

Media Release

The Hon Vicki Ward MP

Minister for Emergency Services
Minister for Natural Disaster Recovery
Minister for Equality



Wednesday, 19 March 2025

EQUALITY ONLY NON-NEGOTIABLE UNDER LABOR

The Allan Labor Government stands with our LGBTIQ+ communities in their long fight for equality – we will always fight for their right to be safe, respected, and included.

Last year, Liberal Bev McArthur tabled a petition against the Rainbow Libraries Toolkit. This disappointingly appears to have the support of the Opposition Leader and will be debated in the Legislative Council today.

While the Liberals are determined to use this internal library resource as a tool for division, it is in fact a simple, low-cost toolkit used by library staff to create inclusive spaces and support our diverse Victorian communities.

In May last year, Brad Battin released a statement that said “a Liberal Party I lead will never tolerate hateful and divisive rhetoric”.

Yet he rewards a member of his team who continues to exhibit divisive and hurtful behaviour with a Shadow Ministry position - the very position that would have oversight over local government, including our public libraries.

Just as disappointing is the harmful reality that Brad Battin's Liberals have spread outright misinformation about the content of this resource – and confirmed they would scrap it if elected.

This intolerance for supporting diversity has a long history; this is the same party that fought against Safe Schools, a program supporting young people and their families to feel safe.

The same party that opposed birth certificate reform, making life harder for trans and gender-diverse Victorians.

The same party that just last month happily walked with LGBTIQ+ Victorians at the Pride March – only to refuse to support stronger anti-vilification laws, which are crucial to protecting those very Victorians from harm.

Brad Battin continues to move the goal posts regarding his support for this Bill.

And now he is allowing his frontbench to bring this hateful petition and debate to the parliament.

Homophobic and transphobic policies and rhetoric emerging overseas are causing deep concern within the LGBTIQ+ community in Australia.

We only need to look to places like the United States to see how quickly progress can be reversed, and inclusion and safety ripped apart.

The Liberals cannot be trusted to stand up for equality. Their record speaks for itself.