

27 August 2019

## **Wearing Purple for LGBTIQ+ Youth**

On Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August, Northern District Community Health is encouraging our community to “Wear It Purple” to celebrate and support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning and asexual (LGBTIQ+) young people. “Wear It Purple Day” came about in 2010 in response to global stories of real teenagers, real heartache and their very real responses. The tragic reality was that several young rainbow people took their own lives following bullying and harassment resulting from the lack of acceptance of their sexuality or gender identity. NDCH supports and advocates for all LGBTIQ+ communities and wants to encourage everybody to show respect, dignity and support to rainbow youth every day of the year, but especially this Wear It Purple Day. Because there is no place for homophobia, transphobia or any other form of intolerance in our community.

“Wear It Purple day gives us all an opportunity to give a very clear message that we want to celebrate the spirit of rainbow young people,” Mandy Hutchinson, NDCH CEO said.

“We want to let young rainbow people know that they’re valued, supported, and loved,” Ms. Hutchinson said. “They have every right to be proud of who they are and we want to empower that pride. We also hope this extends to our broader community in continuing to be inclusive of all young people whatever their gender identity or sexuality.”

Most LGBTIQ+ people live healthy, connected, happy and positive lives. But, studies have found that non-heterosexual people face up to twice as much abuse or violence (including physical, mental, sexual or emotional) than their heterosexual counterparts. This prejudice and discrimination adds an extra layer of risk on top of the biological, social, environmental and psychological factors for LGBTIQ+ people. This can lead to depression, anxiety and suicide.

In recent times our local community has been part of a number of initiatives to become more active in supporting and providing services to LGBTIQ+ people. Kerang and Cohuna both hosted a visit from the LGBT Equality Roadshow that visited 29 towns across Victoria. The Roadshow heard from Victorian Government’s first Gender and Sexuality Commissioner, Ro Allan, who also worked with participants to design local action plans to improve the experience of local LGBTIQ+ people. In July, NDCH sent a delegate to the Loddon Mallee LGBTIQ+ Regional Community of Practice to represent and advocate for our rural and regional communities. Participants from agencies right across the Loddon Mallee provided input that will help shape the whole of Victorian Government’s LGBTIQ+ strategy.

Schools right across our region participate in Safe Schools, a program established by the Victorian Government to ensure schools are safe places for all students, including (LGBTIQ+) students, and that they are free of discrimination. It was born out of the need identified by school communities, parents and teachers for greater support for LGBTIQ+ students, who are at higher risks of bullying and suicide, and to ensure that schools create safe and inclusive environments.

NDCH will host a morning tea on Friday for staff and local services to show their support for local LGBTIQ+ young people. NDCH encourages other workplaces, schools, and organisations to also get involved in Wear it Purple Day!

For more information visit: [www.wearitpurple.org](http://www.wearitpurple.org)

Media Release:



**Support for individuals:**

Switchboard: 9663 6733

Headspace: 1800 650 890

Lifeline: 13 11 14

[www.pridecentre.org.au](http://www.pridecentre.org.au)

NDCH youth counselling service: 5410 200.



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