

LGBTQIA+ YOUTH — GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

**828. Mr S.N. AUBREY to the Minister for Youth:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's support for young LGBTQIA+ people who experience discrimination and elevated rates of adverse mental health issues. Can the minister update the house on this government's investment in youth programs and outline what this support means for young people who identify as LGBTQIA+?

**Mr D.J. KELLY replied:**

I thank the member very much for the question and congratulate him for his hard work in removing discrimination for everyone, and young people in particular, who identify as LGBTQIA+. It was great to see him at the Pride night on Saturday, along with a number of other members. If members in the chamber have never marched in Perth's Pride Parade, they really should put it on their bucket list. It was great to be there with the Water Corporation, the Department of Communities, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the Department of Health and a range of other government agencies—too many to mention. It is one of the most uplifting events members will ever be involved in. If members have not done it, they should put it on their bucket list.

When I became Minister for Youth, one of the initiatives I picked up from my predecessor, the member for Willagee, was the Ministerial Youth Advisory Council that he put in place. It is an absolutely great bunch of young people who advise me on a whole range of issues. One of the issues they raised with me was the ongoing discrimination that young people who identify as LGBTQIA+ experience in a range of areas. It is a long list, whether it be school, accommodation or health. They face a whole range of discrimination. One of the things the council recommended was that the state government should fund an advocacy service specifically for young members of that community. I looked at all the things in the report and thought that the best thing I could do was give these young people a voice, so in 2020 the McGowan government funded Youth Pride Network for the first time. Previously, it had been a bunch of hardworking volunteers, but in 2020 we gave funding to Youth Pride Network so that it could employ its first paid staff and have the capabilities and resources to do some good stuff. Since then, it released the *State of play* report on the discrimination that LGBTQIA+ people have experienced in the accommodation system. Youth Pride Network put in a submission when we reviewed the Equal Opportunity Act, it made a submission on the federal Religious Discrimination Bill—that disastrous exercise of the previous federal government—and on the Esther House review, the report on which was released today. I have been really impressed with the work it has done.

I am pleased to announce that the original three-year funding agreement that we had in place for Youth Pride Network, which had another year to go, has entered into a new three-year agreement to push the network's funding out to 2025. It will be given an additional \$500 000 over three years. That will increase its staff resources and, for the first time, give it resources so that it can engage with young queer people in the regions. I know from some regional members that a number of regional pride groups in Western Australia often do not get the love and attention they deserve. I am really pleased to continue to support the Youth Pride Network.

If I can, I pay tribute to Charlotte Glance, who was the project coordinator until recently. She was a founding member and has now moved on to do other things. Charlotte was a great mover in that organisation. I wish Cheyanne Henderson-Watkins all the best in her new role at driving that organisation.

On this side of the house, we believe that young people in particular should be allowed to get on and be the people they are without having their sexuality or gender identity constantly questioned. There are enough difficulties in the world without having to face that issue. We are very proud on this side of the house to have supported the Youth Pride Network. We have also funded TransFolk of WA for the first time for the work it does with young people. I give a shout-out to Hunter, who has been a great driver of that organisation. I am really pleased to do this on the day that we announced, through the Attorney General, that we are banning conversion therapy in Western Australia. That was one of the key issues that the Youth Pride Network raised with me on many occasions. If members talk to young people who have been subjected to that sort of dangerous and bigoted practice, they will know that it does not take long to realise that outlawing that practice in this state is long overdue.