

CONNECTION **LGBTIQA+RIGHTS** FIGHT AIDS **MARRIAGE EQUALITY** RAINBOW
FAMILIES **TRANS RIGHTS** DECRIMINALISATION PRIDE IN ALL AGES **ANTI RACISM**
COVID-19 **SUICIDE PREVENTION** COMING OUT HERE FOR YOU



THIRTY YEARS OF SWITCHBOARD

Switchboard Vic
ANNUAL REPORT
2021-22



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Switchboard Victoria is based on the lands of the Yaluk-ut Weelam clan of the Boon Wurrung peoples in the Kulin Nation.

We acknowledge that our work takes place on lands that are under colonial occupation and that sovereignty has never been ceded. We hope to pay our deepest respects to Boon Wurrung elders, past and present, and wish to extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People across this Country we know as Australia.



Cover design by [Jacq Moon](#)

SWITCHBOARD VICTORIA INC

A.B.N. 81 367 786 099
Victorian Pride Centre
79-81 Fitzroy Street
St Kilda, VIC, 3182

Web: switchboard.org.au

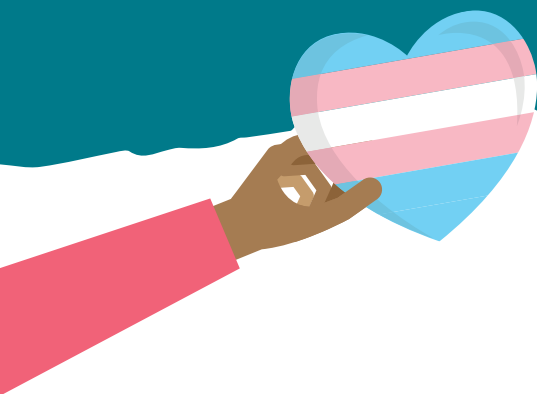
Email: admin@switchboard.org.au

Administration: (03) 9663 2474



Contents

We are Switchboard	4
Connecting the LGBTIQ+ communities	6
Thank you to our staff and volunteers	7
Welcome from the Chair	8
Letter from the CEO	9
30 years of Switchboard	11
Year in Review	16
Rainbow Door and our broader family violence work	18
Suicide Prevention	20
Anti-racism at Switchboard	22
Being there for our older LGBTI community members	24
QLife / Teleweb	26
COVID-19	27
Community Engagement	28
In memory	29
Switchboard Board members 2021-22	30
Governance: Accountability and transparency for our communities	31
Treasurer's report	32
Financial reports Auditor's statement	33
Thank you for supporting our work	39



DONATE

Make a tax-deductible donation to support our work today

www.givenow.com.au/switchedonforswitchboard

► **PURPOSE**

We serve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender diverse, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQA+) people, their families, allies and communities.

► **VALUES / PRINCIPLES**

WE ARE

/ INFORMED.

We listen, we reflect, and we are well informed.

/ ACTIVE.

We contribute to our communities and the world around us (we lean in and reach out).

/ ACCOUNTABLE.

We keep our promises to our members, to our LGBTIQA+ communities, to funders and to ourselves.

/ CONNECTED.

We connect, engage and mobilise communities, stakeholders and partners (we mobilise people power to empower our communities).

/ RESPONSIVE.

We respond to the diversity of community need.

/ RESPECTFUL.

We are empathetic and meet people where they're at.

► **AIMS**

To provide peer-driven support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender diverse, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQA+) people, their families, allies and communities.

► **INTERSECTIONALITY STATEMENT**

Switchboard is committed to ensuring that our work and services address the intersections between different forms of inequality, discrimination and disadvantage, including colonisation, racism and immigration status, and the role that these play in the oppression and discrimination of LGBTIQA+ peoples.

Staff members of Switchboard will engage with the intersectional work that takes place at Switchboard and will attend Switchboard's professional development sessions and events that address racism and intersectionality. Each staff member will undertake their own independent education on these issues to ensure they are informed and able to bring an intersectional lens to their work at Switchboard.



What have we achieved together

96

OLDER LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE SUPPORTED IN OUR OUT & ABOUT PROGRAM THIS YEAR



6,364

PEOPLE LIKE OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

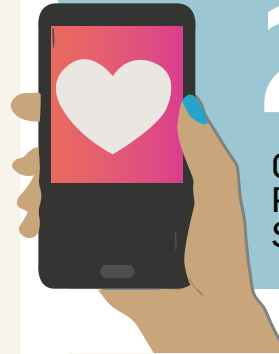


3,481

PEOPLE LIKE OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

2,019

CONTACTS TO QLIFE ON PHONE AND CHAT FROM SWITCHBOARD VICTORIA



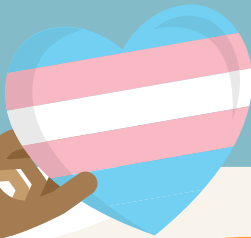
31

YEARS WE HAVE RUN THE SERVICE TO SUPPORT THE LGBTIQ+ COMMUNITY



\$61,334

DONATIONS TO SWITCHBOARD



27,919

CONTACTS THROUGH OUR NEW RAINBOW DOOR SERVICE

1,392

CLIENTS SUPPORTED



Our Rainbow Door service has supported LGBTIQ+ people in Victoria through the COVID-19 health crisis.



CONNECTING THE LGBTIQ+ COMMUNITY

Switchboard Victoria is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation that provides peer-based, volunteer-driven support services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and gender diverse, Intersex, Queer, Asexual and more (LGBTIQ+) people, their friends, families and allies.

/ PEER PHONE AND WEB COUNSELLING AND REFERRAL

Switchboard is the Victorian partner in the national QLife telephone and web counselling, information and referral service, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. This free peer-based service is for LGBTIQ+ identifying people and those with questions or concerns about LGBTIQ+ issues including families, friends, teachers and coworkers of LGBTIQ+ people.

/ COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS FOR OLDER LGBTI PEOPLE

Our Out & About program aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness by creating friendship and connection between Victorian LGBTI seniors and peer volunteer visitors.

/ ANTI RACISM

Our Queer, Trans And Intersex Bla(c)k and/or People of Colour (QTIBPoC) programs aim to build greater equity for LGBTIQ+ people who are Bla(c)k, People of Colour and/or People of Faith.

/ RAINBOW DOOR

Rainbow Door is a free specialist LGBTIQ+ service providing phone and web-based information, support and referral for people experiencing suicidal thoughts, family violence (including elder abuse) and issues with housing, alcohol and other drugs (AOD), relationships, sexual assault, legal issues, mental health and wellbeing, and social isolation.

Experienced LGBTIQ+ peer workers provide advice, referral and support to help LGBTIQ+ people navigate the service system and find the supports we need. Rainbow Door also provides specialist secondary consultation to other services.

/ SUICIDE PREVENTION

Our Suicide Prevention Program puts responding to the challenges of suicide among LGBTIQ+ communities at the core of Switchboard's work. We work nationally to provide suicide prevention, intervention and postvention programs to LGBTIQ+ people, with an emphasis on building community resilience through peer-led and lived experience activities.

THANK YOU TO STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND LIFE MEMBERS

/ OUR STAFF

A heartfelt thanks to our staff for your dedication and hard work during another year of pandemic challenges, organisational growth and increased demand. Thank you for coming together to serve our communities.

/ OUR SWITCHBOARD MANAGEMENT TEAM

Chief Executive Officer › Joe Ball (he/him)

Director of Services › Meaghan Holden (she/they)

Teleweb Manager › Libby Jamieson (she/her)

Suicide Prevention Manager › Anna Bernasochi (she/her)

Racial Equity and Inclusion Manager › Greg Rincon (he/him)

Out and About Manager › Meredith Butler (she/her)

For privacy and safety reasons we do not publish the names of our Administration and Finance staff, Teleweb Team Leaders, Volunteer Coordination staff, Rainbow Door Team Leaders, Rainbow Door Helpline staff, Supervision staff, Suicide Prevention Project staff, QTIBPoC Project staff, Out and About Project staff, Communications, Training and casual staff. We sincerely thank them for their work.

/ OUR VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to all of our volunteers, who power so much of our work through our services, reference group, governance structures and more. It is only because of your time and dedication that we can continue to serve our communities.

Our volunteer Board for 2021-22 and committee members are listed on page 30.

/ OUR LIFE MEMBERS

Finally, thank you to our life members, who continue to guide us in the spirit of our founders.

