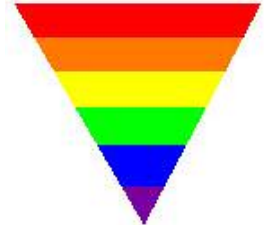


# Rainbow Visions - Hunter Inc.

Working to enhance the health, well-being and social life of gays, lesbians, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people in the Hunter

**PO Box 43 ISLINGTON NSW 2296**

**email: [rainbowvisions@lycos.com](mailto:rainbowvisions@lycos.com)**



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## **Forum on LGBTIQ Ageing Saturday, 17 July Newcastle**

Rainbow Visions Hunter, a community group working to enhance the health, well-being and social lives of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ), held a forum to discuss issues associated with ageing on Saturday, 17 July in Newcastle. The forum was supported by the Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care.

Forty people attended the event. Subjects discussed included superannuation, partnership rights, legal and financial issues, accommodation options, what growing older means to individuals and positive ageing. The forum was opened by Mannie De Saxe and Kendall Lovett (from the Melbourne based group Intersection), two wonderful, 'out' older gay men who work tirelessly to raise awareness of LGBTIQ issues and to fight discrimination. Another presenter gave a very personal account of her experiences with the health and aged care sector following a series of strokes suffered by her life partner. She had been lucky to find an aged care establishment that was non-homophobic, but not before trying many that appeared to have no policies or procedures for dealing with minority groups.

Whilst it was agreed that some issues of concern were common to the majority of older people, there were others that were specific to the LGBTIQ community. For example, superannuation remains an issue, with people concerned about whether funds allow same-sex partners to be named as beneficiaries. Finding gay-friendly doctors, lawyers and aged care providers is also perceived as a problem.

Changing body image and ageism in the gay male community was identified as a real issue for many older men, as was isolation and alienation, although these issues seemed to be less pronounced with older lesbians. Invisibility remains an issue, as there are few older LGBTIQ role models either on television or with a high profile in the community.

People at the forum also mentioned that application forms, legal documents and attitudes towards interpersonal relationships in the "straight" world are usually predicated on a hetero-normative model. Service providers say that the reason they do not ask people about their sexuality is that it is 'none of their business'. On the surface this appears to be the "right" answer, however it also means that people are presumed to be heterosexual and have to 'out' themselves constantly, especially if their partner is not of the opposite sex..

Rainbow Visions will continue to raise awareness of ageing issues. For example, we are submitting the outcomes of our forum to the NSW Forum on Ageing, which will be held at Parliament House in Sydney on Tuesday, 28 September this year. We are continuing to improve service provision for our communities via a web-based 'Rainbow Friendly Directory' that lists businesses and services which welcome LGBTIQ people and we are planning a theatrical event which dramatises some real life experiences of older LGBTIQ people for the Rainbow Festival in October 2005 in Newcastle.

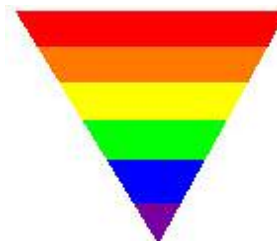
Further information about Rainbow Visions and its activities and initiatives can be found at <http://www.rainbowvisions.org.au>

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## Issues raised at the Rainbow Visions Ageing Forum, 17 July 2004

No.	Issue	What can Rainbow Visions (we) do?	What can others do?
1.	Superannuation	Investigate beneficiaries now allowed. Has legislation changed?	Ditto plus lobby Commonwealth & State Depts to push for change. Ministerial Advisory Committees.
2.		Lobby funds Highlight Help increase awareness	Superfunds Anti-discrimination Board Change the Government
3.	Partnership rights for lesbians, gay men and transgender people	Lobby members of RV and other LGBTIQ groups to do likewise	Demand that workplaces chose superannuation schemes that accept the rights of GLBTIQ people
4.	Discrimination and injustice. Often invisible because it remains a "private" issue	Write articles in main-stream newspapers, respond to known injustices, help make private issues more public	
5.	GLBTIQ residential accommodation	Needs survey	TARS
6.	Volunteer based home care services + Ankali-like for older people	As Co-ordination point	Expand CSN. Use the CSN and Ankali models
7.	Retirement Village Gay Couples (N/H Hostel)	Lobby for Government change	Discussions with already existing organizations in aged care industry i.e We're here!
8.	Determine what and who are decision-makers and policy makers. Ho do we find out they exist?	Education: local and regional groups. Liaison with government agencies.	CPSA OWN Phillipa Smith (Super Industry), COAL: let's re-focus on local issues
9.	Advocacy	By RV & other networks	Liaise with other networks
10.	Recognition as a target group ("special needs")	Lobby Local, State and Federal agencies	Liaise with other networks and State and Federal agencies
11.	No role models who are older people e.g. Justice Michael Kirkby	Promoting role models	
12.	Looking up to older men for their knowledge and wisdom (not attractive!)	Awareness	
13.	Men not good at networking an organizing the community	Workshops and seminars	

<b>No.</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>What can Rainbow Visions (we) do?</b>	<b>What can others do?</b>
14.	Social community network		Activity/sport and interest based groups and networks
15.	Own groups or more inclusive existing groups		
16.	Meeting place for mature persons		Guys Around Gosford
17.	Build networks with other groups/organisations	Include links to other organizations on website	Cross linking back to Rainbow Visions
18.	Isolation and alienation	Promote regional publications	Government funding
19.		Attempt to identify people living alone and even in the case of couples	Network with other groups
20.	No options for GLBTIQs (accommodation owned and operated)	Organise collectives? Advocate	
21.	How do you find gay-friendly health services in regional and rural areas (Specifically a doctor's name)?		
22.	How do you find gay-friendly lawyers in regional and rural areas?		Issue of wills, guardianship and Power of Attorney
23.	Acknowledge the skills and expertise in this room	Harnessing	Advocacy
24.	People living with HIV/AIDS, people from and Indigenous people	Support networks and facilitate discussion	Note that none of these people seem to be identified in this audience
25.	Ageing as a GLBT political issue	Public responses about funding, ageing and superannuation etc	
26.	Funding for regional activities		
27.	Getting information in and out	Newsletter Mainstream press/LOTL and SSO Use pick up points e.g. music stores, bookshops and newsagents	
28.	Awareness of vs. (Knowledge is power) We need to be assumed to be here. We live in a hetero-assumist society	Present community awareness forums and develop Press Releases	ACAT, Educare Medical avenues and legal services Uni/TAFE programs (i.e medical, welfare, nursing legal) Newspapers
29.	How to make a personal contribution to gay, ageing family?	Establish a register of volunteers	Tap into other existing services who can use RV as a resource to help with GLBTIQ people and clients in their work