

2.5 CONNECTING WITH THE MONASH LGBTIQ COMMUNITY – YEAR ONE SUMMARY (TE)

Responsible Director: Julie Salomon

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the actions that Council Officers have implemented to better recognise, represent and connect with LGBTIQ members of the Monash community, within the scope of existing operational activities and resources as outlined in the October 2018 endorsed report.

INTRODUCTION

In October 2018, Council endorsed Officers to explore opportunities to better recognise, represent and connect with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer/Questioning (LGBTIQ) members of the Monash community, within the scope of existing operational activities and resources as outlined in this report. This report presents a summary of the implementation of actions since the community consultation.

BACKGROUND

The need for a community consultation with the Monash LGBTIQ community was initiated in response to calls from community members, asking Council to consider the role it could play in improving the recognition, inclusion and understanding that the City of Monash can have in relation to the local LGBTIQ community.

A Healthy and Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2017-2021 outlines that Council celebrates its rich cultural, linguistic, religious, age, gender and sexual diversity and works to support lifetime wellbeing, community harmony and opportunities for everyone to be able to participate fully in community life. The specific inclusion and recognition of our LGBTIQ community is vital for their improved resilience, increased sense of security, improved mental health outcomes, greater social cohesion and more accessible health care.

Council had limited knowledge and evidence on the current needs and priorities for our broader Monash LGBTIQ community. It was important to undertake a needs assessment to determine what response Council can implement to promote LGBTIQ recognition and inclusion including (but not limited to) internal and external policies, services and other initiatives.

Council has had a long-standing commitment to equity and inclusion, but in 2018 it was the first time a formal report has been considered by Monash Council on this aspect of our diversity.

Developing the recommendations on proposed actions provided Council with the opportunity to take leadership in advancing our LGBTIQ residents' full and equal participation and inclusion in community life, making Monash a fairer and more cohesive community.

DISCUSSION

Based on the rich feedback that Council received from the Monash LGBTIQ community, service providers and key Council departments during the community consultation process, a number of proposed actions were recommended. Over the past year, Council has implemented the following actions:

- Provided LGBTIQ Inclusive Practice Training to 65 Monash employees facilitated by Transgender Victoria across a diversity of departments. This training will now be embedded into the annual Training and Development calendar.
- Council is a member on the Q-East Alliance (made up of the 7 Eastern-Metropolitan Councils and community organisations). The Q-East Alliance has organised a Rainbow Celebration event for young LGBTQIA+ people on 15 November, 2019.
- Monash Public Library Services developed a LGBTQIA collection series title.
- Council Officers were encouraged to wear purple on Wear it Purple Day on 30 August, 2019.
- The Youth Services team coordinated an information stall in the Glen Waverley library forecourt on Wear it Purple Day with information and resources for young people. The Glen Waverley library also had a book display to promote their LGBTQIA collection list.
- Glen Waverley Library hosted a film screening for International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) Day in May 2019.
- As part of MGA's 'The Luminaries: Sketching a City Portrait of Monash' exhibition for February-May 2020, Australian Photographer David Rosetzky is currently interviewing members of the Monash LGBTIQ community to reflect their lived experiences in the exhibition.
- LGBTIQ+ Youth Monash Pride Meet Up commenced in August through the Youth Foyer at Holmesglen. The group is being supported by Monash Youth Services.
- Supporting Monash Sports clubs to be more inclusive of the LGBTIQ community, through initiatives such as developing a Transgender Policy for their club.
- In 2019 WordFest the festival weaved together authors from a variety of backgrounds to tell the poignant experiences that shaped their lives, influenced their writing and enabled them to share their deepest truths. The speaker line-up included Nevo Zisin who identifies as non-binary.

Council Officers will continue to strengthen the actions to better recognise, represent and connect with the Monash LGBTIQ community in 2019/2020.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report is in line with Council's A Healthy and Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan (2017-2021).

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

This report is in line with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and in particular with the following rights: recognition and equality before the law, freedom of movement, freedom of expression and taking part in public life.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The summary of actions outlined within this report were delivered within existing operational resources.

CONCLUSION

Through the recommendations of proposed actions from this consultation report in October 2018, Council sought to address discrimination and exclusionary practices based on sexuality or sex and gender diversity at the local level. It has also assisted and strengthened Council's approach to social inclusion and diversity by proposing concrete whole-of-Council actions across the municipality.