

## AASW supports International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT)

On 17 May, the Australian Association of Social Workers recognises the importance of this date and issues raised by IDAHOBIT, as we continue to take a stand against discrimination of the LGBTIQ community. It marks the day the World Health Organization made the decision in 1990 to remove homosexuality as a mental disorder. AASW National President Christine Craik said, “Today is the day before a Federal election. We call on the next government to ban so-called ‘conversion therapy’ across the nation. “As social workers, we have noticed that the use of these discredited therapies has actually been on the rise in Australia. It is a situation we have been monitoring. As a profession, it can sometimes be our job to help un-do the damage that these so-called ‘therapies’ can cause to families and individuals.” Ms Craik said much action is still needed to counter discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in Australia. “We are saddened and disappointed that homophobic, biphobic, intersexist and transphobic views continue to be broadcast, and that they are given air time in our media and community,” she said. “We only have to look at highly influential but misinformed media commentary which led to the ultimate disbandment of the Safe Schools program nationally. We want to see the Safe Schools program reinstated in its full scope and we urge the next government to do so. These programs save lives.” Ms Craik urged Australia to promote human rights and counter homophobia, biphobia, intersexism and transphobia internationally. “There is much influence that Australia has abroad, particularly in our part of the world. It would be great to see our political leaders taking a diplomatic stance on Brunei, which recently introduced and then retracted the death penalty for homosexuality. It is still illegal though. It is good to see the recent boycotts have gone some way to working. Brunei is a fellow Commonwealth country and one in our region. Now is the time for political leaders to flex diplomatic muscle and use it to promote human rights.” Christine Craik is available for interview.

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