

# COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS JOIN FIGHT AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA

Australian Community Organisations Rally Against Homophobia And Transphobia Discrimination By Asking 'Will You Be My Ally?' On May 17th 2012

Sydney, May 8 - Several Gay and Lesbian supporting community organisations are marking this May 17th as International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) with a new campaign, targeted at engaging members of the community to become allies to battle homophobia and transphobia.

The new campaign, which asks members of the public to make a 'pledge' to speak out against prejudice, discrimination, intolerance and hate aims to provide hope for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer and Questioning (LGBTIQQ) young people.

"When I heard about the Be My Ally campaign, I immediately knew I had to move quickly to get in touch with the organisers (IDAHO-NSW)," said Rami Mandow, Chairman of The Community Brave Foundation – a new Foundation which aims at reducing online bullying, homophobia, transphobia and youth suicide. "We wanted to partner with IDAHO to deliver a community message, but we didn't want to be restricted to our small circles."

"So we sent a few emails out amongst our networks and asked a bunch of community organisations to join us," said Mandow. "Before we knew it, everyone loved the idea and was right on board. We've got the teams from It Gets Better Australia, Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras, Twenty10, Guide to Gay, Star Observer and the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Business Association all partaking in this brilliant community message. It's so simple, yet so effective."

The Be My Ally Idea is the brainchild of Stuart Garske, after having worked three years with the community for IDAHO. The aim of the project is to continue on the conversation about homophobia and transphobia beyond the May 17day of recognition for IDAHO and ensure that communities, schools and workplaces become more tolerant and accepting.

"Like many of our fellow community organisations, we have a strong message when it comes to homophobia and transphobia. And that message is that it will not be tolerated anywhere in society," said Mandow. "That's why we want to become allies with so many people in our communities to ensure that we are there to help provide resources, tools, information and direction if young people are being subjected to homophobia or transphobia."

"As all of us Community Organisations launch the campaign, I expect to see a whole lot more come on board. Even with the few teasers that we have released through Community Brave, we've had four organisations let us know they are interested," said Mandow. "Based on this, we are hoping that this will trigger a chain reaction of recognition events around the nation to get people to address homophobia and transphobia when it occurs. Self-policing if it can be called this, both online and offline."

IDAHO NSW is a community based initiative made up of individuals, services and organisations dedicated to addressing homophobia, transphobia, intersexphobia, as well as supporting equal rights for LGBTIQQ people. Founded by Stuart Garske in 2012.

The Community Brave Foundation is a community volunteer program which has aims to reduce online bullying, homophobia, transphobia and youth suicide using social media as a tool to communicate with young people providing resources, information and referrals. Established in 2012, Community Brave has released several videos featuring members of the public at Mardi Gras and are about to release a series of videos featuring Australian celebrities.

For further information about the IDAHO campaign, or to schedule and interview with Rami Mandow or Stuart Garske, please call Rami on +61 416 853 250 or email [admin@thecommunitybravefoundation.org](mailto:admin@thecommunitybravefoundation.org)

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