

BRIEFS



Gregory Storer and partner Michael kiss in front of Muslim protesters at the Global Atheist Convention in Melbourne. Photo: Pete Darwin

Atheist kiss

A same-sex kiss at the Global Atheist Convention in Melbourne earlier this month invoked the ire of a Muslim protest group.

The conference attracted some 5,000 attendees to see speakers including Richard Dawkins, A.C. Grayling, Lawrence Krauss, Geoffrey Robertson and Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

The conference also attracted a number of religious groups protesting outside the conference centre.

Gay rights advocate Gregory Storer took the opportunity to kiss his partner in front of a group of Muslim protesters.

"My partner Michael and I took advantage of the moment to kiss in front of the group," Storer said in a statement.

"We understand that in some Islamic States gay people are persecuted and executed for their sexuality. It was an ideal opportunity to challenge the notion of acceptance and

tolerance. As we began kissing, the Muslims began chanting, 'Burn in hell!'"

It Gets Better

A group of Australian comedians have produced a video for the online anti-homophobia campaign It Gets Better.

Produced to coincide with last week's National Youth Week the video was filmed during the recent Melbourne International Comedy Festival and features messages from 16 comics including Wil Anderson, Peter Helliard, Claire Hooper, Hannah Gadsby, Geraldine Hickey, Justin Hamilton and Wes Snelling.

It Gets Better Australia national director Jamison Parker said the video offers an important message to young people who feel marginalised.

"We appreciate these comedians sharing their stories and hope that their message brings some comfort to young Australians who are going through rough times in their

lives," Parker said. The video can be viewed at igba.org.au

Diverse & deadly

The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and Family Planning Victoria are launching a film and website celebrating sexual diversity in Victoria's Aboriginal communities.

The short film, *Celebrating Sexual Diversity*, was filmed during 2011 Outback and Songlines NAIDOC event at Melbourne's Hi-Fi Bar and features Melbourne Aboriginal drag icon Constantina Bush among the diverse group giving messages of support.

The 'Diverse and Deadly' website has information and links for Indigenous health, sexual health and information and GLBT organisations and support groups.

The official launch of Diverse and Deadly takes place this Thursday (April 26, 2012) at Hares & Hyenas bookshop, 63 Johnston Street, Fitzroy, from 6pm. diverseanddeadly.com

EDITORIAL

ANDREW SHAW

andrew.shaw@eevolution.com.au



FAMILY VALUES

Featured in *MCV* this week is the complicated issue of commercial surrogacy. Commercial surrogacy is where a woman is paid to carry a child for another person or persons and is paid for her time and effort and in this country it is illegal in some states. But as you will see from the story this does not put some people off. The alternative is altruistic surrogacy, where the woman – usually a close friend or even a relative – carries the child to term without payment, save for covering the usual medical costs associated with childbirth.

As I learned from the men I interviewed, altruistic surrogacy is harder than it seems. The existing relationship can complicate the procedure. Dave, one of the men I spoke with, compared altruistic surrogacy with Amway. "You know how with Amway the first people you pick on to buy your products are relatives? Because you can't legally advertise for your surrogate or your donor, you tend to be limited as to who can be the candidate."

Limiting the field means the surrogate mother may not be equipped to handle the separation that will occur when the baby is born. The commercial surrogacy agencies in the States, for example, screen potential mothers before recommending them to clients.

In Australia, there is a wealth of practical material available to men looking to start a family through surrogacy. Gay Dads Australia is a good place to start – the website offers a breakdown of the process of surrogacy, including contracts, legal obstacles and choosing a surrogate:

"Surrogates can come from a number of states outside California, however you can request one in California if that is your preference," the site advises. "Be warned that this may mean that your match will take longer. Finding surrogates in Canada can be difficult. Canada has a smaller population, and does not have the commercial surrogacy industry that the US has. In India, the surrogate is usually arranged for you by the Agency. In India you are unlikely to actually ever meet your surrogate as the industry in India operates very differently to the US and Canada."

The final point, that in India you are unlikely to ever meet the mother of your child, is held up by the experience of Sam in our story this week. He says he was disappointed because he had an idea that the surrogate mother would be more involved.

"I was hoping we could have ongoing contact with her, but it's hard in India because they want to go back to their own families and don't want to be reminded that they've carried for a foreigner," Sam told me. "They do it because the money's terrific: they can put their kids through school or buy a house. But it's not considered a socially acceptable way to earn money."

From what I gathered talking to these men, surrogacy is not a process for the faint-hearted. The joy of holding your child in your arms comes often at the end of a tough, obstacle-filled journey that takes a lot of time and planning, and a lot of money. As always, we welcome your feedback: what do you think about commercial surrogacy, and, as many of these men believe, should adoption be made available to gay men as a viable option?

Brighton



Visit our showroom or call today!
Ask for **Jason**, your Brighton Mazda consultant!



Mazda



facebook

0777

ATKINSON RD
TUCKER RD
SOUTH RD
TMMA MC/GBM-170212