



Media release – LGBTQ Domestic Violence Awareness Day 2024

Under a partnership funding by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Engender Equality and Working It Out are proud to acknowledge LGBTQIA+ Domestic Violence Awareness Day 2024. While the experiences of intimate partner violence, abuse and coercive control in LGBTQIA+ relationships are often made invisible in wider discourse of family violence, LGBTQIA+ people experience family and intimate partner violence at similar or higher rates to the heterosexual/cisgender/endosex population. Based on population data and statistics, it is estimated that around 19,000 LGBTQIA+ Tasmanians have suffered at least one form of violence perpetrated by an intimate partner.

Dr Lynn Jarvis, CEO of Work It Out explains, "We have been aware of the prevalence and impact of Domestic Violence on LGBTQIA+ people in Tasmania for a long time, but until now we have not had the resources to offer the expert support needed. Our partnership with Engender Equality is driven by a desire to build our organisational capacity and to support the implementation of a dedicated support service. This is an exciting partnership that can make a real difference to those people who currently feel there is nowhere for them to get support and assistance."

It is important to note that family violence encompasses a range of different behaviours and does not just account for physical violence and assault. The term 'family violence' encompasses verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, financial abuse, spiritual abuse, purposeful isolation, and other patterns of harmful behaviour that account for coercive control. Family violence also often co-occurs with sexual abuse, sexual coercion, and sexual violence.

For LGBTQIA+ people, family violence can also encompass threats to 'out' a person against their wishes, using an imbalance of power and 'experience' in the LGBTQIA+ community to denigrate or exploit, using societal heteronormativity and homophobia to exert or increase control, threats to disclose a person's HIV status, or interfering with or preventing a person's gender affirmation.

There are many reasons why LGBTQIA+ family violence is not reported and poorly understood. LGBTQIA+ people may fear others will attribute their concerns or issues



about their relationship solely to sexual orientation or gender identity, and worry that support services and Police won't take their concerns seriously or misidentify them as the aggressor. Further, the person experiencing harm may be worried that their identity or relationship will be misunderstood by service providers or fear they will lose their friends and community support if they seek support or speak up about the harm they have experienced.

Alina Thomas, CEO of Engender Equality, highlighted the importance of the partnership. "For a long time LGBTIQ+ people may not have felt that help was available to them. Lots of people have struggled to get support due to feeling like they won't be heard, believed and understood. This new partnership with Working It Out will help our service to be more relevant to the people who need us".

Engender Equality is partnering with Working It Out Tasmania to ensure that everyone in the community who has experienced family violence is able to get affirmative, culturally safe support. Engender Equality will soon be home to an LGBTIQ+ Family Violence Service, with tailored counselling support. In addition, Engender Equality has a new worker dedicated to developing new LGBTIQ+ Family Violence Guidelines and a Training Package which will be available to all services and practitioners statewide by the end of 2024. These Guidelines will be realized through input and feedback from Working It Out, Lived Experience Advocates and other specialists and stakeholders from across the state. Engender Equality and Working It Out are looking forward to leveraging one another's expertise to improve outcomes for LGBTIQ+ people who have experienced abuse, harm and violence in their intimate relationships.

For further comment or photos, please contact:

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If you are affected by this story and want to seek assistance, contact:
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Reference:

To determine approximate Tasmanian prevalence data, the following was used:

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) placed Tasmania's population at 542, 342.
- Children aged 0-14 years accounted for 16.7% of the entire population, therefore there are 451, 770 people over 14 years residing in Tasmania (ABS).
- It is estimated that 11% of Australians identify as LGBTIQ+ (Department of Health, 2019) . Therefore, there are around 49, 694 LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians.
- Four in ten (40%) of LGBTIQ+ people across Australia report ever experiencing violence and abuse from their intimate partner/s (Private Lives 3, 2021). Therefore, 19, 877 LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians have likely experienced family violence.