

WELCOME TO THE SIXTH EDITION OF OUR

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

LGBTI LEGAL SERVICE INC



JULY UPDATE

In the latest edition of our monthly newsletter, we review our law reform submission in relation to vilification and hate crimes. We thank all that contributed for your hard work and dedication to the project. You can read a summary of the submission on page 3. New Management Committee member, Kate Fuller, also features in this edition. Kate tells her personal story of how and why she became an ally and how this led her to the LGBTI Legal Service.

EVENING CLINIC UPDATE

Our evening advice clinics are still being conducted via telephone due to COVID-19. We endeavour to get the clinics back to face-to-face ASAP. However, the current climate and continuously changing restrictions is making this quite a challenge.

Welcome to the team, Symone

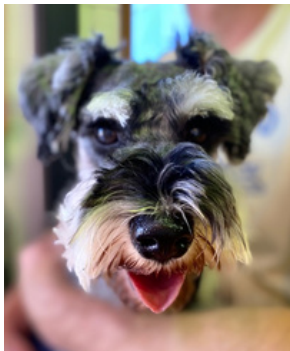
Earlier this month, the LGBTI Legal Service welcomed a new member to the team, Symone. Symone has 13 years of experience in the community legal sector and specialises in admin and data management. Through years of working at other community legal centres, Symone brings valuable knowledge and skills to our Service. We have already begun implementing some of Symone's suggestions to the way the Service operates.

Symone previously worked in the media, specifically in radio broadcasting and marketing. Symone loves being active and getting out and about! She has lived pretty much all around Australia and even spent some time living in the outback at Uluru. Symone has a busy household full of boys, including a husband and two growing sons. As you can imagine, the food in the house often mysteriously disappears.

Symone's parents also live with her along with Mr Coppin, a Miniature Schnauzer and Constance, who was rescued from the RSPCA shelter. Symone once also homed Lenny, a friendly blue tongue lizard. However, since growing up, Lenny decided to move out of home and now lives wild in the garden. Lenny occasionally pops in when he wants a free meal!

With her time away from the office, Symone loves to travel and look for nice dinner and brunch spots around the inner city. She loves being involved in and advocating for her local community. Finally, in order to make the world a better place, Symone wishes for people to be more thoughtful and kinder to one another.

We are excited to have Symone join the team and look forward to what the future holds for the Service!



Mr Coppins



Constance

LGBTI Legal Service pay our deepest respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and culture. We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistersgirls & Brotherboys community and recognise the ongoing battle for visibility and inclusivity.

We pay respect to Elders past present and emerging. We acknowledge the wisdom, strength and truth telling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In the spirit of reconciliation, we are committed to fostering a culture of shared knowledge and learnings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing justice.



REVIEW OF OUR SUBMISSION

RE: INQUIRY INTO VILIFICATION AND HATE CRIMES

On 12th of July 2021, the Service made a submission to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee on the basis of a parliamentary inquiry into vilification and hate crimes. This inquiry was initiated to consider two issues:

- The type and amount of hate crime and vilification in Queensland, and if it is increasing; and
- How effective the laws are in responding to hate crimes. In our submission we focused on the following key points:

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1. Expanding the specific protected attributes pursuant to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld) to include current definitions of gender and sexual identity, sex characteristics and expression, personal association and HIV/AIDS status;

This updates and modernizes the current wording of the legislation and properly recognizes members of the LGBTI community.

2. Widening the definition of 'public act' to specifically include social media and other conduct observable by the public;

Hate speech and vilification via online communication platforms, and specifically social media platforms, is a widespread issue for LGBTI people so we aimed to tackle this specifically in the submission by widening the definition.

3. Implement a harm based approach with a focus on whether a reasonable person with a protected attribute suffered harm as a result of the public act;

This would change the current test used. It makes more sense for the test to consider the harm suffered by the target population rather than a purely objective test. As such, a harm based approach would consider whether a reasonable person from the LGBTIQ+ community would have felt that, for example, a transwoman, would have felt vilified by the public act complained of.

4. Improving the role and function of the police in prosecuting serious vilification;

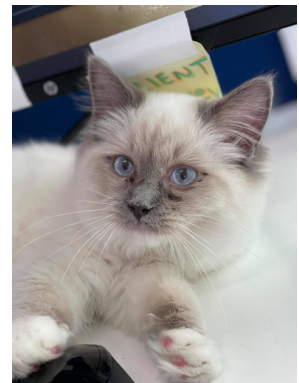
It was recommended that the police have administrative barriers removed to prosecute serious vilification in addition to improving their procedures and techniques for preserving online content combined with targeted training for police in handling vilifying conduct directed to members of the LGBTI community.

5. Expanding the Queensland Human Rights Commission's (QHRC) powers to require information to be disclosed, to issue and enforce compliance notices, and refer complaints to the Queensland Police Service (QPS); and Expanding the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal's (QCAT) powers to enable the issuing of injunctions to prohibit repeated acts of vilification

We aim to improve the function and role of the QHRC in dealing with vilification in order to increase their effectiveness as a complaints body and to develop a defined mechanism for working with the QPS.

Belle is growing up so fast!

