

WayOut

Central Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project

Final written report to accompany video report



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Cobaw Community Health Service



Australian Research Centre
in Sex, Health & Society



A note about this report

This written report is intended to accompany "The WayOut Report" video which consists of a series of interviews with 35 different people involved in or associated with "WayOut, Central Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project."

The video provides a comprehensive overview not only of the work of the project but also the context in which this work was undertaken, the impact of particular initiatives and a summary of the findings of the external evaluation.

This document follows the same format as the video and includes either a summary of comments and/or expanded evaluation data and observations. It also includes some information that was not covered in the video such as the support we received from the adult gay & lesbian community in our region and further details about the challenges we faced in working in some environments.

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WayOut, Central Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project was funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services.

"WayOut" receives 2004 Victorian Public Health Award

In November 2004, the WayOut Project received the Victorian Public Health Award for Innovation in the Capacity Building Category. The award was presented by the Minister for Health, Browyn Pike (2nd on left) and accepted by a young person from the Macedon Ranges WayOut group Sarah Rogers (3rd on left). Sue Hackney, project coordinator (right) and Lynne Hillier, external project evaluator (left) shared in the celebrations.



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Executive Summary

Sue Hackney & Lynne Hillier

In 2001, Cobaw Community Health Service successfully tendered for one of two youth suicide prevention pilot initiatives targeting same sex attracted young people (SSAYP) funded by the Department of Human Services (Rural Health and Mental Health Branches, Melbourne). "WayOut, Central Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project" was funded for three years and commenced in January 2002. It covered four local government areas in Central Victoria: Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander, Central Goldfields and the City of Greater Bendigo.¹

The main aim of the project was to redress the isolation and discrimination that same sex attracted (SSA) young people may face at school, at home and in the catchment area generally.

Project Design and Implementation

Formation of gay-straight youth alliances

From its commencement, the project team was committed to youth participation in the design and delivery of services. Following consultations with SSA young people in Macedon Ranges Shire, the first local working committee of young people was established. Amongst other things, the group members stated that they didn't want to have a group exclusively for SSAYP – rather they wished to involve their 'straight' (ie heterosexual) friends. Consequently membership was open to all young people who shared the project's aim. Some time later the project was approached by young people in Castlemaine, who had seen the work of the Macedon Ranges group, and they then formed the Mt Alexander Shire WayOut Committee which also welcomed all young people.

When the project commenced it was not aware of any groups that used the model of welcoming all young people² and it proved to have a number of strengths:

- It did not require that a young person makes a decision about their sexuality or 'come out' as being same sex attracted or heterosexual.
- It enabled a greater 'critical mass' of young people to gather who shared similar views, concerns and interests (where these may not commonly occur in the broader environment).
- It acknowledged that addressing homophobic discrimination is an important cause for **all** people in the community.

Public activism

The young people in the first WayOut group identified that they wanted to "do something public" to raise awareness and challenge homophobia in their community. Accordingly they have:

- Given talks about sexuality/ homophobia with some 250 secondary students.
- Had articles in the local newspaper and been interviewed on community television.
- Written and performed a short play called "Homophobia Exposed" which was subsequently recorded on DVD/video and distributed to a range of audiences.
- Attended various community events/ conferences to discuss our project and merchandise.

Benefits of this public activism have included:

- Members developing greater confidence in their beliefs about equality and their capacity to raise awareness about the nature and effects of homophobia.
- High levels of engagement with other young people through the use of peer educators.
- Provision of models of youth leadership/participation to other workers in the field.
- Engagement of both SSA and heterosexual adults in the community.

¹ As academic research had indicated that young people most 'at risk' came from areas with a population of less than 20,000, our project concentrated its work in the three smaller shires of Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander and Central Goldfields. (Hillier et al 1996).

² The project team subsequently learned of the Gay-Straight Alliance networks in the United States and has on occasions, drawn from their web resources.

Development and marketing of merchandise

In addition to giving talks, the young people in the WayOut groups believed that the best way to reach other young people (especially those SSAYP who were wishing to remain hidden) was to develop a range of merchandise and flood the environment with accurate information and positive messages about sexual diversity. The merchandise included information cards, stickers, t-shirts, pens, badges, lollies, a poster and our video. Anecdotal information and evaluation data confirm that this has been an enormously effective strategy for engaging the community.

Training and secondary consultations

The project delivered a range of professional development sessions and written resource material for workers in the region. In the vast majority of cases, workers had not previously received training on responding to the needs of the target group and evaluations confirmed that they subsequently felt more confident in doing so. The project also responded to many requests from the youth sector & school workers for advice on supporting individual young people and/or their families.

Brokerage funding

The project received a pool of money to broker to other organizations to undertake work. This was an important feature of the project's design as it enabled the completion of work that the project may not have otherwise been able to undertake. These initiatives included:

- The distribution of free t-shirts and stickers at local youth festivals.
- The production of a resource booklet for same sex attracted young women.
- Organisation of a community photograph of people in the Central Goldfields Shire against homophobia (participants were all wearing one of the project's t-shirts).
- Establishment of a central Victorian PFLAG branch (Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays).

External Evaluation

It was a requirement of funding that the project engage an external evaluator and the project was very pleased to contract the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSH&S) to undertake this work. ARCSH&S proposed an evaluation model called 'consultative evaluation,' that was very suited to the design and context of the project. A range of data were collected for the evaluation. Formative evaluation data were gathered through regular phonecall meetings with the project coordinator. Before and after Rapid Assessments were carried out with key informants in three local government areas to ascertain perceived change in town attitudes and behaviours. Focus groups and surveys were used to gather evaluation data about the information card, T-shirts, stickers, posters and the video. Surveys were used to evaluate the photo shoot. Evaluation data were gathered at community forums. Focus groups were also conducted with young people and observational data collected.

Work with Particular Audiences

Secondary schools

The project dedicated considerable time and resources to try and engage secondary schools in the area. However, consistent with similar projects in other parts of Victoria, state secondary schools in the region were generally cautious and/or resistant to undertaking work, particularly at a whole of school level. This would appear to stem from a broader lack of awareness about equal opportunity legislation and indeed, it seems that few, if any local schools have appropriate policies, procedures and training for staff or students.

Without disregarding the above, there was some work done by schools and the local Catholic Secondary College could be cited as a (somewhat unanticipated) lead example. That school for instance, invited the project worker to train their 'Celebrate Diversity' student group as peer educators, displayed our posters around the campus, organized professional development for all staff and reviewed its bullying policies and procedures. Such work was undertaken in accordance with the school's "social justice" framework.

Local Government

The project established links with youth workers from each of the four local government offices in the catchment area and in general these proved very positive and constructive working relationships. For example, the first WayOut group in the Macedon Ranges Shire formed largely through networks that had been established by that Shire's Youth Development Officer. This WayOut group was then invited to give a briefing about the project at a Council meeting and Councilors responded in an interested and supportive way. There were however some challenges in working with one local government organization in which senior executive staff expressed a strong concern that their Council not be seen to be "promoting homosexuality." Some twelve months later, the same Council appeared to affirm this position by adopting a youth policy in which it had removed a specific reference to being inclusive of same sex attracted young people (and Koori young people) that had appeared in the draft version.

Recommendations

The recommendations from the project staff and external evaluator are:

1. Department of Education & Training

- a) That there is a need for a clear written directive from DE&T to each school council and principal stating that all schools are required to have an up-to-date equal opportunity policy which:
 - i) Specifies the Council's, School's and student's legislative rights and responsibilities.
 - ii) Details how the organization will inform parent's, staff and students about the policy.
 - iii) Details how provisions will be incorporated into regular staff training sessions, performance reviews, Council meetings and student curriculum.
 - iv) Details procedures for the making complaints of discrimination through internal (School, Department) and external (Equal Opportunity Commission) avenues.
- b) A clear directive from DE&T to regional offices that raising awareness about the needs of same sex attracted students and the nature and effects of homophobia in school is considered a priority to be included in well-being and curriculum plans and staff training.

2. Department for Victorian Communities

- a) That the Department for Victorian Communities (Local Government) review the status of equal opportunity policies, training and implementation in all rural shires. It is also recommended that Councils be informed that the Department encourages the delivery of initiatives to welcome diversity and challenge discrimination within local communities.
- b) That in any applications for funding for youth (Office for Youth) and general community planning/strengthening initiatives (Community Strengthening & Volunteering), organisations are required to provide evidence of their equal opportunity policies and strategies to promote the inclusion of same sex attracted community members.

3. Cobaw Community Health Service

That Cobaw Community Health Service collaborate with relevant departments/organizations to plan the delivery of the project's merchandise and learnings state-wide.

4. Department of Human Services

That the Department of Human Services require all Community Health Services in their health promotion plans to undertake initiatives which aim to make their services expressly welcoming to and inclusive of the needs of same sex attracted young people in their catchments areas.

1) Introduction

In 2001, Cobaw Community Health Service successfully tendered for one of two youth suicide prevention pilot initiatives targeting same sex attracted young people (SSAYP) funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services. "WayOut, Central Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project" commenced in January 2002 and covered four local government areas in Central Victoria: Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander, Central Goldfields and to a lesser extent, the City of Greater Bendigo.³ The main aim of the project was to redress the isolation and discrimination that same sex attracted young people may face at school, at home and in the catchment area generally.

Target Group

Approximately 8 – 11% of young people are not unequivocally heterosexual. (Hillier et al 1996; Lindsay et al 1997) Although this represents a significant minority of young people in the State, research has found that in a society where heterosexuality is the norm, life for many same sex attracted young people (SSAYP) is less than easy. Studies have shown that SSAYP are more likely than young people generally to experience family conflict, encounter difficulties at school, experience abuse (at school, work or in public places), become homeless, and report high rates of drug and alcohol abuse. (Remafedi 1994; Remafedi et al 1991; and Hillier et al 1998). SSAYP were also noted as a particularly high-risk group by the 1997 Victorian Suicide Prevention Task force and it is usually estimated they are 4 – 6 times more likely to attempt suicide than the population as a whole. (Victorian Department of Human Services 1998)

Although it is clear that SSAYP are at significant risk, particularly in rural communities, there are additional challenges faced by services endeavouring to engage with this group. This is largely because of research which reports that most suicide attempts occur **before** a young person 'comes out' to others as 'gay.' (Nicholas & Howard 2001) In other words, these young people are not necessarily identifiable and indeed, may be going to great lengths to remain invisible.

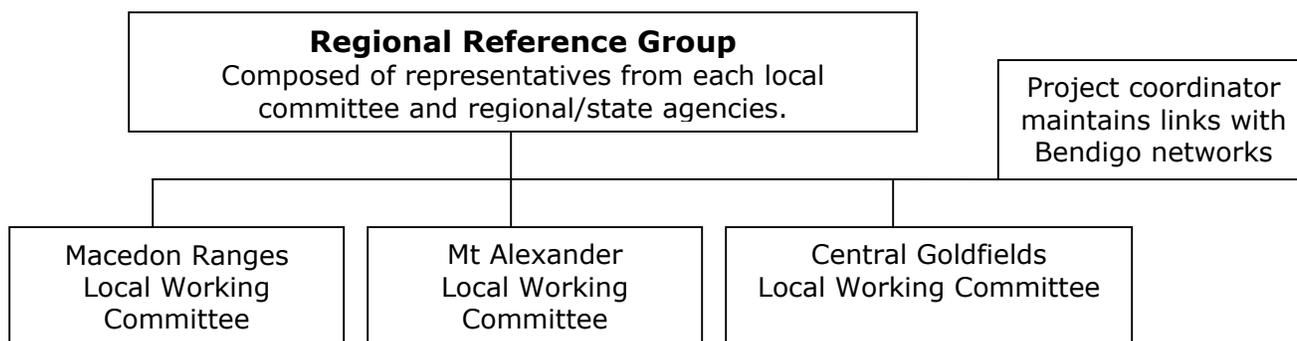
Funding and staffing

The project was funded \$255,000 over three years and this provided for:

- The employment of a project coordinator (Sue Hackney) four days per week and associated vehicle and administrative costs.
- The engagement of the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society to undertake an external evaluation of the project.
- The establishment of a brokerage fund or pool of money that could be accessed by other organizations to undertake initiatives.

Project Management Committees

The following committee structure was established by the Project:



³ As research had indicated that young people most 'at risk' came from areas with a population of less than 20,000, our project concentrated its work in the three smaller shires of Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander and Central Goldfields. (Hillier et al 1996).

Statements detailing the Committees' terms of reference, membership, decision making, roles etc were formulated and are included in Appendix 1. A list of past and present committee members is included in Appendix 2.

Project framework & values

Shortly after the project commenced, we formulated a statement of values and frameworks to explain and guide the subsequent development of initiatives. This statement contained in Appendix 3.

External Evaluation

It was a requirement of funding that the project engage an external evaluator and we were very pleased to contract the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSH&S) to undertake this work. Dr Lynne Hillier from the Centre undertook the evaluation. ARCSH&S proposed an evaluation model, called 'consultative evaluation', that was very suited to the design and context of our project.

The Consultative evaluation model[♦]

Traditionally, projects have been evaluated internally, externally, or not evaluated at all. Internal evaluation is conducted within the project by the project staff. It has the advantage of using the skills of the project workers, of being reflexive, of allowing the project to change with evaluation feedback during the project and of being relatively inexpensive. External evaluation has none of the advantages of internal evaluation, but it does have more credibility because it is thought to be objective (without conflicting interests), is carried out by evaluation experts and usually involves ethical approval from a university or similar institution.

"Consultative evaluation", the model used in this report, is both internal and external to the project and has the advantages of both the internal and external evaluation models without any of the disadvantages. The model uses the skills and knowledge of the project workers, it is reflexive and relatively inexpensive, has the expertise and credibility of an external evaluator and the ethical backing of a university. In this project, the evaluator was from an external institution, La Trobe University and ethical approval was gained from the La Trobe Human Ethics Committee. The project worker is experienced in the youth and community development field.

Consultative Evaluation in practice

The evaluation began with a 'colour mapping' workshop which ensured that the aims and strategies of the project were logically consistent. The types of data which would reflect the change necessary to achieve the aims of the project were then clarified and ways to gather this data developed.

The project worker was responsible for the gathering the data, however the evaluation measures were developed in partnership with the evaluator. After ethics approval was gained, the data were collected and passed on to the external evaluator for analysis.

A range of data were collected for the evaluation of the Waypout project. Formative evaluation data were gathered through regular phonecall meetings with the project coordinator. Before and after Rapid Assessments were carried out with key informants in three local government areas to ascertain perceived change in community attitudes and knowledge about experiences of SSA young people and what resources may be available (see Appendix 4 for interview questions) These measures were taken from the same ten 'key informants' from each of the shires at two separate times around the beginning and the end of the project (see Section 8). Focus groups and surveys were also used to gather evaluation data about the informations card, T-shirts, stickers, posters and the video (see section 4). Surveys were used to evaluate the photo shoot

[♦] Information appearing in italics has been collated and written by Lynne Hillier as external project evaluator.

