

## Media Release

For immediate distribution

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# FYA welcomes new Brumby Government support for same sex attracted students

The Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) welcomes the Victorian Government's recent funding announcements to support same sex attracted young people. FYA is committed to improving the learning outcomes and life chances of all young Australians, including young people of diverse sexualities and gender identities.

FYA recognises that same sex attracted and gender diverse young people can experience high levels of social isolation, disengagement from education and reduced health outcomes as a result of social stigma, rejection and victimisation. This group of young Australians is often under-represented in funding and initiatives to support and redress these health and education challenges.

The Victorian Minister for Mental Health, Lisa Neville MP, has announced an important initiative to improve the mental health of same sex attracted young people through community suicide prevention programs.

This has been supported by the Victorian Minister for Education, Bronwyn Pike MP, who has provided \$80,000 to Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria (GLHV) to develop a program to educate teachers about the negative effects of homophobia in Victorian schools and to help create a safer school culture. FYA commends this initiative and is committed to partnering with GLHV to establish a Safe Schools Coalition in Victoria.

"FYA is looking forward to working with teachers, schools and young people to tackle these important issues in our school system," said Jen Sainsbury, who will lead FYA's work on this project.

"Establishing a Safe Schools Coalition is an important step for Victorian schools as homophobia is prevalent in many Victorian schools and has a negative impact on the lives of young people, teachers and school staff," she said. "We know that effective school-based programs that address homophobia in schools and support teachers in dealing with this challenge are urgently required."

Jen was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2009 to investigate international best practice in challenging homophobia and supporting same sex attracted and gender diverse young people in schools.

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Jen Sainsbury, Partner and Program Development Manager at FYA, is available for interview

### Media Enquiries

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