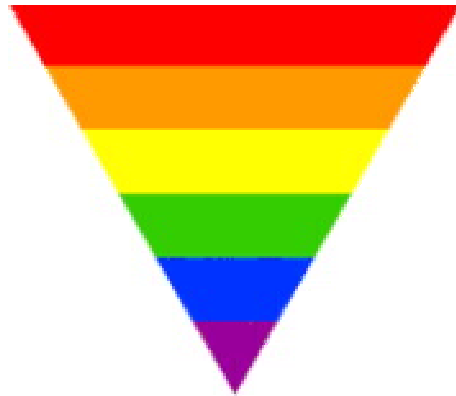


*Welcoming and celebrating
diversity*

Rainbow-Friendly Guidelines



RAINBOW VISIONS HUNTER Inc

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

PO Box 43, Islington, NSW 2296

ABN 57309692554

<http://www.RainbowVisions.org.au>



Attorney General's
department of nsw

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Rainbow-Friendly Guidelines

Introduction

In New South Wales, discrimination based on homosexuality, transgender status and HIV/AIDS status is prohibited by both State and Commonwealth legislation. State legislation also prohibits vilification (*slander, verbal abuse*) on the same grounds.¹ However, legislation provides only the bare minimum of protection for people whose lives are not based on the heterosexual norm. The law cannot, by itself, create an environment that is friendly towards the Rainbow Community.

The Rainbow Community consists of a diversity of sexualities and gender identities. In the Hunter they have formed a coalition called Rainbow Visions, which aims to enhance the health, well-being and social life of the Rainbow Community. The people who make up this community sometimes use the term GLBT to refer to the diversity of their identities. In the present guidelines we make use of this abbreviation, which stands for “Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender”.



There are many books, reports and manuals that deal at length with the issue of how to develop a rainbow-friendly social environment (*Some of these are included in the list of resources at the end of this document.*). So, we are not attempting here to provide a definitive or exhaustive list of best practice standards. Our aim has been to provide a simple, straightforward set of guidelines in a concise, accessible form.

These guidelines are divided into two sections:

1. those applicable to individuals and
2. those applicable to organisations. The section relevant to organisations is itself divided into two parts, which apply to employers and service-providers respectively.

Individuals can demonstrate Rainbow-Friendliness

Educate Yourself

1. Read books, internet documents and other current materials about Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) people.
2. Watch movies and TV shows featuring GLBT people and experiences.
3. Be aware of diversity and the variety of experiences and perspectives which people possess.
4. Talk to GLBT relatives, friends, colleagues or classmates.
5. Attend workshops on "homophobia" (*fear or hatred of members of the rainbow community*).



Recognise Your Own Homophobia

1. Identify how homophobia affects the way you live (*i.e. avoiding certain clothing, mannerisms or behaviours so that people do not think you are gay or lesbian*).
2. Confront the expectations and beliefs you have about GLBT people.
3. Stop using homophobic slurs (*e.g. poof, dyke*).
4. Don't laugh or remain silent when hearing jokes and innuendos targeting the rainbow community.
5. Don't assume all of your friends, relatives, colleagues, clients, customers or classmates are heterosexual.



Take Simple But Effective Steps

1. Use inclusive language that does not marginalise the rainbow community.
2. Help create an atmosphere where jokes and innuendos against GLBT people are not acceptable.
3. In your home and workplace and in casual discussion, prompt inclusion of issues around discrimination/difference.
4. Teach children to accept and value people who are different.
5. Show your support for relatives, friends and colleagues who are members of the rainbow community.
6. Support local initiatives that promote the human rights and quality of life of the rainbow community (for example, *Rainbow Visions*).
7. Put up rainbow-friendly material (e.g. *stickers, posters*) in your home or office.
8. Encourage others to speak out against homophobia.



Organisations can demonstrate Rainbow-Friendliness

As a Service-Provider

1. Have policies explicitly prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the provision of services.
2. Have procedures for clients to file and resolve complaints regarding discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.



3. Use inclusive language in forms and procedures so that they are culturally appropriate for GLBT clients (*i.e. use "partner" rather than "husband/wife/spouse"*).
4. Provide ongoing diversity, harassment, and anti-discrimination training for staff around GLBT issues as they pertain to the organisation's services, so that all staff can identify and address basic GLBT issues within the scope of their expertise.
5. Have confidentiality policies that explicitly acknowledge that information about sexual orientation and gender identity is highly sensitive and should be treated accordingly.



As an Employer

1. Actively recruit GLBT employees in your hiring practices, including advertising employment opportunities in GLBT publications.
2. Have written policies regarding diversity, non-discrimination, and sexual harassment that explicitly include GLBT employees.
3. Support and encourage visibility of GLBT employees.
4. Have formal procedures for addressing employee complaints of discrimination or harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
5. Work to ensure that GLBT employees of all ages have the same benefits/compensation as all other employees, incl. family benefits.