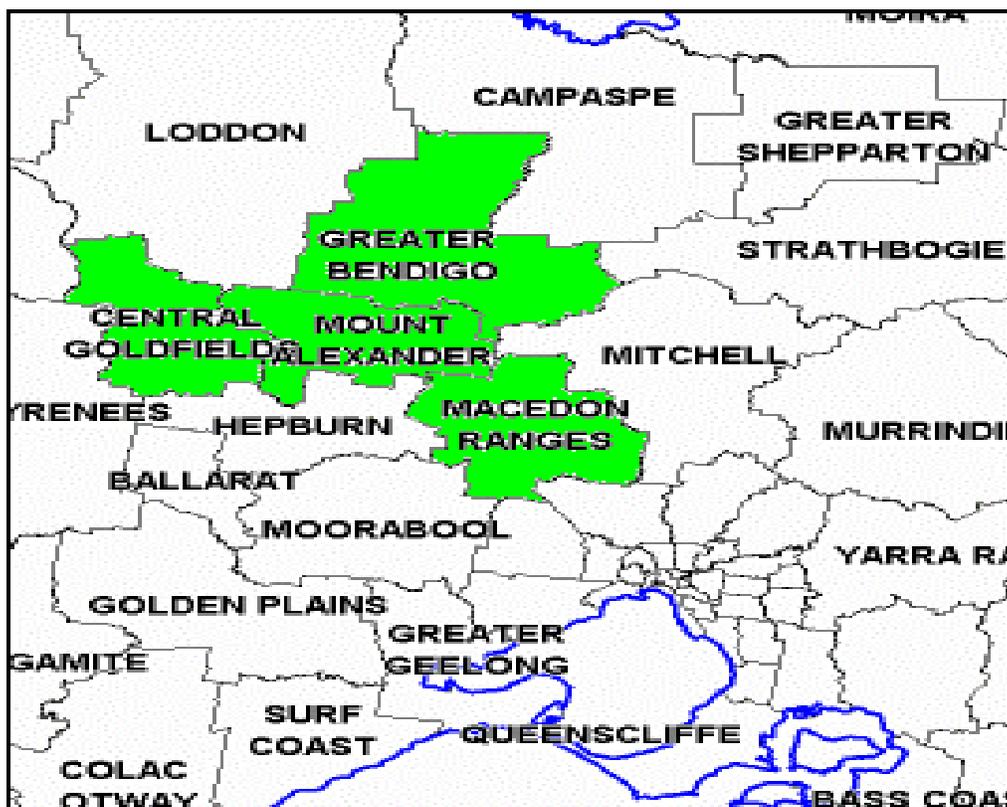
undertaken in the Central Goldfields Shire (see section 6). The evaluations were gathered at community forums and focus groups were conducted with young people and observational data collected.

Traditionally a report on a project will contain a background statement, aims and results, discussion and possibly recommendations and often an evaluation report is presented as a separate document. In this model, the evaluation and the project report are contained within two documents – a video and a written report.

2) The Context

Geographical Location

The project covered four local government areas in Central Victoria: Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander, Central Goldfields and the City of Greater Bendigo. Due to the findings of academic research which showed that the young people most 'at risk' came from towns/areas with a population of less than 20,000, our project concentrated its work in the less populated shires - Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander and Central Goldfields. (Hillier et al 1996)



Macedon Ranges Shire

Macedon Ranges Shire is north-west of Melbourne. An estimated 38,384 people were living in the Shire at 30 June 2002. This included 3,232 people aged 15 – 24 years. Because of its proximity to Melbourne, the Shire is experiencing significant growth, particularly in the southern areas in and around the towns of Gisborne, New Gisborne, Riddells Creek and Romsey which have a high proportion of commuters. Townships in the Shire's north, including Kyneton, are characterised by manufacturing operations and agricultural enterprises such as traditional sheep and cattle grazing, broad acre cropping and timber milling. Tourism and viticulture are major growth industries, although an increasing number of people are also now commuting from the northern areas of the Shire to Melbourne. (Macedon Ranges Shire 2004)

Within the Shire there are two State Secondary Schools (Gisborne and Kyneton), one Catholic Secondary School (Sacred Heart, Kyneton) and two independent schools (Braemar College and Macedon Grammar). There are two Community Health Services (Cobaw Community Health with its main office in Kyneton and Macedon Ranges Community Health which is located in Gisborne). The Macedon Ranges Shire employs one full-time youth development officer and two part-time, project funded youth workers.

Mt Alexander Shire

Mt Alexander Shire is approximately 120 kms north west of Melbourne. An estimated 17,273 people were living in the Shire at 30 June 2002. This included 1,656 people aged 15 – 24 years. Over 30% of the population are aged 50 or more years which is higher than the average for regional shires in Victoria. Nearly 20% of those who are working are employed in the manufacturing industry and the Castlemaine Bacon Factory is the major employer. Other main industries include retail and health and community services. The main business/residential centre is Castlemaine and other townships include Maldon, Harcourt and Newstead. (Mount Alexander Shire 2004)

Within the Shire there is one state secondary school (Castlemaine Secondary College) and one independent school (Olivet Christian College offering classes up to year 9). There is one Community Health Service and the Shire employs one full-time youth worker.

Central Goldfields Shire

Central Goldfields Shire is approximately two hours drive from Melbourne. An estimated 13,069 people were living in the Shire at 30 June 2002. This included 1,258 people aged 15 – 24 years. The area has been experiencing a negative population growth since 1991. Approximately 26% of the labour force is employed in the manufacturing industry and major employers are printers. The main business/residential centre is Maryborough and other townships include Carisbrook, Talbot, Dunolly and Bealiba. (Central Goldfields Shire 2004)

Within the Shire is one state secondary school (Maryborough Regional College) and one independent school (Highview Christian College). There is one Community Health Service and the Shire employs one full-time worker who covers both youth & family services.

City of Greater Bendigo

The City of Greater Bendigo is approximately two hours drive from Melbourne and is the third largest urban centre in the State. An estimated 86,068 people were living in the Shire in 2001. This included 12,843 people aged 15 – 24 years. City of Greater Bendigo's growth rate is 1.5%, which is higher than the Victorian average of 0.9%. The main business/residential centre is Bendigo and other townships include Heathcote, Marong, Goornong and Elmore. (City of Greater Bendigo 2004)

Within the Shire are six state secondary schools, one Catholic Secondary School and four independent schools. There is one Community Health Service (operating from several sites), one Women's Health Service and a diverse range of government and welfare agencies providing services to both the immediate city of Bendigo and broader Loddon Mallee Campaspe region. The Shire employs two full-time and three part-time workers in Youth Services.

The subject of "same sex attraction" in rural areas

WayOut was largely the first project of its type to cover the four shires in the central Victorian region. In order to be successful it needed to be sensitive to diverse community views about same sex attraction and homophobia. Information about this context can be drawn from comments by participants in the WayOut Report video and general academic literature.

- ***Talking about sex generally***

Several video participants made the observation that raising the subject of sex, whether this be heterosexual or homosexual, is difficult in a range of professional settings. For example one worker who is responsible for delivering sexual health programs in schools described how it is a big challenge to even initiate discussions about the distribution of condoms by health/welfare workers to secondary students. This occurs despite the demonstrably high and increasing teenage birth rates in rural, regional and remote areas and corollary evidence pointing to the lack of access to contraception and education for young people in the country. (see for example, Hillier et al 1996)

- ***In the country its more difficult to be anonymous.***

Given the smaller population size of communities in country areas it is much more likely that people will observe and/or hear details about the lives of others in their area. Generally connectedness to local neighborhoods is identified as a protective factor in terms of adolescent health. (see for example, Bond et al 2000) However, it would appear that lack of anonymity can caused stress for some SSA young people in country areas and indeed, the way information travels fast in a rural town can also be a problem for SSA adults, their family and friends.

- ***Some consequences of homophobia for adults in rural Victoria***

Research has reported that in comparison to their city counterparts, adult members of the gay and lesbian community in rural areas live within a more prevalent atmosphere of non-acceptance and vilification. (see for example, Gottschalk and Newton 2003) Due to actual and/or perceived higher levels of homophobia, same sex attracted adults are less likely to 'come out' and accordingly, for the young people there are fewer visible role models and identifiable avenues for accessing social and support networks.

3) Young people: the core of our project

Starting the "WayOut" groups of young people

From its commencement, the project team was committed to youth participation in the design and delivery of services. A major challenge however was raised in academic research which reported for example that suicide attempts by SSAYP occurred before they disclosed their sexuality to any other person. (Nicholas & Howard 2001) In other words, the project was endeavoring to reach a target group that may be going to great lengths to remain hidden, particularly in country areas. By using professional and community networks within the Macedon Ranges Shire, the project coordinator was able to meet with individual young people who identified as SSA to seek their views about how to develop a group/service that would be responsive to the needs of other young people in the community. Subsequently, our first group, the Macedon Ranges WayOut Committee was formed in 2002 and some twelve months later we were approached by young people in Castlemaine, who had seen the work of our Macedon Ranges group, and they then formed the Mt Alexander Shire WayOut Committee. Both groups organized meetings to plan initiatives and attendance varied from 2 – 15 individuals. Due to a range of reasons, the Macedon Ranges group has met more regularly and undertaken more work than the Mt Alexander Committee.

Gay-straight alliances

One of the most significant observations made by the young people consulted in these initial stages was that they didn't want to have a group exclusively for SSAYP – rather they wished to be able to involve their 'straight' (ie heterosexual) friends. Within Australia the traditional model of responding to the needs of SSAYP involves workers/organizations running groups exclusively for young people who identify as SSA. When we commenced we were not aware of any groups that used our model of welcoming all young people⁴ and it has proved to be a new approach of relevance to work in this field, particularly in rural areas because:

- It does not require that a young person makes a decision about their sexuality and/or 'come out' as being same sex attracted or heterosexual.
- It is safer in that belonging to the group does not mean that a young person is same sex attracted – more that they have a commitment to social justice.
- It enables a greater 'critical mass' of young people to gather who share similar views, concerns and interests (where these may not commonly occur or be discussed in the broader/mainstream environment). In this regard, the model promotes connectedness between SSAYP and other young people in the community (rather than isolation).
- It acknowledges that addressing homophobic discrimination is a worthy cause for all people in our community.

Public activism

Another element of the traditional model of working with SSAYP is that groups are confidential and typically meetings take the form of discussions about SSA and/or providing recreational activities. The young people in our groups however identified that they didn't want to just get together and talk about issues in a confidential meeting rather, they wanted to "do something public" to raise awareness and challenge homophobia in our community. Accordingly over the past two and a half years they have:

- Given talks about sexuality/ homophobia with some 250 secondary students.
- Had articles in the local newspaper, with group photos. (see Appendix 5)
- Written and performed a short play called "Homophobia Exposed" which was subsequently recorded on DVD/video and distributed to a range of audiences.
- Been interviewed on community television (Bent TV – Channel 31).
- Attended various community events and conferences to promote our project and merchandise.

⁴ We subsequently learned of the Gay-Straight Alliance networks in the United States and on occasions drew from their web resources.

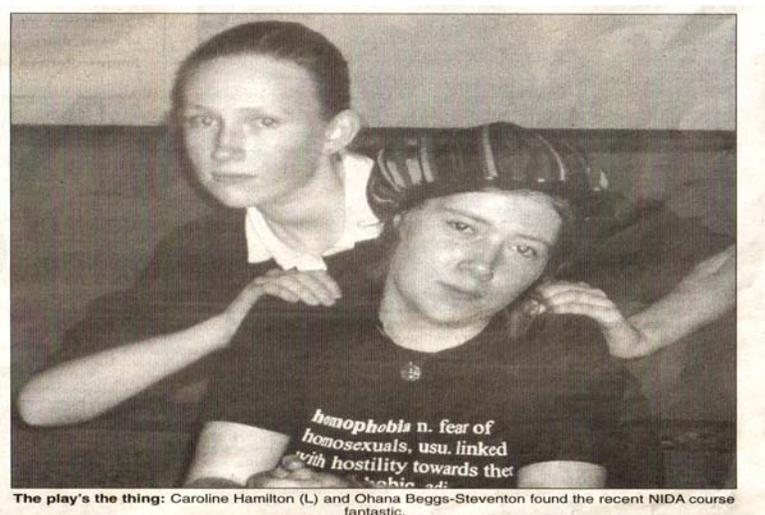
Mutual support through activism

While the groups did not seek to be 'support' groups in the traditional therapeutic sense, they nevertheless provided a safe environment where members could (while designing products etc) coincidentally talk if they wish to about either their boyfriends/ girlfriends, experiences of homophobia and/or ask questions about sexuality and same sex relationships. This inevitably allowed for mutual support and constructive conversations to occur.

Examples of activism: media and conferences

The Macedon Ranges group has featured in two articles in a local weekly newspaper which covers Macedon Ranges and Mt Alexander Shires – see Appendix 5.

In addition, members of both the Macedon and Mt Alexander Groups used all opportunities to profile the work of the project. For example, below is a picture from a local newspaper article (Midland Express 5/10/04) about some young people who had attended a drama course held in Castlemaine. One of the young women in the picture, Ohana, is a member of our Castlemaine WayOut group and she is wearing the t-shirt designed by that group.



In April 2004, we were invited to be participants in the "Youth Booth" at the World Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education in Melbourne. Below, Aaron from the Macedon Ranges group and Sue Hackney, project coordinator, give out merchandise and discuss our project with delegates.



In November 2004, our Macedon Ranges group was invited to give a presentation about our work to participants attending an International Summer School at the Dulwich Centre for Narrative Therapy in Adelaide. Below are pictures taken on the day.



Belinda (Manager, Counseling & Accommodation, Cobaw Community Health), Sarah, Brentton (Macedon Ranges WayOut Group) & Sue (coordinator) arrive at the Dulwich Centre.



Brentton and Drew, Martha and Sarah from Macedon Ranges WayOut having lunch in Adelaide shortly before our presentation

External evaluation of WayOut groups' model[♦]

Groups for young people who are same sex attracted can be run on at least two models. The first is the segregated model in which the group is for SSAY only. This is the dominant model used in groups in the urban areas of Melbourne. The alliance model on the other hand is agenda based and open to all people who want to work towards making the community a safer place for all SSAY. It was this model which was preferred by the original working group of young people in the WayOut project. They argued that segregation is the current default and they wanted to move away from that model to integration. There are many reasons why this model was successful in these rural localities.

- 1) It is not just same sex attracted young people who suffer from homophobia. Young heterosexuals who push gender boundaries eg the sensitive male or the rough and tumble*

[♦] Information appearing in italics has been collated and written by Lynne Hillier as external project evaluator.

female, are likely to have their sexuality questioned and to suffer from all sorts of abuse as well. Moreover, there are many heterosexual young people who have parents, sisters, brothers and friends who are gay, lesbian or bisexual. An alliance allows these young people to show their support for their same sex attracted peers while at the same time having access to a space that is not homophobic. One young woman in one of the groups had lesbian mothers and had suffered homophobic abuse and exclusion at school. She would not have been allowed to attend an exclusively same sex attracted group. A gay/straight alliance is able to include all of these stigmatized young people and provide a safe space for them all.

- 2) A gay/straight alliance allows SSAY to belong to a group without the risk of being 'outed' because those who attend an exclusively SSAY group must be SSA. Young people can belong without worrying about having made a statement about their sexuality. This is particularly relevant in rural areas where surveillance is much more intense and anonymity far more difficult to achieve. The ramifications of being outed in a rural area are far more serious because it is not possible to move schools and start again without leaving home. The fact that one of the groups had its photo in the local newspaper was a testament to the added freedom accorded an alliance over a same sex attracted only group.
- 3) The alliances were more political and outward looking than most SSAY social support groups while still allowing personal support to happen.
- 4) Young people are not hemmed in to a certain sexual preference when they join. They are free to move – no foreclosure on the sexual choices.

The evaluator conducted a focus group with members of one of the gay/straight alliance groups.

When asked about the purpose of the group, young people were very clear that the group was about social change: "to promote diversity", "to fight homophobia and discrimination", "to get people thinking" were some of the responses. They also made it very clear that this was not a support group, or that it was for SSAY only. These are the two important differences from SSAY support groups in the city.

