

Queer(y)ing Indigenous Health; Achieving Indigenous LGBTQI health and social justices

Dameyon Bonson, Black Rainbow, Australia

It's been estimated that over 71,000, or 11%, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) Australians can be defined within the spectrum of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Queer, Trans, and/or Intersex (LGBTQI) identities^{1,2}. Yet despite this significant number, and that both Indigenous and the LGBTQI communities register highly on a number of health, and social measures and indicators as "vulnerable" communities³, there is a paucity of inclusion of Indigenous LGBTQI Australians across mainstream, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and LGBTQI health and social wellbeing agendas. For example *The Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan (2017)*, despite having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians as a priority area, does not include Indigenous LGBTQI people. Similarly, the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023*⁴, *The Implementation Plan (2015)*⁵ and its supplementary document *My Life My Lead: Opportunities (2017)*⁶, mention Indigenous LGBTQI people just the once. The seminal *Writing themselves in* reports one, two and three, on the sexuality, health and well-being of same-sex attracted young people also excludes Indigenous LGBTQI (young) people from its discussions. Enter Black Rainbow⁷. In 2013 Black Rainbow launched on social media, its premise, to provide something that was free and accessible that positively promoted and increased the visibility of Indigenous Australian LGBTQI people. Since then, Black Rainbow's founder, Dameyon Bonson, has catapulted off it's increasing social media presence (and following) and his and Black Rainbow's agitation on Indigenous LGBTQI health and social justices, toward to a becoming more substantive player within heath the Australian health, wellbeing and social justice landscape. His argument, and to borrow form a line from Andrew Farrell's work *Can You See Me? Queer Margins in Aboriginal Communities*, "If we cannot see our health, we cannot observe our health, we cannot respond to our health needs". It's premise, to create something that was free and accessible that positively promoted and increased the visibility of Indigenous Australian LGBTQI people.

¹ Bonson, D 2018

² Commonwealth of Australia. National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Ageing and Aged Care Strategy. Canberra; 2012

³ Bonson, D 2014, Voices from the Black Rainbow: the inclusion of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQI, Sistersgirls and Brotherboys in health, wellbeing and suicide prevention strategies

⁴ Commonwealth of Australia. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023. Canberra; 2013.

⁵ Commonwealth of Australia. The Implementation Plan National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Implementation Plan Canberra; 2015

⁶ Commonwealth of Australia. My Life My Lead: Opportunities Canberra; 2017

⁷ Black Rainbow www.blackrainbow.org.au