



Dear Community,

Re: Marriage Equality and Beyond

We, the Macedon Ranges Local Safety Committee (LSC), work in partnership to enhance the mental health, well-being and safety of all residents, visitors, students and workers in the Macedon Ranges. As such we actively support the push for equality and champion the rights of the local Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) community.

Despite substantial social reform and legislative change we know that, as a result of ongoing discrimination and exclusion, the mental health of the LGBTI community is among the poorest in Australia. Same sex attracted Australians are up to fourteen times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers.

The Macedon Ranges has made significant investment in suicide prevention and mental health and well-being initiatives such as Live4Life, Wayout at Cobaw and the Macedon Ranges Suicide Prevention Action Group. Support for equality is integral to and consistent with the aims of these initiatives. Given that we know there is a causal link between the effects of discrimination and mental health and well-being it is inconceivable that we, as a community, support these initiatives and not LGBTI equality.

The LSC believes that the rights and liberties of all individuals are absolute. They are essential in the creation of a healthy, harmonious and open society. In line with this belief we say the following:

- *We are for Marriage Equality.*
- *Equality is not negotiable.*
- *LGBTI rights are human rights.*

We recognise that the rights of a majority of us have not been subject to debate and as such neither should the rights of LGBTI people. The LSC will not, in language or action, be complicit in the denial or delay of LGBTI people's rights.

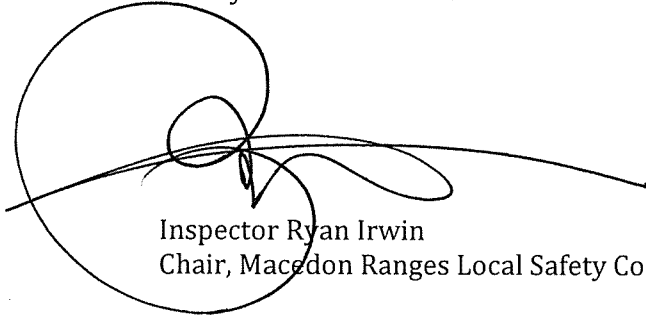
The LSC understands that equality and the preservation of hard won LGBTI rights is an ongoing process. We believe 'tolerance' is a bar set too low. Consistent with our pursuit of enhanced mental health, well-being and safety for everyone in the Macedon Ranges we hold it our goal to equally affirm LGBTI rights and LGBTI people, not simply tolerate them.

To quote the late American LGBTI activist and politician Harvey Milk:

"It takes no compromise to give people their rights...it takes no money to respect the individual. It takes no political deal to give people freedom. It takes no survey to remove repression."

We couldn't agree more.

Cobaw Community Health
Gisborne Secondary College
Victoria Police - Macedon Ranges
Mary-Anne Thomas MP - Member for Macedon
Macedon Ranges Shire Council
Central Victorian Primary Care Partnership - Castlemaine
Kyneton District Health
Macedon Ranges Health
Rotary Club of Gisborne



Inspector Ryan Irwin
Chair, Macedon Ranges Local Safety Committee