There were many gains of being part of the group. The first was in terms of personal emotional well-being. One young man said "It has lifted me up – helps me see that everything is good" and another "It is positive and makes me feel I want to be part of it." A second gain concerned awareness. One young woman said "It has made me more aware" and another "I've gained insight into how much homophobia is around". A heterosexual young person said "When I tell people that I'm part of the group I notice there's more prejudice around than I thought". A final gain concerned increasing confidence through being involved in actions for change such as producing resources and public speaking. One young person commented: "It has given me confidence and an opportunity to do things" while another said "I spoke to the [local government] councilors – it was scary but I gained a lot of confidence".

One challenge of being part of the group was the homophobia directed at young people when they told others about the group for example "Knowing how people feel when they find out I'm part of the group" and "Dealing with people when they learn I am part of the group". Convincing people of what they were about was also difficult: "Trying to get people to understand that we are not a support group and we are not like other groups. We are an alliance, we are political, we have an ideology and issues that we agree on". Another member said "We are here to make change".

In conclusion, the young people in the two groups had very strong beliefs about why they were members and what they wanted to achieve. At the same time they were committed to a group that was for everyone who wanted to join. The achievements of these groups were remarkable in the merchandise they produced, the activism that they were involved in and the personal growth journey that each young person embarked on as a group member.

4) Engaging our Audience: The Free stuff

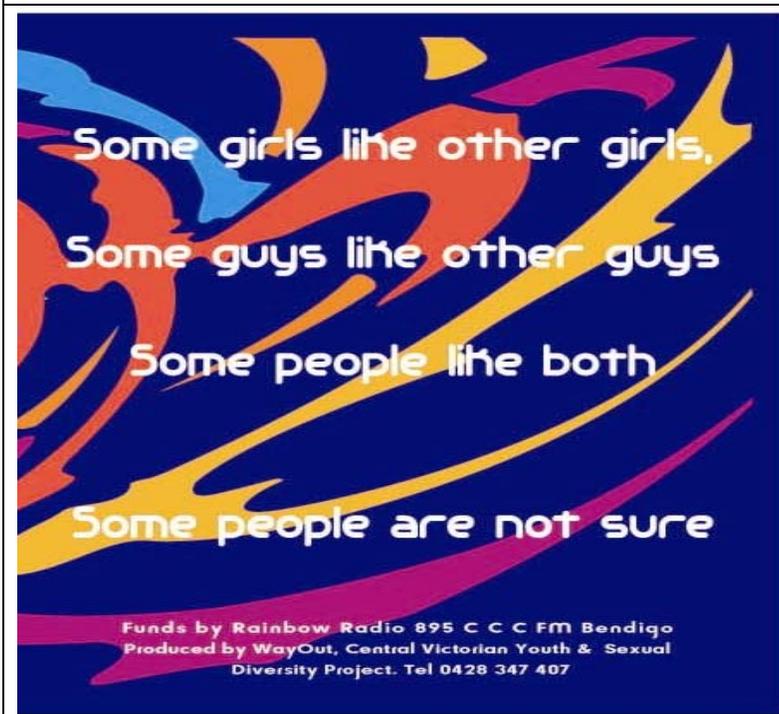
In addition to giving talks and other public activities, the young people in our groups considered that the best way to reach others was to develop a range of merchandise and flood the environment with accurate information and positive messages about sexual diversity. This was a brilliant response to the challenge of trying to reach a target audience in our community that may be going to great lengths to remain invisible.

The following items have been designed by the young people.

	<p>T-shirts with the slogan "We're All Human, its time to prove it ... Fight Homophobia"</p> <p>Over 300 of these have been distributed free of charge at community events such as the Macedon Ranges YouthFest (a festival that attracts some 2-3,000 young people) and the "Better Living Festival" held in Maryborough in 2003.</p>
	<p>T-shirts with the slogan "Queer, Don't knock it till you've tried it." These have been used mainly as a fund raiser at gay/lesbian events. We have also sold them at 'mainstream' events and they obviously appeal to young heterosexuals as well as SSAYP.</p>
	<p>Stickers with the same slogans as the two different t-shirts. We printed 1,500 copies of each version and have distributed these free of charge to hundreds of individuals and organizations at a local, state, national and international level. We have seen them in many different places including on people's diaries, bags, office windows and cars.</p>



We designed and produced one thousand pens and five hundred badges with the slogan 'We're all human, Fight Homophobia.' These have been distributed free of charge to a range of school students, other young people, human service workers and members of the community.



A wallet size information card for same sex attracted young people, their family and friends. Five thousand cards were printed and distributed amongst young people in our communities, youth & human service workers and some school based staff. The card includes information about the percentage of people who are same sex attracted, what determines sexuality, coming out, homophobia, legal rights, famous gays & lesbians, information for parents & friends and services and websites.

Some girls like other girls

Some guys like other guys

Some people like both

Some are straight

Some are not sure

We welcome you all

Produced by **WayOut**, Central Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project ©
Cobaw Community Health Service Telephone 5421 1619

Poster designed by young people of Macedon Ranges WayOut Group and funded by Rainbow Radio 895, Triple C FM Bendigo and Central Victorian Friends of Gays and Lesbians

This A2 poster was designed by the young people for organizations to display in their waiting rooms and client consultation areas. We printed two thousand copies and they have been distributed to a range of services such as community health centers, doctors' surgeries, secondary schools, local government and youth services.

We have recently approved several requests to re-print the poster. For example, Family Planning Association of NSW used the artwork to print a version for that State and the NSW Institute of Psychiatry has given copies to participants in their state-wide 'School-Link' training on working with same sex attracted young people.

Homophobia EXPOSED

"Homophobia Exposed" was written and performed by young people of the Macedon Ranges Committees of "WayOut, Central Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project."

Some of the comments made by young people after seeing the video: "It's really good, very informative and great acting"

"It floods your emotions"

"I think it should be shown at all schools and on TV"

"It would show people what but feels like to people who are gay."

"It really shocks you into thinking about the so many different ways that homophobia exists in our society."

© 2003 WayOut, Central Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project.
Cobaw Community Health Centre,
47 High St, Kynein, Victoria, 3444, Australia
Tel 61 3 5421 1666. Fax 61 3 5422 2161
Email: adm@cobaw.vic.gov.au

Video production & cover design - DAZ MEDIA
Duration 10 mins.

An informative and entertaining resource for schools, youth groups, human service organizations and anyone interested in understanding the nature and effects of discrimination towards same sex attracted young people.

Our most recently completed resource is a DVD/video called "Homophobia Exposed." This was produced principally for use by schools and human service agencies however, the feedback we have received from a diverse range of audiences indicates that it has much broader appeal. For example, it has been used by a church group, with tertiary students, with staff and residents of the Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centre and we have approved a request for it to be incorporated into the Victoria Police Gay & lesbian Liaison Officer training.

External evaluation of merchandise

Our main items of merchandise were each evaluated through surveys and focus groups attending community events. In most cases young people living in the project's catchment area were the main participants.

Evaluation of "We're all human" T-shirt and sticker[♦]

Youthfest is an annual event which takes place in the shire of Macedon Ranges. As the name denotes it is a festival for young people. The WayOut project launched its T-shirt and stickers at the event by having a stall and giving them away in return for young people filling out a questionnaire on the meaning of the logo. The logo which was created by the Macedon Ranges working group was "We're all Human. Its time to prove it. Fight homophobia".

Seventy-nine people filled out the questionnaire and received T-shirts or stickers. Eighteen of them were under 14 years and so their data were excluded. The remaining 66 questionnaires were analysed. More women (54) than men (22) filled out the questionnaire. The majority (90%) were under 21. We have no data about sexual orientation from this group.

The most important items for the purposes of the evaluation asked the participants "What does the logo mean to you?" and "Has the logo made you feel differently about gay and lesbian issues?" The answers to this question were short and clear, mostly phrases and small sentences. There were a number of clear interpretations of the meanings of the logo, all of them a variation on the theme of social justice.

The first meaning of the logo to young people was about people's rights to be how they want to be. One 18 year old woman wrote: "It means you should let people be themselves without feeling ashamed or hiding their sexuality", and a 15 year old wrote "being free to be who you want to be".

A second meaning concerned the duty of the community to respect others, for example "That we should respect people for who they are regardless of gender or sexual orientation", "As humans every one of us deserves to be treated with respect and not be victims of abuse and discrimination" and from a 16 year old, "Being human is about respecting everyone for who they are."

A third meaning was about the right to equality for everyone. One 18 year old argued "It doesn't matter if you're gay, everyone is the same" and from another 16 year old, "That everyone is equal, everyone is human and everyone should treat each other as equals."

There was also the sense for some that the logo was a call to action for the community. One 16 year old wrote "Fight against homophobia" and another 14 year old boy: "You have to fight back'.

Other young people focused on what it meant to wear the T-shirt. One 17 year old wrote; "it means that the people wearing it aren't homophobic and are sticking up for everyone no matter what their sexuality."

In summary, the logo was a very simple and effective communicative tool. There was no indication of any confusion about its meaning with young people from 14 years, to adults of 50 years, interpreting it in terms of the rights of SSA young people and the obligations of the community to accept and support them.

On a second level, this intervention at Youthfest where 1000s of young people gathered, very successfully broadcast the message to all who were there. At a third level, that stickers can be attached to books or walls and that T-shirts can be worn, allowed the intervention to do its work exponentially. Anecdotally there have been reports of the T-shirts being worn all over the Macedon Range, in neighbouring Shires, and other parts of Victoria. One woman wore hers into a

[♦] Information appearing in italics has been collated and written by Lynne Hillier as external project evaluator.

local hotel and received three orders from the patrons. Another young man had his photo in the local paper about another issue, wearing the T-shirt. Finally the T-shirt was used in the photo-shoot in Central Goldfield's Better Living Festival. At all levels this strategy must be regarded as very successful.

Evaluation of the SSAY information card.

One merchandising strategy developed by the Mt Alexander WayOut Committee was an information card. The card, which folds into a pocket size pamphlet, contains information for SSAY on one side and the straight community (including friends and families) on the other. The card has a very sharp design in bold colours. In order to evaluate its impact, five focus groups of young people at Youthfest 2003 were conducted.

Questions asked were about the look of the card, learnings from it, whether it made a difference to young people's thinking and its value to a same sex attracted person and an opposite sex attracted person. Young people were also asked about improvements that could be made to the card.

Young people generally liked the look of the card with comments such as "eye catching colour", "jazzy" and "stands out from plain boring white". There was a criticism about the writing being hard to read because of the bright colors.

The most common things young people learned from the card were about famous people who were gay and the legal rights of gays and lesbians.

Most young people said that they did not feel differently after reading the card. In all cases there was a sense of support for same sex attracted young people. One person said "half of us are from Daylesford", meaning that because they were from a town thought to be over represented in gay and lesbian residents, they had inclusive attitudes already. A number of young people said that they had gay or lesbian mothers and/or other relatives and friends.

Young people felt the card would be of use to SSAY because it was "reassuring and telling you that you are OK". Another said: "It tells SSAY that they are "not alone, not sick and they've got legal rights". There was a strong belief that the card would give great comfort to SSAY and that the information would give them the sense of being one of many.

Young people felt the card could be used to address homophobia. One person said "You should carry heaps of them and when someone is putting someone down, you could give them a card". It was suggested that the cards be given out at schools and universities. Another said: "Families and friends, everyone really". There was a strong belief in the card being widely distributed because young people believed it could make a difference.

Young people suggested a number of improvements including: "It could be bigger for people like my Dad who has glasses" and "Put on it why people are homophobic" and another "put on it why people are gay". These suggestions may not be acted on, however, they do show that young people were thinking carefully about the card.

In summary, young people liked the brightness and size of the card. They also appreciated the information that it gave them, especially about famous gay people and the legal rights of gay and lesbian people. They also believed that the card could make a difference in the ways people think and wanted it distributed widely in schools and in the community.

Evaluation of the WayOut poster

This poster, designed by young people in the Macedon Ranges working group was developed in accordance with the philosophies of the group concerning inclusiveness and non-segregation. Thus, all sexualities are mentioned and welcomed. The poster is suitable for use in public places and organisations that deal with the public. Data to evaluate this poster were gathered through

focus groups with young people who attended Youthfest 2004, an annual carnival day for young people in the Macedon Ranges.

Young people liked the simplicity of the poster, its straightforwardness and its bright colors. Some would have liked a picture of a gay or lesbian couple on it as well. They believed the message was about difference and equality. They felt that the poster was suitable for display everywhere including in schools, libraries and supermarkets and that in places such as health service waiting rooms it would make same sex attracted people feel comfortable. They did feel, however, that it was likely to be pulled down by people who disagreed with its message.

Young people believed that the poster would have a mixed reaction at their schools including some loving it while others would hate it. They felt that an important impact would be that people would talk about the issues, that a conversation would happen and that "any reaction would be good". In summary, there was overwhelming support for the poster even though it was controversial and might be removed and defaced.

Evaluation of video "An Interview with Homophobia"

This video was devised, written, directed and produced by young people in the Macedon Ranges working group under the guidance of the project coordinator. The video presents a historical context to the abuse of gay men and lesbians, with homophobia personified by a speaking presence in a black cape and white mask. Data to evaluate this poster were gathered through focus groups with young people who attended Youthfest 2004, an annual carnival day for young people in the Macedon Ranges. A letter about the video was also received from a group of community workers who had seen it during one of their group supervision sessions.

Young people's reactions to the video were many, including: "it floods your emotions", "it's very informative and simple as well", "I like the way they made the homophobia person" and "it shows people what hate feels like to people who are gay". The video was clearly educative with one young person commenting, "the facts and figures at the end were powerful, I didn't realise about suicide, it really shows that homosexuality is not such a big deal like it's not an illness or anything". It also gave them insight into their peers at school: "It made you think about how much it hurts them. One of my friends at schools was gay and he used to get picked on all the time – the other students would tell him that no one liked him and that he should go and live in the gutter".

Favourite aspects of the film such as: "the way everyone stood up to the dude in the white mask" and "the bits at the end when people fight back" show clearly that the film has been successful in concretising homophobia as a bad thing and giving inspiration to people to overcome it and remove it from the community. The film was successful because the viewer identified with the young people and not with homophobia. That young people could recognise the depiction of homophobia in their school and personal lives could also be seen in their comments: "There's a lot of crap at school, like we're Goths and we get called names all the time because we wear make-up and stuff – get called faggot and shit", "yes, at school everything's gay, faggot. There's a girl at school who's bi so nobody will touch her" and "I know some guys at school who say he's gay, I'm going to bash him". The community workers were also impressed with the strategy of personifying homophobia. They wrote: "We felt that your interview with homophobia as a character meant that your approach was non-blaming". There were some in the focus group, however, who left as soon as they realised what the film was about.

Young people also experienced the film as a call to action. Comments such as "Spread the word around, people should know about it" and "You can't close your mind all your life, you have to fight it [homophobia] as a group" were fairly typical reactions to the film. There was great enthusiasm about showing the video widely in schools and in the community because the need for change was great.

5) Work in Schools

Within the project's catchment area there are some 17 secondary schools which contain approximately 12,900 students and 890 staff. The project considered that schools were a very important sector to engage and dedicated considerable resources endeavoring to do so both at an individual school level as well as the regional office of the Department of Education and Training. Unfortunately these efforts produced few results particularly at a systems level and it was only largely because of the commitment of individual staff and students at some schools that the project was able to achieve positive outcomes. The main obstacles arose from:

- A lack of awareness in the schools of equal opportunity legislation in general and specifically in regard to discrimination on the basis of lawful sexual activity. Few schools in the catchment area had equal opportunity policies and where they did exist, they tended to be minimalist, outdated and staff had limited knowledge of their content or indeed where they could be found.
- School leadership regularly expressed a belief that undertaking initiatives would generate strong parental objection. It is interesting that senior staff perceive parents have homophobic attitudes and in the absence of verifiable data, it has been a difficult argument to challenge.
- Lack of clear direction from the Department at either a regional or state level that awareness raising with staff and students was endorsed and/or encouraged.