- › Heather Morgan
- › David Samson
- › Chris Oxley (*passed Dec 2021*)
- › Carol Wilkinson
- › Michelle O'Sullivan
- › Julie Dyer
- › Libby Jamieson
- › Chris Mier
- › Dom Smith
- › Paul Cosgrave
- › Brian Murray
- › Peter Knight
- › Bruce Beet
- › Peter O'Grady
- › Nate Reid
- › Margaret Cannington
- › Bec Harris
- › Bridget Gargan
- › Hadya Klemm
- › Shane Laing
- › Leanne Renfree
- › Vanessa Robertson
- › John Wall
- › Kenny Yu
- › Mon Hameed
- › Christine Haag



Welcome from the Chair

Sarah Marlowe, Chair

Welcome to our 2021-22 Annual Report. It's been a hugely eventful year – our 30th year supporting our LGBTIQ+ communities. A key highlight was moving into our administrative home in the beautiful Victorian Pride Centre. Our team also worked hard to prepare the new home base for our QLife and Rainbow Door teleweb services.

The pandemic has changed so much. Teleweb supports like QLife and Rainbow Door grew and played a critical role supporting many. But enormous demand – surging during the lockdowns and every bigoted media 'debate' – put pressure on our dedicated staff and volunteers. A key focus this year has been developing organisational structures and approaches to support both our growth and the wonderful humans who deliver our services – see our Rainbow Door, QLife and Governance reports.

This was just one focus for the Board in monitoring and mitigating risk. Risk was also a focus for Board development work, led by Secretary Alice Drury. Another was Board self-assessment, led by Milla Galea

– the findings will inform skills development and growth in the next term, when the Board will also lead development of our next Strategic Plan. Milla and I also scoped a clinical governance review project for implementation in the coming year. And the World's Best non-profit Treasurer, Blake Leschen, again led a complex budget build with Joe and the staff, with an enthusiasm for financial literacy that convinced every Board member that finance can indeed be fun – as well as a critical part of our governance responsibilities.

Changes wrought by the pandemic have resulted in greater opportunities for online engagement, including fabulous events with partners like Koorie Pride Victoria, Transgender Victoria, Many Coloured Sky and Zoe Belle Gender Collective, and the popular QTIBPoC community skill-building workshops – see the QTIBPoC report. The increased accessibility of online and hybrid events is a silver lining we are determined to keep.

Another highlight was the increasing reach and development of our programs, from the QTIBPoC program's strengthening dual focus on internal and community work; to 96 older people supported by Out and About – a triumph of dedicated hard work given the barriers faced by those who need our support – to the increasing national and international reach of our suicide prevention work. See the program reports for more.

My heartfelt thanks and admiration go to our dedicated staff and volunteers, not least our indomitable CEO Joe for leading us through another challenging, exciting year with vision, dedication and the true spirit of community. My thanks to our Board – almost all of you have hung in through two years of Zoom meetings and given untold hours behind the scenes. Thank you for bringing your skills, professional and lived experience to the virtual table – for the passionate debates, for the sharing, listening and learning, for your humour, your dedication and your excellent questions.

In June 2022 family health issues forced me to step down as Chair, and I will reluctantly leave the Board after five great years, 3.5 as Chair, at the 2022 AGM. I am determined to keep contributing to our wonderful, 30-year-old organisation – including to keep bringing my lived experience as a family violence survivor (some years ago) and a rainbow family parent, including of two gorgeous trans teens. My deepest gratitude to wonderful Rashmi Kumar, our QTIBPoC Committee Chair who stepped up to become Acting Board Chair, and who with the Executive Team – Blake, Alice and my 2016 QLife training buddy, Deputy Chair Amelia Arnold – skilfully led a wide range of activities to completion in what has been a massive Board term.



From the CEO

Joe Ball, CEO

I have had the privilege of leading Switchboard Victoria since 2016. During this time, we have navigated the marriage law postal survey, debate around transgender birth certificate reform, banning of conversion practices and the proposed religious discrimination bills – just to name a few obstacles. In short, there have been challenges to my morale from time to time – days when you want to, as they say, flip the table. Something I have found myself considering this year, *is how do you keep leading when you feel like the political attacks are relentless?*

What has always helped me through, is our community. The kindness of the team at Switchboard, the legacy of Switchboard's forebearers, the camaraderie from our broader LGBTIQ+ communities, the messages of solidarity from allies and the grand public displays of support. I was in tears of joy when Macklemore performed at the NRL during the marriage equality campaign. I took photos in front of the giant "YES" banner at Melbourne's Trades Hall. I smile every time I see a Trans character on a TV show. And throughout the coronavirus pandemic, I have drawn strength from thinking of our Switchboard founders and early members who started our organisation during the last pandemic – the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It's our communities being visible, showing up for each other and supporting each other that energises me to continue this work. We are stronger together, and together we make it through. The key I always come back to is – it's going to take all of us.

This year saw the first full year of operations for Australia's only peer led LGBTIQ+ dedicated Family Violence and mental health helpline, the Rainbow Door. We know that our trusted, community-controlled and peer-led programs are vital to our communities, evidenced by 28,000+ contacts to the Rainbow Door in this year alone. The demand on

I am so grateful to every person who sits down the other end of a call for our community, whether it is on QLIFE or the Rainbow Door, for meeting our communities where they're at and being the person that holds space when its needed most.



Rainbow Door is huge, and we are proud to deliver essential services to our communities during a time of great need. Personally, I am so grateful to every person who sits down the other end of a call for our community, whether it is on QLIFE or the Rainbow Door, for meeting our communities where they're at and being the person that holds space when its needed most.

The work that all our staff and volunteers do is critical to keeping our community members safe, and alive, across all programs, from visiting someone in aged care, to participating in an advisory group, to running a QTIBPoC event, to sitting on the Board, to taking a call. I will never take their work for granted and feel privileged to work alongside them. We will never see their faces in the movement history books or etched on any award. But when we see and say Switchboard, and we talk about who showed up over 31 years plus for us, we mean every single one of them who gave so much.

2022 was an election year, and never have I done so many election interviews – interviews about our communities, about Trans rights, and about my life as a public Trans Man. This must be the last election we have to do this – our

rights, access to healthcare and dignity for Trans people must become a bipartisan issue, not election fodder in the race to the bottom. The freedom to discriminate against an individual based on who they are is unacceptable and has no place in any future public debate. Thank you to every single person who stood with us during this time.

Earlier this year, MP Stephen Jones visited Switchboard to tie a ribbon on The Remembering Rainbow, in honour of the life of his young nephew, Ollie. When you lose someone to suicide, it is important to create deliberate and healing spaces for you to remember your loved one. That is why we created the Remembering Rainbow - to honour those we have lost. This year we have tied too many ribbons.

We need allies, like Stephen, who support our work because they too know that things need to be better for LGBTIQ+ people. Allies who show up, speak out publicly, face the pain we share and take action. It is from this place of remembering and honouring that we have built our suicide prevention work, which continues to grow. I am humbled that our suicide prevention work is renowned nationally as the leading LGBTIQ+ suicide prevention program.

This year we also celebrated 40 years of fighting for equal rights in Victoria. 40 years since the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Victoria marks an important moment, and it deserves reflection. It was one steppingstone on a long journey to legal equality - one that continues today. At this 40-year milestone, we must also remember that the line to equality is not linear; gains can be lost. Whilst we must celebrate the wins, and honour those who came before us, in



Joe Ball with Dr Todd Fernando (Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities) and Mama Alto (CEO, Transgender Victoria)



MP Stephen Jones visiting Switchboard, 2022.

my opinion we honour them most when we take their legacy, grit and determination as sparks to continue the fight for the rights of all LGBTIQ+ people today and into the future.

I would like to acknowledge the Chair Sarah Marlowe, who reluctantly stepped down this year due to personal reasons. Sarah over her 5 years has made an indelible mark and leaves as her leadership legacy, improved governance, a roadmap for how to lead in a crisis and the high water mark of always striving for quality improvement. Thank you Sarah for your kindness, generosity and for being the calm voice at the other end of my call.

I am so proud that across all our programs at Switchboard, we are working hard to change the narrative in mainstream spaces that LGBTIQ+ people are inherently a 'vulnerable population.' We are showing the world we're tenacious because despite facing systemic hate, exclusion, and violence - we're still here, challenging the prejudiced system. The QTIBPOC and Out and About programs have led on this and provided workshops and events to celebrate and support different parts of our communities from a strengths-based lens. Our LGBTIQ+ communities are working hard to change and lead how society views vulnerability - not as something to pity and patronise but as a quality to aspire to.

The year ahead will undoubtedly bring challenges to our communities, but we will navigate them together, as we always have. Our volunteers, Board, staff, and Switchboard community.

