

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex rights

Homosexuals are second-class citizens in Australia. The Howard government and the ALP made sure of that when they passed the same-sex marriage ban in 2004.

Yet full same-sex marriage rights already exist in Canada, Spain, the Netherlands and Belgium. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Finland have these rights in all but name—"registered partnerships" rather than "marriage".

But here, as the bigots are legitimised by politicians branding homosexuals as "moral terrorists of the 21st century" and "unfit to raise children", lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people continue to be physically abused. Same-sex attracted youth are up to six times more likely to kill themselves than heterosexual youth.

This reality is not surprising, given that 35% of Australians still think homosexuality is immoral (Australian Institute 2005 survey). 85% of lesbians and gay men have experienced harassment or violence with 1 in 4 reporting that they have been physically attacked at some time in their life. Homophobia really is a matter of life and death.

All this has coincided with a 41% rise in HIV rates across Australia, increasing misery and stress within the LGBTI community.

But the tide is beginning to turn in favour of LGBTI rights. A recent Galaxy poll revealed that support for same-sex marriage has increased from 38% to 55% since the 2004 same-sex marriage ban—that is the direct result of the campaign for those rights in which Socialist Alliance lesbian and gay activists have played a leading role.

The federal election is a further chance to strike a blow for the rights of the LGBTI community against the bigots and the backward or spineless Lib-Lab politicians. If you support justice and equality for LGBTI people, vote 1 Socialist Alliance and 2 Green, then put the ALP before the Coalition. The bigger that vote, the louder the message for LGBTI rights!

OUR POLICIES

Anti-discrimination legislation

- ✓ Adopt anti-discrimination legislation to protect LGBTI people and people living with HIV/AIDS
- ✓ Remove exemptions from anti-discrimination laws for private schools, religious organisations, the insurance industry, the tax system and superannuation funds
- ✓ Legislate the right of transgendered people to be issued with passports and other documents specifying the gender of their choice
- ✓ Provide social welfare (Newstart, the pension, etc) regardless of relationship status
- ✓ Legislate against the use of non-violent homosexual "advantage" as a defence of "provocation" in violent crime

Full legal recognition of same-sex relationships

- ✓ Ensure the right of gays and lesbians to marry
- ✓ Legislate full recognition of same-sex relationships. This would include extending equal status with heterosexual *de factos* in superannuation, immigration, taxation, family law, industrial relations and other areas
- ✓ Guarantee the right of gay men and lesbians to adopt or foster children and end discrimination against gay men and lesbians in child custody cases

A serious campaign against homophobia in society

- ✓ Boost funding for LGBTI youth programs, including refuges, housing and health services, and coming out, self-esteem and suicide prevention programs
- ✓ Boost funding to HIV campaigns that give objective, non-moralistic information about same-sex and opposite-sex experiences
- ✓ Provide non-judgmental information about drug usage and HIV rates
- ✓ Fund education, youth, aged, health, employment and welfare programs through non-discriminatory government and/or secular non-profit community organisations.
- ✓ Ensure education in schools contains positive material on homosexual, transgender and intersex issues
- ✓ Support the Pride Marches, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, film and video festivals and other queer community events; defend and extend gay, lesbian and transgender programming on the ABC, SBS and community broadcasters; work for an end to the vicious and destructive portrayal of LGBTI people in some sections of the media