Engaging with the Department of Education and Training

The project made several attempts to engage relevant regional DE&T staff:

- a) In mid 2002 the project worker met with a regional DE&T student well-being team member and invited them to be on the WayOut Regional Reference group. The staff member was interested and requested that we submit an overview of the project for consideration by her team manager. This document was submitted however we did not receive a response and despite contact over subsequent months, a representative was never appointed to our group.
- b) Following from the suggestion of the above department worker, in late 2002 the WayOut project coordinator submitted an abstract to present at a regional teacher training conference organized by the Department and held every two years. We did not receive any reply.
- c) Around March 2003 the project coordinator contacted the central office of the Department seeking their endorsement for our information card being distributed (free) to all secondary students in our area. We were advised that the Department has a policy of not endorsing any products and it was suggested that we use regional DE&T staff to advertise its availability.
- d) In mid 2003 the project worker approached another member of the regional student well-being team in DE&T and introduced the project again. The DE&T staff member advised that he would circulate information to schools and keep in contact regarding opportunities to attend relevant school cluster/regional meetings and to present information sessions. We did not receive any invitations and are not aware of any information being circulated.
- e) In April 2004 we wrote to the Regional Director of the Department providing information about our project, copies of our resources and requested an opportunity to meet with senior staff. As of December 2004, we had not received a reply.
- f) In October 2004, the Youth Liaison Officer from the Department of Victorian Communities (who had known of the difficulties we had encountered engaging schools) organized a meeting with the Regional DE&T student well-being team. Although this was a constructive meeting it was identified that as the WayOut project was due to finish in two months there would be few opportunities for information etc to be circulated.

Overview of work undertaken in schools

Prior to the commencement of the WayOut project, during 2001 another suicide prevention project, "Breaking Through," had completed work in two secondary schools in the Macedon Ranges Shire (Gisborne and Kyneton Secondary Colleges). "Breaking Through" aimed to raise awareness about the needs of SSA students from a broader promoting diversity/anti-bullying

framework. As we did not have the resources to work intensely with each school in the catchment area, we planned to complete the following work:

- a) Engage schools in the Central Goldfields Shire that had no prior exposure to the subject of SSA students/homophobia (Highview Community Christian College & Maryborough Regional College).
- b) Work in partnership with "Breaking Through" in 2002 at Castlemaine Secondary College
- c) Support other schools in Macedon Ranges and Greater Bendigo Shires by responding to requests for assistance/resources/training where possible.

Central Goldfields

During 2003 the project coordinator approached the two schools in Central Goldfields Shire to introduce the project and its resources. Following a meeting with senior staff at the independent college, a time was arranged for the WayOut coordinator to speak to all staff about the needs of SSAYP and resources available for teachers. A copy of the "Pride & Prejudice" training package was left with the school as well as several handouts on topics such as 'responding to a student who comes out' and 'responding to discriminatory language in the classroom.' The coordinator subsequently visited the school to assist in consultations with students for the development of the local Shire's Youth Policy (an initiative instigated by the Maryborough Youth Workers' Network). It would appear that informal networks between young people in the project's catchment area also ensured that information about the project circulated within the student body – for example, an article about the school's social in the Maryborough Advertiser (on 15/4/03) contained a photograph of a young man wearing one of our "Queer, Don't knock it till you've tried t-shirts." Also the WayOut co-coordinator received several emails from students attending the school - one who identified as SSA and others who wished to show their support for a friend who had come out.

The coordinator also made a number of attempts to engage the state secondary school in the Shire. She first met with the Chaplin from the school and he subsequently became a member of the WayOut local working committee in that area. Through the Chaplin, a time was arranged for the coordinator to do a presentation to the school board to obtain approval for the project to work in the school. There were no negative reactions expressed about the presentation (which included an overview of research findings about SSAYP, challenges they faced at school, relevant departmental policy and equal opportunity legislation). Following the meeting, the coordinator was advised that the school intended to review/update its policies on the subjects of bullying and wellbeing etc and they considered that it would be better to wait for this to occur before any specific work was undertaken by the project. Over the subsequent twelve months, the coordinator contacted the school several times to offer assistance (for example, with the policy and/or staff training, talks to students etc) but eventually the designated school contact person did not reply. The association with the school Chaplin continued and through this avenue as well as other local youth workers, some of our resources were circulated to students (such as stickers and information cards). The WayOut coordinator was also contacted by workers (within and outside the school) to seek advice about supporting individual students who had 'come out.'

Mt Alexander

As mentioned earlier, the project was committed to working in partnership with staff from the "Breaking Through" project at the Castlemaine Secondary College during 2002/3. This included presentations to the School Council, assisting in the design and delivery of a full day staff training session (hosted by the Breaking Through and involving presentations by workers from the "Safety in Our Schools" project conducted by the Australian Research Centre in Sex Health & Society as well as a drama performance "Something Gay" by "How Now" Theatre group). Following completion of the Breaking Through Project, the WayOut Project worker sought to continue work with the school and several offers were made to assist with policy and curriculum initiatives as well as work directly with students. Permission was also sought to distribute the WayOut information card to all students attending the senior campus (yrs 10, 11 and 12). This request was not approved on the basis that the school did not want to be seen to be promoting homosexuality and/or encouraging students to become "gay." Permission was given for the cards to be made available outside the school welfare staff offices.

The school also declined assistance with policy and curriculum initiatives and the project worker was advised she could however participate in meetings of one of a school's student group "CAST" (Castlemaine Adolescent Support Team). Although the project coordinator had reservations about what systems level changes could be driven by the students (given the power imbalances involved) she nevertheless proceeded to work with the group and attended their meetings on a regular basis for some twelve months. During this time and after learning about the work of the WayOut Project, the students decided that they too would like to develop and distribute posters, stickers and t-shirts around the school. WayOut brokerage funding was provided for this work (see further information below under 'Brokerage'). The students subsequently developed the slogan "Embrace Diversity" to be printed on stickers and t-shirts. However senior staff at the school instructed the group that this was not appropriate and advised that the slogan "Tolerate Diversity" would be acceptable. Understandably the students were angry about their slogan being censored and indeed, both the students and WayOut project coordinator were somewhat confused as to how the word "Embrace" could be viewed as inappropriate. Following a meeting between the WayOut coordinator and a senior staff member, the group was permitted to use the slogan "Respect Diversity."

Partly as a result of this incident, the WayOut coordinator was approached separately by a group of students who wished to form their own WayOut group independent of the school. We were very happy to support their energy and commitment to raising awareness and challenging homophobia. The group subsequently met out-side of school on two occasions and planned various activities including the production of a t-shirt for members with a definition of homophobia on the front and definitions of other words (such as "gay", "faggot" and "poof") on the back. Members were however finding it difficult to get together outside of school hours (because of for example, transport schedules) and they decided that it would be best to see if we could meet at lunchtime during school. Although we did meet on two occasions, doing so generated a strong reaction from some staff. The main obstacle arose from a requirement by the school that we could only meet with a staff person of its choice present. During one discussion with a senior staff member, the WayOut coordinator stated that she fully appreciated the need to have a school representative present (for duty of care reasons) and was happy for this to occur. However, she also expressed her concern that this requirement (for their nominated employee of the Department of Education to be present) did not appear to apply to other student groups who met at the campus such as the young Christian group. The students were later advised that they could not meet at the school because they were a "political group." The group subsequently met outside the school and we discussed relevant provisions within equal opportunity legislation. Group members determined that in the first instance they would write a letter to the Principal. At the time of writing this report, the matter remained unresolved.

Macedon Ranges and Greater Bendigo

The two state secondary schools in the Macedon Ranges Shire had been involved with the Breaking Through Project prior to the commencement of the WayOut Project. Staff at both schools had therefore undertaken training as well as participated in other initiatives as part of that project. Accordingly we introduced our project, explained the resources we could offer and advised schools that we were happy to respond to their requests for assistance. This led to the project doing presentations at Year 9 & 10 Health Days, distributing resources (stickers, posters, information cards, and our video) as well as responding to requests for secondary consultations in the support of individual students who had 'come out.'

The WayOut coordinator made contact with a staff member from the Catholic Secondary College and over a period of two and a half years was able to support this teacher's development/implementation of very successful work. This included whole of school staff training, revision of relevant policies and training of a student group to act as peer educators with younger students on the subject of promoting diversity. The work was undertaken in accordance with the school's social justice strategy. It is our view that the work undertaken by this Catholic College is the best illustration of what could have been achieved by any school in the project's catchment area.

Due to limited resources we were unable to intensively engage the 11 secondary schools in the Greater Bendigo Shire. However we were able to work in partnership with the School Focussed Youth Service in that area to distribute information about the needs of SSA students and advertise our project. We were also able to support the organization and delivery of two training/information sessions by workers involved with the Safety in Our Schools⁵ and SSAFE projects.⁶ As information about our project and resources circulated informally, we responded to requests for information cards and posters as well as secondary consultations from welfare staff providing support to individual students.

Young people's networking in schools

It is important to acknowledge the enormously effective 'leg-work' done informally by individual young people in our Macedon Ranges and Castlemaine WayOut groups within their schools. As described above, the coordinator faced many challenges endeavoring to engage schools at a formal level. Irrespective of how those negotiations were proceeding, our merchandise filtered into school environments. On occasions, individual members of our groups approached staff and requested that for example, posters be displayed in staff rooms. Students who had seen our video in other settings approached their teachers and asked if it could be shown in class. Our t-shirts and information cards were given out to friends. Stickers appeared on lockers and windows. Our members interrupted peers in the playground and asked why they called something/someone "gay" as a put-down. This may very well be the most effective and efficient way that awareness has been raised amongst students within the school systems. It is of great concern that it often occurred without official school support and indeed, in some instances, in the face of active resistance by school leadership.

Evaluation of work in schools*

The WayOut project was responsible for a number of professional development sessions in schools in the area. As well, outside organisations were brought in to run information sessions for teachers. A number of schools contacted the project for information, referral and advice concerning SSAY issues. The project was quite active in the school arena, however, resistance was met on most school fronts and little real change could be observed in school systems. Unless the entire school community is of one accord and using a whole of school approach, and there is the overt backing of the state department of education, schools are extremely difficult organizations in which to bring about change. An added barrier to change is that the WayOut project was working in a rural context, where attitudes tend to be conservative (the survival of rural towns often depends on this) and surveillance is very high. One teacher from a rural school commented, "It's hard dealing with such immovable structures as school councils." This project faced particular difficulties in enacting change in its rural school communities for at least the following reasons:

- a) There was never a time in which the entire school community agreed to address homophobia in schools.*
- b) There was never the belief on the part of the school communities that the DE&T was behind them in addressing homophobia or more, that it required them to address homophobia in the school community. In fact many school staff were afraid of a backlash if they became involved in addressing homophobia in the school. This project produced many resources of a very high standard and yet DE&T, Victoria was unprepared to endorse these. The information card, for example, is an excellent information resource for teachers and students because it dispels myths and gives important information about sexuality – all with a credible research base. However, schools were unprepared to distribute it because there was no overt backing from DE&T.*

⁵ A project written and delivered to secondary schools by the Aust. Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society

⁶ A project conducted by Family Planning Victoria during 2002/3.

* Information appearing in italics has been collated and written by Lynne Hillier as external project evaluator.

- c) *Though it takes a whole school community to bring about change, there was evidence that one or two school council members could derail an intervention that was happening in the schools and stymie the work of the project.*
- d) *There was evidence that school personnel were frightened of a parental backlash and with no DE&T backing they were unprepared to take a risk.*
- e) *There was also evidence in some cases that members of school communities had their own personal agendas to not deal with discrimination and abuse against SSAY students.*

In all of the schools in this project, resistance prevented the project from making inroads into schools beyond initial forums and meetings. The project was stalled in many different ways at many different levels. At one school, students who formed a group to address discrimination, particularly homophobia, were told that they could not meet at the school unless fairly rigid conditions were met, including having a staff member present at all times. Their activities, including the resources they were planning, were also constantly censored by school staff. These conditions were not applied to religious and other groups who were allowed to freely meet at the school without school staff present. In response the group of young people decided to meet outside the school. They wrote a letter to the principal to complain about their treatment. The group has since been very active in producing resources and working for change.

Much of the change occurred in schools because of the work of the young people. Although this is inspiring and empowering for them, it should not be that the responsibility for change is left to those whom the school system is supposed to protect.

A strong recommendation of this evaluation is that DE&T direct schools (in a written memo) as to their legal obligations to address homophobia and discrimination in their schools and to protect the rights and ensuring the well being of their SSAY students. Unless schools have a written directive from DE&T that they can refer to for support when changes are challenged, it is difficult to see that change will happen.

6) Training Sessions

Over the three years, the project delivered a variety of training and information sessions to audiences ranging from young people in community based education and training programs to tertiary students and human services and health professionals. In total approximately 530 people attended these sessions and for many participants it was the first time they had received information on subjects such as same sex attraction and/or homophobia. As the project's work became known we also responded to requests to discuss the nature of our project's model and approach, how it was driven by young people and also our merchandising and social marketing strategies.

Depending on the time available and needs of the specific audience, training would usually include some or all of the following topics:

- What is sexuality
- Research findings regarding:
 - the percentage of young people who identify as SSA
 - physical and emotional wellbeing of SSA young people
 - suicide rates and when suicide attempts occur
- Nature and effects of homophobia & heterosexism
- Myths & stereotypes about SSA people in our community
- Supporting same sex attracted young people
- Equal opportunity legislation
- Why and how our project has been developed and delivered.

As our merchandise was developed, participants received various stickers, the information card and a poster etc and we generally included a screening of our video "Homophobia Exposed" in each session.

7) Brokerage

Provision of a brokerage component in the project funding has been very significant in that it has enabled us to support other organisations to undertake work that we may not have otherwise been able to complete.

An information booklet describing the aims of the project, brokerage assessment guidelines and application form was developed and is included in Appendix 6. Below are examples of the initiatives undertaken with brokerage funding.

Production of merchandise

The young people in WayOut local working committees designed and distributed a range of merchandise to engage our community and raise awareness. Brokerage money was provided to fund these initiatives and full details about the various stickers, t-shirts, posters, information card, video etc and associated evaluation results are described in section 4.

Community Photograph in Central Goldfields

The Central Goldfields WayOut local working committee identified that a priority was to circulate information to the general community through avenues such as local newspapers and events attended by local residents. An opportunity to do this occurred when a group of organisations in the area planned to hold a "Better Living Festival" in June 2003. This Festival was a day where residents could obtain a variety of information about health services, community and recreational activities as well as see displays by organizations such as the State Emergency Service, Police and Country Fire Service etc. Our committee decided that not only could we hold a stall and distribute information and merchandise at this event but we could also invite residents to take part in 'the biggest possible community photograph of people in the Central Goldfields area against homophobia.' Media releases and posters inviting people to participate were circulated throughout the area (see Appendix 7 for copies of newspaper articles and posters publicizing the event). A stall was set up and we distributed approximately 100 free t-shirts with the slogan "We're all Human, Its time to Prove It, Fight Homophobia." Participants were also invited to complete a short questionnaire as part of the external evaluation (see results below). The photograph was taken by a professional photographer and copies were distributed to many of those involved as well as key organizations working with young people such as the local Shire and community health centre.