It's going to take all of us.

Thank you for being a part of Switchboard's story.

OUR SWITCHBOARD JOURNEY



The history of Switchboard is held by many people. As we celebrate over Thirty Years of Switchboard we highlight achievements and notable moments, knowing that the picture is incomplete.

We call out to those who have volunteered, worked or connected with the service to reconnect. We welcome your observations and memories of Switchboard, and of course you can share them anonymously [via this link](#).



1991 Gay and Lesbian Switchboard formed

1993 FROGLES (Friends of Gay and Lesbian Switchboard) launched

In 1993, Gay and Lesbian Switchboard launched what we believe is the first card discount promotion aimed at the Lesbian and Gay Communities. It involves people becoming FROGLES (FRiends OF Gay and Lesbian Switchboard) for the donation of \$25 (or \$10 concession). Special thanks to Tim Craker for creating our very queer FROGLES mascot.

1996

Switchboard's First Executive Officer

In May 1996, Rachell Rose was appointed as the first Executive Officer for Switchboard.

"Switchboard's two most important assets cannot be found by looking through our financial statements. The commitment and dedication of the service's core volunteers and the goodwill and support Switchboard enjoys in the gay and lesbian (sic) community are vital to its ongoing survival."



1993

When You Need More Than Straight Answers!

"When David Samson set up Switchboard, his vision was that one day it would be an independent organisation, open 24 hours a day."



David Sampson, co-founder of Switchboard Victoria

1997

Telstra "making Life easier" for Switchboard

In 1997, Telstra's support ensured that Switchboard could meet the costs of providing a free 1800 number throughout country Victoria. In addition to supporting operational costs, this partnership also included a fax machine - vital to communication at the time. Telstra would also later donate Switchboard's first Switchboard - a PABX system to handle calls.

It would take until 2003 before Switchboard's numbers were listed in all rural White Pages. This was a considerable achievement of the Switchboard team at the time given TELECOM had refused to list Switchboard's 0055 information service numbers in 1992.

(Telstra and Switchboard were first partners in 1995)



2001

S.O.S Save Our Switchboard

In July 2001, Switchboard turned to the community to ask for help. Facing closure, a public campaign to raise \$25,000 was launched. The tagline used was, "If the Switchboard helped you, or someone you know and care about, NOW is the time to return the favour."

In response to that call out Miss Candee, with Sasha Turner and Keith Corey Photography, devised a greeting card campaign that raised over \$4000.



2002

State Government Funding

Switchboard also began negotiations in July 2001 to secure funding with the Victorian State Government. In May 2002 Switchboard finalised negotiations with the then Department of Human Services for recurrent funding. The three-year grant for \$25,000 was signed after a considerable effort from the Funding Steering Committee.

2003

Michelle O'Sullivan - Most Outstanding Contribution to Community Award

In 2003, Michelle O'Sullivan was recognised at the Pride Awards for over 10 years of service to Switchboard, receiving the Most Outstanding Contribution to Community Award

2003

Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status secured

After four attempts, Paul Cosgrave led the successful effort to secure DGR status for Switchboard.

2005

"There For Us" fundraising campaign

The "There For Us" fundraising campaign raises \$10,000, coordinated by Jen Scantlebury.

2008 - 2022

14 years at City Village

In 2007, the City of Melbourne called for EOIs for subsidised CBD office space leasing for the NFP sector. Switchboard was a successful applicant, and operated out of the offices at City Village on Bourke Street for 14 years from 2008.



➤ Libby Jamieson in the Switchboard phone room, 2021

2009 ▼

General Manager begins

In October 2009, Leanne Renfree commenced work as the new Manager of Switchboard - a position that she would hold for 7 years. Leanne was instrumental in the transition to our partnership in QLife, and in setting up the Out and About LGBTI seniors program.

2009 ▼

30th QLife Volunteer Training Course

The 30th Training Course was delivered by experienced QLife phone counsellors to new volunteers in the Kulin Room in City Village.

The training courses are the heart of Switchboard. The training course is so many things to so many people. The reasons that people want to volunteer are simple - we wanted to give back to a community that cared for US - Libby Jamieson, Life Member



◀ Leanne's first day - chatting to life members at the AGM



2013

In 2013-14 Switchboard joined our phone service with services in other states to form Australia's first national LGBTIQ+ telephone and web-chat counselling service, now known as QLife.

By that time it was clear that the name Gay and Lesbian Switchboard reflected neither the callers' nor our volunteers' diversity in relation to sexuality and gender.

So in 2014, our members agreed to drop "Gay and Lesbian" and call the service Switchboard Victoria.

2014

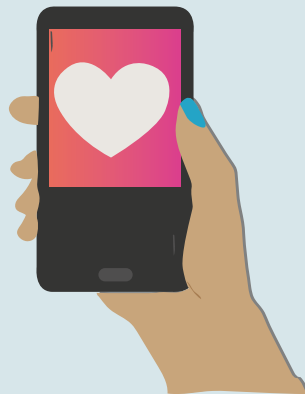
In 2014 we also significantly expanded our services to provide a volunteer-based home visiting service, now called **Out and About**, to reduce social isolation and improve community connectedness for older LGBTI Victorians.



2014

Switchboard cracks over \$100,000 in revenue

2014 was the first year that Switchboard's annual revenue reached over \$100,000 (\$159, 295)



2014

Gay and Lesbian Switchboard becomes Switchboard Victoria

On 24 June 2014, a Special General Meeting passed a resolution to change our name to Switchboard Victoria. Thanks to the work of Leanne Renfree and the Governance Sub-Committee.



2017

Marriage Equality - Switchboard is there for you

In response to public debates around the Marriage Law Postal Survey, Switchboard took a community leadership role, ensuring that the QLife service was promoted widely. The key message was that Switchboard was there for the community during difficult times and debates.

"After the YES vote was announced outside the State Library of Victoria, I walked up to City Village and jumped on the phones. I'll never forget the first call I took. They said, "I thought I'd feel better." That perfectly summarised how I felt, too. The harm caused by the public debates around LGBTIQ+ rights cannot be understated." - Amelia Arnold, former QLife phone counselling volunteer and Deputy Chair.



2017

In 2017 we established our **QTIPoC program**: QTIPoC stands for Queer, Trans and Intersex People of Colour. The program aims to further understanding within and beyond Switchboard on issues that affect accessibility and inclusion of QTIPoC.

2017

Hitting the Regional Road

Then General Manager Joe Ball went on a LGBTI Rural Roadshow with Commissioner Ro Allen, visiting 23 Victorian regional centres over 6 weeks.



2019

In 2018-19 Switchboard formally established our **suicide prevention service**, in February 2019 engaging our Suicide Prevention Manager.

In April 2019 the **Out and About** program was re-funded, following a decision in December 2018 where the program's funding was slashed by two thirds. Switchboard's broad-based campaign saved this valuable service. Since then we have been funded to expand the service to socially isolated LGBTI elders aged over 60, and to partner with and build the capacity of mainstream service providers.



2018

In 2017-18 we joined Queerspace/ Drummond street services, Thorne Harbour Health and Transgender Victoria in launching **w/respect**, Australia's first LGBTIQA+ integrated services response to LGBTIQA+ family violence.

2020

In 2020 in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19), we have transformed our service to respond to the needs of the LGBTIQA+ community during a world wide pandemic.

2019

Switchboard appoints first CEO



> Joe Ball - current CEO

2021

As we move into a new era globally, Switchboard has grown as a service and know that we have the capacity and resilience as an important service for the LGBTIQA+ community in Victoria.

On the 28th September 2020, we launched **Rainbow Door**. Switchboard was named in the Mental Health Royal Commission in March 2021, to receive recurrent funding for the Rainbow Door.

In June 2021, the Victorian Pride centre became our new home.



Year in Review

REPRESENTING OUR LGBTIQ+ COMMUNITIES



Image above: Left: Director of Services Meaghan Holden appointed to the Victorian Government Health and Wellbeing Working Group. **Right:** CEO Joe Ball appointed to the Victorian Government LGBTIQ Taskforce

Representing our communities' concerns to government

We're looking forward to the opportunity to work alongside other representatives of our LGBTIQ+ communities to advise the government on community issues and the development of services and policies.

Government House roundtable discussion

We're proud that Board Deputy Chair Amelia Arnold, an alumnus of the 2019 Leadership Victoria LGBTIQ+ Leadership Program, was invited by the Governor of Victoria Linda Dessau AC and Mr Anthony Howard AM QC to a lunch and roundtable discussion at Government House Victoria.

