

Call for Parliamentary Inquiry into Hate Crimes in Victoria

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

20 August 2019 – Thorne Harbour Health has joined Dowson Turco Lawyers (DTL) and Victorian freelance journalist Seb Starcevic to call for a parliamentary inquiry into historical and contemporary institutional responses to hate crimes in Victoria aimed at LGBT communities.

This follows a similar NSW inquiry convened in 2018 as well as yesterday's apology from Victoria Police for historical harms to LGBTI communities.

Thorne Harbour Health CEO Simon Ruth said, "While we acknowledge that Victoria Police and others are trying to do the right thing, an important part of this reconciliation is knowing what they're apologising for."

"An inquiry into Victoria's institutional response should take the justice system into account but also institutions like hospitals. We have received community feedback that for many, their distrust in 'the system' starts there."

Nicholas Stewart, partner at DTL, said, "As an LGBTI law firm we are always looking to make society safer and more inclusive for LGBTI communities across Australia. But that objective requires consideration of the wrongs of the past and learning from those errors so that laws are drafted to guarantee our communities' safety."

Investigative journalist, Seb Starcevic said:, "Through my research, I have discovered that, as in New South Wales, dozens of gay men in Victoria were assaulted and in some cases killed simply for being gay. One of these men was Brent Everett, a 29-year-old aspiring artist who was stomped to death in a Geelong public toilet in 1988. After talking to Brent's family, I learned the wounds from these acts of murderous homophobia are still raw decades later."

Nicholas Stewart added, "DTL is grateful for the investment of the NSW Parliament in relation to this issue, and we are now deeply considering the interim report from the inquiry of 2018. It is important that Victoria follows suit because the LGBTI communities in that state are just as significant as those in NSW and are looking to their government for acknowledgement of enduring pain and significant vulnerability."

ENDS

For more information, contact:

Caleb Hawk
Communications Manager, Thorne Harbour Health | caleb.hawk@thorneharbour.org | 0419 213 542

Matt Mitchell
Media Manager, Dowson Turco Lawyers | matt@hiredgunmedia.com.au | 0431 980 365

Seb Starcevic | sebstarcevic@gmail.com | 0435 171 070