People of the Central Goldfields area against homophobia
Organised by "WayOut" Central Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project
20th of June 2003

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Photo shoot evaluation[♦]

One innovative intervention devised by the working group in Central Goldfields was to stage a photo shoot at their Better Living festival in which as many people who wanted to, could have their photo taken wearing the WayOut T-shirt with the logo "Human? Prove it. Fight homophobia". The festival was regarded as a family event. The aim of the photo shoot was to provide an opportunity for people who wanted to show support for SSAY to make a stand and an educative initiative for those who looked on. The T-shirts were distributed free to those who were in the photo shoot and/or who filled out a questionnaire which contained some evaluation and some research items. Over 100 questionnaires were filled out and the equivalent number of T-shirts distributed. (See Appendix 8 for questionnaire)

Young people who were under 14 were not included in the analysis, nor were those who did not complete the questionnaire. Seventy-eight people filled out the questionnaire because they wanted a T-shirt, not because they were going to be part of the photograph. Because the T-shirt had an anti-homophobia logo on it however, it could be argued that regardless of the photo shoot, obtaining and wearing the T-shirt constitutes an anti-homophobia intervention. Of most importance to this evaluation however were the questionnaires filled out by people who were interested in being part of the photo shoot and those who would have liked to take part but were concerned about the repercussions. Within this group we were most interested in the items about the reasons for people being involved or not being involved in the photograph.

Forty-five adults (33 women and 12 men) and 3 children were in the final photograph. The gender difference is important and may be explained through gendered manifestations of homophobia or because women are more likely to be involved in work with SSAY. Ages ranged from 14 to 79, with the under 40s being nearly all women. Twenty were over 50 years and about 30% were same or both sex attracted. The reasons for being in the photograph were many, but all were on the theme of support for the gay and lesbian community. This is an excellent example of a gay-straight alliance occurring in the broader community.

Some people were involved because they believed in social justice for all people. One of the under 20s was involved because "it's fair", a 40 year old woman was involved because "I believe in fighting against discrimination of any kind. We're all the same." A 52 year old woman was involved because "I believe in human rights and equality."

A second reason for involvement was to support the gay and lesbian community. A 14 year old wrote "supporting the community" and these three words were repeated many times by others.

A third reason was a concern about same sex attracted young people, homophobia and negative health outcomes, particularly suicide. One 62 year old man wrote: "to support gay and lesbian young people who may be affected by others views on homosexuality" and a 50 year old man wrote "desperately concerned about gay and lesbian youth suicide".

There were also personal reasons for being involved: One man wrote "my son was gay."

Booklet for same sex attracted young women

The WayOut Brokerage Committee was pleased to approve an application for funding from Loddon Mallee Women's Health Service (LMWH) to produce a resource booklet targeting same sex attracted young women. The booklet is currently being printed and includes information on same sex attraction, lesbian lifestyles and health issues as well as contacts for further information including social and support groups. The front cover of the booklet is depicted below:

[♦] Information appearing in italics has been collated and written by Lynne Hillier as external project evaluator.



Merchandise produced by the student group "CAST"

Brokerage funding was provided to Castlemaine Secondary College for the production and distribution of a poster, stickers and t-shirts by their student group CAST (Castlemaine Adolescent Support Team). The group distributed this merchandise as part of their awareness raising activities on the senior school campus during Mental Health Week in 2003. Below is a copy of the stickers they produced.



Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG) Group

Shortly after the WayOut Project commenced it was identified that there was limited support in the area for parents of SSA young people. Although the project team was mindful of the need to consult further with parents about what type of service/group they would find useful, doing so presented several challenges on both practical and conceptual levels. For example, much of the project coordinators time was dedicated to engaging with young people and also the project's over-riding responsibilities in terms of ensuring safety, support and confidentiality were to these young people. Accordingly following preliminary negotiations, we were very please to provide funding to Loddon Mallee Women's Health to establish a Central Victoria branch of Parents and

Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG). The funding enabled the employment of a project worker, Beth Taylor, one day a week for six months to:

- Gauge community interest in forming a group.
- Make contact with the Melbourne Branch of PFLAG and seek their advice concerning the establishment of a branch in our region.
- Providing there was sufficient interest from local parents, facilitate the establishment of a group.

The initiative was extremely successful and the first meeting held in Bendigo on 2 August 2004 was attended by some 30 individuals. The participants shared a range of stories about how they reacted when their children 'came out' and their experiences of being the parent in a country community that is not necessarily welcoming to same sex attracted people. Group members subsequently arranged to meet on a monthly basis and are undertaking a range of activities including the planning/delivery of an ongoing telephone contact service. A copy of the group's flyer is contained in Appendix 9.

8) Outcomes for workers, organizations & communities

Feedback from workers

Participants in the WayOut video report describe a range of personal and professional benefits from being involved with the project. These included:

From young people who volunteered in WayOut groups

- getting an opportunity to stand up for something they believe in
- working for equality in our community
- being part of a group making them feel stronger and cared about
- having people in their community listen to what they have to say
- being treated like 'celebrities' after they have done a public presentation
- becoming more aware of homophobia happening in their community
- gaining more open-minded about a range of issues
- learning a range of life skills such as public speaking
- having fun

From paid workers associated with the project

- feeling like they had some backing
- being able to use the merchandise
 - to raise awareness in their workplace amongst colleagues
 - to show clients/students they were okay to talk to about SSA
 - to initiate discussions either in the workplace or with their family
- going through a re-thinking of their own views/beliefs about SSA
- using the WayOut project coordinator to do training in their workplace
- consulting with the WayOut project coordinator about providing support to individual young people that have approached them
- being part of a movement for change in their community.

In addition to the comments made on the video, there are several other important gains and/or support that we would like to acknowledge.

General community views before & after the project

As part of the external evaluation of the project ten 'key informants' were selected from each of the three smaller shires (Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander and Central Goldfields) to participate in a short telephone interview around the beginning and then again towards the end of the project. This approach is called a 'Rapid Assessment Technique' and it endeavored to measure whether there were any shifts in community thinking about same sex attraction and supporting SSA young people during the time that the project was conducted.

Analysis of WayOut Rapid Assessment Technique (RAT)♦

Ten key informants from each local government area (LGA) were interviewed over the phone for about 30 minutes. Interviews were mostly structured but there was room for added individual comments about some of the items. Positions of the key informants varied in each of the LGAs but included some of the following: school nurse, newspaper editor, public librarian, councillor in local government, Community Health Service staff, police officer, general practitioner, student support services officer, a child maternal and health nurse, recreation officer, school chaplain and business person. The aim of gathering these data was to assess the impact of WayOut on the broader Central Victorian community. RATS were carried out at two time periods (Time 1 at the beginning of the project and Time 2 at the end) in the three LGAs with a range of public figures – many of them (though not all) having no direct contact with the project.

♦ Information appearing in italics has been collated and written by Lynne Hillier as external project evaluator.

The questionnaire (see Appendix 4) had three sections:

- Section 1 a five point scale (1 = very supportive, 5 = very unsupportive) about key informant perspectives on community reactions to nine different scenarios in the town eg How do you think your community might react to government funding of a service for SSA people in your area?
- Section 2 consisted of questions about the following: a young man/woman) in the Shire comes to you and tells you that she thinks she might be gay/lesbian – what advice would you give him/her?
- Section 3 asked about particular training and policies around homosexuality and homophobia in the key informants' workplace.

The aim of the exercise was to gather a profile of the town from the perspectives of people who have a particular public position that affords them a bird's eye view. Some of these people worked with young people and others had some involvement with WayOut.

Macedon Ranges

Prior to WayOut, this area had been exposed to some education around SSAY issues through a project called Breaking Through. This project worked mainly in schools and involved collaboration with the drama group Theatre of the Oppressed to bring about change. It could be expected therefore that this area would present less opposition to addressing SSAY issues than another LGA which had not been exposed to interventions. It could also be argued that because the WayOut project was based in the Macedon Ranges Shire, more change could be expected there.

Ten key informants were interviewed in the early stages of the WayOut project. Eight of them were available for a follow-up interview 18 months later. All were happy to spend time talking about the cultural climate of their town in regard to same sex attracted issues. Nine events were described to them (see Appendix 4) and for each they gave a score of one to five according to how supportive the town might be of each event (lower scores = more supportive).

All scores averaged over 2.5, indicating that there was thought to be no real support for any of the events described in the interview. In Time 1 there was the general prediction that the town would be least supportive of events that involved young people, especially young people in schools. These were homosexuality visibly included in the school curriculum (3.5), a gay man on the football team (3.3) and an openly gay or lesbian teacher at school (3.1). The least resistance to events was predicted for a gay friendly restaurant (2.5) and an advertisement for a lesbian support group in the local paper (2.5). Gay and lesbian couples dancing at the local dance (2.9), a public meeting about homophobia (2.9) a lesbian couple holding hands in the street (2.7) and government funding for a SSAY service in the area (2.8) were given middle scores by the key informants in the unsure to unsupportive range. Total predicted support score was 26.2 with an average of 2.9, between unsure and unsupportive.

In terms of change between Time 1 and Time 2, the greatest shift occurred in regard to a public meeting about homophobia (2.9 down to 2.1), homosexual visibility in the school curriculum (3.5 down to 3.1) and government funding for a service for SSAY in the area (2.8 down to 2.4). An advertisement for a lesbian support group (2.5 down to 2.1) and a gay friendly restaurant (2.5 down to 2.2) also showed a change in predicted town reaction away from unsupportive. There was no shift in predicted reactions towards gay and lesbian couples dancing at the local dance and a gay man on the football team. Total shift was from 26.2 down to 23

These shifts are quite substantial and are especially important where young people are concerned because these were the areas of most resistance in Time 1. Schools are also the places where research tells us, young people are most likely to suffer from homophobia and discrimination because of their sexuality. Given the WayOut project is about the well being of young people, these shifts demonstrate that it has achieved some of its aims in the Shire of Macedon Ranges. It should not be assumed, however, that this result indicates a change in schools, rather it indicates

a change in attitudes of townsfolk about what should happen in schools as perceived by the key informants.

There were two events in section 1 that many of the key informants chose to comment on as well as giving a score. These were the gay man on the football team and the gay friendly restaurant. In each case there was the belief that the answer depended on qualities of the player and the restaurant, that is, if the player was good he would be more supported and if the restaurant food was good it would be more likely supported. There were also indications that the qualities of gay men and lesbians in the town would impact on whether they were supported eg whether they contributed to the town in terms of the common good. One person argued that: "Sexuality doesn't mean anything, it is the persons integrity that counts more".

Section 2 of the interview involved key informants responding to: "A young man or woman in the Shire comes to you and tells you s/he thinks they might be gay (lesbian) – what advice would you give?" There were fairly strong shifts in responses from Time 1 to Time 2 to this series of questions. In Time 1, it was often suggested that the young person would need to seek support outside the area for resources and groups with most suggestions focussing on the city. In Time 2, suggestions were more often made about support and information that resided inside the local area. The WayOut project, Sue Hackney, in particular, and the WayOut working group of young people were often mentioned as resources that young people could access. As well, many people knew about the resources that had been produced, for example the information card and the poster. It is probably true that the act of conducting the interviews may have alerted these people to the project but it equally may mean that they had been exposed to or involved in other activities of WayOut since the first interview. Where particular resources and groups were mentioned the latter is true.

There was also the sense that those key informants who worked with young people and who had more to do with the project felt that more change had been brought about because of the project. People who were older and/or had had less to do with young people and the project were less likely to have observed change. One person commented "Can't discern a change in attitudes since the last interview" while others disagreed: "I think attitudes are changing – there are more openly gay people in the community". Another said: "the community is becoming more accepting generally over the past few years. Issues about sexuality are talked about more openly". Another commented: "I think the WayOut project is doing some important work in the area".

In Section 3 Time 1, very few of the key informants had undergone anti-homophobia training or knew of policies that included SSA people in their workplaces. In Time 2 – a number of changes were evident. The first was in the police force, with gay and lesbian liaison officers placed in each region and anti discrimination policies put in place in the last few years. This was a Victorian initiative and not as a result of WayOut, however, it was important in making change in police culture in the area. There were a number of cases in which key informants had taken part in training that had been conducted as part of the WayOut project. These included those involved in youth work, teaching and health professions. Those who attended the training were clearly influenced by it.

Mt Alexander Shire

Like Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander Shire had been exposed to some education around SSAY through the Breaking Through Project. The shire also contains some towns which are thought of as gay friendly and which have a higher than usual gay and lesbian population. As with Macedon Ranges, there was some attrition. Whereas 10 key informant interviews were completed at Time 1, eight follow-ups were successfully matched to them.

As with Macedon Ranges, the events at Time 1 which key informants believed would receive the least support were a gay man in the football team (3.3), homosexuality visible in the school curriculum (3.5) and an openly gay or lesbian teacher at school (3.1). Again, these were events that involved young people - the focus of the WayOut project. The least resistance for events were predicted to be a gay friendly restaurant (2.5), a lesbian couple holding hands in the street

(2.7) and an advertisement for a lesbian support group (2.5). Total scores for support were 25.1 with an average of 2.8, slightly more supportive (or less unsupportive) than for Macedon Ranges. Only one event, an advertisement for a lesbian support group, scored 2 denoting more town support.

The largest T1 to T2 change in predicted support were for a public meeting about homophobia (2.9 down to 2.1), homosexuality included in the school curriculum (3.5 down to 3.1) and government funding for a project for SSAY (2.8 down to 2.4). Unlike Macedon Ranges, perceived support did not increase for an openly gay or lesbian teacher at the school. In terms of project success, again we can see the greatest change (to more supportive) in events that concern young people and at least some of that change can be attributed to the work of the WayOut project.

In Section 2, there was the sense that SSA members of the community were visible, had a lot of contacts and were well resourced. As one key informant commented "Most of the SSA clients are highly intelligent ... well informed ... and could teach me". Another commented "Here at my workplace almost half the workers are gay and are well accepted". Key informants in this shire were also more likely to say that they would refer the person to their own gay and lesbian friends. One key informant suggested that 40% of businesses were owned by members of the gay community and the community was happy to go to them.

Despite the perception that the adult community was well represented by gay people and that the town did not seem to discriminate against them, there was also evidence that homophobia was common and that SSAY suffered from it at school and in the community. Those key informants who were younger and/or had close contact with young people (as workers or parents) were more aware of SSAY issues. One person believed that it was the "55+ original residents that resisted the openness of the gay community". There was a common belief that schools in particular allowed homophobic abuse to continue unchecked. One key informant believed that: "Staff at schools don't want to deal with young SSA students. They are picked on by other students and not protected by adults. I think there is a real need for an education program but you can't get past school council". Another participant who said "We are privileged to live in Castlemaine where anything and everything goes" and who had gay relatives was surprised when his daughter made homophobic comments. Evaluation of the project in regard to schools can be found in Section 5: Work in Schools. The importance of the Cobaw project was referred to by a number of the key informants including the following youth worker who said: "I think WayOut is a fantastic project – it is unique and very needed in this region. The work it has done is great and we really need it to continue". As with Macedon Ranges, Section 2 responses were more likely to refer to the WayOut Project and resources in the area rather than referrals to the city.

In Section 3, any professional development training opportunities that the key informants mentioned had been conducted by the WayOut project. Though several had attended the training, three mentioned that they had not attended because of time constraints.

Central Goldfields

Unlike the other two shires, the Central Goldfields Shire does not have high visibility of the lesbian and gay community, nor had it, prior to the WayOut project, been exposed to any anti homophobia interventions. Ten key informant interviews were carried out at Time 1 and eight at Time 2.