Resources

Organisations

Rainbow Visions Inc <http://www.RainbowVisions.org.au>

Gay & Lesbian Information & Referral Service (GLISS)
Every Friday night 6-10pm
PO Box 220 Islington 2296
Phone; (02) 4927 6969

ACON Hunter
129 Maitland Road, Islington, NSW 2296
Phone: (02) 4927 6808
<http://www.acon.org.au/regional/hunter/main.htm>

Hunter Women's Centre
(also contact for Lesbians in Newcastle and Lesbian Mother's Support Group)
Avon Street (cnr Industrial Drive), Mayfield, NSW 2304
Phone: (02) 4968 2511

FPA Health
15-19 Queen St, Cooks Hill, NSW 2300
Phone 02 4929 4485
<http://www.fpahealth.org.au/>

Inner City Ministries (Steve Rowe)
Spiritual Encouragement and Pastoral Care
Phone: (02) 4927 5397

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
Level 8, Piccadilly Tower, 133 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000
GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 1042
Telephone: (02) 9284 9600
Complaints Infoline: 1300 656 419
Privacy Hotline: 1300 363 992
General enquiries and publications: 1300 369 711
<http://www.hreoc.gov.au/> and <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/>

Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales
Level 1, 414 Hunter Street, Newcastle West
Phone: (02) 4926 4300 Tollfree 1800 670 812 (only within New South Wales)
<http://www.agd.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/adbcontact>

PFLAG Hunter (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)

PFLAG Hunter can be contacted through ACON Hunter (see above).

The closest branch of PFLAG that has a web site is Western Sydney.

<http://www.pflagwestsyd.org.au/links.html>

Australian Federation Of Aids Organisations Inc.

Level 4, 74 Wentworth Avenue, Surry Hills NSW 1300

PO Box 876 Darlinghurst NSW 1300

Phone: (02) 9281 1999

<http://www.afa.org.au/index.asp>

Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby

PO Box 9, Darlinghurst, NSW, 1300

Phone: (02) 9360 6650

<http://www.glr.org.au/> Email: info@glr.org.au

Print resources: Australia

FPA Health (2000) *Yes You Are. A Guide to educating young people and adults about healthy relationships, sexual diversity and anti-homophobia.* Sydney: FPA Health. 328-336 Liverpool Road, Ashfield NSW 2131.

Hillier, L., Dempsey, D., Harrison, L., Beale, L., Matthews, L., and Rosenthal, D. (1998) *Writing Themselves In. A National Report on the Sexuality, Health and Well-Being of Same-Sex Attracted Young People.* Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health, and Society, La Trobe University (see <http://chiron.latrobe.edu.au/www/arcs/shs/publications.htm> . Unfortunately this report cannot be downloaded.)

Laskey, L. and Beavis, C. (eds) (1996) *Schooling and Sexualities: Teaching for a Positive Sexuality.* Geelong: Deakin Centre for Change in Education.

Other print resources

Setting Them Straight: You Can Do Something About Bigotry and Homophobia in Your Life by Betty Berzon (New York: Penguin/Plume, 1996)

A Family and Friend's Guide to Sexual Orientation: Bridging the Divide Between Gay and Straight by Bob Powers and Alan Ellis (editors) (New York: Routledge, 1997)

How to Make the World a Better Place for Gays and Lesbians by Una W. Fahy (New York: Warner Books, 1995)

Homophobia: How We All Pay The Price by Warren J Blumenfeld (editor) (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993)

Is It a Choice? : Answers to 300 of the Most Frequently Asked Questions About Gay and Lesbian People by Eric Marcus (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1999)

Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism (Includes Afterword and Annotated Bibliography) by Suzanne Pharr (Inverness, California: Chardon Press, 1988)

Bashers, Baiters and Bigots by John P. De Cecco and Michael G. Shively (editors) (Binghamton, New York.: Haworth Press, 1995)

Overcoming Heterosexism and Homophobia by James T. Sears and Walter L. Williams (editors) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

Homophobia: A History by Byrne R. S. Fone (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000)

The Other Side of Silence: Men's Lives and Gay Identities: A Twentieth-Century History by John Loughery (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998)

Openly Gay, Openly Christian: How the Bible Really Is Gay Friendly by Rev. Samuel Kader (San Francisco: Leyland Publications, 1999)

How Homophobia Hurts Children: Nurturing Diversity at Home, at School, and in the Community (Haworth Gay and Lesbian Studies) by Jean M. Baker (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2002)

