

## Victorian AIDS Council (VAC) responds to reports of homophobic violence at Footscray Park

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

12 JANUARY 2017 — The Victorian AIDS Council (VAC) has been made aware of several incidents of violence being committed in parks and public places around Melbourne, particularly at Footscray Park.

The acts of violence have included homophobic abuse and verbal threats of violence; and actual physical violence. In many instances, individuals have been lured into secluded areas then assaulted by large groups of men.

These attacks are terrible and inexcusable. Every person has the right to safety, and should be able to visit public places without fear of violence or intimidation.

VAC has informed Victoria Police about these attacks, and is committed to working with them to make Footscray Park — and all public places — safe places for our community.

Victoria Police employs a group of specially trained officers who act as contacts for members of the LGBTI community. Known as LGBTI Liaison Officers (or GLLOs), these officers can take reports and complaints from the LGBTI community and ensure they are handled appropriately and effectively.

A complete list of GLLOs is available on the Victoria Police website at [www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document\\_ID=30300](http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=30300).

“If you are the victim of violence, or observe it happening, it is critical that you report it to the police. This helps raise awareness of homophobic violence, and helps the police in their efforts to prevent it,” said VAC CEO Simon Ruth.

“When reporting to the police you can ask to speak with that station’s GLLO. If you are not comfortable approaching GLLOs, you can contact VAC, and we can pass on any information on incidents to the relevant authorities.”

To report an incident to VAC, contact Michael Whelan on (03) 9865 6700.

If you have witnessed or been the victim of violence, or need someone to talk to, please contact VAC’s counselling team on (03) 9865 6700.

Alternately, you can contact the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard on 1800 184 527 for free, confidential, and anonymous telephone counselling and referrals.

ENDS

For more information or media enquiries, contact:

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 P 61 3 9865 6700  
 F 61 3 9826 2700  
 Toll Free 1800 134 840

Positive Living Centre  
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 South Yarra Victoria 3141  
 P 61 3 9863 0444  
 F 61 3 9820 3166  
 Toll Free 1800 622 795

Centre Clinic - St Kilda  
 Rear of 77 Fitzroy Street  
 St Kilda Victoria 3182  
 P 61 3 9525 5866  
 F 61 3 9525 3673

PRONTO!  
 Rapid Testing Service  
 175 Rose Street  
 Fitzroy Victoria 3065  
 P 61 3 9416 2889

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