Similar to the other shires, Section 1 events which were perceived to be most unsupported were those where young people were involved, that is, an openly gay or lesbian teacher at school (3.4) and homosexuality included in the school curriculum (3.4). Other unsupported events were gay and lesbian couples dancing at the local dance (3.4) and a gay friendly restaurant (3.6). Those events thought to meet with least resistance were government funding for a service for SSAY (2.8), an advertisement for a lesbian support group (2.6) and a public meeting about homophobia (2.9). The greatest change from Time 1 to Time 2 occurred in an openly gay or lesbian teacher at school (3.4 down to 2.9) a gay friendly restaurant (3.6 down to 2.9) and a public meeting about homophobia (2.9 down to 2.6). There were also examples of change the other way with

government funding for SSAY (2.8 up to 3.2) and a gay man in the football team (2.9 up to 3.4). The rest stayed the same.

Overall scores on support were not very different from the other shires, however they seem to be less stable. Though change towards more support was observed in two youth related events, the trend was not as strong as in the other two shires.

Section 2 responses revealed fairly strong homophobic attitudes in some of the key informants, especially at Time 1 and a very strong link between gender and sexuality. Gay men would not be discriminated against if they were not sooks that is, abuse depends on the way men perform gender. There were some gains however. There were indications that the local library had increased its stock to include gay and lesbian issues as a result of the WayOut project and one key informant had worked with WayOut to introduce change into school policy and curriculum. He commented: "The WayOut project worker has done a lot to raise awareness/knowledge of SSA and legal issues. I feel more confident now about supporting SSA young people." In those key informants who worked with young people and/or were involved in the WayOut project there were many changes from Time 1 to Time 2 especially in their awareness of resources and referrals within the area or close by.

In regard to section 3 the WayOut project was the only organisation in the area providing professional development around issues regarding sexuality.

In summary all three shires showed change in perceived support for events embracing same sex sexuality and except for two events at Central Goldfields, all of these changes were in the direction of more support and/or less resistance. Consistent change throughout the shires was observed with events to do with young people, for example open gay and lesbian teachers at school, visibility in the curriculum and government funding of a service for SSAY. These were also the events that were least supported in Time I interviews and which communities generally have difficulty with. Though we cannot say categorically that all of this change was brought about because of WayOut, there was evidence in the qualitative data to indicate that at least some of it could be attributed to the work of the project. Given that WayOut aimed to make the community a safer place for same sex attracted young people, we can say that the success of this aim is supported by the RAT data.

Unsolicited support from our local GLBTI community

Shortly after the project commenced its initial introduction to the region we were approached by presenters of a program called "Rainbow Radio" from a community radio station based in Bendigo. The program features news, views etc of interest to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) listeners, their family & friends. Since this first contact, the WayOut project has received ongoing interest and support from Rainbow Radio and members of the community. We have for example, received unsolicited donations totaling \$8,590 from individual adult gay & lesbian members of our community and also various GLBTI social/fundraising events. We feel honored to receive such support and have been pleased to acknowledge the groups/individuals contributions on products we have produced (see information card, poster and video). We also recognise that the support is very significant for a range of reasons not least of which is that our project design (public activism by young people) would appear to have provided an avenue of engaging an otherwise disparate and hidden group within our community.

Working with local governments

The project established links with youth workers from each of the four local government offices in the catchment area. It is important to note that in contrast to metropolitan offices and with the exception of Greater Bendigo, there is only one full-time youth worker in each office and their resources are very limited. Nevertheless, the project has received very positive responses and in fact our project's first contact with SSA young people was arranged through a shire youth worker in the Macedon Ranges. The WayOut group that later formed in that local government area was subsequently invited to give a briefing about the project at a Council meeting and Councilors

responded in an interested and supportive way. Our posters and stickers continue to be displayed in various council staff offices' and youth areas.

To the extent that we found most local governments to be important and supportive partners for our project, we did experience challenges with a senior staff member in the Central Goldfields Shire. Before describing these in more detail we wish to stress that we were able to undertake some very successful work in this local government area and we received fantastic support from a committed network of professionals working with young people, in which the Shire's own youth worker is a key player. Difficulties with the senior staff member arose immediately after the local paper printed extracts of our media release inviting people of the Shire to participate in the biggest possible community photo of people against homophobia (see section 7). The WayOut project coordinator was advised that the Council staff member was very angry about the situation and we subsequently met in person. At this meeting he expressed a strong concern that our project had implied (by using the words "Shire" in the media release) that the Council endorsed our activities. Although it was explained that the words were used in the sense of identifying a geographical location, the staff member stated that he did not want the general community to have the impression that his organization could be seen to be "promoting homosexuality" and/or associated with our project. During the discussion, he also identified that he was on the secondary school board and played football with the editor of the local newspaper. The discussion can be used as an illustration of the way that projects such as WayOut can be faced with situations where an individual's/organisation's actual stance on sexual diversity can exist in a clear but otherwise undocumented/publicly traceable way. It is also an example of the challenges of work in smaller communities where there is a greater probability that some individuals will have the capacity to exercise their influence across a range of forums (although, this can be used in a negative or positive way). Some twelve months later, that Council appeared to affirm its position by adopting a youth policy in which it removed a specific reference to being inclusive of same sex attracted young people (and Koori young people) that had appeared in the draft version submitted by the local youth worker's network.

Support from the auspicing agency

Cobaw Community Health Service is a comparatively small generalist rural health service offering services from counseling and emergency accommodation to family day care, physiotherapy, podiatry, a community health nurse, dietician and day care programs for (elderly) people with a disability. Although it had limited prior experience in running programs that targeted SSA young people and homophobia occurring in our community, it has provided invaluable support and encouragement for the WayOut project to achieve its aims. Indeed, the organization readily incorporated objectives on promoting a welcoming and inclusive service in its annual health promotion plan in 2002/3. It also supported the WayOut coordinator to develop and distribute a survey among staff to gauge their knowledge about same sex attraction, resources for clients who identify as SSA, their views/experiences about homophobia in their workplace and training needs. (See Appendix 10 for copy of staff survey). Further, at regular intervals, the project was invited to provide an update at staff meetings as well as presentations to the community health centre board (who in 2003 for example, awarded certificates of appreciation to the young people involved in our Macedon Ranges WayOut committee). Another indication of the way the project was recognised as an important agency initiative can be found in the Service's most recent annual report in which the WayOut poster was reproduced on the back page. This ongoing and demonstrable commitment from our agency has been critical to the success of the project.

9) Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

From the project coordinator: Undertaking this project has been both challenging and enormously rewarding on many different levels. When we commenced we were uncertain about how the project would actually look or be received by our local communities. As we conclude the funding period, we are confident that not only has it been enormously successful but also that there is fantastic support in our area for the development of a community that welcomes sexual diversity and objects to homophobia. Most importantly we have learnt a lot from the expertise that young people in our community have about how to respond to complex issues such as discrimination. Without question, the success of our project from both a design and implementation perspective can be attributed to the young people in our groups who energetically volunteered their time, personal experiences, knowledge, concerns and skills.

From the external evaluator: *This WayOut project has had spectacular success in bringing about awareness of discrimination and homophobia in rural LGAs of central Victoria. It has also been a vital element in raising community awareness to the links between homophobia and public health, in particular the negative health outcomes for young people who are same sex attracted. More than this, the project has mobilized a significant number of people in these communities to take direct action for change in their professional and personal lives.*

The project has reached same sex attracted young people on their own terms at their own levels according to their own needs. At the most basic level, WayOut has provided information and positive visibility through its merchandise for all SSAY, regardless of whether they have spoken to anyone about their sexuality or want to take any action at all. In an indirect way it has given them support by letting them see that they are not alone and giving them referral points if at a later date they want to speak to someone, meet other young people or work for change. The WayOut project has also raised general community awareness to SSAY issues and created a more aware, considerate and respectful group of health professionals through professional development and the resourcing of organizations. Through its work in schools, WayOut has created conversations about the safety of SSAY and provided resources for teachers, student welfare counsellors and libraries. All of these changes have helped hidden SSAY feel less isolated and more connected through the provision of information which affirms their normality. At the next level, SSAY who wanted to speak to someone, join a group and work for change were also catered for through the working groups. The project also had an impact on the adult gay and lesbian community which in turn engaged with the project through donations and other support.

In summary, the strategy of consulting young people from the start of the project gave insights and principles from which to work including:

- *Young people are the experts on how to best make change for the benefit of other young people.*
- *In rural areas at least, further segregation of an already marginalised group is inadvisable. Activities of the group should be inclusive of people of all sexualities.*
- *Resources produced by the group should also speak to people regardless of their sexuality – there should be something for everyone.*
- *Merchandise is the best way to reach everyone*

Other important learnings from the project included

- *Brokerage gives the project an edge and helps move change along.*
- *Engage the community where people are at – this takes time.*
- *The value of a supportive auspicing base cannot be underestimated*
- *Never underestimate the community – help often comes from unexpected quarters.*

Recommendations

The recommendations from the project team and external evaluator are:

1) Department of Education & Training

- a) There is a clear written directive from DE&T to each school council and principal stating that all schools are required to have an up-to-date equal opportunity policy which is regularly reviewed and:
 - i) Specifies the Council's, School's and student's rights and responsibilities under the legislation.
 - ii) Details how the organization will inform parent's, staff and students about the policy.
 - iii) Details how provisions will be incorporated into regular staff training sessions, performance reviews, Council meetings and student curriculum.
 - iv) Details procedures for the making complaints of discrimination through internal (School, Department) and external (Equal Opportunity Commission) avenues.
- b) A clear directive from DE&T to regional offices that raising awareness about the needs of same sex attracted students and the nature and effects of homophobia in schools is considered a priority to be included in well-being and curriculum plans and staff training.

2) Department for Victorian Communities

- a) That the Department for Victorian Communities (Local Government) review the status of equal opportunity policies, training and implementation in all rural shires. It is also recommended that Council's be informed that the Department encourages the delivery of initiatives to welcome diversity and challenge discrimination within local communities.
- b) That in any applications for funding for youth (Office for Youth) and general community planning/strengthening initiatives (Community Strengthening & Volunteering), organisation's are required to provide evidence of their equal opportunity policies and strategies to promote the inclusion of same sex attracted community members.

3) Cobaw Community Health Service

That Cobaw Community Health Service collaborate with relevant state-wide units/departments/organizations to plan the delivery of the project's merchandise and learnings on a state-wide basis.

4) Department of Human Services

That the Department of Human Services require all Community Health Services in their health promotion plans to undertake initiatives which aim to make their services expressly welcoming to and inclusive of the needs of same sex attracted young people in their catchments areas.

Appendix 1: Committee Terms of Reference



WayOut Regional Reference Group Terms of Reference

Introduction

The WayOut project's main aim is to redress the isolation, stigma and discrimination that same-sex attracted young people may face at school, at work, at home and/or in Central Victorian rural communities generally.

Terms of Reference of the Regional Reference Group

The principal responsibilities of the Regional Reference Group are to:

- Provide expert advice and share information in the identification of project priorities;
- Participate in the formulation of strategic plans responding to regional needs/issues;
- Support the work of the WayOut Local Working Committees in each Shire;
- Foster collaborative working relationships between organisations across the region;
- Foster collaborative working relationships with rural projects for same sex attracted young people in other regions and relevant State-wide services;
- Encourage the development and evaluation of innovative approaches to working with same sex attracted young people through the administration of brokerage funds.

Membership of the Regional Reference Group

Membership will reflect a mix of individuals with relevant skills and expertise from across the region and some state-wide services. Initially, the Group will be formed by approaching individuals and seeking expressions of interest to be involved. Once the initial group has met, further members may be sought to ensure the broadest possible representative of key stakeholders. All members of the Regional Reference Group shall accept and act in accordance with the project's values and statement of confidentiality.

Meetings

Meetings occur bi-monthly (every 2nd month) for one and a half hours at a venue to be determined by the group. When appropriate, members shall form ad hoc/short term working parties to deal with specific tasks and meet according to need.

Decision Making

Day to day management of the project is the responsibility of Cobaw Community Health. The Regional Reference group is responsible for consulting with the project team and providing advice.

Roles

The Group shall nominate a member to act as Convener/Chair for meeting purposes. The Group shall determine and approve the need for further designated roles.



WayOut Local Working Committee

- Committee Membership
- Terms of Reference
- Administration

Introduction

The WayOut project's main aim is to redress the isolation, stigma and discrimination that same-sex attracted young people may face at school, at work, at home and/or in Central Victorian rural communities generally. In order to ensure that it is relevant to the needs of local areas, the project shall create avenues for community direction and participation. This will be achieved through the establishment of a Local Working Committee in each of the Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander, Central Goldfields and Bendigo Shires. Such groups shall be composed of:

- local health, youth and welfare services
- local schools and educational support staff
- residents of the local community
- other relevant agencies such as employment and drug treatment Services

Membership of Local Working Committee (LWC)

Initially, local working committees will be formed by approaching individuals (who fall into one of the above categories) and seeking expressions of interest. Once an initial group has met, further membership may be sought upon recommendations from existing members. Memberships will otherwise be closed. If new individuals are interested in participating and/or are required to replace a leaving member, this will be discussed by the LWC at a meeting prior to the new person attending. All members of LWC's shall accept and act in accordance with the project's values and statement of confidentiality.

Terms of Reference of Local Working Committees

As a local committee, members are responsible for working as a team, to share relevant information, and plan and undertake initiatives that:

- support organisations & individuals to meet the needs of same sex attracted young people;
- develop collaborative working relationships between individuals and organisations across the regions in the design and delivery of services to same sex attracted young people;
- provide resources and training to professionals and the community generally on the needs and rights of same sex attracted young people;
- encourage the development, piloting and evaluation of innovative approaches to working with same sex attracted young people
- promote diversity and reduce isolation, homophobia and discrimination in organisations, schools and the community generally.

Roles within Local Working Committees

The LWC shall nominate a member to act as Convenor/Chair for meeting purposes. The LWC shall determine and approve the need for further designated roles.

Meeting Schedule

Generally, the LWC will meet on a monthly basis at an agreed time and place. When appropriate, members shall form ad hoc/short term working parties to deal with specific tasks.

Administrative Work

In the initial stages of formation, the project worker, in consultation with the LWC Convenor, shall be responsible for:

- preparation of the Agenda and minutes and circulating to members
- booking of meeting rooms

This may be reviewed by the LWC three months after their first meeting.

Appendix 2: WayOut Committee members

REGIONAL REFERENCE GROUP

- Angela Fooks, Counsellor, Cobaw Community Health (till 2003)
- Belinda Hearne, Manager, Counselling & Accom, Cobaw Community Health (from 2003)
- Gavan Thomson, School Focused Youth Service, Macedon & Mt Alexander Shire
- John Bonnice, St Lukes (2002/3)
- Liz Wynne (2002/3), Monique Michel-Moylan (2004), youth workers, Macedon Ranges Shire
- Sarah Brandhoff, youth workers, Mt Alexander Shire
- Alison Bailey, Chair, Central Highlands Division of GPs
- Kerry Proctor, Breaking Through Project/ Bouverie Centre
- Ian Seal, Liz Alexander, Project Workers, Family Planning VIC (2002 & 2003)
- Mark Camilleri, Family Planning Victoria (2004)
- Mel Taylor, Youth & Family Services Co-ordinator, Central Goldfields Shire
- Marian Orr, Student Support Services Officer, Dept of Education
- Pam Long, Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centre
- Sarah Rogers, Macedon Ranges WayOut local working committee

Observers/ Occasional attendees:

- Lynne Hillier, Aust. Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society (external evaluator)
- Shelly Walker / Lynda Thompson, Project Worker, Eastern Metropolitan Local Government areas Gay & Lesbian Youth Support Project

MT ALEXANDER LOCAL WORKING COMMITTEE

This committee was composed of the following during 2002 and till mid 2003.