"Representing Switchboard Victoria, I was fortunate to have lunch with Mr Howard and his staff, as well as the Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities and other LGBTIQ+ Community leaders, to participate in a rich discussion about LGBTIQ+ issues in Victoria. Thank you Governor Linda Dessau AC for the invitation, and for ensuring LGBTIQ+ issues are prioritised through the Office of the Governor." – Amelia Arnold, Deputy Chair



Image above from left: Ro Allen, former Commissioner of LGBTIQ+ Communities, Son Vivienne of Transgender Victoria, Amelia Arnold, Brenda Appleton OAM, Mr Anthony Howard AM QC, Adam Bourne of ARCSHS, Jamie Gardiner OAM, Jayde de Bondt Pipan of Victorian Government LGBTIQ+ Taskforce.



ADVOCATING AGAINST THE RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION BILL

Switchboard vocally opposed the Religious Discrimination Bill proposed by the previous federal government. As a helpline service, we hear every day about the damage caused to LGBTIQ+ lives as we were again thrust into the centre of political debate and intense media reporting.

"Whilst we would support a bill that would genuinely protect people from religious discrimination, this cannot be at the expense of causing harm and distress to another community. The freedom to discriminate against an individual based on who they are is unacceptable and has no place in our legal system, or in any future public debate." – Joe Ball, CEO



A DIFFERENT PRIDE SEASON

We made the difficult decision to not attend Melbourne Pride or Midsumma Carnival and Pride March this year. This decision was about prioritising the ongoing health of staff and volunteers, minimising risk of COVID-19 infection and keeping our services operational, including our two 7-day per week helplines and older peoples visiting service.

Melbourne Pride was an outdoor event for LGBTIQ+ people and allies marking 40 years since the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Victoria. We wanted to ensure those who lived through this time were included, sending out 75 "pride packages" to older LGBTIQ+ people with messages of support from our communities.

Switchboard sign created for the Midsumma carnival stall, 2022



For more info, check out starobserver.com.au

40 YEARS SINCE DECRIMINALISATION

Switchboard contributed a piece to Star Observer on the 40 year anniversary of decriminalisation of homosexuality in Victoria.

"40 years marks an important moment, and it deserves reflection. For many though, it was one stepping stone on a long journey to legal equality - one that continues today, particularly for the transgender and intersex communities. We must remember that the line to equality is not linear; gains can be lost. We must continue to fight for the rights of all LGBTIQ+ people." - Joe Ball, CEO



SEEN AND BELIEVED

To mark LGBTQ* Domestic Violence Awareness Day on 28 May, we promoted Transfemme, a fantastic community resource developed by Zoe Belle Gender Collective and Rainbow Health Australia. This website aims to promote healthier relationships between trans women and cisgender men, and draws on lived expertise. Trans women – especially trans women of colour – are disproportionately affected by family and intimate partner violence. Transphobia, transmisogyny and racism both drives and normalises this violence.

Everyone deserves to feel safe, equal and respected in our families and relationships. It's vital that as a community, our experiences are seen and believed - and that all services and initiatives to address family and intimate partner violence are inclusive and respectful.



SPEAKING OUT FOR TRANS COMMUNITIES

Switchboard passionately spoke out about transphobia in sport, as trans community rights were again debated in the public sphere. Joe gave numerous interviews, including on The Project and ABC Afternoons with Jacinta Parsons.

Rainbow Door and our broader family violence work

RAINBOW DOOR IN A YEAR



1392
CLIENTS



9104
APPOINTMENTS OR
EPISODES OF CARE



27,919
TOTAL CONTACTS

● **8156**
TOTAL CALLS

● **13,771**
TOTAL TEXT MESSAGES
(SMS)

● **5992**
TOTAL EMAILS

Rainbow Door is a free specialist LGBTIQ+ service providing phone and web-based information, support and referral for people experiencing family violence, including elder abuse, and issues including mental health, housing, alcohol and other drugs. The service also provides specialist advice to mainstream services, and informs our broader work in family violence, including our advocacy, partnerships and training.

Reports through the Rainbow Door tell us that significant barriers remain for LGBTIQ+ people experiencing family violence to access safe, appropriate support - in particular the absence of crisis housing and support for trans and gender diverse people, and gay and bisexual men fleeing violence.

LGBTIQ+ Family Violence Leadership Circle

Switchboard was fortunate to join a leadership circle with Safe and Equal, Djirra, inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence, Women with Disabilities Victoria and Council on the Ageing Victoria in the Victorian Pride Centre to discuss our collective work of ending family violence within our shared communities.



▲ Above: The LGBTIQ+ Family Violence leadership circle

Family Violence Vigil

On behalf of Switchboard, Teleweb Manager Libby Jamieson attended a candlelight vigil in May to remember the precious lives of those within our LGBTIQ+ communities (and beyond) who have been killed by family and intimate partner violence.



"I am lighting a candle for all the LGBTIQ+ people impacted by family and intimate partner violence. I am here to acknowledge the LGBTIQ+ people whose lives have been lost to violence. I am here to acknowledge the unknown numbers of LGBTIQ+ people who have died by suicide as a way of escaping the violence they are experiencing. All those who think they are alone and there is no help available. All those who are rejected, abused and targeted because of who they are. I stand here today to let you know that you are not alone, there is help, we see you and we hear you."

Teleweb Manager Libby Jamieson.



Supporting trans women to access specialist family violence services

We joined Safe and Equal and Zoe Belle Gender Collective for a webinar centering on the voices of trans women of colour, in recognition of the national day for the prevention of LGBTIQ+ family violence on 28 May 2022.

Resource to provide LGBTIQ+ inclusive family violence support

LGBTIQ+ people experience family violence at similar (and potentially higher) rates to the rest of the population. However, the risks for experiencing violence and the barriers to support can be quite different. Our Rainbow Door team partnered with Safe + Equal to develop a tip sheet for practitioners about LGBTIQ+ inclusive support, available at rainbowdoor.org.au/family-violence.



Partnering with Respect Victoria to prevent elder abuse

We partnered with Respect Victoria to amplify their campaign against elder abuse, and shine light on how LGBTIQ people are impacted.

Elder abuse is a form of family violence. It refers to any act within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which results in harm to an older person. Elder abuse can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological, social and/or forms of neglect.

Ageing does nothing to diminish your rights. Everyone deserves to be safe, equal, and respected.



- ▲ Above: Social media tile from the Respect Victoria partnership
- ◀ Left: LGBTIQ+ Family Violence resource with Safe and Equal

Suicide Prevention

OUR WORK PREVENTING
LGBTIQA+ SUICIDE
AND SUPPORTING BEREAVED
COMMUNITIES

Our Suicide Prevention program grew and increased its national reach and profile this year, delivering services, advocating and founding a national LGBTIQA+ lived experience network and our new suicide prevention hub, CHARLEE.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- › Delivered a one-year pilot phase of the LGBTIQA+ Support After Suicide Program
- › Established the national LGBTIQA+ Lived Experience Network
- › Secured funding for First Nations Suicide Prevention
- › Delivered LGBTIQA+ ASIST and safeTALK workshops for our community
- › Launched LGBTIQA+ Suicide Safety Card resource

LGBTIQA+ Support After Suicide Bereavement Group Pilot

We ran our first two online LGBTIQA+ Support After Suicide bereavement groups. The partnership with Jesuit Social Services enabled us to open the second group to NSW participants and offer case management to those contacting the program. Thanks to our Lived Experience of Bereavement advisory group for supporting the program's development.

"We've experienced huge interest in the suicide bereavement support groups, which shows how much the community needs and values our services. Participants of the support groups have told us how important these groups have been to break the isolation of suicide bereavement."

Bereavement Group Facilitator



Join LGBTIQA+ Support After Suicide

An 8-week support group for community members who have lost someone to suicide

For more information, call 0484 088 647 or email bereavement@switchboard.org.au



Lived Experience Network and CHARLEE

In November 2021, we founded the National LGBTIQA+ Lived Experience network, starting with regular sessions in which LGBTIQA+ people with lived and living experiences of suicide were invited to learn together how to safely share stories and advocate from LGBTIQA+ lived experiences.

CHARLEE is a national online LGBTIQA+ suicide prevention hub co-created by the Lived Experience network and our suicide prevention staff. CHARLEE stands for Connection, Hope, Action, Resources and Lived Experience Education, see charlee.org.au.



The new bespoke branding for CHARLEE



▲ The suicide safety cards launched in 2021

Funding announced including First Nations Suicide Prevention

Our work in this space continues to grow, with the Victorian Government funding: expansion of our LGBTQIA+ bereavement groups to include a drop-in group; continuation of our 'How to Prevent' suicide safety webinars; and development of new CHARLEE resources supported by a designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention role.

