

Media release:

Equal Voices Christians call on Churches and Government to end their LGBTIQ+ wars after the latest 'ugly face' of Anglicanism is revealed



Equal Voices, the national network of LGBTIQ+ Christians and allies, has called for an end to Church and Government discrimination after the latest Sydney Anglican attention to LGBTIQ+ people this week.

Equal Voices point to recent public utterances by Sydney Anglican Archbishop Glenn Davies as striking examples of the 'ugly face' of religiously-based exclusion and harm inflicted on the LGBTIQ+ community. It also draws attention to the reactionary gender diversity guidelines being adopted across the highly extensive Sydney Anglican area. 'These developments have to stop', said Equal Voices spokesperson the Revd Dr Jo Inkipin. 'As both an Anglican priest and a transgender woman, I know only too well the harm that is being done. It is time to choose love not exclusion.' Equal Voices thanks Sydney Anglicans who have spoken out for love, and church leaders who are responding to the institutional harm which causes depression, shame and suicide. It encourages all who are troubled to take positive loving action.

Equal Voices believes that the federal Government's proposed religious discrimination legislation gives the green light to such religious actions. 'It is no coincidence', said Dr Jo Inkipin, 'that the Sydney diocese is also in the forefront of pressing for the strengthening of legally discriminatory powers. This week's call for LGBTIQ+ people and their allies to leave churches is a harbinger of what is to come in our wider communities if Government does not rethink its own actions.'

In an online petition, at change.org, Equal Voices Anglicans express 'grave dismay' at the Sydney Archbishop's statements this week, as 'deeply damaging to the mental health and well-being of so many in our society' and a 'betrayal of the love and generous hospitality of Jesus.' They point to the numerous LGBTIQ+ Anglicans now married under Australian law and the impact of labelling such loving relationships as 'sinful', particularly in the light of the extraordinary high levels of mental health challenge among LGBTIQ+ people. 'The encouragement of outdated binary understandings of sexuality and gender', say Equal Voices Anglicans, 'is also hugely damaging, putting lives at risk.'

Equal Voices challenges Church and Government leaders to face up to hypocrisy among Christians who plead vigorously for extra privileges whilst using their current powers to exclude. Even in terms of his interest in evangelising, the Sydney Archbishop's words make no sense, say Equal Voices. According to the last census there are 300 000 LGBTIQ+ Anglicans in Australia, and 61.6% of Australians, including Anglicans, voted for marriage equality in 2017, yet this majority has just been asked by the Archbishop to leave. This is quite apart from others in the 'unreached' population who are presumably not welcome to join. 'Such a stance', says Equal Voices, 'is contrary to the teaching of Jesus that all are welcome and deeply inhibits the mission of the church.'

'We ask that those in leadership consider prayerfully the great harm that has been done...and seek ways to redress that harm. We urge that public statements and actions be made by all pastorally aware Anglicans, making clear that LGBTIQ+ Anglicans are welcome and affirmed.'

For further information: contact Jo Inkipin (0488 333 169) or Keith Mascord (co-chair)

Equal Voices website at <https://equalvoices.org.au>
Equal Voices Anglican - <https://www.equalvoicesanglican.org>