- Jacqui Archibald, Family Division, St Lukes Castlemaine
- John Parkinson, Drug & Alcohol counselor, Castlemaine & District Community Health
- Louise Wolff, Guidance Officer, Southern District, Dept of Education & Training
- Marina Healey, Primary School Teacher
- Marissa Monagle, School Nurse (Castlemaine & Kyneton secondary schools)

By mid 2003, some members had left their jobs/the area and the remaining members decided efforts should be concentrated on establishing/supporting a group composed of young people. Towards the end of 2003, the project coordinator was approached by a group of young people wishing to set up a WayOut Castlemaine group. Their first meeting was held in November 2003 and members were all aged under 20 years:

Cortney Sayer	Hannah Monagle	Rachael Fitzgerald	Ash Starr
Harry Woodrooffe	Harley Dannatt	Leslie Belle-Starr	Evan Llyod
Adam Rubins	Tess Brennan	Marshall McDonald	Nic Imfeld
Sollai Cartwright	Frances Farley	Rachael Fitzgerald	Ohana Beggs-Steventon

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS LOCAL WORKING COMMITTEE

- Mel Taylor, Youth & Family Services Co-ordinator, Central Goldfields Shire
- Liz Schepisi, Family Division, St Lukes Maryborough & Castlemaine
- Penny Francis, Youth Worker, Maryborough Community Health, Goldfields Employ. & Training
- Ray Ollerton, Chaplin, Maryborough Regional (Secondary) College
- Lorrie Higgs, Community Member, Rainbow Radio
- Trish Steele, School Focussed Youth Service, Central Goldfields & Bendigo areas.

MACEDON RANGES LOCAL WORKING COMMITTEE (all aged under 25 years)

Marty Gladman	Brentton Peacock	John Neil	Peta F.
Jess Bennett	Anna Caldwell	Drew Trail	Chris Simmons
Kat Etwell	Sarah Rogers	Martha Fooks	Aaron Blu
Jo Mundy	Sara Green		

Appendix 3: WayOut Project Values



WayOut Project Values¹

- a) The WayOut project believes that same sex attraction is both healthy and natural. It does not problematise or pathologise same sex attraction or gender identity .
- b) The WayOut project believes that the problems experienced by young people originate in the stigma, isolation and discrimination that comes from the society around them.
- c) The WayOut project places both the confidentiality and personal safety of young people above all other considerations
- d) The WayOut project holds the view that the young person has the sole right to decide if, when and how it is appropriate to “come out” to their family, friends and community.
- e) The WayOut Project seeks to develop new initiatives and add value to existing services and community resources; it will avoid duplication of initiatives that are already underway.
- f) The WayOut Project addresses the support and training needs of all members in its target group: SSA young people; their families and friends; school, health and welfare workers; and the community in general
- g) The WayOut project recognises that there exists considerable resources, knowledge and expertise within the community and shall make every effort to work in partnership with local individuals and organisations in the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives.
- h) The WayOut project also acknowledges that in a society of heterosexual dominance some community members may resist initiatives that support of GLBT young people, their family and friends. As the project’s ultimate aim is to ensure the safety and well-being of the target groups, the project will be flexible in the frameworks it uses for intervention and publicity. Such frameworks may include:
 - Prevention of mental illness and youth suicide
 - General anti-discrimination, harassment & bullying
 - Freedom of (lawful) sexual association as a fundamental human right
 - The right of individuals to form diverse types of family associations

¹ These values were adapted from principles developed by the Vic. Ministerial Advisory Committee on Gay & Lesbian Health

Appendix 4: R.A.T. Questionnaire

"WayOut" Central Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project

Questions for project evaluation by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society

Details of person being interviewed:

Age

Gender

Position

Questions:

1) On a scale of 1 – 5 how do you think your community might react to the following situations?:
(1 = very supportive, 2 = supportive, 3 = unsure, 4= unsupportive, 5 very unsupportive)

government funding of a service for SSA people in your area?

An openly lesbian or gay teacher at the school.

Gay and lesbian couples dancing at the local dance.

A gay man in the football team.

Lesbian couple holding hands in the street

Advertisement for a lesbian support group in the local paper.

Gay-friendly restaurant with a sign saying gay friendly in the window

Public meeting about homophobia

Homosexuality visibly included in the school curriculum

2) A young man (woman) in the Shire comes to you and tells you that s/he thinks s/he might be gay (lesbian) - what advice would you give him/her?

- a)** Where in the Shire would you suggest s/he go to meet other young people like him/her?
- b)** Would you suggest s/he find gay and lesbian adults in the Shire and talk with them?
- c)** Where would you suggest s/he get information & resources eg about sexual health, the law?
- d)** What advice would you give them about telling other people eg friends at school, parents.
- e)** Is there anyone in the Shire you would suggest they talk to?

3) The young persons says they were bashed up in the street and called faggot – what would you advise?

Questions tailored to the knowledge and expertise of the person being interviewed

Editor/Journalist

To your knowledge has your newspaper ever run any articles about gay or lesbian individuals or community?

Is there anything you would consider before running such articles?

Human Services/Youth workers/CEOs/Police

Have you ever seen any professional development or organisational policy that addresses the needs or issues of gay or lesbian clients/customers/public?

What in general happens in your organization's dealing with gay/lesbian clients?

Gay/Lesbian adult

How homophobic do you think this town is? Why do you think this way?

Health Professional

Do you provide relevant information about sexuality, reproduction and safe sex to your gay/lesbian patients and/or do you refer on?

Sporting Clubs

Does your club provide any specific professional development regarding the needs/rights of gay & lesbian players?

Are gay or lesbian players out and comfortable in the team?

Local Librarian

Could you please check the collection in your Library and advise if there are any books for young people that contain information/stories concerning same sex attraction/homosexuality? Have these books been borrowed often? Does the library have a policy regarding purchasing/provision of books that are inclusive of interests of gay & lesbian readers?

Proud teens battle prejudice

By Angela Crawford

Surviving your teenage years can be a struggle for just about anyone, but imagine if that time was also spent battling to come to terms with an alternative sexual persuasion to that of most of your friends, in a social, school and community environment without any real support.

Finally, projects are being started up to not only support young people through this time but also to combat the kind of ingrained prejudice and discrimination that has been known to leave these young people isolated, depressed or worse.

The Victorian Youth and Sexual Diversity project, 'WayOut' was begun across the state at the beginning of 2002.

The project, funded for three years by the Department of Human Services, aims to promote diversity and reduce isolation, homophobia and discrimination in schools, organisations and the broader community, and working advisory groups were formed last year in Castlemaine and Bendigo involving

both young people and human services professionals.

The Macedon Ranges shire now has its own WayOut group, formed just a few months ago, but what makes this group exciting and unique is that it's the first group to be made up completely of young people - both gay and heterosexual - with the help of just one Project Officer, Sue Hackney.

Word of mouth about the group has grown and more young people have come on board.

"When I started the project I spoke to a number of young people who identified as gay who said they didn't want a separate service... they didn't want to have a group specifically for same-sex attracted kids only, but wanted to be amongst their peers," explained Sue.

The project crosses four shires, but the group in the Macedon Ranges is the most active according to Sue.

"The main thing we're doing is making it an issue that people have to talk about," says group member, Marty. "But we don't expect to change everyone's

mind," he adds.

"Then there'd be no fun in it!" laughs fellow member, Martha. WayOut members have been active in getting their message out into the community, already receiving a positive response. Starting with the recent Youth Fest at Kyneton, the group distributed t-shirts, stickers, flyers and cards which had a great response across the board, from young and old.

"My parents are both wearing the t-shirts," says Brenton.

The t-shirts have been hugely popular, spreading across the state, and one man was recently photographed wearing one in a Maryborough newspaper, where there is yet to be a WayOut project formed.

The next big challenge for the group is just how to approach schools... including their own... with their message and their work.

"We want to find out how other groups have done it first before we tackle school," explained Martha. "In school, I want to be able to say I'm a part of this group - a group that fights homophobia," adds



'Fighting homophobia: Members of the Macedon Ranges' WayOut group, Sarah, Martha, Brenton, Sara, John and project officer, Sue, have big plans for this progressive local project.

Brenton.

Although country communities like ours may be perceived as lagging behind in the progressive thinking stakes (as Sue points out these communities are a little insular and very much still 'Anglo' and not terribly diverse), WayOut members are already noticing a change in the community's thinking - a push away from the kinds of assumptions it's

simply not wise to make any more. "Now young people don't necessarily assume everyone in the room is heterosexual," says John.

Challenging the reinforcement of stereotypes is also important to the group and encouraging people not to simply be bystanders but to stand up for themselves and their friends against abuse. Next up will be the

release of a documentary collection of interviews the group has been working on, involving a diverse range of people sharing their experiences, which will hopefully be viewed in schools.

Few people probably know that same-sex attracted young people are significantly more likely to attempt suicide than the population as a whole, and up to 25 to 40 percent of young gays and lesbians have attempted suicide. As a result of these alarming figures, WayOut projects across the state form part of the government's Youth Suicide Prevention Project.

Anyone wanting to become involved in the Macedon Ranges WayOut group is welcome to contact Sue Hackney on 5421 1619 or 0428 347 407 or email a i l : shackney@cobaw.vic.gov.au.

Midland
Express
16 Nov 2004

'WayOut' in front in tolerance stakes



Members of Cobaw Community Health Service's award-winning 'WayOut' team: (L to R) Alan Taylor (Chief Executive), Kat, Brenton, Peta, Sue Hackney (Project Co-ordinator), Sarah and Chris.

Cobaw Community Health Service's 'WayOut' program has won a prestigious Victorian Public Health Award for Innovation (in the Capacity Building category).

WayOut, Central Victorian Youth and Sexual Diversity Program, is a youth suicide prevention project funded by the Department of Human Services. It commenced in January

2002 and covers four shires: Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander, Central Goldfields and Greater Bendigo. The aim of the project is to raise awareness about the needs of same-sex attracted young people and the nature and effects of homophobia in our community.

Sue Hackney, project co-ordinator said the project was funded largely because research had shown life for many same-sex attracted young people was less than easy, particularly in rural areas. "Many of these young people are being subjected to high rates of verbal and physical abuse at home, school or in public places. They were also noted as a particularly high risk group by the Victorian Suicide Prevention Task Force and it is usually estimated that they are four to six times more likely to attempt suicide than the population generally," explained Sue.

"Although there are a lot of same-sex attracted young people who feel great about their sexuality and are supported by their family and friends, there is a small percentage who are under a great deal of stress because of the discrimination and negative messages they get from their community. This can also include young people who are heterosexual but don't necessarily conform to traditional gender stereotypes - for exam-

ple the young man who is more interested in drama than football.

Alan Taylor, Chief Executive of Cobaw Community Health Service said that a community which allows this type of discrimination to occur is an unhealthy one.

"All the research shows that communities who are doing well in terms of social connectedness and indeed, economic prosperity, are those in which diverse interest groups have equal rights and opportunities," said Alan.

WayOut has been largely designed and delivered by local young people, who have formed two "WayOut" groups - one in Macedon Ranges and one in Castlemaine.

"The young people have done an absolutely fantastic job and I'm very excited that they have received the award. It's a great acknowledgement from the government and health field of the incredible skills and expertise that kids in our towns have in responding to complex issues such as discrimination occurring in their community," said Sue.

The hallmark of our project's work has been the merchandise developed by the young people as a way of engaging with others. This has included production of t-shirts and stickers with slogans such as "We're All Human, Its time to

prove it, Fight Homophobia.

"We have also produced a poster, pens and badges as well as a video called 'Homophobia Exposed' which is being circulated to schools, youth and community groups," said group members Sarah and Brentton.

"We have also done talks to secondary school students as well as community organizations and workers and its great to be involved in a project that encourages others to welcome diversity."

Another group member Kat said "although there have been a small number of negative reactions, these have been far outweighed by positive responses".

"There has been a lot of great support from adults in our community and it's fantastic to see that rural areas are concerned about the well-being of all young people" she added.

The WayOut team wishes to acknowledge the support of a range of organisations, in particular the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, who have been undertaking an external evaluation of the project, staff from local governments, community health centres, the Central Highlands Division of GPs, and all of the other organizations involved in supporting young people affected by homophobia.

CROSSWORD
No. 7864

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8						
11	12	13		10		
		17			18	19
20	21		22		23	
24		25		26		27
	28		29	30	31	
32	33	34		35		
36		37	38		39	40
		41				
43				42		

ACROSS

3	Dispirited	12	Irish republic
8	Stopped	13	Radiolocation
9	Animals with two feet	15	Musical drama
11	Act of retaliation	16	Long lock
14	Innkeeper	18	Conifer knighthood on
17	Made amends	20	Wide
19	For each	21	Semi-precious quartz
20	Small nail	23	Burdened
22	Little rounded lump	25	Was ahead
24	Kingly	27	Agreeable
26	Outbuildings	29	Inherent
28	Spheres of action	30	Salty
31	Raised platform	33	Piebald horse
32	Fitting	35	Inherited character
34	Harm		units
36	Prescribed meals	37	Snares
38	Gifted	39	Melt, as snow
41	Dried grape	40	Exploit
42	Make ineffective		
43	Finishes		

DOWN

1	Cicatrice
2	Stringed instrument
3	Charge with a debt
4	American inventor
5	Staggered
6	Waistband
7	Erface
10	Wide views

Solution No. 7863

S	S	O	R	O	R	A	L	A	
F	E	A	S	T	P	V	E	I	N
R	C	O	N	V	E	N	I	E	N
B	A	R	O	N	A	R	I	D	S
P	A	T	E	R	N	A	L	O	A
S	I	E	S	L	I	T	E	M	B
O	E	E	S	S	I	E			
O	M	A	R	S	H	C	H	R	E
T	I	F	A	C	I	D	O	S	I
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C	O	N	V	E	R	G	I	N	G
A	L	O	E						
P	O	R	E	S	S	I	E	R	S

Appendix 6: Brokerage Guidelines and Application



WayOut

Central Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project

Brokerage Funding

INFORMATION AND APPLICATION BOOKLET



For further information contact:
Sue Hackney, Project Officer
Tel: 5422 3011 (Mon - Thurs)
Mobile: 0428 347 407
Email: shackney@cobaw.vic.gov.au
Cobaw Community Health Service
47 High Street
KYNETON
VICTORIA 3444

Background

WayOut is a community based project funded by the Department of Human Services. The project's principal target group is young people who are attracted to members of the same sex. However, the focus of intervention by the project is individuals and organisations in these young people's environments such as friends, parents, teachers and human service workers. The aim of the project is to redress the isolation, stigma and discrimination that same sex attracted young people may face at school, at work, at home and/or in rural communities generally. The project which commenced in January 2002, is funded for three years and is based at Cobaw Community Health Service. It has a focus on towns with a population of less than 20,000 and covers four local government areas: Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander, Central Goldfields and Bendigo.

