



QLife History

QLife provides anonymous LGBTI peer support and referral for people wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.

We are Australia's only National LGBTI early intervention telephone and webchat counselling and referral service, addressing social isolation, discrimination, family and relationship issues, psychological distress, poor mental health and other social determinants of mental health and wellbeing.

QLife services are delivered by four local LGBTI organisations, supported by the National LGBTI Health Alliance. Our partner organisations are Switchboard in Victoria, Living Proud in WA, Diverse Voices in Queensland and Twenty10 (incorporating GLCS) in NSW.

Although QLife is just five years old, QLife partner services have many years' experience providing LGBTI peer telephone counselling and community support. Central to QLife is our commitment to honour and build upon that proud history of grassroots, community responses to the marginalisation, persecution, prosecution and discrimination of LGBTI people and communities.

QLife timeline

2000

The first national conference of gay and lesbian telephone support services discussed the need for a national gay and lesbian telephone number.

2003



2006

Telstra sponsorship established a national website, Gay and Lesbian Counselling and Community Services of Australia, and national 1800 number (1800 184 527) and an inaugural national Mardi Gras float to promote the number in 2003. This sponsorship ended in 2006, though the website was maintained locally for some years to follow and the 1800 number continued as the regional freecall number for several of our services.

2011

National conference in Adelaide again discussed a coordinated, national service and potential options for federal funding.

2012

The National LGBTI Health Alliance established a working group that resulted in our successful tender for national teleweb funding.

2013

QLife commenced operating, with the National LGBTI Health Alliance as the contract holder, supporting five state partners:

- Twenty10 incorporating GLCS NSW (NSW)
- Gay and Lesbian Switchboard (VIC), now known as Switchboard
- Gay and Lesbian Welfare Association (QLD), now known as Diverse Voices
- Gay and Lesbian Community Services of WA, now known as Living Proud
- The Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service SA/NT (no longer a QLife partner).

The current QLife partners

LGBTI Health Alliance

The National LGBTI Health Alliance (the Alliance) is the national peak health organisation in Australia for organisations and individuals that provide health-related programs, services and research focused on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people (LGBTI) and other sexuality, gender, and bodily diverse people and communities.

The Alliance recognises that people's genders, bodies, relationships, and sexualities affect their health and wellbeing in every domain of their life.

Originating out of community-based organisations with an HIV/AIDS focus, the Alliance is one of the first organisations of its kind in the world. The National LGBTI Health Alliance was formally launched at Australia's Parliament House in August 2007.



Health in Difference Conference 2018

Twenty10 (incorporating GLCS NSW)

The story of Twenty10 (incorporating GLCS NSW) begins in 1970 with the Campaign Against Moral Persecution (CAMP NSW). Sydney in 1970 was very different to what we know and love today - it was still illegal to have homosexual relations in NSW and the rest of Australia, it wasn't possible to get your gender officially changed, and people could still be fired from their jobs for being LGBTIQA+.

CAMP NSW was originally founded to challenge unjust laws and create a space for like-minded people to meet. Organised and run entirely by volunteers from the popular "Phone-A-Friend" service in April 1973, the support arm of CAMP NSW evolved into the Gay Counselling Service, and then the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service of NSW (GLCS NSW).

At the same time as this was happening, young people across New South Wales were coming to Sydney after being kicked out of home by unaccepting families. Twenty10 was founded in 1982 in Darlinghurst (the name comes from that postcode!) as a crisis refuge for these young people and at

that time was described as "a project for gay kids". The first of its kind in Australia.

Over time, Twenty10's services evolved into transitional housing, case management, counselling, and social support through Drop-In and groups.

In 2012 Twenty10 and GLCS NSW merged into one organisation, sharing resources and expertise to work towards people of all genders, sexualities, and/or intersex variations being Affirmed, Secure, Healthy and Connected, able to live in a society free from oppression, persecution or violence.

Today, Twenty10 provides social support services to people ages 12 and up, including some adult support groups; transitional housing, case management and counselling for people ages 16 - 25; inclusivity training and consulting; as well as telephone and webchat counselling for people of all ages.

Twenty10 is proud to celebrate 45 years of continuous peer-based telephone counselling support in NSW in 2018, from Phone-A-Friend in 1973 to today as the NSW state partner delivering telephone and webchat support for QLife.



Gay & Lesbian Counselling Service of NSW telephone counsellors in Sydney, early 1980s; photo courtesy of Twenty10 incorporating GLCS NSW and the personal archives of Peter Trebilco



Twenty10 incorporating GLCS NSW July 2016.

Diverse Voices, Queensland

The CAMP Club (Campaign Against Moral Persecution) in Brisbane had offered a telephone contact line for a number of years to assist people to find like-minded others in ultra-conservative Queensland. By 1983, membership of the Club had declined considerably; in the midst of the Bjelke Peterson era there were rumblings from a number of welfare and community groups towards reform. The full impact of the AIDS crisis was yet to be felt, however its advent led to a greater coalescing of the various communities in Queensland's capital and it was only a short time before some passionate and committed activists devised the Homosexual Community Welfare Service (HCWS) in response to the gap left from the phone service at CAMP.