Straight Parents, Gay Children: Inspiring Families to Live Honestly and With Greater Understanding by Robert A. Bernstein (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1999)

Understanding Homosexuality, Changing Schools by Arthur Lipkin (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000)

Homosexuality: The Secret a Child Dare Not Tell by Mary Ann Cantwell (Indianapolis, Indiana: Rafael Press, 1998)

Two Teenagers in Twenty: Writings by Gay & Lesbian Youth by Ann Heron (editor) (Los Angeles: Alyson Publications, 1994)

Internet resources

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission has produced one manual and three reports that are available as PDF downloads from the following URL:

http://www.humanrights.gov.au/human_rights/gay_lesbian/index.html

The manual, called *Not Round Here: Affirming Diversity, Challenging Homophobia* is a training manual produced under the auspices of Outlink, a project of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and the Australian Youth Foundation. The co-authors of the manual are Kenton Penley Miller and Mahamati. (For further information on Outlink, see

<http://outlink.trump.net.au/index.htm>.) The three reports are:

1. *Human rights for Australia's gays and lesbians;*
2. *Discrimination on the ground of sexual preference: Report of Inquiry into Complaints of Discrimination in Employment and Occupation; and*
3. *Superannuation Entitlements of Same-Sex Couples - Report of Examination of Federal Legislation.*

A handbook on lesbians, gays and the law in New South Wales, entitled *Acts of Passion*, is available as a PDF or Text Only document at the following URL:

<http://www.actsofpassion.nsw.gov.au/>. This site also has links to a variety of useful resources.

The Anti Discrimination Board has fact sheets available on the internet

<http://www.agd.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/adbmap>

or individually as follows:

- *homosexual discrimination:* <http://www.agd.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/homosexual>
- *lesbian discrimination:* <http://www.agd.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/lesbian>
- *transgender discrimination:* <http://www.agd.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/transgender>
- *HIV/AIDS discrimination:* <http://www.agd.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/hivaids>

The information for employers, service providers and advisers is at

<http://www.agd.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/guideindex>

A very useful page is the "Services for Employers" page. It states "The Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW offers a complete range of services designed to keep you up to date with the latest developments in discrimination and harassment law." The URL is

<http://www.agd.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/employers>

A long and useful report on homophobia in schools was produced by the organisers of a conference called "Homophobia: get over it", held in Brisbane in June 2001. The report is available in html format at

http://www.uq.net.au/get.over.it/HTML_REPORT_ONE/Homophobia_GOI.html

An Australian resource guide on the construction of gender has been produced for educators by the Tasmanian Department of Education. It contains some references to homophobia, and is available at:

<http://www.doe.tased.edu.au/equitystandards/gender/framework/resources.htm>

A short article on “impediments to the formation of gay communities in some rural areas” by Richard Roberts is available at:

<http://www.mit.csu.edu.au/research/crsr/ruralsoc/v2n3p13.htm>

The Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby’s *Age Of Consent Report* is available as a PDF download from their web-site: <http://www.glr.org.au/>

The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations has set up a support site for young males at:

<http://www.afao.org.au/afao/gayguys/flash/index.html>

Other resources

Anti-Violence Kit For Students

Produced by students present at Anti-Violence and Anti-Racism Conferences in 1994 & 1995. Modules on sexual harassment, conflict resolution, anti-racism, bullying, combating homophobia, valuing difference, gender equity, turning talk into action, holding a youth forum and workshops.

Produced by St George District SRC Association (Contact Jeanne Bow - Kogarah High School, Gladstone St. Kogarah 2217 Ph. 02 95875815)

¹ A good overview is provided at <http://www.uws.edu.au/uws/uwsn/admin/eou/legislation.html>. The New South Wales *Anti-Discrimination Act* (1977) prohibits discrimination and vilification on the grounds of homosexuality, transgender status and HIV/AIDS status (see http://bar.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/aa1977204/index.html). In addition the NSW *Property (Relationships) Legislation Amendment Act* (1999) provides protection for gays and lesbians in partnerships (see <http://www.actsofpassion.nsw.gov.au/>).

The Commonwealth *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act* (1986) recognises discrimination on the basis of sexual preference as an actionable breach of human rights (see http://www.hreoc.gov.au/about_the_commission/legislation/index.html). A good overview of HREOC’s proactive stance on human rights for Australia’s gays and lesbians may be found at http://www.humanrights.gov.au/human_rights/gay_lesbian/index.html.

The Commonwealth’s *Human Rights (Sexual Conduct) Act* (1994) also prohibits “any arbitrary interference with privacy within the meaning of Article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights”. This article is set out in Schedule 2 to the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act* (1986). The article reads: “**Article 17** 1. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation. 2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.”