

# QUEERING THE CAMPUS

"I believe you can't control or choose your sexuality."

So sang Savage Garden once upon a time, and while we may cringe every time we hear Darren Hayes screeching those words, he does make a good point.

As uncomfortable as some people may feel about this topic, sexuality is a fact of life. Well, let's face it, it is life. Whether you Do It to create life or not, however, is a highly contentious matter.

Recently, students at the university have approached the Student Association seeking to start up a Queer Student Society on campus. The first response people had was "we will have to get approval for that". Did we get approval to start Psyche? MedSoc? PAANDA (Performing Arts At Notre Dame Australia)? The Social Justice Club? Or the Law Student's Society? No, no, no, no, and no respectively.

So why are people so on edge about QS? Because the Catholic Church has a pretty firm stand point on homosexuality. Some people might have a problem with the Student Association supporting homosexuality. However, some of the values and attitudes of the Liberal party are an affront to Catholic ideals as well, and we didn't need approval to start a Liberal Club.

Homosexuality is a part of our society. Some people may not agree with it, but as a community, we accept it. Australia's human rights obligations require governments to take all necessary measures to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sexual identity. In Western Australia, comprehensive legislative measures ensuring equal treatment of all Sandgropers regardless of their sexual preference were passed in 2002.

The Student Association feels that by supporting a Queer Student Society, we are contributing to the university's goal of "providing a welcoming and supporting university environment for all people ... of all backgrounds" (from the mission statement). Craig Comrie, the National Union of Students Queer Officer, points out that young gay and lesbian people, "many of whom are students, suffer from higher rates of depression, drug and alcohol abuse, and are up to six times more likely to commit suicide than their heterosexual peers. That is why every university in Australia has a Queer Support Service."

Every university in Australia, except Notre Dame...

...but hopefully not for long! Given that October is Pride month, we thought it would be an appropriate time to propose the introduction of 'Quasihomo', the Notre Dame Queer Students' Society.

Quasihomo will be for ALL students, queer or straight. But it will need student support to make the society work. So if you support queer rights PLEASE JOIN. If the club gets approval, membership will cost a gold coin donation to the society and you can fill out a membership form at the Student Association.

Quasihomo has three main goals:

1. To provide social support for queer students.
2. To provide information on queer issues, such as legal rights, health and mental health, support services, and queer events in Perth.
3. Most importantly, to create a tolerant campus environment where students feel comfortable being themselves.

We also need a team of students to help run the society. So if you would like to help us out in any way, or if you have any 'queeries', please contact Courtney via email at [ccollins4@nd.edu.au](mailto:ccollins4@nd.edu.au).



\*\*Photo taken from 'Queer as Folk'

## Quasi Survey: "Are you queer friendly?"

Yes  
88%

No  
10%

Undecided  
2%

\*100 students surveyed.