Postvention work

We collaborated with the LGBTQIA+ Commissioner's Office and Coroner's Office on a major piece of work around sensitive collection of LGBTQIA+ suicide data, and supported a range of communities affected by suicide, including in Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula.



▲ Quote about LGBTQIA+ Lived Experience Network

CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Wear It Purple 2021

Switchboard and Koorie Pride Victoria held an online event featuring N'arwee't Dr Aunty Carolyn Briggs AM and comedian, song writer, poet, actor, performer and Blak funny man Stephen Oliver yarning with Alli from Koorie Pride and our own Joe Ball.

International Association of Suicide Prevention World Conference

Joe's keynote for the International Association of Suicide Prevention World Conference drew on personal experience and Switchboard's expertise to illustrate the invisibility of LGBTQIA+ issues in suicide prevention, and ways to create change. Amid toxic debate around trans womens' participation in sport, attendees gave feedback about the significant impact of his speech.

Roses in the Ocean Summit

Roses in the Ocean is the national suicide lived experience of suicide organisation. We spoke on the opening panel of their 2021 Summit and presented two workshops: "Defining LGBTQIA+ Inclusion: Pride in Lived Experience" and with Beyond Blue, "Speaking Up and Speaking Out: Making Services More Inclusive through the Voices of LGBTQIA+ Lived Experience".

Partnership with Mental Health Academy

Suicide Prevention Manager Anna Bernasochi spoke at the Mental Health Academy's annual suicide prevention summit on "Counternarratives in LGBTQIA+ Suicide Prevention." We were also a summit charity partner, raising \$6,000 for our suicide prevention work.

MindOUT Forum

Joe delivered a keynote for the LGBTQIA+ Health Australia MindOUT Forum, and Suicide Prevention officer spoke on a panel about our program work.

"I am proud of Switchboard's leading work in LGBTQIA+ suicide prevention and enjoyed sharing insights into our initiatives in the postvention sector."- Suicide Prevention Program Officer

Anti-racism at Switchboard

QUEER, TRANS AND INTERSEX BLA(C)K AND/OR PEOPLE OF COLOUR (QTIBPoC)

Our QTIBPoC program combines introspective work with community-led program delivery, partnership, training and capacity building. We draw on Racial Literacy and Anti-Racist organising including to inform our approaches to professional development, community consultation and recruitment, aiming to create a safer and genuinely equitable environment for everyone who participates.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- › Expanded the team to have a dedicated QTIBPoC Program Officer
- › Changed program name from QTIPoC to QTIBPoC in consultation with community
- › 13 workshops attended by more than 90 QTIBPoC community members
- › Developed Switchboard Anti-racism Organisational Change Plan
- › Anti-racism reporting tool hosted on our website, in partnership with Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)
- › Expanded anti-racism training and capacity building initiatives.

FROM QTIPoC TO QTIBPoC

After consultation with our QTIBPoC Advisory Committee and QTIBPoC Board Committee we concluded that, BIPOC was an acronym that was introduced to so-called Australia from Turtle Island (USA). It does not entirely apply here as it implies First Nations people in Australia are not black. Aboriginal people are both bla(c)k and Indigenous – facts that cannot be separated. “Bla(c)k” is inclusive of Indigenous people and other black-identifying people living in so-called Australia”.

“Bla(c)k” is inclusive of Indigenous people and other black-identifying people living in so-called Australia”



COMMUNITY SKILL BUILDING WORKSHOPS

These workshops covered topics including peer support, resume building, mental health, grant writing and unpacking imposter syndrome. All workshops focused on building resilience and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of QTIBPoC community members by creating a safe and inclusive space for reflection and growth.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORK CONTINUES

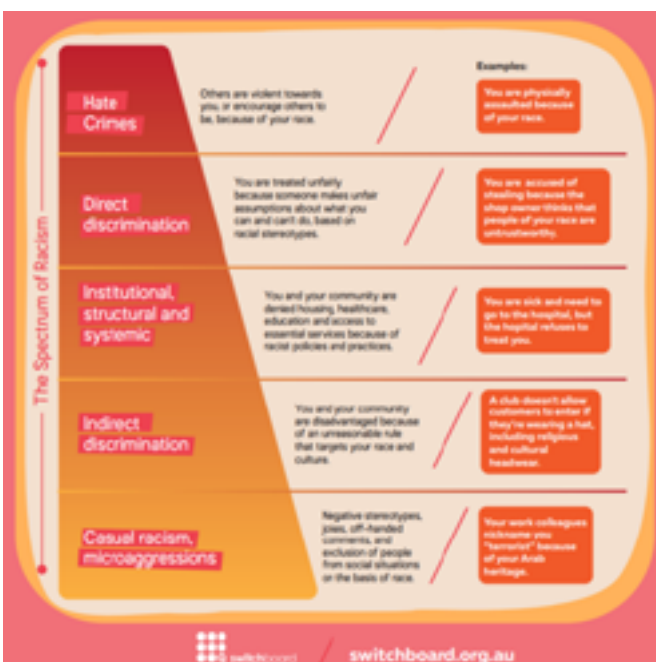
Our QTIBPoC Advisory Committee provides advice and direction to our program. Each member brings their unique professional and personal experiences, providing insight into the needs of the communities we serve. Thank you to all of our Advisory Committee members - and a special thank you to those who also facilitated our community workshops.

ANTI-RACISM ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE PLAN

We developed an Anti-racism Organisational Change Plan that provides strategic direction and initiatives to combat racism, informed by our annual Racial Equity and Inclusion staff survey. We also conducted training on cultural awareness, anti-racism, bias and macroaggressions, as well as anti-racism reading groups.

ANTI-RACISM REPORTING TOOL PARTNERSHIP

Racism and other acts of discrimination can cause serious harm to individuals and silence communities, often leaving people feeling isolated and marginalised. This year we partnered with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission to host their Community Reporting Tool on our website. This tool provides a quick, easy way to report instances of racism or other discrimination you have experienced or witnessed. The Community Reporting Tool is accessible at switchboard.org.au/antiracism.



▲ Spectrum of racism graphic developed for Human Rights week.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Cultural Diversity Week

Over Cultural Diversity week (21-26 March) we reached out to our LGBTIQ+ community members from culturally diverse backgrounds to ask them how they cultivate and embody joy;



TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Switchboard has expanded our training and capacity building initiatives this year, offering tailored professional development and training for external organisations including:

- > LGBTIQ+ multicultural and multi-faith cultural competency
- > Anti-racism and racial literacy
- > Intersectionality
- > Self-reflexivity on power and inequality
- > Equity and affirmative action approaches

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

"This work needs to continue!"

"It is very empowering to know Switchboard facilitates such workshops for minority groups in unfolding the sensitive social topic."

"Facilitators are friendly, open, patient and reflective. Thanks for organising this workshop for QTIBPoC community!"

"Great facilitator providing a genuine safe space for participants. Excellent workshop."

THANK YOU

Thank you to all QTIBPoC staff, Advisory Group members and volunteers, for all the work you do supporting our QTIBPoC communities.

Being there for our older LGBTI community members

Out and About (OaA) is our program for older lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people. We aim to reduce social isolation and loneliness through creating peer friendships and community connections.

Our community visiting program grew significantly in 2021-22:

- > 19 new referrals
- > 85 current active participants
- > 96 older people supported over the year
- > 28 registered participants for our SPARK conversation series
- > 85 'Pride' packages delivered

SPARK conversation series

We partnered with Transgender Victoria to deliver this three-part conversation series for trans and gender diverse (TGD) people over 50, in response to requests for an age-specific peer support group for older TGD people. SPARK is part of a broader strategy to improve trans and gender diverse Victorians' health and wellbeing, including by nurturing peer support, kinship and resilience across all of our intersections.

SESSION 1 > "Sharing our stories" with Toni (Toni/she/they)

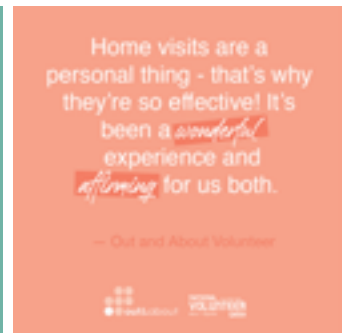
Led by Toni Paynter. An invitation to "join me in my living room" enabled everyone to feel relaxed and included.

