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QUEENSLAND NEWS

QUEENSLAND'S LGBTI LEGAL SERVICE RECEIVES WELCOME FUNDING

The LGBTI Legal Service believes the service is crucial, with a third of LGBTI people hiding their gender or sexuality when accessing services for fear of discrimination.

JESS JONES — MARCH 28, 2017

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📷 LGBTI Legal Service. Image: Facebook.

LGBTI Queenslanders have welcomed an announcement that the volunteer-run LGBTI Legal Service will receive funding from the Queensland Government, meaning more people will be able to get legal help.

“There are many LGBTI people with legal issues which are hidden and closeted, but they show a portrait of disadvantage, including mental illness and drug use, employment problems, homelessness and poverty, and generally lower health outcomes,” said Matilda Alexander, president of the LGBTI Legal Service.



LGBTI people face disproportionate stigma, marginalisation and harassment. For instance, over 15 per cent have reported being fired or resigning from their employment due to their sexuality or gender.

The LGBTI Legal Service believes this specific service is crucial, with a third of LGBTI people hiding their gender or sexuality when accessing services for fear of discrimination. One survey showed less than 20 per cent of support services rated themselves as “fully competent” to work with LGBTI clients.

“LGBTI Legal Service has been providing free legal services for over six years without funding, and is the only standalone community legal centre in Australia specialising in helping LGBTI people with legal problems,” said Alexander.

“With this money, we will be able to support LGBTI people experiencing domestic violence, to assist victims of crime, to provide specialist family law advice service, to support transgender people to transition and to eliminate discrimination in our workplaces. We now have the capacity to pursue justice and to make equality a reality for Queenslanders.”

LGBTI Legal Service is a recognised leader in the Queensland LGBTI community, winning Community Organisation of the Year and Activist of the Year at the last Queens Ball Awards.

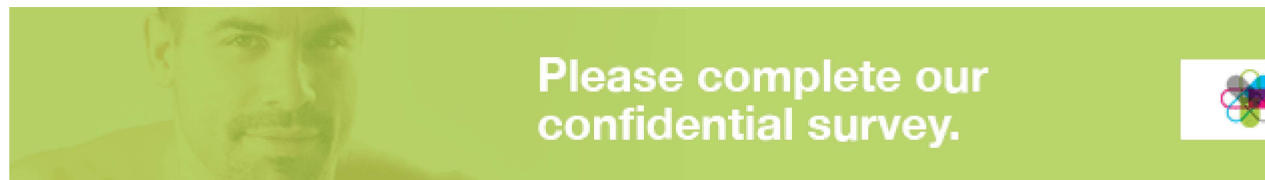
“LGBTI Queenslanders face the same legal problems as everyone else, as well as issues that are specific to people with diverse sexuality and gender identity,” said Scott McDougall from Caxton Legal Service.

“This funding will allow the service to do important work, and we’re pleased that the Queensland Government is supporting these vital services.”

Director of Community Legal Centres Queensland James Farrell said, “With six years’ experience of providing quality legal help to people facing legal problems, it’s great to see the Queensland Government recognise the value of LGBTI Legal Service and the work they do.

“Sadly, this announcement comes as community legal centres across the state face a significant funding cut from the federal government.

“While funding for services like this one are welcome and important, we again call on Malcolm Turnbull and George Brandis to reverse the funding cuts to community legal centres, to ensure all Queenslanders can access the legal help they need and the justice they deserve.”



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About the Author

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Jess is Star Observer's Queensland and NT journalist. His background is in public health and sex work, and his special interests include health, gender and travel. When he's not writing, Jess is into movies, martial arts and margaritas. You can follow his tweets @JessJonesAU.

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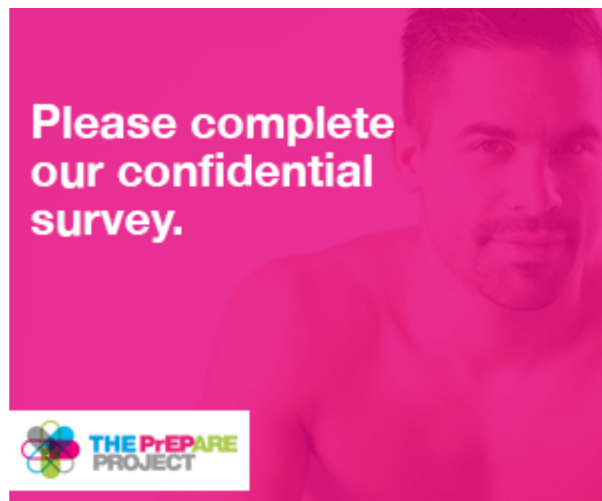
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