

David SOUTHWICK MP

MEMBER FOR CAULFIELD

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY



2 November 2022

Mr. Michael Barnett
Co-Convenor
Aleph Melbourne
Via email: michael@aleph.org.au

Dear Michael,

Leading into the state election this November, I wanted to reach out to you and affirm my support for the LGBTQIA+ community.

Over the years, I've been pleased to join you and members of Aleph at Midsumma and show allyship with a community that gives so much to our state. Our diversity – whether it be diversity of sexuality, religion, race, ethnicity, or gender identity – is our strength. Supporting all people, no matter where on the spectrums of sexuality and gender identity they may sit, is a fundamental part of what I believe in.

Recently, the Victorian Liberals supported the Andrews Government in passing laws to outlaw Gay Conversion Therapy. There is no place in Victoria for such barbaric practices and changing these laws ensured that.

The Liberals will protect religious freedoms to allow Jewish schools to employ people who are aligned with their values. These laws will not grant schools any power to terminate staff based on values and no existing staff would be impacted by the changes. Just as importantly, an individual's sexuality, gender identity and ethnicity would also be equally protected from discrimination and unfair dismissal under these laws. Any proposed changes would only occur after extensive community consultation (including with Aleph) and would need to protect every single Victorian from discrimination.

I want to give you my iron-clad guarantee that any amendment to the Equal Opportunity Act will protect our LGBTQIA+ community from discrimination. As Liberals, our belief in equality is non-negotiable.

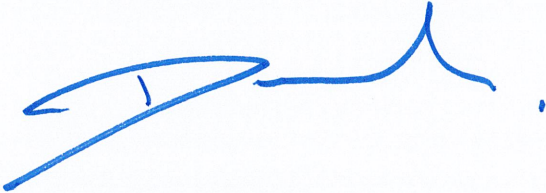
In 1981, it was a Hamer Liberal Government that decriminalised homosexual activity. In 2014, I was proud to be part of a Government that took the historic step to expunge these archaic convictions from the record. In 2017, as the Turnbull Government delivered gay marriage, I watched with pride as my former colleague Tim Wilson proposed to his now-husband Ryan on the floor of Parliament. A year later, a Federal Liberal Government put PrEP on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for the very first time.

A future Victorian Liberal Government will deliver a dedicated professional legal support service for the LGBTQIA+ community, which will be based at the Pride Centre. We will also invest \$1 million over 4 years into Joy 94.9, so they can continue to bring the community together.

I look forward to continuing working with Aleph to determine where funding, support and advocacy can be most impactful.

After the 26th of November, I hope to stand with you as part of a Victorian Liberal Government that supports, respects and protects every community and every Victorian. We will always defend equality.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, sweeping initial 'D' followed by a series of connected loops and a final upward stroke, ending with a small dot.

David Southwick
Member for Caulfield
Deputy Victorian Liberal Leader