LGBTI Equality Roadshow Evaluation Report

"The policy leapt off the page into a bus, and came to visit town" *(Program Participant)*

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Executive Summary

Program Overview

On behalf of Martin Foley MP, the Minister for Equality, Victorian Government's first Gender and Sexuality Commissioner, Ro Allen, and the Department of Premier and Cabinet undertook an LGBTI Equality Roadshow along with representatives from state-based organisations supporting LGBTI communities, and LGBTI advocates. The team spent eight weeks between November 2016 and June 2017 visiting 23 towns in rural and regional Victoria on a Victorian Police Bus with the aim of raising awareness of and promoting LGBTI equality and inclusion.

The roadshow engaged local LGBTI people, allies, CEOs, local business leaders, decision makers, representatives of service providers and local government in their communities. It included a series of workshops, community dinners, inclusive planning sessions, networking opportunities and other community events. The roadshow provided a demonstration of the Victorian Government's commitment to addressing discrimination against LGBTI people and promoting LGBTI inclusion across all of the State and an opportunity for government to consult directly with LGBTI communities in rural and regional settings.

Value for Money

Chart showing values: High Economy 6/6, Good Efficiency 5/6, High Effectiveness 6/6 (y-axis scale 0 to 6).

The LGBTI Equality Roadshow represents excellent Value for Money. **Economy** and **efficiency** were well supported through program design and implementation, with the program team undertaking sound program management and logistics, creating cost savings and efficiencies across the program. Very strong leveraging occurred, with community members, organisations and other government departments contributing time and effort, ideas, resources, materials and funding support which has meant that the program has produced more for what it put in.

The overall efficiency of the roadshow has been slightly diminished by insufficient communications for regional and rural communities which is likely to have reduced the attendance levels of roadshow events.

The program achieved exceptionally high **effectiveness**. The strategies used to achieve change have effectively led to the outcomes sought and activities were implemented to a high-quality standard. The program has achieved strong scale and reach and significance of change, with several respondents reporting that the program was "life saving" and "life changing".

Impact

"This roadshow has opened so many doors, and I think those doors are not going to be shut again".

The roadshow achieved an impressive range of important and significant impacts for LGBTI people. The program effectively linked in with and supported LGBTI people, building their skills, confidence and motivation to publicly drive change and advocate for equality and inclusion. It has led to the establishment of eight new LGBTI groups which have provided a platform for LGBTI people and allies to become involved in their communities and contribute their ideas, resources and networks. Networks have continued to grow their membership and have undertaken a range of actions to promote equality and inclusion in their communities.

Important systemic changes have been achieved within some service providers. At an organisational level, the roadshow has resulted in an increased awareness, prioritisation and commitment among participating service providers, with attitude and practice shifts taking place. The program enhanced staff understanding of LGBTI inclusion issues and how inclusion can be strengthened. The roadshow team helped to build confidence that things can change, provided practical ideas for getting the ball rolling, helping organisations to bringing about small but important wins, and drive momentum for change. For some organisations, the roadshow has garnered wider support within the workplace, and helped them to push the boundaries and scale up their inclusion work. A range of projects and partnerships have been established between mainstream organsiations and LGBTI people and groups, which have helped service providers to implement LGBTI inclusion plans.

Key achievements

Key highlights and achievements of the program include:
- More LGBTI people have been empowered, becoming leaders and advocates in their communities
- Eight new LGBTI groups / networks that have formed between LGBTI people, individuals and service provider representatives across Victoria which are actively progressing inclusion across communities
- Headspace, a youth Mental Health Foundation created an LGBTI youth worker role
- The program encouraging police to nominate themselves and volunteer to become GLLOs officers (LGBTI liaison) in the communities they serve, with the number of GLLOs increasing from 170 to 240 since the roadshow
- More service providers have developed LGBTI inclusion plans and progressed their implementation.

Appropriateness of the model

"It draws people together, and invites people from within the community, no matter where they sit in the alphabet, to come to connect, and to make a difference".

The approach of bringing resources to people and designing the program locally and working with and through LGBTI people within communities has been highly effective. Engaging a broad range of mainstream stakeholders, creating opportunities for people to link and connect, and building community capacity to lead action has created a high degree of ownership in communities and has been critical to the program's success.

The program's approach of investing in face to face engagement and establishing trust and connections between local people and state-based policy makers was appropriate and is highly appreciated by rural and remote Victorian communities. The second phase of the program is well positioned to further strengthen and deepen the outcomes achieved under the first phase, promoting systemic changes and fostering sustainable groups and networks that support LGBTI inclusion.

Recommendations

For the LGBTI Equality roadshow:
1. Adopt more agile and adaptive communications that can respond to changing circumstances and ensure that the program is able to be promoted through radio and print in regional local areas to broaden participation
2. Continue to support the capacity building of individual LGBTI advocates and the institutional strengthening of LGBTI groups and the links between them
3. Strengthen engagement and alignment with existing Equality Branch, other government departments and initiatives at the state and regional levels, embedding linkages across the program
4. Continue to make government approachable, accessible and accountable to community.

Based on lessons learned from the Roadshow the following are recommendations that could be applied to other government programs:

(A) When working with and supporting marginalised groups
1. Engage the broader community and a diversity of organisations, creating opportunities for supportive allies from the mainstream to link in with and support marginalised groups
2. Identify and engage people from marginalised groups as equal partners in the design and decision-making process, working with them to identify and create safe environments, and supporting their leadership and engagement within their communities
3. Invest in strategically targeting influencers including those who are resistant, and in bringing them to the table using an encouraging and non-judgmental approach
4. Prioritise the creation of an informal and fun environment to assist communities to have challenging and difficult conversations, working towards the positive experience of participants as an aim in and of itself.

(B) When co-designing community centred engagement projects
5. Travel to communities in the planning phase to undertake the ground work by spending time in communities, meeting people face to face, learning about the context, developing relationships, and returning and following up, taking community timeframes into account
6. Build sufficient flexibility into the design to enable the program to listen to community and adapt elements of the program to meet the needs and contexts of different communities

7. Explore ways to connect small towns in the one shire to increase connections and links, enabling people from different towns to share resources, ideas, connections and effort
8. Invest in working directly with particular communities and monitoring risks at the local level (i.e. if leaders move away or experience burn out) when developing a 'regional program' to ensure local community capacity and engagement.