thorneharbour health* | media release

Legacy of Community Action Honoured at Thorne Harbour Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday 13 November – Thorne Harbour Health has announced the recipients of their 2023 Awards alongside the 31st Keith Harbour Address – this year delivered by Switchboard CEO and trans community advocate Joe Ball.

Held as part of the organisation's annual general meeting, the Keith Harbour Address invites a special guest to deliver an oration addressing the ongoing response to HIV as well as the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ communities more broadly.

Focused on honouring the legacy of community activism, Joe Ball spoke to the importance of addressing suicide in LGBTIQA+ communities and drew a parallel in the iconic 'Silence Equals Death' message to acknowledge that we must be able to name the issue to address it.

"In the silence, we obscure the reality that we are not our deaths and that we are not just people who succumb to despair. We are people who can and profoundly wish to thrive," he said.

He added, "We have inherited a legacy that calls us to build a broad movement of support, to find and maintain our allies, and to reclaim the narrative surrounding our lives and experiences. If you haven't joined the struggle for trans rights already – consider this your invitation. Let us stand united just as AIDS activists taught us to do; and together we can create a world where everyone has the right to thrive and to love and to be loved."

The address was immediately followed by presentation of the 2023 Thorne Harbour Health Awards, including Life Membership for Living Positive Victoria CEO Richard Keane and Lady Primrose Potter AC for their longstanding commitment to supporting people living with HIV. Lady Primrose Potter AC reflected on the impact the early epidemic had on her.

She recalled, "We were over at Fairfield [Hospital] and I'd seen young men there whose family had thrown them out. They'd had AIDS, and they weren't going to have them in the house, and they had no money – they had nothing. They were destitute. You can't leave people like that without helping them."

Flis Marlowe OAM received the 2023 Thorne Harbour Health President's Award for their legacy of work in supporting LGBTIQ+ communities over the years – including the recent Rainbow Community Angels project focused on mobilising community members to create safe spaces of LGBTIQ+ events. In their acceptance speech, they highlighted the positive impact of the initiative in regional settings and acknowledged the collective behind the project.

"I just want to say it's an honour to do the Rainbow Community Angels. It's the most inspiring, ally-inclusive activity I've ever done…I can say that it wasn't only me. There were many, many other people involved every step of the way."

Melbourne Grammar's school captain, Daniel Cash, received the 2023 Greig Friday Young Leader Award for making headlines in April 2022 when he called out the Presbyterian Church for its public stance that students in a same-sex relationship would be ineligible for student leadership.

Special Service Awards were also presented to dedicated volunteers Mike O' Brien, Jill Newton, and Peter Farrington as well as Community Co-Chair of the Victorian LGBTIQ+ Taksforce, Jayde de Bondt.

ENDS

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