**MEDIA RELEASE THURSDAY 9 MAY 2019 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ILLAWARRA LGBTIQ+ INCLUSION NETWORK LAUNCHES**

The new Illawarra LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Network (ILIN)) launches in the Illawarra to coincide with International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT). This exciting and vibrant initiative brings community members, allies, local service providers and government representatives together for LGBTIQ+ communities.

The global theme for IDAHOBIT 2019 is ‘Justice and Protection For All’, which is in recognition that in many places around the world, LGBTIQ people still face injustice and live in fear and danger. IDAHOBIT reminds us of the important need for LGBTQI+ people and their allies to continue to work together in challenging anti-LGBTQI+ hate, and promote diversity and inclusion.

Jen Gifford, Event Coordinator of The Rainbow Underground said the community group is thrilled to be hosting the IDAHOBIT event, *Inspired Change* on Sunday 19 May that will launch ILIN, "The Rainbow Underground is all about raising the visibility of and connection with LGBTIQ+ people and their allies by hosting events and offering creative opportunities across the region.

We are grateful to have received an ACON IDAHOBIT Community Grant, which has enabled us to host a screening of ‘The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert’ and a Q&A. This event comes at a time where regional support for LGBTIQ+ communities is so important.” Gifford said.

ILIN aims to promote equality and inclusivity in the region through advocacy, education and supporting access to safe and equitable services.

Member of ILIN, Clare Adams said that “despite significant progress made over recent years in fostering a more inclusive society in Australia including through legislating marriage quality, many LGBTQI+ Australians and their families continue to be targets of prejudice, discrimination and exclusion. ILIN provides a great opportunity for the region to demonstrate that we are serious about welcoming and celebrating difference.”

Grant Barnes, a member of ILIN and long term Illawarra LGBTIQ+ advocate is also thrilled to see the community continuing to make strides for inclusion, "the Illawarra has long supported the local LGBTI+ community, I grew up here and have lived locally for over 40 years, I have seen a lot change in that time. Initiatives like the ILIN and groups like The Rainbow Underground are so exciting to be a part of and I’m looking forward to continuing to contribute to the community and region I love”.

**What:** Inspired Change, IDAHOBIT and ILIN Launch Event

**When:** Sunday 19 May 2018, 11am - 4pm

**Where:** Woonona Bulli School of Arts, 479 Princess Highway, Woonona

**More info:** https://tinyurl.com/ILINLaunch

**Editor note:**

LGBTIQ+ = lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning, Sister Girls, Brother Boys plus all other experiences and identities of diverse sexualities and genders.