

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Tuesday 14 October 2014

Time to talk about aged care needs specific to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens

The future of aged care for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community will be in the spotlight during Seniors Week this week (October 13-19) when a forum is held in Hobart to consult with LGBTI community members and discuss developments in this area.

The forum will be held on Wednesday, October 15, at Glenview, 2-10 Windsor St, Glenorchy from 10.30am-3pm and anyone interested in discussing issues relevant to this area is invited to attend.

According to Professor Craig Zimitat from the University of Tasmania's School of Medicine, it will be an opportunity to start a conversation and to listen to the voices of LGBTI seniors.

"The thought of being in a vulnerable position going into an aged care facility, many of which were originally designed for heterosexual couples and run by religious organisations, is causing anguish for some LGBTI people who have feared or experienced rejection and discrimination during their life," he said.

"The move to a consumer-driven model of aged care in the home means that providers will need to be aware and sensitive to the needs of LGBTI people if they are to avoid making clients feel like second-class citizens in their own homes."

Professor Zimitat, together with colleagues Andrea Miller, Dr Derith Harris, Dr Danielle Williams, Lucille Kerr and Virginia Bashford, is currently researching the concerns, expectations and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people with health and aged care services in Tasmania.

Funded through an LGBTI Community Grant, the project will culminate in a report and forum with aged care service providers in 2015.

In 2010 the Productivity Commission released the *Caring For Older Australians* report which specifically highlighted the challenges facing LGBTI seniors as they consider options for at-home or residential nursing home care.

That report was followed in 2012 by the *National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Strategy*, the first Australian Government strategy to specifically address the health and well being of LGBTI people.

“While there have been major positive advances in laws related to this area the ongoing marginalisation and stigmatisation of those who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender or intersex continues to have negative health outcomes,” Professor Zimitat said.

Topics to be discussed at the forum include:

- What some care providers do to be more inclusive of older LGBTI people
- Changes in legislation and how the Office of the Anti Discrimination Commissioner can help
- The Tasmanian Elders Abuse Helpline
- Wills, power of attorney, enduring power of attorney and why they are important
- Current research into LGBTI health and ageing and how you can participate

The forum is supported by a broad range of community organisations such as Relationships Australia, Working It Out, Tasmanian Council on Aids, Hepatitis and Related Diseases (TasCAHRD) and the Department of Health and Human Services.

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