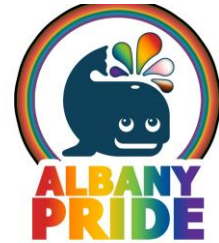




Rainbow Futures WA and Albany Pride

Joint Statement August 26, 2024



We stand together against hate and bigotry. We call on everyone to join us in this crucial endeavour to ensure LGBTIQ+ young people and their families can thrive and flourish in safe and empowered lives free from discrimination. We care deeply about the safety of children; many of us are also parents who work hard to safeguard them against abuse and harm.

Local organisations like Albany Pride play an important role in creating inclusive, welcoming and safer regional communities. Unfortunately, these groups must increasingly stand against confused bigotry that uses division for electoral gain. It is up to adults to show young people, who are often the targets of this misinformation, that we have their backs and that they can grow up proud of who they are.

Moral panic over book content doesn't keep children safe. Sanitising libraries so they reflect only one perspective doesn't keep children safe. Attempting to divide a town with bigotry doesn't keep children safe - it actively harms them. If people are serious about keeping children safe, they can contribute to welcoming environments where all children are accepted for who they are and supported in their communities. Our communities are strong and powerful. Opposition to our existence in public spaces is part of the increased prejudice, hate and harassment against LGBTIQ+ people in this country. This underscores the critical need to resist these baseless attacks. LGBTIQ+ people have the same right as anyone to feel welcome and participate fully in public life, free from discrimination.

We must come together urgently to show that hate and misinformation will not win.

From the Reverend Chris Bedding, on behalf of Equal Voices WA:

"Despite the harm that some churches inflict on children, vulnerable adults and queer people, we celebrate our identity as Christian LGBTIQ+ people. Every church and community is made safer by evidence-based, age-appropriate education and resources. We call on our fellow believers to support love and inclusion and turn away from cruelty and unkindness."

From Queer, Transgender and Intersex People of Colour WA (QTIPoC WA):

"The misinformation being spread by a small but growing group in Albany will have dangerous consequences for the well-being of LGBTIQ+ communities, in Albany and beyond. These misinformed, hateful, and archaic views are nothing but discrimination, under the guise of care and concern. We stand in solidarity with Albany's LGBTIQ+ communities and urge the Council to do the same."

From Parents, Families and Friends of the LGBTQIA+ community (PFLAG+ Perth):

“Wear It Purple Day 2024’ is this Friday the 30th August. It’s a day and movement specifically promoting love, support and acceptance of our young people. In partnership with many other organisations the Parents, Families and Friends of the LGBTQIA+ community (PFLAG+ Perth) will be participating in showing visible support by giving several educational presentations this week. We know that factual information and age appropriate education play a vital role in nurturing our young people and supporting their growth into healthy and happy adults, giving them the tools they need to protect themselves and respect others. We stand with Albany Pride and the wider Albany community - who speak from their hearts and not from ignorance and fear.”

From Youth Pride Network:

“LGBTQIA+ hate speech and misinformation have no place in Western Australia or beyond. Every young LGBTQIA+ individual has the right to safe spaces where they can connect with peers, find a sense of belonging, and build community, especially when school environments fail to provide safety. With 67% of young LGBTQIA+ individuals reporting being called a slur in high school, the urgent need for supportive spaces is undeniable.

In regional towns, young LGBTQIA+ people face even greater barriers: limited access to inclusive services, scarce community resources, and a profound lack of understanding from peers and adults. These obstacles only deepen their sense of isolation and hinder their ability to find the support they need. Albany Pride is essential to the Albany community, ensuring that our young LGBTQIA+ individuals have the mental health support and community connections necessary for their well-being to thrive.

At the Your Pride Network, auspiced by the Youth Affairs Council WA, we are resolute in our commitment to child safety and empowerment. Our mission is to create spaces where young people are free to express themselves, confident in their identities, and supported in their journeys. The Youth Pride Network stands in solidarity with Albany Pride and their initiatives dedicated to ensuring every young LGBTQIA+ person can flourish within a safe and inclusive community.”

From TransFolk of WA:

“TransFolk of WA stands in solidarity with the LGBTQIA+ community in Albany and regional communities across the state. We are committed to advocating for a future where everyone, regardless of their gender identity, can live openly and authentically without fear of discrimination. We urge local authorities, businesses, and community organisations to take steps to create a safer, more inclusive environment.”

From Dr Daniel Vujcich, CEO WAAC:

“Regional WA towns are famous for their community spirit, and it is important that LGBTIQ+ people are recognised as valued members of those communities. WAAC is committed to the creation of inclusive communities, recognising that LGBTIQ+ people living in regional WA face unique challenges. We stand in solidarity with Albany Pride’s commitment to ensuring their community members feel safe, respected, affirmed and celebrated.”

From Meaghan Holden, CEO Living Proud:

“The LGBTIQ+ community continues to face significant health, mental health and wellbeing challenges, the need for comprehensive, evidence-based insights has never been more critical. Anti-LGBTIQ+ views such as those expressed in Albany recently are fringe, misinformed, and not representative of the broader community. When misinformation and hate speech targeting LGBTIQ+ people is spread, it is dangerous. It greatly impacts on the day-to-day experience of LGBTIQ+ people’s lives and mental wellbeing. To our queer and trans community in Albany and all regional areas in WA, we see you – you are vibrant and resilient, with equal rights to safety and privacy. We stand in solidarity with Albany Pride and all regional LGBTIQ+ communities in WA to flourish and thrive, to live their best life and to be able to dream of positive futures and enjoy all the same things as other people do.”