

## **OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BENEFIT FROM ANDREW'S GOVERNMENT 'FREE FROM VIOLENCE' FUND**

Young people, particularly those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersexual and queer (LGBTIQ), will benefit from a \$100,000 funding initiative for the Barwon area that involves supporting healthy and safe relationships free from violence.

The Hon. Natalie Hutchins, Minister for the Prevention of Violence Against Women, recently launched the project at Barwon CASA / Minerva who have teamed up with Barwon Adolescent Task (BAT) Force, City of Greater Geelong and Creative Geelong Inc. to implement a prevention of violence initiative focused primarily on working with families (young people and their parents/carers) to address gender-based and family violence.

*"This funding will ensure young people and their families in the Barwon area are supported in their relationships to reach their full potential," said The Minister*

Young people will be engaged in the project to explore perceptions and challenge the 'social norms' of traditional male and female roles of gender and sexuality and the expectations that are portrayed through society by promoting equality and respect; and healthy and safe relationships free from violence.

There are few resources and narratives focused on the prevention of violence tailored to this cohort and that speak to what a healthy and safe relationship is free from violence. Much of the prevention focus of the Family Violence initiatives in both Victoria and Australia are based on the framework of building 'equality between men and women' and rarely, if ever, acknowledge LGBTIQ related issues. They do not include tailored information relevant to those in abusive same sex relationships, nor those experiencing homophobic or transphobic violence from family members.

Minister Hutchins said, *"Healthy ideas about relationships and gender equality are an important part of changing the attitudes and behaviours that lead to family violence."*

The unique partnership melds the specialist knowledge of family violence primary prevention through Barwon CASA, and is guided by BATForce and its expertise in engaging with young people and their families; with innovative and creative approaches for transferring the key messages through a range of social media mediums by Creative Geelong; and expands upon existing gender equality and the primary prevention of violence against women and children initiatives with the City of Greater Geelong.

Helen Bolton, CEO Barwon CASA / Minerva said, *"Our partnership is thrilled to receive funding from the Victorian Government to deliver prevention activities in the Barwon area that support healthy and safe relationships free from violence. In particular, collaborating with young LGBTIQ people through creative mediums to challenge the norms of gender and sexuality"*.

The project will challenge the images of gender and sexuality and the expectations that are portrayed through pornography and promote healthy, safe and respectful relationships free from violence as well as include key terms to support parents/carers in having conversations with young LGBTIQ people about the subject matter. Identifying what healthy and consenting sex looks like as well as promoting equality and respect and providing supportive and inclusive language for young people exploring gender and sexuality.

The partnership is built around a deep commitment from all organisations to undertake an active role in the prevention of family violence and all forms of violence against women and children.

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**L to R** – Darren Cheeseman, MP; Christine Couzens, MP; The Hon. Natalie Hutchins; Helen Bolton, CEO Barwon CASA / Minerva; Jane Wager, Coordinator Community Development COGG; Jennifer Cromarty, President Creative Geelong; Leigh Bartlett, Regional Youth Affairs Consultant, BATForce