

Friday 15 May 2009

Anti-Discrimination Commissioner speaks out in support of International Day Against Homophobia

Commissioner Susan Booth of the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland today spoke out in support of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGTBI) communities in the lead up to the International Day Against Homophobia on Sunday 17 May 2009, to remind the broader community that LGBTI rights are protected in Queensland legislation.

Two cases heard by the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal Queensland in 2008 and 2009 found in favour of the complainants and resulted in significant fines for the people who breached the law.

Commissioner Booth said that Queensland's strong anti-discrimination legislation was there to protect all residents and visitors, including LGBTI people.

"The rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people to live free of illegal vilification and harassment is, in my view, central to our maturity in creating a safe and diverse society."

Jean Lawson, a Woodridge woman was ordered to pay \$23,100 to her gay neighbours for nine months of harassment after losing a Supreme Court appeal against the decision of the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal in March 2009 after referring to her neighbours as 'faggots' and making false reports to police and the RSPCA.

In 2008, the Tribunal also ordered former Gympie councillor and gun lobbyist Ron Owen to pay \$12,500 and issue a public apology for inciting hatred against homosexuals, for displaying a bumper sticker that read "Gay rights? Under God's law the only 'rights' gays have is the right to die. Lev.20.13", and publishing a homophobic letter online.

"The Tribunal's recent findings prove that protecting LGBTI rights is taken seriously in Queensland and sends a clear message that illegal discrimination against members of this community will not be tolerated." Commissioner Booth said.

Interview opportunities: Commissioner Susan Booth of ADCQ is available for telephone interview.

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