WayOut Project Beliefs

- a) The WayOut project believes that same sex attraction is both healthy and natural. It does not problematise or pathologise same sex attraction or gender identity .
- b) The WayOut project believes that the problems experienced by young people originate in the stigma, isolation and discrimination that comes from the society around them.
- c) The WayOut project places both the confidentiality and personal safety of young people above all other considerations
- d) The WayOut project holds the view that the young person has the sole right to decide if, when and how it is appropriate to "come out" to their family, friends and community.
- e) The WayOut Project seeks to develop new initiatives and add value to existing services and community resources.
- f) The WayOut Project address the support and training needs of all members in its target group: same sex attracted young people; their families and friends; school, health and welfare workers; and the community in general.
- g) The WayOut project will be flexible in the frameworks it uses for intervention and publicity. Such frameworks may include:
 - Prevention of mental illness and youth suicide
 - General anti-discrimination, harassment & bullying
 - Freedom of (lawful) sexual association as a fundamental human right
- h) The WayOut project recognises that there exists considerable resources, knowledge and expertise within the community and shall make every effort to work in partnership with local individuals and organisations in the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives.

WayOut Project Brokerage Funds

The following information describes who may apply for such funds, the application and decision making process and the criteria for decision making.

Who can apply for Brokerage funds

Subject to the following conditions, any organisation (such as a school or a community agency) can apply for WayOut brokerage funds. When there is more than one organisation involved, the application should be made by one organisation on behalf of the others. The applying organisation must:

- Be appropriately incorporated
- Be based within the Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander, Central Goldfields or Bendigo Local Government areas or be seeking to undertake the proposed initiative in these areas;
- Act in accordance with the WayOut Project's values (stated above)

What Types of Projects will/will not be eligible

Brokerage Funds may be used for projects involving any of the four target groups: same-sex attracted young people; their family and friends, schools, organisations and networks who work with young people; and the community in general. In a limited range of (emergency) circumstances, brokerage funds may be used to support the needs of an individual from the target group.

Projects should aim to do one or more of the following:

- Build family, professional and community awareness of the needs of young people with same sex attraction and their susceptibility to depression, self harm and suicide

- Promote coping/resilience skills within same-sex attracted young people.
- Reduce the sense of isolation and discrimination experienced by many same sex attracted young people
- Provide same sex attracted young people with access to positive role models, peer support, accurate information and appropriate counselling
- Promote the development of environments/cultures within schools, organisations and the general community that are welcoming and inclusive of same sex attracted young people

Preference will be given to funding projects that have the capacity:

- to be sustainable – have the potential to become self-funded and ongoing
- to be adaptable - to a variety of settings
- to be innovative – making a new contribution to the field
- to be inclusive of young people in its design and/or delivery, particularly where this includes same sex attracted young people.

All programs and activities funded by brokerage funding need to be appropriately evaluated with a commitment to identifying and sharing good practice.

How will applications for brokerage funds be assessed?

A committee composed of representatives from the WayOut Regional Advisory Group will consider all applications for Brokerage funds. (The Regional Advisory Group is made up of representatives from each of the four Shires covered by the Project, relevant state-wide services and other interested individuals. The names of members of the committee may be supplied upon request).

The Brokerage Committee will make one of four recommendations:

- a) that the program be funded through WayOut Brokerage,
- b) that the program be funded with certain conditions,
- c) that the program not be funded at this stage and that certain actions be taken before it will be reconsidered for funding:
- d) that the program not be funded.

If the application is for some reason not successful, the WayOut Project Officer is able to work with organisations to develop alternative strategies to meet the need.

Legal issues

The legal relationship between Cobaw Community Health Service (as the WayOut host Agency) and any organisation receiving funding through brokerage will be contractual in nature. By accepting WayOut brokerage funds an organisation commits itself to providing the service outlined in the application. Any variation from this needs to be approved by Cobaw Community Health Service. Organisations receiving brokerage funds will be required to sign an acquittal form acknowledging receipt of the funds and committing itself to spend the funds on the agreed program. The organisation receiving brokerage funding will be responsible for any legal liability arising from the funded program. It is expected that the organisation will have, or will arrange, appropriate liability insurance. Funding will be limited to the agreed amount. Cobaw Community Health Service will bear no responsibility for any cost over-runs.

If a program funded through WayOut Brokerage requires staff, the organisation receiving brokerage funds will be responsible for employing any such staff. The organisation receiving brokerage funds will be required to ensure that all individuals that are involved in the program funded by WayOut brokerage (both volunteers and paid workers) have the appropriate personal qualities, qualifications and skills for their role. It is expected that all individuals in direct contact with young people would be subject to a police records check.

How to apply for brokerage funding

To apply for funds, applicants must complete an application form.

IMPORTANT:

To ensure that the information you provide is able to be understood and is adequately supported, please:

- Print clearly in block letters
- Make sure that you complete all parts of the application. If space is insufficient attach a separate sheet/s signed by the head of your organisation or their delegate
- Clearly describe your proposed project in the space provided, addressing each of the issues raised in the questions.
- Please ensure that all required attachments are included with your application.

WayOut Brokerage Funds Application Form

Name of School/organisation applying for brokerage funds:
Postal Address:
Street Address:
Name of Contact person: Title: Phone number: Fax number: Email:
Name of other individuals/organisations that will be involved in the proposed project:

UNDERTAKINGS AND AGREEMENTS

1. We state that the information in this application and attachments is to the best of our knowledge true and correct and understand that any omission or false statement may result in this application being rejected or withholding any other funding already approved.
2. We agree that the WayOut Project members, for the purpose of assessing this application, may check any of our statements and we agree to provide any information requested.
3. We understand that this is an APPLICATION ONLY and may not necessarily result in a funding approval.

SIGNED BY the following authorised representatives of:

_____ (insert name of organisation)

Signed by: _____
Name (please print): _____
Office held: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY WAYOUT PROJECT OFFICER

Date received: / / File No:
Date Referred to Brokerage Committee : / /
Decision made on : / /
Applicant Advised phone : / / letter / /

Budget

6. What amount of funding are you seeking and how will this be spent. If other financial resources are being used for the project, how much will these be and who will be providing them?

Expenses	
Salaries (including on-costs)*	\$ _____
Hire of facilities	\$ _____
Travel costs	\$ _____
Equipment	\$ _____
Consumables	\$ _____
Administration	\$ _____
Other (please specify)	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____
Financial resources to be used in the proposed program	
Income provided by applicant(s)	\$ _____
Other financial resources secured (eg grants)	\$ _____
Amount sought from WayOut Brokerage funds	\$ _____
Other (please specify)	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

* please specify number, type of workers & number of hours they will work

Please describe any in-kind contributions to be received by the proposed project (eg volunteer assistance, administrative support, transport)

WayOut

Central Victorian Youth & Sexual Diversity Project



Brokerage Committee

Response Form

Brokerage Applicant:

Amount of Funds Sought:

Recommendation (please indicate your decision):

Yes No Defer/Other

If no or other, please outline reasons:

members name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Thank you for your response.

Hand/Post/Fax/Email to:
Sue Hackney
PO Box 146 Kyneton 3444
Fax 5422 2161
shackney@cobaw.vic.gov.au
Ph 54 22 3011
Mob 0428 347 407

Appendix 7: Community Photograph Publicity

T - OFF DISCRIMINATION



Do you want a free t-shirt?

Do you want to be in a photograph?

Do you want to support diversity & challenge discrimination in our community?

Then join us for the biggest possible community photo of people who don't want homophobia in the Central Goldfields Shire. You shall a **free** t-shirt to wear in the photo with the slogan printed on it "We're all Human, Now its Time to Prove It, Fight Homophobia." **All** members of the community are welcome.

Date: Friday 20 June 2003
Time: Collect your free t-shirt from 4pm:
Photo @ 4.30 pm
Venue: "Better Living Festival" Nestle Sports & Fitness Centre,
42 Gillies Street, Maryborough.

For further details contact: Sue Hackney, "WayOut", Central Victoria Youth & Sexual Diversity Project, Cobaw Community Health Service, tel. 5421 1619 or mobile: 0428 347 407

Appendix 8: Photo shoot questionnaire

We are interested in knowing your opinions about the work we are doing today.

Please fill out this questionnaire and you will be given a free T-shirt.

1) What is your postcode? 2) How old are you?yrsmths

3) Are you (please ✓ one box only)

1 <input type="checkbox"/> male 2 <input type="checkbox"/> female 3 <input type="checkbox"/> transgender (m-f) 4 <input type="checkbox"/> transgender (f-m)	5 <input type="checkbox"/> only attracted to people of the opposite sex 6 <input type="checkbox"/> only attracted to people of the same sex 7 <input type="checkbox"/> attracted to people of both sexes 8 <input type="checkbox"/> not sure which sex you are attracted too
--	---

4) Do you have anyone in your friendship/family network that you know is same-sex attracted
 yes No

5) How did you hear about this event?:

- through friends/personal contacts I read about it in the newspaper
 I heard about it through my employment I saw a poster
 Other, please describe:

5) Why did you decide to be involved in the photograph?

.....

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.....

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.....

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.....

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6) Do you have any worries or concerns about what others may think or do because you are in the photograph? yes No

If yes, please describe

.....

.

.....

.

7) If you were a same sex attracted young person in your town:

a) How would you generally feel about yourself?	Very Bad 1 2 3	Very Good 4 5
b) Would you be worried about verbal abuse	Worried a lot 1 2 3	Not worried 4 5
c) Would you be worried about physical abuse?	Worried a lot 1 2 3	Not worried 4 5
d) Would you be worried about losing friends?	Worried a lot 1 2 3	Not worried 4 5
e) Would you be worried about telling your parents?	Worried a lot 1 2 3	Not worried 4 5
f) How accepting would your parents be if you told them that you were attracted to people of the same sex?	Very accepting 1 2 3	Not accepting 4 5
g) How homophobic is your town?	A lot 1 2 3	Not at all 4 5

8) If you wanted to find out some information about same sex relationships where would you go/who would you approach?

.....
.....
.....
.

9) Any other comments you would like to make?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire

Appendix 9: Central Victorian PFLAG flyer



**Parents, Families
and friends of
Lesbians and Gays**

PFLAG stands for Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays.

We are a non-profit voluntary organisation whose members have a common goal of keeping families together. PFLAG has been formed to provide help, support and information to families and friends of all gay people.

Who Are We?

We are the parents, families and friends of gay and lesbian people and a part of our community. Some of our families may be large, some small. Some of us are married, some divorced, some single. Our occupations are as varied as our personalities. BUT. We do have a common bond.

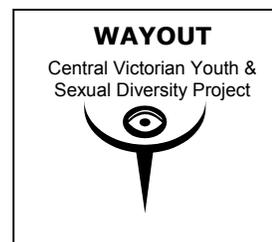
Someone we love and care for is lesbian or gay.

At PFLAG our goal is to
"Keep Families Together"



For further information

Beth Taylor
PFlag Project Worker
Loddon Mallee Womens Health
47 Myers Street, Bendigo 3550
03 54430233
1800 350 233
beth.taylor@lmwh.net



Appendix 10: Cobaw Health Service Staff Survey

10 June 2003

Dear Staff member,

As part of this organization's Health promotion Plan for 2002-3, we have made a commitment to ensure that our health promotion services are inclusive of the needs of same sex attracted community members. This is a comparatively new area of work not only for Cobaw, but also for most community health services across the country.

A team of staff have been formed to plan how the objective will be achieved and one of the priorities they have identified is to undertake a training needs analysis. **Attached is a short confidential questionnaire which all staff are required to complete.**

The survey has been developed by our staff member, Sue Hackney and draws from relevant academic sources as well as input from other Cobaw staff and the Australian Research Centre in Sex Health and Society (who have been engaged as an external evaluator for the project that Sue work's on, "WayOut").

You are not required to provide any identifying information in your responses and we are not seeking to find out who may have the 'right or wrong' views. The main aim of the survey is to determine what would be appropriate information to include in future training sessions. The responses will be collated by the team working on the health promotion objective and fed back at a staff meeting. During this period, a review of relevant policy and organizational practices will also been conducted.

To the best of our knowledge, Cobaw is one of the first community health services to undertake such an initiative and we hope to take the learning's from this process and develop a package that can be used by other agencies. Given this broader aim, it is very important that staff not only take adequate time and care in completing the survey but also provide Sue with any additional comments/suggestions for its improvement and undertaking work in this area generally.

Thank you for cooperation and assistance.

Regards

Alan Taylor.

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE BOX AT RECEPTION AND SIGN YOUR NAME OFF BY MONDAY 16 JUNE AND YOU WILL RECIVE ONE FREE CHOCOLATE FROG.

Cobaw Community Health Service Sexual Diversity staff survey

PART ONE

- 1) Approximately what percentage of the general population is SSA**?
1% or less 5% 10% 20% 50% don't know
- 2) Is it against the law to refuse to employ a person because they are SSA?
Yes No Don't know
- 3) Can SSA couples legally adopt children?
Yes No Don't know
- 4) In Victoria, is the age of consent for sex the same for SSA people and heterosexuals?
Yes No Don't know
- 5) Do you know of any famous people who were/are SSA? Yes No
If yes, state their names:
- 6) Do you have anyone in your friendship/family network that you know is SSA?
Yes No

PART TWO

- 7) Does your organisation have an anti-discrimination policy that specifically refers to sexual orientation and homophobia?
Yes No Don't know
- 8) Have you received any staff training about sexual diversity, homophobia and/or providing a service that is inclusive of the needs of SSA clients?
Yes No
- 9) Do the areas where clients may go (for eg waiting rooms, interview/treatment rooms etc) have any posters or stickers that refer to SSA in a positive light?
All areas some areas no areas Don't know
- 10) Have you heard a staff member, volunteer or Board member make jokes or negative comments about SSA people or people/clients they thought were SSA?
Often Occasionally rarely never
- 11) Are you aware of any SSA clients accessing your service?
Yes No
- 12) Do any of the information sessions/groups that you run on sexuality, parenting, relationships, sexual health, include same sex sexual information/SSA relationships?
Yes, all sessions do It is mentioned if someone asks
No I don't run any such information sessions
- 13) If you seek information about a client's marital status/living arrangements on a form, does the form provide an option for SSA relationships?
Yes No I don't collect this type of information from any client

* In this survey, the letters SSA are used to describe same-sex attracted/gay/lesbian/bisexual/homosexual/queer

Cobaw Community Health Service Sexual Diversity staff survey

14) If you seek information about who should be contacted in an emergency involving either the client or their children, does the form provide an option for a SSA partner/parent?

Yes No I don't collect this type of information from any client

15) Do you know of any specific services, support or social groups for SSA members of the community?

Yes No

If yes, state the name(s): _____

PART THREE

Please circle your choice

SD = Strongly Disagree, GD = Generally Disagree, GA = Generally Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

16	Same sex attraction is a normal aspect of human identity/behaviour	SD	GD	GA	SA
17	If high school students are taught about homosexuality then it is more likely they will become SSA as adolescents/adults.	SD	GD	GA	SA
18	I would be ashamed if I were a parent and I found out that my son or daughter were SSA	SD	GD	GA	SA
19	I would be worried/angry if others falsely thought I was SSA	SD	GD	GA	SA
20	Lesbians are generally more masculine than heterosexual females	SD	GD	GA	SA
21	Gay men are generally more feminine than heterosexual males	SD	GD	GA	SA
22	I would NOT feel comfortable about a SSA person staying overnight at my house	SD	GD	GA	SA
23	The number of children sexually abused by SSA adults is greatly exaggerated.	SD	GD	GA	SA
24	Same sex attraction is classified as a mental illness.	SD	GD	GA	SA
25	I would sign my name to a petition asking the government to make SSA marriages legal.	SD	GD	GA	SA

26) What type of information would you find useful in a training session

- Relevant legislation and academic research
- Health needs/issues of the homosexual community
- Communicating respectfully (etiquette when talking about a person's homosexuality)
- Referral and other sources of information
- stories from homosexual people about their experiences of using health services
- Other, please describe _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you wish to make any further comments, please use a separate piece of paper or contact Sue Hackney on x 119

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