

NATIONAL QUEENSLAND SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Twenty-five face legal action over same-sex marriage 'hate speech'

By **Toby Crockford**

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Comments made during last year's contentious same sex marriage campaign have landed 25 people in legal trouble after they were posted online and plastered around university campuses on posters during last year's Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey.

The LGBTI Legal Service will put the culprits before the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland after receiving funding from the state government to monitor and identify those engaging in unlawful hate speech during the postal survey period.



Crowds in Queens Garden, Brisbane, celebrate the Yes vote's same-sex marriage postal survey win in November 2017. JORGE BRANCO - FAIRFAX MEDIA

Some of the posts that have attracted the action include: "Burn all faggots #voteno"; "Hitler had the right idea about homosexuals – burn them"; "Send the poofers to their own island"; and "You are all getting rooftopped".

LGBTI Legal Service president Matilda Alexander said more than 220 examples of hate speech had been documented during the survey and legal action was being taken against the worst offenders.

"We have selected these 25 based on the level of hate in the comments or publications," she said.

"The postal survey saw a resurgence in the amount of homophobia and transphobia in the community.

"It was OK to say no, but it was not OK to say Hitler had the right idea of killing gays.

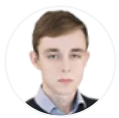
"The majority of the hate speech was online, people assume they could not be held accountable for their actions by using a different name on their profile, but in law, you're liable for the hate speech you publicise."

The LGBTI Legal Service announced on Friday that it had lodged a complaint with ADCQ under Queensland vilification laws, which aimed to prevent people from ridiculing someone publically because they identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

The LGBTI Legal Service and the 25 respondents would meet with the ADCQ, where those accused of the hate speech would be asked to explain themselves, remove the material and offer an apology.

Ms Alexander said if they were not satisfied with the response, the case would go to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

"The postal survey opened the door to homophobia and vilification being expressed under the guise of legitimate debate. This case will close that door," Ms Alexander said.



Toby Crockford



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