

Media Release

The Hon Harriet Shing MP
Minister for Housing
Minister for Water
Minister for Equality



Tuesday, 20 August 2024

NEW COMMISSIONER FOR LGBTIQA+ COMMUNITIES APPOINTED

The Allan Labor Government is making sure lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQA+) Victorians continue to have a strong voice to advocate for their rights and wellbeing.

Minister for Equality Harriet Shing today announced that Joe Ball will be Victoria's third LGBTIQA+ Commissioner – a proud transgender man and longstanding LGBTIQA+ advocate with decades of experience across mental health, family violence, suicide prevention and disability sectors.

Passionate about working alongside diverse communities to reach meaningful solutions, Mr Ball was previously CEO of Switchboard where he oversaw the creation of landmark programs including Rainbow Door, a dedicated LGBTIQA+ family violence and mental health helpline, along with CHARLEE, a LGBTIQA+ Suicide Prevention Hub.

He is a current member of the National LGBTIQA+ Health and Wellbeing 10-year Action Plan Expert Advisory Group, and was honored as one of 50 Outstanding LGBTI+ Australian Leaders in 2020.

Mr Ball has served as a member of several leading community services committees and boards including Safe and Equal, the 1800 RESPECT community advisory committee, the Victorian LGBTIQA+ Taskforce, the Victorian Family Violence Reform Advisory Group and the National Suicide Prevention Governance Committee.

Mr Ball will commence in the role on 23 September. The Labor Government was the first in Australia to appoint a Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities in 2015, with Ro Allen's appointment, followed by Dr Todd Fernando.

The Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities provides a strong voice for diverse LGBTIQA+ communities across the state, working with the Government to implement *Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQA+ strategy 2022-2032* – a roadmap to ensure all Victorians feel safe, have equal human rights and live wholly and freely.

Victoria has led the nation in its strategy to foster inclusive communities where everyone can live safely and authentically, appointing Australia's first Minister for Equality in 2014.

The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* allocated \$22 million over four years to deliver key priorities including boosting the number of Rainbow Tick accredited community and mental health providers, funding to support LGBTIQA+ groups, events and organisations and delivering Pride in Ageing to address the needs of ageing LGBTIQA+ Victorians.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Equality Harriet Shing

"Joe's appointment to the role of LGBTIQA+ Commissioner will ensure we can continue our nation-leading work to recognise, support and celebrate LGBTIQA+ people and communities across Victoria, and I congratulate him on his determination over many years to improve the lives of LGBTIQA+ people."

"Commissioner Ball's expertise and inclusive advocacy will be enormously important in delivering our Pride in Our Future Equality Strategy, and builds on the legacy of previous Commissioner Todd Fernando."

Quote attributable to new Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities Joe Ball (he/him)

"It is an immense honour and responsibility to be the next Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQA+ Communities. I am here because of those who fought for generations so that LGBTIQA+ people could not only exist, but thrive."

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