

For Immediate Release

Wednesday 25 November 2015



Hepburn Health is 'Over the Rainbow'

Victorian rural healthcare provider, Hepburn Health, has become the first 'residential aged care' and Commonwealth Home Care Package provider in Australia to achieve Rainbow Tick Accreditation meeting the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) peoples.

Hepburn Health's three aged care residences at Creswick, Daylesford and Trentham, along with the Health Services' Home Care Packages Program, were formally accredited this month by Quality Improvement and Community Services Accreditation (QICSA), Australia's most comprehensive not-for-profit accreditation organisation, for demonstrating inclusivity and a safe and welcoming environment for LGBTI people.

Brian Dunn, Manager of Health Promoting Health Service at Hepburn Health, was part of the working group that guided the Health Service through the accreditation process.

"For many of our older LGBTI community members being discriminated against has been a big part of their lived experience. It wasn't that long ago that being LGBTI was deemed to be a psychiatric illness or a criminal activity," says Brian. "Because of this many older LGBTI people are less inclined to access mainstream healthcare services leading to poorer health outcomes than the general population."

"A major part of the accreditation process was the provision of specialist training and education for our staff along with updating our standards and procedures including admission processes," says Brian. "It further demonstrates our commitment to being a person-centred health service, ensuring that LGBTI consumers are valued and understood."

Although LGBTI consumers have the same right to access safe and high quality services as everyone else, not all service providers are able to understand or respond well to the needs of the LGBTI community.

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Trish Collocott, CEO of Hepburn Health states that “having the Rainbow Tick gives a clear message to our community that we are prepared and in a place to receive LGBTI consumers in an environment where they can feel safe and receive service from our staff who are knowledgeable and respectful.”

An initiative of Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria (GLHV), the Rainbow Tick is an accreditation program that guides organisations through a cycle of self-assessment and review by external assessors to determine the extent to which the organisation is able to meet the needs of LGBTI consumers.

An integral part to achieving Rainbow Tick was the establishment of an LGBTI Advisory Committee that included consumer representatives from within the community.

Jules Sappho is a former theatre nurse and a member of the Hepburn Health LGBTI Advisory Committee who has experienced prejudice firsthand within a healthcare setting based on her sexual orientation.

“Achieving Rainbow Tick speaks volumes to the clients, staff, visitors and the community as a whole. It clearly states that Hepburn Health values diversity and welcomes everyone. When I see the pride flag stickers on the front door, I feel safe to be open about who I am and my family life,” says Jules.

“Having the Rainbow Tick will encourage LGBTI seniors to seek healthcare at Hepburn Health with the confidence that they can be open and honest. It will encourage connection – between their loved ones and staff, and perhaps ease the transition into full-time care.”

Hepburn Health’s leadership in, and commitment to the Rainbow Tick process, has been recognised with invitations to present at the National LGBTI Ageing and Aged Care Conference and participation in the regional LGBTI Working Group facilitated by the Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership and the Department of Health and Human Services.

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Staff at Trentham Aged Care



Staff at Clunes Community Health Centre



Staff at Daylesford Hospital & Aged Care



Staff at Creswick Hospital & Aged Care

For more information contact:

Erryn Stephens, Manager Communications & Fundraising, Hepburn Health Service
Tel: 03 5321 6555 Email: erryns@hhs.vic.gov.au