

# PRIDE IN THE REGIONS:

## A Case Study on the Role of LGBTIQ+ Community Development in Albany

Freedom Centre (FC), a peer-led mental health and social support service for **LGBTIQ+ people aged 12-25**, provides counselling, community development, and educational workshops for those who support LGBTIQ+ youth. FC is a project of WAAC (formerly the WA AIDS Council), a not-for-profit organisation focused on improving sexual health and supporting communities affected by HIV, sexually transmitted infections, and blood-borne viruses.

LGBTIQ+ young people in regional and remote areas face unique and often compounding challenges, including **social isolation**, **limited access to affirming health services**, and **heightened exposure to discrimination and stigma**.

In Albany, these issues have recently been exacerbated by increasingly hostile political and cultural discourse, creating a climate of fear, invisibility, and distress for LGBTIQ+ communities, particularly transgender and gender diverse people.

### Albany Pride

Alongside WAAC and M Clinic (WAAC's sexual health clinic), FC delivered a community development initiative during Albany Pride. **The initiative aimed to create more accessible pathways to sexual and mental healthcare.**

Community development events were held in partnership with **Youth Pride Network**, **Rainbow Futures**, **Perth Front Runners** and **Albany Pride**, including those listed here →

While some engagements were limited, they were all of a high quality and impact. The most valuable things in the workshops were reported to be **"how to have a happy and safe relationship"** and **"talking to other LGBTIQ+ people about things that matter to me"**.

Wellbeing Workshops

Relationship and Sexuality Education

Sexual Health Testing

Sexual Health Outreach

Community Roundtable

Parent and Guardian Workshops



**850+ CONDOMS AND LUBE**



**250+ INTERACTIONS**



**25+ DENTAL DAMS**



**20+ MERCH SALES**

### Where to Next...

For many LGBTIQ+ young people in regional areas, safe spaces, support services, and representation remain scarce. Without ongoing support, LGBTIQ+ communities experience poorer mental health outcomes. **This is particularly true for trans and gender diverse young people.**

By centring **peer-led**, **community-informed**, and **culturally safe approaches**, FC's work in Albany offered pride, visibility, and connection. It created pathways for young people to access care, share stories, and see themselves reflected in community leadership. It also laid the groundwork for future collaboration, community trust, and long-term impact.

**This initiative was just the start.** While it marked a meaningful step forward, isolated events are not enough. There is a demand to invest in structures, relationships, and people to ensure all young LGBTIQ+ people, no matter where they live, feel seen, supported, and safe.

