

MEDIA RELEASE

11 November 2010

Celebrating Youth Sexuality and Gender Diversity Afternoon Tea and Forum

Time:	2 – 4pm
Date:	Thursday 11 November 2010
Location:	Reception Room, ACT Legislative Assembly

The Youth Coalition of the ACT and the Youth Sexuality and Gender Diversity Network will today hold an afternoon tea and forum, hosted by the Minister for Children and Young People, Ms Joy Burch, at the ACT Legislative Assembly.

The forum aims to celebrate the contributions of young people aged 12 – 25 years who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex (GLBTI) and raise awareness of the issues they may experience.

‘It is widely understood that approximately 10% of young people identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex,’ said Emma Robertson, Director of the Youth Coalition. ‘Given this, it is essential that the Canberra community considers strategies to support this cohort of young people.’

‘While research has indicated that young people are increasingly feeling positive about their sexuality; young people may still experience a range of issues, such as homophobia and discrimination, leading to higher rates of self-harm and alcohol and other drug use, depression and disengagement from education.’

The forum will feature keynote speaker Assistant Professor Iain Hay, from the Faculty of Education at the University of Canberra. Assistant Professor Hay has worked in the education sector for over 20 years and currently engages in research relating to youth sexuality and gender issues; and in particular how sexual identity and social isolation impact on young people who identify as GLBTI. In addition, young people who identify as GLBTI will be present to speak about their own experiences in the Canberra community.

Assistant Professor Iain Hay; and Ms Emma Robertson, Director of the Youth Coalition, will be available to speak to media immediately prior to the event (1.45 – 2pm); and following the event (3.45 – 4.15pm).

Please Note: It is requested that media refrain from filming or photographing the young people speaking during the forum, to respect the sensitive nature of the event.

For more information on the event or to arrange an interview with Assistant Professor Hay or Ms Robertson, please contact Erin Barry on 0431 100 847.