

ATSAQ UPDATE

AUSTRALIAN TRANSGENDER SUPPORT ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND INC.

CENTRELINK AND SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS INCLUDES TRANS RELATIONSHIPS

Background

- Following the Australian Human Rights Commission report, Same-Sex: Same Entitlements, the Australian Government has introduced reforms to remove discrimination to enable same-sex couples and the children of same-sex relationships to be recognised by Commonwealth law.
- From 1 July 2009 changes to social security and family assistance legislation will mean that Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office will recognise all couples, regardless of sexual orientation or gender of a partner. The reforms also recognise children living in same-sex families.

Key issues

- From 1 July 2009 customers in a same-sex de facto relationship will be recognised as being a member of a couple for Centrelink and Family Assistance Office purposes, and will therefore be assessed in the same way as other couples.
- From 1 July 2009 customers in a same-sex de facto relationship must tell Centrelink that they are in a relationship, as this may affect their payment.
- Customers should be encouraged to contact Centrelink on 13 6280 for more information about how the changes may affect their individual situation and for other assistance.

Other government same-sex law reform changes:

The Australian Government's reforms will also affect other Government laws and programs, including:

- Tax
- Superannuation
- Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Safety Net and Medicare Safety Net
- Aged Care
- Child Support
- Veterans' Affairs
- Immigration
- Citizenship

For an overview of the same-sex reforms, visit www.ag.gov.au/samesexreform

Questions and Answers

When do the changes take effect?

- Changes to recognise same-sex de facto relationships for Centrelink purposes take effect from 1 July 2009.

Who will be affected by these changes?

- From 1 July 2009, customers who receive a Centrelink payment or service and are in a same-sex de facto relationship may have their payment affected.
- A same-sex de facto relationship is where two people are living together and are members of a couple. Establishing whether two people are members of a couple involves consideration of financial and social aspects of the relationship, nature of the household, presence or absence of a sexual relationship, and nature of the commitment. Evidence relating to these factors is considered, although not all factors need to be present for a decision to be made.

What do customers have to do?

- From 1 July 2009 customers must advise Centrelink if they are in a same-sex de facto relationship.
- Customers can contact Centrelink on 13 6280 or contact a Customer Service Centre to advise that they are in a same-sex de facto relationship.
- If customers are unsure about their relationship status for Centrelink or Family Assistance Office purposes they should contact Centrelink.

How will the changes affect customers?

- Most payments are assessed based on the income and assets of both the customer and their partner. Customers may receive a different rate of payment, or may stop receiving payment once their partner's income and assets are included in assessing their payment. For most payments, the partnered rate is less than the single rate of payment.

OUR GENDER CLINICS ARE HERE TO HELP YOU:

THE BRISBANE GENDER CLINIC

Working with the Transgender
Community since 1994

Dr Gale Bearman M.B.B.S.
Level 1,
270 Roma Street,
BRISBANE Qld 4000

Wednesday
1:30pm to 5:00pm
07 3837 5645
(all other times
07 3837 5611)

GENDER TRANSITIONING (CAIRNS)

Cairns Sexual Health Service
Cairns Base Hospital
The Esplanade.
CAIRNS Q 4870
(07) 4050 6205

SUNSHINE COAST GENDER CLINIC

Clinic 87
87 Blackall Terrace
NAMBOUR Q 4560
(07) 5470 5244

GOLD COAST GENDER CLINIC.

Level 1,
2019 Gold Coast Highway
MIAMI Q 4220
(07) 5576 9033

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OBJECTIVES OF ATSAQ

- > To provide Queensland's transgender population with such support as our resources can permit.
- > To continue a program of public education aimed at changing the negative images which the community may have with transgender people.
- > To provide support for family and friends of transgender people and help with understanding issues involved.
- > To provide information on medical and health

services available to transgender people.
> To continue to address the problem of legal recognition and human rights for transgender people in the state of Queensland.

Membership is available upon request. Pick a form up at the luncheon or we can post one to you. Fees for membership are \$30 pa single & \$50 pa couple. If you require one to one counselling

or would like to meet in a friendly, unconventional atmosphere, please contact us 07 3843 5024 8am-6pm weekdays. Write to us; PO box 212 NEW FARM Q 4005 or trans.atsa@bigpond.com or atsaq.com

PLEASE NOTE:

ATSAQ is run from a private residence and is **not** an introduction agency.

ATSAQ's CHRISTMAS PARTY

28 November 2009

Sportsman Hotel, Leichhardt St Spring Hill

For Your Enjoyment
2 Shows @ 12.40pm & 3.15pm
Heaps of Raffles Prizes to be won.
Secret Santa \$5-\$10 value

BOOK NOW

Ring Mama Gina 07 3843 5024

The fun kicks off from 11am, collect your name tags and your two tickets for champagne or soft drinks.

Bring your money with you for raffle tickets
5 for \$2 or 12 for \$5.

Prepaid bookings only. All welcome.

ENTERTAINMENT

2 BIG SHOWS: With MC CANDY SURPRISE also performing, BELLA CHIMES AND SASHA TRAJIC MOLE including a special preview of the SPORTIES CHRISTMAS SHOW!