Some previous readers will know that Belle, our office cat, recently joined the Service. Belle has been a hit with many of our clients and loves all the attention she gets (some clients will only come in when she's here!). Belle makes herself at home in the office. She is usually full of energy in the morning. She loves to jump on desks, drink our water and walk across our keyboards. Just after lunch, Belle will be out of energy. She will then find a place to nap for the rest of the day, usually on a chair or filing tray. Last week, Belle was spayed. So she is a little bit sore and grumpy this week. This means, unfortunately, there will be no 'little Belle's' running around the office any time soon. We wish Belle a speedy and healthy recovery.



Goodbye Brigid We will miss you!

Brigid was the Service's first ever social worker. Unfortunately, last month, we said farewell to Brigid. Brigid was an invaluable asset to our team and we were very sad to see her go! Throughout her time at the Service, Brigid assisted many clients experiencing severe hardship, domestic violence and other personal problems associated with their legal issues. Brigid's bubbly and inviting personality created a safe and inclusive space for her clients, allowing her skills as a social worker to flourish. Brigid is passionate about Social Justice and Human Rights and successfully brought positive change that improved many clients' wellbeing. Brigid provided in-house support for her clients and occasionally went to Court to assist and provide additional support for clients when necessary.

The whole Service thanks Brigid for all her hard work and dedication. We wish Brigid the best for her future endeavors!

Follow us on social media to keep updated on news and upcoming events



@LgbtiLegalService



LGBTI Community Legal Service



@LGBTILegal

MANAGEMENT SPOTLIGHT - KATE FULLER



My name is Kate Fuller (she/her) and I am a volunteer solicitor with the LGBTI Legal Service as well as a member of the Management Committee.

By way of background, I have been a practising criminal lawyer for nine years, including my clerkship whilst I was at university. Obviously, I went in to crime because of the massive pay cheque and glowing public opinions of defence lawyers 😊. I was drawn to crime because I love being in court and criminal cases are inherently human and interesting. Working as a criminal lawyer requires a significant level of compassion and non-judgmentalism. All in all, it's a tough gig, but I wouldn't want to do anything else.

In 2016, I made the leap to establish my own firm with my best friend, and fellow criminal lawyer superstar, Brittany White. Fuller & White grew to two offices and 10 staff by the time I left in June of this year, when I passed my bar exams to become a barrister.

You see, I'm actually an ally and I identify as a cis-hetero woman. I was motivated to reach out to the Service to see if there was anything I could do to help out because of two very important men in my life: my older brother and my roommate/bestie. Both of these fellows are gay men.

My older brother is one of the most resourceful, tool-loving, "No you can't just throw a computer out because it's slow" people. But he was treated terribly when in our late teens/early twenties he started bringing boys home for Christmas, with which some members of my family seemed to take stead. My brother would "play down" his homosexuality – "It's not like I'm super gay" or "No one at work will know I'm gay because I'm masc".

Fast forward to my mid twenties, Roomie was a slightly younger gay man, who had moved from Gympie to Brisbane. He was funny, smart, handsome and he filled our house with Taylor Swift music. He would slide Hawaiian pizza under my door if I was in a bad mood and remind me that I was a bad ass when I felt a little insecure. What I progressively saw as we would go on our merry adventures, was disgraceful homophobic behaviour – things that I had naively believed didn't happen, at least not in a progressive city like Brisbane. I witnessed my incredible best friend wallow in self loathing – scared to tell his family he liked dudes. Over time, he found his community, got some counselling, and one day his partner literally ran in to his life at the Stones Corner Park Run.

But then there's that revolting plebiscite – remember that political trash fire back in 2017 when our elected officials chose not to legalise marriage themselves?

My beloved roomie was confronted with relentless images, videos and news stories of people purporting to tell him how to love, that his love wasn't equal and, at worst, horrific homophobic slurs. He saw these posts not just from bigoted randoms in the Courier Mail, but in his social media feeds from family members he grew up with.

Of course I was delighted that Australia made the right decision, but I'm still embarrassed and angry that the plebiscite even happened.

Working at the LGBTI Legal Service has furthered my understanding of the entrenched problems that homophobia has created in our legal system. I also believe that LGBTI people need to know that there is a safe place where they can come and speak about their legal problems without tactless questions like, "Oh, so if you are gay married then who is the, like, man in the relationship" or "What do you mean you don't have a gender".

So what did I learn in the process of becoming an ally? Firstly, that homophobia and discrimination is real and profoundly damaging. Just because something isn't happening to you, and you aren't doing it, doesn't mean it's not happening. It's real and it's tragic. Secondly, I learned to listen – to really listen means I also need to identify my own privilege. Finally, and this is something that I think comes with age and confidence, I learned to call out homophobic nonsense (sometimes with a scene and sometimes without).

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR OUR NEW WEBSITE

Next month we will be launching our brand new website! It has been a long time coming, but we are nearly there! Our fresh new website will be much more user friendly, easier to navigate and easier on the eye. On the new website, clients will easily be able to contact us for an appointment and users will have access to a plethora of legal resources and factsheets.

The website will also include a blog! Blog posts may include articles from staff or Management Committee members, summaries of landmark cases and any updates in relation to the Service.

Stay Tuned!



WHAT AREAS OF LAW CAN WE ADVISE ON?

- FAMILY LAW
- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
- CRIMINAL LAW
- EMPLOYMENT
- DISCRIMINATION
- GENERAL CIVIL LAW

So, how do I make an appointment to get some legal advice?

Call us on **3124 7160** and one of our staff will talk you through the process. Or you can email us at: **mail@lgbtilegalservice.org**

