

# Out of the shadows

AUSTRALIA'S first aged care packages designed for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex seniors has been launched in south-east Queensland.

Described as "invisible" when it comes to aged care, this community now has aged care packages tailored specifically for them and delivered by Care Connect.

"Traditionally, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex community has been invisible when it comes to aged care tailored to their specific needs and sensitivities," said Care Connect chief executive officer Paul Ostrowski.

He said older adults from this community had lived most of their lives with stigma, discrimination and abuse.

Ambassador for Ageing Noeline Brown said Care Connect's trained staff understood the issues facing the community.

"I believe Care Connect strives to provide an environment where people do not fear discrimination and, for those in relationships, Care Connect recognises partners as chosen decision-makers, which is a wonderful thing," she said. Healthy Communities



**TAILORED CARE** – Ambassador for Ageing Noeline Brown (second right) with (from left) Paul Martin, Marissa Galiazzo, Paul Ostrowski and Fred Maddern at the Care Connect launch.

executive director Paul Martin said that, for example, 80-year-olds would have been in their 60s when homosexuality was decriminalised in Queensland and in their 70s when discrimination, based on gender identity, became illegal in Queensland.

He said as a result of being marginalised for most of their lives, these seniors had learned to hide their identities out of necessity.

"He was delighted when the Department of Health and Ageing supported Care

Connect's proposal to tailor existing aged care packages to suit this community in south-east Queensland.

"We worked in partnership with Healthy Communities (the leading lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex community organisation in Queensland) to successfully gain Commonwealth funding – we are now rolling these packages out in south east Queensland and are calling for seniors to take up this program."

■ Care Connect 1800-116-166  
www.careconnect.org.au

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