SESSION 2 > with Ben MacEllen (he/him)

Led by Ben, comedian, writer, public speaker and accidental activist. Experiences of story-telling and accidental activism as a transgender man from rural Victoria

SESSION 3 > with Hunter

Led by Hunter, queer trans Brotherboy. An opportunity to share ideas and tips on reconnecting with each other for mutual support and fun.



Care throughout the pandemic

As the pandemic and restrictions impacted on our whole community, staff increased their check-ins with participants and volunteers. These resulted in increased phone support, referrals to QLife and Rainbow Door, counselling, food delivery, technology support and advocacy.

Feedback

"It is an honour to be an active participant in someone's life and hopefully make a difference in their day. The opportunity that Switchboard gives us to do this is a privilege and an honour to be a part of filling a much-needed gap in our community." – volunteer Javier

"We think alike, it's as if we're two people with one head... she's an amazing new friend and we're so close." – participant Steph, about her volunteer visitor Milla

Thank you

Thank you to our program staff for their care and dedication to our participants and volunteers, and to our passionate volunteers for their time and commitment to our older LGBTI communities.



Image: Switchboard CEO Joe Ball with Toni Paynter.

'Pride' care packages and stories

As part of the "Celebrating Pride in all Ages and Places" Melbourne Pride Regional Activation Project, we delivered 85 special "Pride" care packages to OaA program members. These included cards with seeds to represent the 'seeding' of conversations, and a unique satin rose pin made up of the colours of the flag that best represents the way each person identifies within the acronym, with support from Hayden.

As part of project, we invited Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities Todd Fernando to engage with our program participants.

Todd Fernando, Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities:

This is fantastic, what a brilliant activity. I look forward to hearing some of the responses. I am always amazed by the brilliant work Switchboard are doing.



Participants sent back their 'Pride' stories and quotes, including:

"Every era has hard times in a different way. But really, age is a "watershed", as we should all learn from each other and mutually respect each other. At 75 years, I still have foils in my hair!"

"I would tell my younger self: who you are is OK. Listen more to your inner voice."

"I think of when I was young, and the hiding and pain I went through having to keep it all quiet that I was gay. When I hear the word "pride" I think of not having to be ashamed or doubting oneself, confident and believing in your very being."



Image: An example of the Pride care packages sent to OaA program members.



Switchboard Regional Ambassador Sally Conning, Switchboard Out and About Manager Meredith Butler, and Racial Equity and Inclusion Manager Greg Rincon

QLife

QLIFE IS A NATIONAL LGBTIQA+ PEER-SUPPORT HELPLINE PROVIDING ANONYMOUS, FREE, 'SINGLE SESSION' SUPPORT.

Our QLife and Rainbow Door helplines work hand-in-hand, providing a teleweb support service for LGBTIQA+ Victorians from 10am to midnight, seven days a week.

As the Victorian QLife partner, Switchboard works closely with **Twenty10** (NSW), **Diverse Voices** (QLD), **Living Proud** (WA) and **LGBTIQA+ Health Australia** to provide a national peer support service for LGBTIQA+ community members, their families and allies. Common themes of calls and webchat contacts include gender, sexuality, relationships, family, community, isolation and mental health.

Top 5 reasons clients contact QLife:

1. General conversation
2. Coming out
3. Exploring gender identity
4. Family relationships
5. Disability

Teleweb team leaders lead the way

Our QLife Program has five Team Leaders working across seven days. This year, the other QLife partners adopted the team leader model as best practice for supporting staff and volunteers to deliver the helpline service.

Our new phone room

Like many front-line services, the pandemic presented huge challenges for our volunteer engagement. We are grateful to our interim paid staff and funders that helped maintain the QLife service during this period, and look forward to welcoming volunteers back into our wonderful new expanded phone room.

Our first online course

We delivered our 48th training course - our first online - to 20 new trainee volunteers. The group became very close, and reported finding the online course a safe learning space. Most came together in person to complete Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) delivered by Switchboard staff Libby Jamieson and Anna McFee, both accredited LivingWorks ASIST trainers.



THIS YEAR QLife IN VICTORIA HAD



2019

PHONE AND WEBCHAT CONVERSATIONS

ACHIEVEMENTS

- › 2,019 phone and webchat conversations (QLife Victoria)
- › Leading service practice with our Team Leader model
- › Delivered the 48th peer support course for new volunteers
- › Setting up our new phone room for QLife volunteers
- › Supporting students through tertiary level work placements
- › Building our capacity to take webchats

Supporting future practitioners

This year we supported several students on tertiary level work placements, who contributed to keeping the QLife service operational while gaining valuable experience and learning, and completing their course requirements.

Strengthening our service through webchat

Over the last year, we have increased our capacity for webchat support. Webchat or text-based messaging is increasingly preferred as a way to access support, including by young people, people whose first language is not English and people who are hard of hearing or have concerns about being misgendered on a phone call.

Thank you

Thank you to our QLife volunteers in Victoria and across the whole QLife network. Thank you LGBTIQA+ Health Australia for your ongoing support and commitment - we look forward to our ongoing work together to further strengthen our service. Thanks also to Twenty10, Diverse Voices and Living Proud for your support as Victoria experienced multiple lockdowns and other COVID-19 challenges.

Protecting and connecting our communities through the pandemic

Forty years after the AIDS epidemic, we took an active role in engaging, informing and supporting our LGBTIQ+ communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. This work through trusted community organisations is an important way to ensure good quality, appropriate health information reaches our diverse communities.



ACHIEVEMENTS

- › 300 A0 posters, three street-based campaigns
- › A4 posters in community health hubs and LGBTIQ+ organisations
- › Paid advertisement in Archer Magazine
- › Social media tiles that encouraged vaccine education
- › Supporting events for the LGBTIQ+ community to get vaccinated.

✓ Image: Street based campaign to promote vaccinations in Fitzroy, Victoria.

“It’s going to take all of us” - keeping each other safe

As a trusted community voice, Switchboard’s social media channels have been invaluable. We were a chosen ambassador in the Victorian Government’s Vaccine Ambassadors Program, encouraging LGBTIQ+ people to consider vaccinating against coronavirus to keep our communities safe.

This work involved three street-based poster campaigns, print, radio and social media campaigns promoting vaccination and debunking common myths. We also promoted other actions to stop the spread of coronavirus, including mask wearing, COVID-safe events and virtual connections.



Volunteers are the backbone of Switchboard

Amelia Arnold, Chair of Community Engagement Committee

LOVE - LGBTIQ+ volunteer celebration

Every year we celebrate our volunteers and those across so many LGBTIQ organisation with LOVE (LGBTIQ+ Organisations' Volunteer Event). This year's hybrid in-person and online event was hosted by Lance De Boyle and featured the Melbourne Gay and Lesbian Chorus, thank you speeches and a speed-networking activity.



Deputy chair celebrates our volunteers on ABC afternoons

Our Deputy Chair Amelia Arnold shared her experience volunteering with Switchboard with Jacinta Parsons on Melbourne's ABC Afternoons for their Pride celebrations at the Victorian Pride Centre.

"Initially I really wanted to connect with other community members and find my place, and then, to give back to those who raised me as a baby queer myself."

– Deputy Chair Amelia Arnold.



Transgender Day of Remembrance

We partnered with Koorie Pride, Zoe Belle Gender Collective, Many Coloured Sky and Transgender Victoria for an afternoon of conversation and performance, bringing together trans communities and allies to remember, listen, and reflect.

With a Welcome to Country from N'arwee't Dr Aunty Carolyn Briggs AM and opening words from Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities Dr Todd Fernando, the event centred trans BIPOC speakers in a Q&A-style panel chaired by Mama Alto. It concluded with a wonderful performance from Amao Leota Lu, Samoan fa'afafine performance artist, poet and community activist.

VOLUNTEER WITH SWITCHBOARD

Is volunteering with us something you've thought about, or do you know someone who would love to give back to their LGBTIQA+ community? There are many ways to get, including volunteering with QLife, Out and About, our QTIBPoC work, community events, and on our Board and Committees.

For more info, check out www.switchboard.org.au/volunteer

Being a volunteer allows me to continually *grow* and *learn*. I'm continually finding new insights on how to best show up for others and build a *stronger, safer community*.

