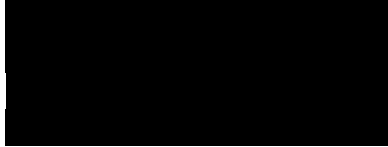


Mr Julian S Punch AM



Dear Mr Punch

Thank you for your letter of 6 January 2006 regarding the 'Coming Out Proud Program'. I apologise for the delay in responding.

As you are aware, the Government has been actively involved in facilitating policies of inclusion and tolerance with respect to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender population. This has included the passage of the *Relationships Act 2003* which came into effect on 1 January 2004 and the adoption of a 'Whole of Government Framework for Tasmania's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Communities' by the Government in November 2004. These approaches are aimed at fostering an inclusive society, which treats all Tasmanians with compassion and respect.

As part of the Whole of Government Framework document, the Government is committed to developing improved partnership and consultation with the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) communities in the process of developing, delivering and evaluating policies, programs and services.

A key action in this regard is to establish a Whole of Government Reference Group chaired by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC). The Reference Group will advise senior Agency representatives and Cabinet Ministers on planning and policy issues related to service delivery to the GLBTI communities and other matters as directed by me.

The Group will also have a role in overseeing the Government's contribution to the implementation of relevant Tasmania *Together* benchmarks.

The Reference Group is to include senior representatives of the Departments of Justice and Workplace Relations; Education; Health and Human Services; and Police and Emergency Management. One of its primary functions will be to meet regularly with representatives of the GLBTI communities to discuss relevant issues and, where appropriate, develop joint work programs.

I note that as part of the proposed COPP Management Plan your organisation is keen to facilitate the development of a Tasmanian GLBTI Council to promote better coordination and consultation with the GLBTI community. The process outlined in the Government's Whole of Government Framework, provides a basis for moving forward to develop a more structured consultation process and has the capacity to

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provide a valuable starting point for discussion around the development of more formalised arrangements with the GLBTI Community. I understand that further discussions have been held with members of my Department about how we can move this matter forward in a way that is inclusive of the broader GLBTI community. I consider this to be a useful approach and look forward to further advice on this in due course.

With regard to your request for a nomination from my Department to the Community Liaison Committee, whilst I am happy for members of my Department to maintain contact with your Committee in the Kingborough area, I consider that the most advantageous way for the State to be involved is in working to facilitate the establishment of broader structures in place as outlined in our Whole of Government Framework. I will, however, raise the issue of the Committee with the State Government Reference Group to ensure that appropriate local level involvement is encouraged among key service providers.

I thank you for writing to me on this matter and look forward to working with you further to promote integrated and responsive services to GLBTI communities.

Yours sincerely

Paul Lennon
Premier