



## Statement in support of Marriage Equality

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**AccessHC has joined with 23 other Victorian Community Health Services to release a joint statement in support of marriage equality.**

Victoria's community health sector has a long history of supporting marginalised communities and advocating for change that will reduce health inequality.

The joint statement arises from a deep concern about the health impacts of a potential marriage equality postal survey. Our concern focuses on the effects the survey may have on the health and wellbeing of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTQ) community.

It has been documented that there are higher rates of anxiety and depression, suicide, drug and alcohol use, and other forms of poor mental and physical health among LGBTQ people, particularly younger people.

These health impacts are a result of individual, social and legal discrimination. It has been shown that the lack of marriage equality in particular has been linked to poorer health and wellbeing outcomes among LGBTQ people.

Further research has found that these harms worsen during campaign periods, and many of the signatory organisations to this statement have already observed marked increases in the number of people from LGBTQ communities seeking support for the distress they are experiencing.

Led by our colleagues at cohealth - this joint statement is an expression of solidarity and support to our many LGBTQ staff and clients in the context of the current debates.

The statement also makes clear that the signatory organisations strongly support marriage equality as an important public health strategy towards improving the mental and physical health of LGBTQ people.