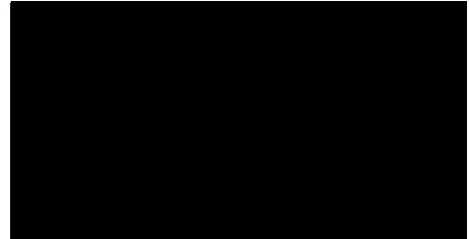


Stonewall Medical Centre

Dr. Wendell J. Rosevear O.A.M.

M.B.,B.S. DipRACOG. FRACGP.

J.P.(Qual.)



re: Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016

The Research Director,
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee,
Parliament House,
Queensland.

Dear Director and Committee,

Thank you that the Queensland government has chosen to address the equal age of consent.

I am a doctor who has worked in HIV and AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic. In 1990, I with Dr David Orth established the Gay and Lesbian Health Service with the Queensland AIDS Council. I also run GLADS which is the gay and lesbian alcohol and drug support group since 1991. I worked in prisons between 1975 and 2005. I also run MARS a support group for men who have been raped or sexually abused.

I am aware of at least six homophobic murders in Queensland. My patient Michael was bashed in a homophobic attack at Manly Beach and subsequently died. I worked with Michael and the man convicted of his murder and I am aware that internalised homophobia and alcohol was the cause of his death.

His death helped precipitate the anti-vilification laws of Queensland.

Homophobia is a toxic curse that Queensland cannot afford. It results in gay bashings and bullying. It also causes preventable deaths through gay suicide.

Collectively, we can help prevent this by enacting laws that reflect the equal value of all people. All people need to be equal under the law if justice is to mean anything. I understand that you cannot legislate love, but we can legislate the equal value of all people.

To legislate for the equal age of consent for sexual activity reflects the equal value of all people.

It would help in HIV and sexually transmitted disease prevention education if all people above the age of 16 could have access to knowledge about sexually transmitted diseases and HIV through anal sex. It is vital that sexually active people above the age of 16 can talk freely to their doctors without feeling that they are breaking the law through their activity. I know that anal sex is practised by males and females and for the law to discriminate on this sexual activity, is to not accept the reality of human behaviour.

Surveys of Australian sexual behaviour show that most people in Australia start experimenting from the age of 14 or 15 (La Trobe University Sexual Behaviour studies, specifically Dr. Lynn Hillier et. al. 25-5-05: "Writing them In") and it is vital for the purposes of education and disease prevention that we don't criminalise normal behaviour.

Homosexuality is not illegal and so it is vital that we do not discriminate against one section of the population. Many religions have many teachings but the government has a specific role to respect individual honesty around sexuality. The government must govern for all people and not be driven by religious ideology as even members of religious organisations need to have their individual beliefs respected like homosexual people deserve to have their honesty respected. The government has a role to protect minorities rather than let prejudice or majority opinion render one group unsafe. Even religious groups need protection, especially if one day they are a minority.

Our society is safer when we value all people and we respect honesty.

We already know that there is an increasing epidemic of syphilis in Queensland. In 2015 Syphilis rose by 30%. In the first half of 2016 there have been 337 cases which represents a rate rise of 260% if it continues for the whole of the year. HIV now is a totally preventable disease if people can have adequate education and the self-esteem to use the information. Prevention is not just about information, it is about valuing yourself and your sexual partner/s to use that knowledge. The law needs to reflect the value of all people and provide free access to information for people to achieve prevention.

I am respectful of the diverse opinions of others but when it comes to saving lives and preventing disease we need to enact laws in the public good.

Thank you for your attention to take this issue seriously and enact laws to protect Queenslanders.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wendell J. Rosevear". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Dr Wendell Rosevear OAM MB, B. S. DIP RACOG., FRACGP., J. P. (Qual)

“..... make Love infectious.”