

# Unacceptable

Our organisations represent the community, experiences, needs and interests of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people across Victoria.

We work extensively in areas of community building, media, arts, sport, health, advocacy, law reform, research and most importantly delivery of programs and services aimed at addressing the systemic and individual consequences of historical criminalisation, stigmatisation, isolation and deprivation of our community.

It is a tribute to enduring community values that much has changed over the past 30 years and our human rights and related entitlements are now well established at law, with everyday opportunities and options being strengthened.

Our collective mission however, underscores the enduring impact of misplaced and discriminatory attitudes towards our community. Chief amongst these impacts is the ongoing social isolation and disengagement of seniors, poor access to the full spectrum of community services for all and, most pertinently, increased mental health concerns amongst young people exploring and questioning their sexuality.

The President of Hawthorn Football Club, Mr Jeff Kennett has been reported as saying that the presence of a bisexual trainer at a football club is 'like having a pedophile working as a masseur at the club'. We are appalled at Mr Kennett's ill informed, misguided and plainly indefensible slur against our community in promoting the utterly spurious and discredited link between homosexuality and paedophilia.

Mr Kennett's public expression of these views suggests a complete disregard for the harmful impact they have on our community and particularly on young people. It is absolutely unacceptable that any football club would countenance such behaviour from its President, behaviour which we believe is both unlawful and immoral.

Football clubs have a special and important leadership position within the Australian community, in particular in shaping and influencing the lives of young people. In recent times we have seen this influence used positively to signal appropriate values in relation to racism, sexual violence and reconciliation.

We therefore demand an immediate and public apology from Hawthorn Football Club. We call on the AFL to issue a statement making it clear that they do not support those views. We seek an urgent discussion with both Hawthorn Football Club and the AFL regarding the ways in which the club and the League might commit to the promotion of anti homophobia initiatives in this sport.



{ The ALSO vision is the creation and celebration of a diverse, strong, safe and inclusive GLBTIQ community which contributes to and is respected by broader communities }

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