

# LIBRARIES ARE FOR EVERYONE

University libraries aren't usually filled with colourful balloons, but in September last year Griffith University's Nathan library was awash with rainbow hues as the LGBTI inclusion initiative was launched. TARA ANDERSON and CATHERINE JOST were there and they tell us more.

The libraries of Queensland's Griffith University have always been a safe place for all people, where anyone is welcome to explore any topic without judgment. But in September last year, Griffith libraries went one step further.

Pro Vice Chancellor (Information Services) Linda O'Brien and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Engagement) Professor Martin Betts officially launched the libraries as LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) safe places. 'Griffith University has always been a place where everyone is welcomed with open arms, no matter your background, and we believe providing a safe place for LGBTI staff and students is a natural progression of this,' Ms O'Brien said.

The initiative is all about creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust by providing a safe place in which LGBTI students and staff can work and study. As part of the initiative, all Griffith University library entrances proudly display a Safe Place sticker to show that they are welcoming, supportive and actively engaged with LGBTI staff and students.

Information Services staff have also completed awareness training run by Pride in Diversity, the employer



Griffith University staff celebrating the launch of the Safe Places initiative.



Griffith University's Pro Vice Chancellor (Information Services) Linda O'Brien and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Engagement) Professor Martin Betts launching the Safe Places initiative.

support program for all aspects of LGBTI workplace inclusion. Attended by more than 60 staff members, the training was an opportunity to learn more about LGBTI workplace inclusion and to help reduce exclusion, invisibility, homophobia and stigma at Griffith. 'The training provided me with a deeper understanding of LGBTI issues in the workplace,' said one participant. 'I'll continue to ensure that I respect and promote diversity not only in the workplace but also in the wider community.' Griffith University is also offering free *Walking in Rainbow Shoes* training to students and staff.

The module from Pride in Diversity provides information on the best way to create a prejudice-free environment and help staff to become more sensitive to the impact that inappropriate questions and comments might have on LGBTI colleagues. More than 200 staff and students have already completed the online training.

Creating inclusive environments is just one step towards acceptance and progress for the LGBTI community. The LGBTI Library Safe Place initiative also shows that Griffith University really is a place where everyone belongs. 🌈

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