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From: Rodney Croome <rodney.croome@equal.org.au>
Sent: Monday, 15 June 2020 4:37 PM
To: secretariat.PESRAC
Subject: CM (TRIM): Yet more evidence of the negative impact of pandemic on LGBTIQ people

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The Secretariat
Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council
C/o Treasury

re: Yet more evidence of the negative impact of pandemic on LGBTIQ people

Dear Secretariat,

It seems that almost every day more evidence is emerging of the negative impact of the pandemic on LGBTIQ people.

I have already sent you Tasmanian research that was the first of its kind in Australia.

Last week I sent you preliminary findings from the national TRANSform survey. More results from that survey have now been released, including in relation to gender-affirming health care. They are shocking. They can be found below, or here:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.2377357129033260&type=3>

Now, I am also sending you the report just released by Equality Australia (attached and summarised below). This report has been submitted to the Senate COVID-19 inquiry. We will be sending the results to your COVID-19 advisory panel.

It is increasingly clear that the LGBTIQ community has been negatively impacted by the pandemic. We renew our call for the panel to meet with LGBTIQ community representatives as soon as possible so we can work together towards public policy and funding responses that adequately address this impact.

Best wishes,
Rodney Croome

Equality Australia report (summary)

From over 2,600 survey responses, we found that COVID-19 has magnified existing inequalities for LGBTIQ+ people, particularly in employment, mental health, access to inclusive services, and in finding welcoming and safe spaces. For example:

Almost 1 in 3 LGBTIQ+ people have lost income since COVID-19 restrictions, with almost 1 in 5 losing more than half or all their income. Unemployment, particularly among trans and gender diverse people, is

high at around 12.7% (among all LGBTIQ+ people) and 20% (among TGD people).

LGBTIQ+ people are particularly concerned about the risk of infection, the impact of COVID-19 on society, inequality, and governments failing to do the right thing, while they are personally struggling with financial issues, and disconnection and loneliness.

TRANSform survey (further results)

Living Situation - 16% of trans Australians are currently living with someone who makes them feel unsafe or afraid. This includes experiences of emotional, verbal and physical abuse, other controlling and manipulating behaviours, misgendering and deadnaming.

Employment - As a result of the pandemic 13% of trans people have lost their job and 30% are working reduced hours. 7% were working as a sex worker prior to COVID-19, with the pandemic having a significant impact on sex workers and their livelihoods. By contrast, some people with jobs in essential services have been working more than usual.

Financial Situation - While some people have had a significant decrease in income, others have had an increase due to a rise in government assistance payments or increased work hours. 42% of people are experiencing financial strain related to paying their rent/mortgage and 60% are experiencing financial strain related to buying food/groceries.

Gender-Affirming Healthcare and Services - Many trans people have had their gender-affirming surgery cancelled (17%) or postponed (55%) during COVID-19. Others who had surgery in the months prior to the pandemic have had their after-care affected. Other gender-affirming services that have been interrupted by the pandemic include laser hair-removal and speech therapy.

Mental Health - 54% of people have had suicidal thoughts in the past two weeks; 84% have felt down, depressed, or hopeless in the past two weeks. Trans people often rely heavily on other community members for support and so COVID-19 social restrictions have had a particularly big impact on many.

Support seeking - During COVID-19, 31% have sought support from a mental health professional; 21% have sought support from a LGBTIQ+ specific organisation (e.g. QLife); 17% have sought support from a mainstream organisation (e.g. Beyond Blue, Lifeline); 22% have sought support from an online TGDNB-specific group or forum and 24% of trans respondents have sought support from an online LGBTIQ+ group or forum.

Positive coping strategies - The most common strategies used by trans Australians to stay positive and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic include spending time doing a hobby or interest (61%), listening to or playing music (58%) and spending time playing with or caring for animals (46%).

Additional findings, including quotes from the COVID-19 survey can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.2377357129033260&type=3>