

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Equality



Monday, 6 December 2021

LGBTIQ+ LEADERS PROVIDE A STRONG VOICE TO GOVERNMENT

Victoria's diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) communities will continue to have a strong voice to the Victorian Government through a group of passionate community champions.

Minister for Equality Martin Foley today announced the 25 Victorians who will be part of the Government's LGBTIQ+ Taskforce and its working groups over the next two years.

The LGBTIQ+ Taskforce and its two working groups – one focused on justice and the other on health and wellbeing – will provide crucial advice to the Government to inform policies and initiatives affecting rainbow communities.

This term, a raft of new members will bring their valuable experiences and insights to these advisory bodies, after being selected through a competitive recruitment process.

People joining the LGBTIQ+ Taskforce include young Victorian Elvis Martin, who has experience advocating for LGBTIQ+ communities, young people, people experiencing homelessness and those experiencing mental health challenges. Elvis is also a member of the Government's Anti-Racism Taskforce.

Among the six new people joining the Health and Wellbeing Working Group is Tara Laursen, who brings strong experience in the mental health sector, having held a range of roles focused on mental health and alcohol and other drugs.

The Justice Working Group welcomes five new members, including Ghassan Kassisieh, the Legal Director at Equality Australia, who brings deep policy and advocacy expertise in LGBTIQ+ justice issues.

Many existing members will stay on, including Jayde de Bondt, who has been reappointed Co-Chair of the LGBTIQ+ Taskforce for a second term alongside the Minister for Equality.

The Co-Chairs for the two working groups have also been reappointed, with experienced researcher Adam Bourne leading the Health and Wellbeing Working Group and Janet Jukes OAM leading the Justice Working Group, both alongside the Parliamentary Secretary for Equality Harriet Shing.

This term, the LGBTIQ+ Taskforce will play a particularly important role in supporting the launch of the Victorian Government's first ever LGBTIQ+ strategy, which will outline a 10-year vision and reform agenda for equality.

More information about the LGBTIQ+ Taskforce and its working groups can be found at vic.gov.au/lgbtiq-taskforce.

Quote attributable to Minister for Equality Martin Foley

"We are proudly working with LGBTIQ+ communities to continue progressing equality in our state – LGBTIQ+ voices are central to this mission."

Quote attributable to Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities Todd Fernando

"These incredible LGBTIQ+ leaders do so much for our communities, and they will help ensure LGBTIQ+ perspectives and experiences are at the heart of our state's efforts to progress equality."

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