

SUPPORTING STAFF DURING THE POSTAL VOTE ON SAME SEX MARRIAGE

On November 15, 11am, the ABS will make the results of the postal survey public. Whether the result is a yes or a no in response to the question “Should the law be changed to allow same-sex couples to marry?”, it is imperative to prepare for the day as both results may have substantial impact on LGBTI employees and allies.

Our members report their EAP providers are currently struggling with demand for their services, with sometimes a three-week delay in face-to-face meetings, but immediate response to phone calls. In preparation for a NO result and in response to current heightened stress levels, please see below for actions you might consider taking within your organisation:

- **Organisation wide communication** reiterating your support of LGBTI staff and acknowledgment of the difficult nature of the debate, including safe contact people within the organisation
- **Highlighting leave options available** for those who require it
- **Sending/resending** the ACON Staying Strong During the Marriage Equality Debate resource
- **Contact your EAP provider** to confirm willingness and capability to support LGBTI staff around the debate and consequential outcomes (and communicating this to staff)
- **Host an event** such as a morning tea on 15th Nov to allow staff to come together and support each other (preparing adequately for both a debrief and a celebration)
- **Physical presence of EAP counsellors** at the time of the announcement and potentially for the days following
- **‘Lunch and learn/support’** hosted weekly in the lead-up to the announcement to allow staff to come together for support/guidance/debriefing
- **‘Coffee roulette’ in which** LGBTI committee makes themselves available to the organisation once a week a member for LGBTI staff as well as allies and those wishing to help to ask questions, learn and get support from members of the committee

Please note that whether the result is YES or NO, LGBTI staff and allies may find it difficult to focus and perform on the day, and potentially in the days following the announcement. A lot of tension has been built around the postal survey debate, and a YES result can be quite emotional and overwhelming as well. An event of some sort to acknowledge the result is recommended in order to allow employees to express their feelings with colleagues and peers.

Please contact your Pride in Diversity Relationship Manager if you need any additional support and assistance on (02) 9206 2139.