

3073

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH CENTRE IN SEX,
HEALTH AND SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL
KIRBY

The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH CENTRE IN SEX, HEALTH AND SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT

MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL KIRBY

In extraordinary circumstances, I congratulate the *Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society* (ARCSHS) on another busy and successful year. Since early 2020 global attention has been focused on the novel coronavirus, COVID19, with its huge impact on health, mortality and society around the world. The virus has placed special burdens on sexual minorities. *ARCSHS* has been directly involved in the disclosure and analysis of this important new knowledge. It has helped to provide evidence and advice on the special effects of the pandemic on LGBTIQ+ Australians. It has also developed new research exploring the impacts of the pandemic on the health and intimate lives of all Australians.

The work of the Centre was recognised in 2020 with a number of successful competitive grants and other funding awards in support of research on a wide range of important topics. These have included a project exploring the extent and impact of gay conversion therapy in Australia. I was especially interested to see the launch of the *Private Lives 3* report in November 2020, the largest ever national survey the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people. While many LGBTIQ+ people now feel supported and respected in Australia, the findings suggest that there remain high levels of feelings of discrimination and violence, along with significant concerns about mental health and sources of individual distress.

I especially wish to acknowledge the significant work being done by *Rainbow Health Victoria* and *ARCShS*, working together, to address family violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ communities. This represents a significant program of research and capacity building activities to support access to services and primary prevention. *Pride in Prevention: A guide to primary prevention of violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ communities* was released in July 2020. It provides a summary of the currently available evidence on the drivers of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ communities and recommendations on how to address them.

These activities, and the many more described in this annual report, are a testament to the talent, hard work, originality and dedication of the Centre's staff. By their dedication they have improved the community's understanding of issues related to health, social justice, sex and sexuality in Australia. I am proud to be the *ARCShS* Distinguished Ambassador. I congratulate all the Centre's staff, their professional partners, and supporters. Through research carefully undertaken and faithfully reported, the Centre has cast light on aspects of human lives that require revelation and deserve informed attention.



Michael Kirby

Distinguished Ambassador of the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society