The local paper could not bring itself to have the words 'gay' or 'lesbian' printed in early advertisements for the peer-based volunteer counselling services, hence 'homosexual' was considered a catch-all term for those of us who lay outside the law and social palatability.

In 1984 15 volunteers were trained to prepare them for the counselling lines. The course dealt with issues which, until then, many had not even considered or been aware of including gay and lesbian identity in the historical perspective, coming out, client and counselling issues, counselling skills.

Access to a telephone was organised through Rev. Ivor Holmans and the Metropolitan Community Church. There were 25 active counsellors by the end of 1986.

In those early days of the service, we functioned in an environment where gay sex was illegal and gay and lesbian communities had no recourse under anti-discrimination legislation (because Queensland had nothing of the kind until 1991). Funding was non-existent and the agency functioned on membership and donations from the Free Business Association to cover advertising costs.

Around 1990, the name changed to the Gay and Lesbian Welfare Association to reflect the emerging identity politics of the time.

By August 1991, GLWA had twenty-eight active counsellors, and a strong volunteer committee who helped coordinate the work.

Over the following decades, GLWA maintained a presence, always being peer-led and staffed. Members played an active role in writing submissions to Parliament around a Bill of Rights, as well as maintaining actions in support of expanding the rights of transgender people.

In 2011, at a national forum with all the other state-based LGBTI counselling services, a proposal was put forward to collaborate with the intention of sourcing federal funding. A year later, a working group, through the National LGBTI Health Alliance, wrote up the QLife teleweb tender and in 2013, QLife finally emerged.

In September 2015, three years after registering as a charity and following 31 years' service to the diverse populations of Queensland, the organisation changed its name to better reflect the breadth of individuals we serve. Diverse Voices was born.



Gay and Lesbian Welfare Association phone room, WBrissane, 1990's



Diverse Voices, Brisbane 2017

Living Proud, WA

Living Proud Incorporated is the new name for Gay & Lesbian Community Services of WA Inc (GLCS). GLCS grew out of the 'Campaign Against Moral Persecution (CAMP)' and 'Phone a Friend' and was formally established in 1974 as the Homosexual Counselling and Information Service of WA.

In 1984 the name was changed to the Gay Counselling Service of WA (Inc) and the organisation became an incorporated body. In keeping with worldwide trends to recognise the contribution and needs of women in the community, the name of the service was changed in 1990 to the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service of WA (Inc). In 1999 the name was changed again to the Gay and Lesbian Community Services of WA (Inc) to reflect the wider range of services that GLCS provides.

The recent name change to Living Proud Inc aims to reflect a more contemporary and inclusive organisation which not only strives to improve the health and wellbeing of gay and lesbian people but also the bisexual, trans, intersex and other sexuality and gender diverse members of the community. Living Proud also reflects our aspiration for the LGBTI communities and our wellbeing.

Living Proud has been providing support, information and resources to the Western Australian gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans* and intersex community for over 40 years. As WA's main LGBTI community service our focus is on providing essential services to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex communities, including our peer counselling phone line, health and wellbeing initiatives and community capacity building.

Living Proud offers a number of training options for professionals including the Opening Closets Mental Health training and other half and full-day workplace training in order to improve accessibility for LGBTI people. Living Proud also has a successful history of running funded projects, often in partnership with other community groups.



Homosexual Counselling and Information Service graduates 1981



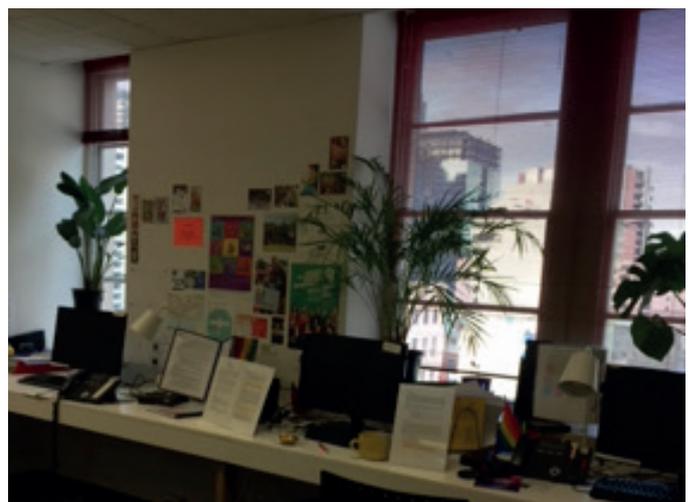
Living Proud staff counselling room, Perth 2018

Switchboard, Victoria

Switchboard continues to operate within the framework established in 1991 by its founders, a collective of motivated individuals who identified as LGBTQI. From their own life experiences, the founders identified the value of establishing a peer-based volunteer counselling service that could affirm the experiences of LGBTIQ people.

With this aim in mind, Switchboard committed to delivering a fully inclusive service, open to all callers without discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, ethnicity, age, ability, religion, health, financial or social status, geographic location or isolation, sexual orientation or political belief.

Today, Switchboard continues this tradition through providing phone and webchat support to the LGBTQI community as the Victorian partner of the national QLife project.



Switchboard phone room, Melbourne 2018