SET MENU

Entrée

Hearty Vegetable Soup with Crusty Bread
Or
Vegetarian Spring Rolls & dipping sauce

Main

Baked Silverside with Jacket Potatoes & Veggies or Salad
Or
Chicken Maryland with Jacket Potatoes & Veggies or Salad
Or
Vegetable Bake with Jacket Potatoes & Veggies or Salad

Desserts

Warm Apple Pie with Ice Cream
Or
Caramel Cheesecake with Whipped Cream

Family and Friends are welcome!

Pay for the Party by the End of September and go in the draw to win your money back. Drawn October Social.



VISITING SERVICE

Community Service Officers from the Fortitude Valley Centrelink visit Camp Hill every second Friday, or on a need by need basis. They will assist you with your claims, advise you as to what you can and cannot do, find out specialised information etc.

Appointments are a must, phone 3843 5024, places are limited. Confidentiality is guaranteed under Federal Government legislation.

Serving Brisbane's Transgender community since 1994

freedom!

FREEDOM ! Support Group

MEETING THIRD SATURDAY of EACH MONTH

This is great news for the Gold Coast as there is a large and diverse trans community. We are told by the Co-conveners, Linda Hibbert and Rochelle Crozier that it will be a place for M2Fs and F2Ms and their friends to meet and network. They will conduct gatherings in safe, secure and friendly areas. Fresh ideas are welcome. Email them on freedom.support@hotmail.com.au or visit freedomqld@yahoo.com.au.

Call for venues and times, Rochelle 0417557130 Linda 0415 410 385

Date: **Saturday 15 AUGUST 2009** Time: **10am—1pm**



Leichhardt St. Spring Hill

A great place to spend FRIDAY nights and the only varnish to be seen these days is on the woodwork! Great food, good fun and floor shows too at 10.30pm and midnight. Look for Aunty Pat. She's the ONE to sell you raffle tickets for just 50 cents each or 3 tickets, yes I said 3, for only one dollar! Is that a deal or is that a deal? But there's even more — if you get your tickets, you can win a bottle of spirits (name your poison) and \$20 in cold cash to spend on whatever your black little heart desires. It's drawn after the 10.30 show, so be early. Prizes supplied by ATSAQ.

Disclaimer

For writers wishing to be anonymous, a non-de-plume will suffice, providing a contact number is supplied. ATSAQ is committed to healthy debate and/or constructive criticism upon any subject, we reserve the right to omit material, which is offensive or inappropriate for publication Ideas and opinions in this publication are not necessarily those of ATSAQ or those of our advertisers. Articles appearing in THE UPDATE are written expressly for ATSAQ unless otherwise stated. All articles may be reprinted providing that the source and author is acknowledged.

A WORD FROM YOUR PRESIDENT, GINA MATHER.

It was pleasing to see that a few of the community are taking advantage of the "Southern Edge" program to help those wishing to re-enter the workforce. This is a golden opportunity to those who have been long term unemployed to gain access to an agency which has a genuine concern in helping. It should be remembered that this program is funded by Health QLD.

Occasionally I feel I should write words of wisdom without any reason to explain.

So to those out there questioning there Gender Identity allow me to quote Dr Harry Benjamin's thoughts on transgenderism as a psychosomatic somato-psychic syndrome, (have I impressed you thus so far?).

"The mind of the transgender cannot be changed in its false gender orientation. All attempts have failed. Thus since it is evident that the mind of the transgender cannot be adjusted to the body, it is logical and justifiable to attempt the opposite, to adjust the body to the mind". References; H Benjamin, 1954, "Transsexualism and Transvestism.", H Benjamin, 1966, "The Transsexual Phenomenon."

Most of you will be impressed, not by Dr Benjamin's analysis, but by the mere fact that I have the capacity to read such an academic journal and still remain calm and sociable.

Krissy and I attended a Consumer Engagement Forum, arranged by Health QLD on June 23 2009.

Over 50 groups, representing a wide diverse community were in attendance. The reason for the meeting, in short, was for Health Consumers around QLD to offer a valuable perspective on the health system. So by sharing experiences with policy makers hopefully an effective, person-centred and responsive health outcome can be achieved for Queenslanders.

All groups were invited to state their case and priorities and as such Krissy and I had our two bobs worth. However there were no representatives from the Gay or Lesbian service providers even though we were told they were invited.

Strange that ATSAQ does not receive any government funding whilst other well known Associations are all government funded, but failed to support those that financially support them. There loss, ATSAQ's gain as we found the forum very informative.

Saturday 1st August — ATSAQ hosted a luncheon for and on behalf of QAHC to assist their research into "States of Mind", LGBT Mental Health and Wellbeing & Alcohol Tobacco and other Drugs.

Shane Garvey and David Farrington from QAHC co-hosted and recorded the conversations, with permission of all involved providing they remain anonymous, with Roz providing a constant stream of varying finger foods, with alcohol and juice being consumed and tobacco being smoked!

It was about gathering perceptions of Alcohol Tobacco and other Drugs use in the Trans community.

