

Education program improving services for LGBTI seniors

By **Jackie Keast** on [March 4, 2016](#) in [Industry](#)



Educating staff in the history and specific needs of older LGBTI people and engaging directly with the LGBTI community is supporting a leading aged care provider to

offer more inclusive care.

The ACH Group's Free To Be project, which was presented with a Better Practice award this month, aims to build a more accessible service for LGBTI seniors.

Since August 2013, over a third of the ACH workforce – some 730 staff – have participated in education and training which focuses on raising awareness of different sexualities and gender diversity.

The training includes guidance in inclusive language, and a background to the history of discrimination that has impacted older LGBTI people, such as the criminalisation and medicalisation of homosexuality.

Project officer Robyn Burton said helping staff understand some of the experiences that have historically faced older LGBTI people builds empathy and understanding in care.

"It's about having a more detailed knowledge of why it may be that a same-sex couple is reticent to trust support workers who come into their home, or the impact for a same-sex attracted person in a residential care facility who feels that they can't talk about a big part of their life – perhaps past partners – because they feel that they may receive a negative reaction from the staff or other residents," she said.

The training also looks in specific detail at the needs of older transgender and intersex people, with a focus on personal care that allows people to remain dignified and respected as the gender that they identify with as they age.

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