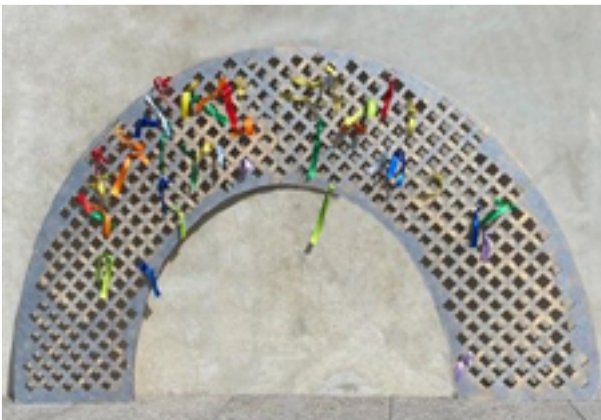
– Switchboard Volunteer



In memory

Sadly, three Out and About participants passed away over the last year and a valued Switchboard life member

- › Chris Oxley (Life Member)
- › Clynton Cooper-Alyn (OAA participant)
- › Angela Pearson (OAA participant)
- › Graeme Hawker (OAA participant)



Remembering Rainbow

At Switchboard, we have created the Remembering Rainbow - a living memorial to honour members of our communities who have lost their lives to suicide. Rituals and memorials can be a meaningful and helpful way to deal with loss and grief. It allows us to take a moment to remember the person we have lost and keep their spirit and memory alive. For anyone who has lost someone they know to suicide, we invite you to tie a ribbon to the Remembering Rainbow in honour of your loved one.

We hope to create a permanent home for the Remembering Rainbow at the Victorian Pride Centre.

RIP Chris Oxley (Life Member)

On 16 December 2021, life member Chris Oxley passed away following her 22-year struggle with breast cancer. Chris was one of the first people to answer Switchboard calls, after completing the first-ever training course. Chris also makes up one half of Switchboard's oldest and longest love story. It was at the first training course that Chris met her partner, Carol Wilkinson. We hold Carol in mind after the loss of Chris. Carol shared that she and Chris were proud to be the organisation's first love story. Chris was kind, loving and generous. She was also talented and stubborn. She leaves a gigantic hole in Carol's life and in the lives of many who knew her.

RIP Clynton Cooper-Alyn (OAA participant)

Clynton Cooper-Alyn was a much-loved participant in Out and About (OaA), and a friend and colleague to many, in and beyond our community. Since Clynton joined OAA in 2017 he and volunteer Haydn and Clynton have visited regularly and shared their lives with each other. Even through COVID and Clynton's declining health, they kept a strong close connection. Enjoy your rest at last, gorgeous Clynton. You brought such a sparkle to all our lives with your bright smile, cheeky laugh and generous open heart. You will be greatly missed.

See more about Haydn and Clynton's story here: www.switchboard.org.au/lgbtiolderpeople



We also want to acknowledge those from our Victorian LGBTIQA+ communities who have died from deaths that could have been prevented, had they not experienced discrimination and systematic oppression in their lifetime. This includes too many who have died by suicide.

We remember you and honour your memory by continuing to fight for a better world.

Switchboard Board Members: 2021-22



/ SARAH MARLOWE
(she/her)

Chair to 20 June 2022,
thereafter General
member
Governance Committee
QTIBPoC Committee
Community Engagement
Committee



/ AMELIA ARNOLD
(she/her)

Deputy Chair
Chair of Community
Engagement Committee
Governance Committee



/ ALICE DRURY
(she/her)

Secretary
Chair of Governance
Committee



/ BLAKE LESCHEN
(he/him)

Treasurer
Chair of Business and
Finance Committee



/ RASHMI KUMAR
(she/her)

General member
Acting Chair from 20 June
2022
Co-chair of QTIBPoC
Committee
Governance Committee



/ BECK HUNT
(they/them)

General member
Co-chair of QTIBPoC
Committee
Governance Committee



/ MILLA GALEA
(she/they)

General member
Business and Finance
Committee
Governance Committee



/ MAMA ALTO
(she/her)

General member
QTIBPoC Committee
Governance Committee
Community Engagement
Committee



/ JENNA TUKE
(she/her)

General member
Governance Committee



/ SARA TIMMS
(she/they)

General member
Governance Committee
Business and Finance
Committee



**/ ELSA
TUET-ROSENBERG**
(she/her)

General member
QTIBPoC Committee
Governance Committee



/ JAMES SEOW
(he/him)

General member
QTIBPoC Committee

Accountability and transparency for our communities

Alice Drury, Secretary

We continued to grow this year, but our focus shifted to consolidating this growth, especially in our major new program, the Rainbow Door. Critical to our sustainable growth is the work that our CEO, staff and Board do together, to ensure we are as effective as we can be, in serving our communities.

Board of directors

Our volunteer Board has an important, often invisible role. The Board is responsible for ensuring we meet our financial, legal and regulatory requirements and manage risk. The Board also guides the organisation's strategic direction, and seeks to ensure we are sustainable into the future.

Board members bring their professional experience and expertise from diverse sectors, as well as their lived and community expertise, and a shared commitment to Switchboard as a grassroots, community-based organisation.

Continuing to manage risk through the pandemic

COVID-19 continued to have a major impact on Switchboard's work and the wellbeing of our communities. Victorian lockdowns continued into late 2021, and each brought more people to our support services.

The CEO reported to the Board about the impact of the pandemic and service demand on our services, and we kept in place measures such as having additional interim paid staff to maintain our QLife service - see QLife report for more.

Board continuity

Through the November 2021 AGM we retained all but one Board member, enabling a high degree of continuity in the Board's work. We said farewell and many thanks to Aliya Ahmad, and welcomed James Seow to the Board.

We are pleased to have a Board with such diverse strengths, including clinical, governance, financial and leadership expertise, and experience across government, the private/ financial and NGO sectors, including mental health, legal, media, sexual assault, Aboriginal health and multicultural organisations.

There remained strong QTIBPoC representation on the Board this year, and anti-racism remained a key theme. Efforts to support greater racial justice and inclusion had a practical impact on many Board decisions, including regarding funding, advocacy and our organisational structure.

Our Board also continued to have strong representation from trans and gender diverse people, parents of queer and trans children, and people with lived experience of mental illness, suicidality and family violence.

We continued to work together remarkably well through the challenges of remote meetings throughout this financial year, in spite of the toll that COVID-19 has taken on all of us, inclusive of the Board, staff and our community.

Our committees

Much of the effectiveness of this year's Board is down to the work at committee level. Committees are where Board members research and discuss recommendations, which are brought to the Board for final discussion and decision.

Finance Committee remained as active as ever, working closely with the Treasurer and CEO to support the organisation's financial planning, reporting and long-term sustainability.

QTIBPoC Committee worked closely with the CEO and QTIBPoC Programs Manager to support our organisation's social justice aims. Our advocacy on the impact of policing on First Nations communities and communities of colour was a significant piece of work undertaken by this Committee. A key focus for the next Board term will be deepening our understanding and practice to bring a racial justice approach to every aspect of our work.

Governance Committee completed a comprehensive review of skills and new areas for growth, to ensure the Board remains well-equipped to guide our organisation. A major focus is planning for the future by ensuring Switchboard continues to be staffed and represented by highly skilled people who represent the diversity of our communities.

Community Engagement Committee reviewed new funding proposals, and finalised a policy on ethical partnerships, sponsorships and donations.

Committees are a great way to get involved, and many Board members are first members of our committees. To find out more, email ceo@switchboard.org.au or chair@switchboard.org.au.



Treasurer's Report

Blake Leschen, Treasurer

Despite the ongoing challenges and disruptions faced by NFP organisations, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, widespread skills shortages and increasing cost pressures on wages and inflation, Switchboard continued to experience a significant amount of growth and success throughout the 2021/22 financial year.

In my role as Treasurer and alongside my fellow members of the Board, Switchboard was able to retain existing funding and secure additional funding to continue delivering critical support services to the LGBTIQ+ community at a time when they are especially needed. Through comprehensive financial oversight and responsible financial policies and decision making, Switchboard has risen to the challenge of scaling up service delivery across all its programs to meet the increased demand from the community, whilst mitigating the risks associated with fast-paced growth in an uncertain operating environment.

Service agreement grant funding from the Victorian Government and Commonwealth Government remains Switchboard's primary source of revenue, representing 95% of total revenue earned. Total revenue increased by 68% from the previous financial year to over \$3.5 million (2020/21: \$2.1 million), attributed to the significant and recurring funding received from the Victorian Government to deliver services

associated with the Rainbow Door, which saw its first full financial year of operations. Additional once-off funding was also secured for use in the Suicide Prevention, QLife and Out & About programs, to respond to the increased demand for these support services during the pandemic. Funding received from donations, bequests, training, consultancy, and workshop fees remained largely consistent with the prior year, representing only a small portion of total revenue earned.