Very interesting to listen to personal stories about "coming out", and thence rejection by so called friends which can lead to substance abuse.

I encourage you all to complete the "States of Mind" survey, visit www.qahc.org.au , if you do not have access to the internet call QAHC on 3017 1777 and they will post one out to you.

Thanks Roz for helping out on the day and to QAHC for providing the funds the luncheon and bevies.

**Yearly Membership:
A New System.
\$30.00 Single, \$50.00 Doubles**

To assist our accounts and bookkeeping people, we have changed the way your membership will be paid.

Surname starting **A-K** your membership is due the end of **SEPTEMBER**

Surname starting **L-Z** your membership is due the end of **MARCH**

If you have already paid your membership, a pro-rata rate will be calculated.

We anticipate your co-operation in this matter. Any queries contact Roz, Krissy or Gina.

Correction for last months "Tweaked Passports Policy"

It was reproduced in it entirety from DIAC's website with permission. Here is the web link to the site.

[HTTPS://www.passports.gov.au/Web/SexGenderApplicants.aspx](https://www.passports.gov.au/Web/SexGenderApplicants.aspx)

Apologises for any confusion that may have occurred.

Thanks to Bambi for the information.



Luncheon of the Boating Party – Renoir

LUNCHEON
29 AUGUST 2009

SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE AND SALADS

11 am kick off

Lucky Door prize.

\$10 members, \$15 non members

**Ring 07 3843 5024, by the
27th AUGUST to confirm your
entrance and venue.**

Dessert will be a mystery.

All are Welcome

Wine, tea & coffee on offer.
Have some laughs, meet some people!

CENTRELINK AND SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS INCLUDES TRANS RELATIONSHIPS

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- Some customers may be able to access payments and services as a member of a couple that they were not previously eligible for, such as, having their partner included on a concession card or having access to bereavement payments.
- From 1 July 2009, customers who are overpaid because they have not told Centrelink that they are in a same-sex de facto relationship may have to pay back some or all of their overpayment.

What impact will the changes have on customer's concession cards?

- Customers who are no longer eligible for a pension or income support payment may lose entitlement to a concession card.
- Customers who do not qualify for an income support payment may qualify for a Low Income Health Care Card or Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (if of age pension age)
- More information about income limits for

Centrelink payments and concession cards is included in the Centrelink Guide to Payments booklet, or is available from www.centrelink.gov.au

- Recognition of same-sex de facto relationships across other legislation will mean that customers and members of the public may benefit from registering for Medicare Safety Net and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Safety Net as a family from 1 January 2009.
- For more information about the Safety Net changes, or to register a family visit www.medicareaustralia.gov.au, or call:
 - Medicare Safety Net 13 2011
 - Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Safety Net 1800 020 613

Customer Privacy

- Customers should be assured that Centrelink is bound by legislation that contains strict confidentiality provisions that limit who can look at information about customers and when and to whom it can be given out. Centrelink is bound by the Privacy Act 1988. For more information see the Your Right to Privacy factsheet.
- Centrelink is committed to ensuring all customers, regardless of sexual orientation

or gender identity, are treated with dignity and respect. Complaints about inappropriate or discriminatory treatment by Centrelink staff will be taken very seriously and can be reported by calling Centrelink's Customer Relations Line on Freecall™ 1800 050 004.

Centrelink Services

- Customers can talk, free of charge, to a Financial Information Service officer about options with savings, investments and related arrangements by calling 13 2300.
- Centrelink also has social workers available to provide counselling, support and referral services as needed. To speak with a Centrelink Social Worker customers can call 13 1794.

Further information is available from the following sources:

- Visit www.centrelink.gov.au
- Centrelink's enquiry line—13 6280
- Ask at a Centrelink Customer Service Centre
- For an overview of other Government same-sex reform changes visit www.ag.gov.au/samesexreform

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States of Mind

LGBT Mental Health & Wellbeing & Alcohol Tobacco & other Drugs Survey

QAHC is currently researching Mental Health & Wellbeing along with Alcohol Tobacco and other Drugs issues in Queensland lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender communities.

This survey forms part of a health and arts research project, commissioned by Queensland Health Department of Communities, which will inform state-wide plans for LGBT Mental Health and Alcohol and other drugs in Queensland LGBT communities.


Please take the time to fill out the community survey.... It will only take 15mins. We need as many LGBT Queenslanders from all walks of life, backgrounds and geographical locations.

If you do not have access to the internet, call us and we can post one out to you.

To complete the survey go to:
www.qahc.org.au

For more info contact:
Shane Garvey: sgarvey@qahc.org.au
David Farrington: dfarrington@qahc.org.au
ph: 3017 1777

This survey is completely anonymous and confidential and you cannot be personally identified in any way.



Australian
TRANSGENDER SUPPORT Association
of Queensland. Inc.
ABN 15 319 522 768

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SECRETARY:
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07 3843 5024 8am-6pm weekdays.

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atsaq.com

ATSAQ is run from a private residence.

SPECIAL THANKS:
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Aunty Pat
many, many things

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