadvertent discrimination and ensure they are in line with WA Labor principles of equality and inclusiveness with particular regard to the LGBTI community.**

Safe Schools Program Saves Lives

WA Labor recognises that Western Australian educational policies around LGBTI inclusion are currently lagging behind other Australian states and territories. LGBTI Australians have higher rates of depression and mental health issues than the general public.

Research shows that specific policies to deal with gender and sexual identity bullying that are properly implemented within schools make a significant difference.

A recent study conducted at La Trobe University indicated that most LGBTI people experience some form of homophobic abuse incident (75 per cent) most of which (80 per cent) occurred at school and most of those incidents occurred at schools with no policy or 'unknown' policy contexts.

The Nationally funded Safe Schools framework has made a good start allowing for the Western Australian Equal Opportunity Commission to develop materials for schools to use in informing students and school administrations on the issues of bullying which targets LGBTI-identifying students.

- **A McGowan Labor Government will ensure WA public secondary schools can choose to participate in the Safe Schools program if the Federal funding is withdrawn.**

Best LGBTI Employer of the Year

WA Labor acknowledges the importance of diversity and cultural awareness training in the private sector in order to eliminate bullying and harassment in the workplace.

Many Australian workplaces are becoming more LGBTI friendly, and their efforts should be held as an example for others to follow. For example, not for profit LGBTI employee support program Pride in Diversity has included the Australian Federal Police & Department of Defence in its compilation of Top 20 Employers for LGBTI Employees in 2015.

- **A McGowan WA Labor will introduce a category for 'Best LGBTI Employer of the Year' to promote great leadership in the area of diversity and inclusion as part of the annual Best Practice Awards.**

Law reform to right past injustices

Mark McGowan has announced the need to change WA legislation to rectify historic convictions for LGBTI Western Australians for offences not illegal today. LGBTI Western Australians should not have to carry the stigma of a criminal record for consensual acts that are no longer considered a crime.

WA legislation lags behind other states when it comes to correcting past discrimination against LGBTI people within the law.

Only in the last thirty years have homosexual acts between consenting adults been decriminalised in Western Australian legislation. WA Labor believes the State Government is failing LGBTI people convicted under past sex and public indecency crimes by lagging behind other Australian states and territories which have expunged these records.

- **A McGowan Labor Government will make the necessary legislative changes and introduce a scheme to expunge historical convictions for homosexual activity that would not be a criminal offence today.**

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markmcgowan.com.au/LGBTI |  **Mark McGowan MP**