Switchboard was able to scale up service delivery across all its programs in a responsible and sustainable way. Total expenditure increased by 55% from the previous financial year to just over \$3.1 million (2020/21: \$2 million). As a service providing Organisation, over 80% of this expenditure relates to people costs. Throughout the financial year, the Organisation employed over 40 individual employees across its programs with a mix of full-time, part-time, and casual staff. As employee headcount grew to service growing demand, significant investment was made in the Organisation's fixed assets and IT systems & infrastructure, most notably the fit out and furnishing of Switchboard's new support office at the Victorian Pride Centre and the separate phone room and training facility. Additional funds were also allocated to marketing, event hosting and attendance to further strengthen the Organisation's voice and increase its visibility within the community, as prioritised in the strategic plan. Through a detailed and comprehensive budget process at the beginning of the financial year, as well as agile refinements to program budgets as additional funding became available, total actual expenditure was largely aligned to expectations.

Switchboard achieved a net surplus of \$394,038. The Organisation also

maintained a healthy cash flow throughout the financial year, never dropping below the minimum cash reserve outlined in the reserves policy, with a closing cash balance of over \$1.7 million. This surplus is largely attributable to unspent funds in the Rainbow Door program related to staff movements and recruitment challenges resulting in vacant positions needing to be filled. These funds will be rolled over to the new financial year to further build on the program's service delivery capacity.

Looking to the future, the growth of Switchboard is expected to continue. I anticipate total revenue and expenditure to increase by around 20% during 2022/23, as the Rainbow Door service matures into its second full year of operation, the Suicide Prevention program continues the success of its bereavement groups and launches its dedicated web hub, and the expansion of the Organisation into a second premises – a dedicated phone room and training facility. This facility will also facilitate the Organisation's training and workshop program as a revenue-generating program with a dedicated manager and revenue target. The re-engagement of volunteers in QLife and Out & About will be led by additional volunteer management and support staff, and funding has been set aside to recruit a Finance & Operations Manager and additional administrative support to facilitate the growth forecasted in the 2022/23 financial year, ensuring it will be managed sustainably.

On reflection, the 2021/22 financial year is one that I am immensely proud of, as should my fellow members be. Each year Switchboard continues to go from strength to strength and has proven it can respond to even the greatest challenges and provide critical support services to our community.

Financials

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
INCOME		
Department of Health (Commonwealth Government)	95,892	186,819
Department of Fairness, Family and Housing (Victorian Government)	-	11,000
Department of Health (Victorian Government)	2,895,859	586,483
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (Victorian Government)	-	260,816
Department of Premier & Cabinet (Victorian Government)	118,400	405,000
Donations received	61,334	58,259
Interest Income	152	454
National LGBTI+ Health Alliance	254,692	388,338
North Western Primary Health Network	-	64,566
Other Grants	51,500	6,215
Bequests	35,558	55,670
Consultancy Fees	1,825	2,168
Membership Fees	-	241
Other Income	778	50,000
Training & Workshop Fees	13,674	18,823
TOTAL INCOME	3,529,664	2,094,852

Financials

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
EXPENDITURE		
Accounting, audit & consultancy fees	32,442	6,196
Advertising, promotions & marketing	17,820	11,259
Bank fees	521	-
Brokerage costs	139,260	45,677
Clinical supervision	21,374	21,794
Depreciation	128,716	-
Donations & Sponsorships	1,000	-
Events & functions hosted and attended	28,275	7,284
Food & catering	4,898	2,145
Human resources support	6,624	7,104
Insurance	1,619	1,788
IT expenses	73,013	23,631
Leave entitlements	74,921	20,885
Office expenses	6,490	2,869
Other expenses	5,809	610
Portable long service benefits levies	60,069	-
Postage, printing & stationery	7,485	5,922
Rent	72,903	19,793
Salaries & wages	2,092,887	1,580,519
Superannuation	208,591	148,166
Subscriptions	59,055	44,709
Telephone & internet	15,722	11,082
Training	9,517	8,776
Travel	10,617	4,005
Volunteer costs	3,095	8,023
Workers compensation	52,903	35,190
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3,135,626	2,017,427
Net surplus/(deficit) for the Year	394,038	77,425

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
Net surplus/(deficit) for the Year	394,038	77,425
Other comprehensive income for the Year	-	-
Net surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Association	394,038	77,425

Financials

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2022

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	2	1,782,878	1,309,399
Accounts and other receivables		395,753	53,615
Prepayments		14,286	8,530
Security Deposit/ Rental Bond		27,484	-
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		2,220,401	1,371,544
NON CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	3	-	36,103
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		-	36,103
TOTAL ASSETS		2,220,401	1,407,647
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other creditors	4	388,628	
Amounts received in advance	5	880,069	
Provisions	6	169,727	
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,438,424	
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	6	15,382	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		15,382	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,453,806	1,035,090
NET ASSETS		766,595	372,557
EQUITY			
Accumulated funds		766,595	372,557
TOTAL EQUITY		766,595	372,557

Financials

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	Accumulated funds \$	Total \$
Balance as at 1 July 2020	295,132	295,132
Surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Association	77,425	77,425
Balance as at 30 June 2021	372,557	372,557
Surplus/(deficit) attributable to the Association	394,038	394,038
Balance as at 30 June 2022	766,595	766,595

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	2022 \$	2021 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Receipts from funding agencies and grants	3,208,221	1,540,866
Receipts from other sources	113,169	185,161
Payments to employees and suppliers	(2,726,961)	(2,001,216)
Interest received	152	454
Net cash generated from/(used in) operating activities	594,581	(274,735)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Payment for property, plant and equipment	(121,102)	(36,103)
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities	(121,102)	(36,103)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	473,479	(310,838)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year	1,309,399	1,620,237
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	1,782,878	1,309,399

TOWARDS A VISION SHARED



**Collins & Co
Audit Pty Ltd**

127 Paisley Street
Footscray VIC 3011
Australia

Phone (03) 9680 1000
Fax (03) 9689 6605

www.collinsco.com.au

**SWITCHBOARD (VICTORIA) INC
ABN 81 367 786 099
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS**

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Switchboard (Victoria) Inc. (the Association), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2022, and the income statement, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes and the statement by the members of the Board.

In my opinion, the financial report of the Association is in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2022 and of its performance for the year ended; and
- ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards as per Note 1, the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. I am independent of the Association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Switchboard (Victoria) Inc. to meet the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the applicable legislation and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the registered entity's internal control.

Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the responsible entities.

Conclude on the appropriateness of the responsible entities use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the registered entity to cease to continue as a going concern.

Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal controls that I identify during my audit.



Name of Auditor: Frederik R. L. Eksteen

Address: Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd
127 Paisley Street
Footscray VIC 3011

Date:

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR WORK

/ FUNDERS

Thank you to our funders and organisations who support our work:

- › Australian Government Department of Health
- › Victorian Government Department of Health
- › Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- › North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN)
- › LGBTIQ Health Australia (QLife)
- › Transgender Victoria (TGV)
- › Lesbians Incorporated
- › City of Melbourne
- › City of Port Phillip

/ COLLABORATIVE AND SPONSOR ORGANISATIONS

Thank you to our partners who share our vision of safer futures for our communities:

- › LGBTIQ+ Health Australia
- › StandBy
- › The Shed
- › Transgender Victoria (TGV)
- › Victorian Pride Centre
- › Midsumma Festival
- › Jesuit Social Services
- › Beyond Blue
- › LivingWorks
- › Roses in the Ocean
- › North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN)
- › South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network (SEMPHN)
- › Budget Direct

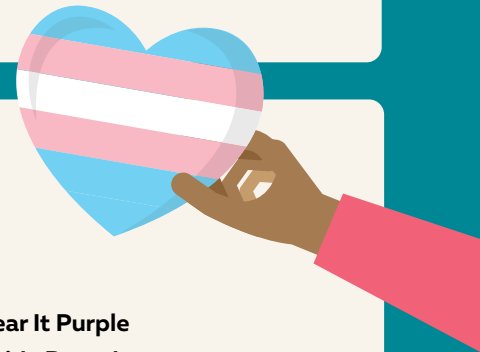
/ DONATE

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time or donated this year. To donate to support our work into 2023 and beyond visit:

www.givenow.com.au/switchedonforswitchboard

Special mention to monthly donors and those individuals and organisations who set up fundraisers for Switchboard with their work, social and sporting group activities during the year.

- › **Liberty Financial - Wear It Purple**
- › **Vic Metro Over 35s Pride Round**
- › **Jade**
- › **Lets Go Round Again**



MAKE A DONATION

ONCE OFF OR REGULAR DONATION

If you would like to make a once off donation and/or become a regular donor, you can do so through our [Give Now Account](#)

