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Media Release

Call to Equalise Sex Laws

The Queensland AIDS Council has lent its voice to the growing call for the laws on the age of consent for sexual activity in Queensland to be equalised.

The Queensland AIDS Council is one of several organisations who are supporting the “Love in for Love Equality” picnic taking place on Sunday 13th February, 1pm to 3pm near the Rose Garden in New Farm Park, Brisbane. The purpose of the picnic is to draw attention to and encourage community action on the current unequal treatment of sexual activity in the State’s laws.

Under current State legislation ‘sodomy’ or anal intercourse is illegal until age 18, while all other consenting sexual activity is legal from age 16. The maximum penalty is 14 years imprisonment.

“The current law causes confusion amongst many in the community who believe that all sex between men is illegal before the age of 18” said Paul R Martin of the Queensland AIDS Council. *“We are concerned that young people who are sexually active are reluctant to come forward to access sexual health services and receive sex & relationships education for fear of being prosecuted”*.

Mr Martin went on to say *“There is no legitimate reason why the age at which young men and women can have vaginal sex, which may result in child birth, should be any different from the age at which people can legally have anal sex. The current law does nothing to protect young people, on the contrary it criminalises young people who choose to have anal sex”*.

The Queensland AIDS Council supports measures to prevent underage (i.e. under 16) sex and the sexual exploitation of children and those with learning disabilities. The change in the law would only seek to equalise the age of consent for consenting sexual activity between those over 16.

Notes to the editor:

The Queensland AIDS Council (QuAC) is an independent community-based organisation responsible for providing education, advocacy and support for those affected by HIV/AIDS in Queensland.

Paul R Martin, General Manager of QuAC, will be available for comment prior to and at the picnic on the contact details above.