

DAWN HOUGH

PROGRAM DIRECTOR, PRIDE IN DIVERSITY

SPEECH TRANSCRIPT

Let me start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we gather today, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present.

Good afternoon, and once again, a very warm welcome to the official launch of Australia's first LGBT inclusion program for the workplace, Pride in Diversity.

As Program Director, I would also like to *personally* welcome and again extend a special thank you to our foundation members.

- IBM
- KPMG
- ING Australia
- Goldman Sachs JBWere
- Department of Defence
- Australian Federal Police
- Lend Lease and
- Telstra

It has been my pleasure to work closely with these Australian employers in the lead up to the launch. Their commitment to their own LGBT community is evident and ongoing and I know we have many of our foundation member employees here today to celebrate their involvement in this initiative – so a very warm welcome to you as well.

I would also like to extend a welcome and thank you to The Hon. Michael Kirby who has so generously given of his time to support the launch of his initiative and Richard Wilkins for MC'ing today's event.

A special welcome also to Diversity Council Australia and ACON representatives here today. Both ACON and Diversity Council Australia bring a wealth of experience and expertise as partners of this program, along with Stonewall UK. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to both the Gender Centre and representatives of OII who have taken time out to join us for today's launch.

Pride and Diversity is an Australian-first and it is with pleasure that I introduce you to some of the member benefits today. For those of you who are not aware, Pride in Diversity is a not-for-profit, member-based, Australian employer program that has been set up specifically to support HR and Diversity professionals in all aspects of LGBT workplace inclusion.

Australian workplace diversity practice has traditionally focused on women in leadership, flexibility, Indigenous employees, age, culture/ethnicity and disability. Our US and European counterparts have long included LGBT within diversity practice and while I acknowledge that we do have some leaders in this field, this area of diversity has largely gone unrecognised even though the population of employees representative of the LGBT communities exceeds that of many other minority groups that we address in diversity practice.

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Unfortunately, the impact of a non-inclusive culture for LGBT employees is often hidden from employers as many members of our community feel more comfortable hiding their orientation.

Doing so means avoiding any commentary re: perceived discrimination or exclusion for the fear of being “outed” in what is often perceived as a non-LGBT friendly environment.

The fear of social exclusion, discrimination, negative career impacts and “being found out” are very real and everyday for many employees. To say that there is no effect on the mental health and wellbeing of any employee that feels they need to live a double-life at work, or that there is no effect on the organisation itself in terms of team cohesion, productivity, risk mitigation, the ability to recruit the best talent and reputation is at it best, naive.

There also needs to be an important distinction between the outcomes of an inclusive culture and what this program is trying to achieve. This is not about have a LGBT lobby group in your workplace, or about trying to force all LGBT employees to “come out”, it is simply about ensuring that your workplace does not inadvertently discriminate against LGBT employees and that it is inclusive of *all* employees, including those that are LGBT.

Should an employee then feel they want to be “out” in the workplace, then it is both a safe and inclusive environment to be so.

While there are many organisations and consultants that can assist Australian Workplaces in all other aspects of Diversity, we have not had, up until now, a program designed to specifically work with organisations in areas of LGBT inclusion. Although we recognise the work and role of the Gender Centre in working specifically with the Transgender community.

Through membership to Pride in Diversity, you will gain an understanding of the unique challenges that your LGBT employees face and the impacts of a culture that does not specifically include LGBT within its statements around discrimination, within its policies and within its diversity strategy and initiatives.

To assist you in all aspects of your LGBT diversity strategy, we will provide our members with:

- A dedicated account manager to provide ongoing support and advice, ensuring maximum benefits of the program.
- An invitation to at least three good practice seminars annually to discuss topical issues and share good practice across employers.
- A high quality LGBT awareness training session on-site to help you make the workplace fully inclusive.
- [Members-only website](#) with resources, e-forums and a quarterly e-bulletin, also officially launched today (www.prideindiversity.com.au)
- Targeted recruitment and marketing to the LGBT community via members-only job pages on our website.
- Member profile on the Pride in Diversity Website
- Exclusive use of the Pride in Diversity logo to promote active participation in the program (recruitment, internal comms, external HR press)
- Exclusive networking opportunities with diversity professionals and across the LGBT community.

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- A 25% discount on other training programs, including any tailored programs as needed (ie anti-bullying).
- Nomination of LGBT network leader for dedicated newsfeed, PID support and inclusion in PID networking events.
- An opportunity for member organisation LGBT employees to participate in the Sydney Mardi Gras
- An opportunity to build your brand reputation and leadership on diversity.

We are also pleased to officially announce today that towards the end of 2010, Pride in Diversity will also be launching Australia's first workplace equality index. This index will provide a means by which organisations can measure their inclusivity. Members of the Pride in Diversity program will receive free entry into the index, personalised workplace-specific feedback and an opportunity to benchmark against other Australian workplaces.

Once again, I would like to personally thank you for attending the launch of this unique diversity offering. You will have received a brochure on your arrival today, I encourage you to consider membership for your organisation and look forward to an opportunity to discuss how we may assist your workplace, no matter your starting point.

Thankyou.

ENDS

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