

Urinal survey suggests homophobia and transphobia issues among Christchurch male pubgoers

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Joseph Johnson/STUFF

Urinal surveys are part of a new approach by All Right? campaign promoter Ciaran Fox to draw attention to male issues.

Hundreds of men have used their urine to signify they don't want their mates coming out as gay or trans.

While unscientific, a urinal poll organised by Canterbury mental health campaign *All Right?* suggests an alarming number of men hold a negative opinion of trans and gay people.

Five polling screens placed in urinals at Christchurch bars Dux central and Bealey's Speights Ale House were splashed with over 5000 responses from about 2000 men.

Responses to an automated poll at Christchurch urinal



41%

If a mate was trans we'd stay friends?



41%

Real men talk about their feelings?



49%

If a mate came out as gay we'd stay buds?



50%

Pink is for girls, blue is for boys?



39%

I'd chat to a friend if I was struggling?

SOURCE: ALL RIGHT?

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(The above graphic refers to the percentage of respondents who answered "yes" to the questions featured.)

About 60 per cent of respondents said they would not stay friends with a mate becoming trans and 50 per cent said they would not stay friends with a mate coming out as gay.

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Men were asked to aim left or right to answer a list of 20 questions about attitude to things like boys playing with dolls, the manliness of rugby versus yoga, and friendship. The average urinal visitor cast between two and three votes, answering two to three questions each time.

Joseph Johnson/Stuff

Bar drink coasters are a new approach by All Right? campaign promoter Ciaran Fox to draw attention to Male issues.

All Right? mental health promoter Ciaran Fox says the "very unscientific" survey was a "fun, novel way to get health promotion in front of blokes who might not even notice posters".

Market research found that men were less likely to engage with the All Right? campaign, which started in Canterbury after the 2011 earthquakes to promote wellbeing in the region.

The peeing poll was one way to make it relevant to men, Fox says.

An online survey of 385 men with similar questions done last year turned out completely different results, with about 95 per cent of respondents saying they would stay friends with a mate coming out as gay and 85 per cent with a friend turning trans.

Joseph Johnson/Stuff

Ciaran Fox showcases a urinal poll at Bealey's Speights Ale House in Christchurch.

Canterbury University marketing expert Ekant Veer says the survey does not try to be representative but it is revealing.

Either men frequenting the two Christchurch bars are different from the online survey takers, or people are lying in one of the two survey, he says.

"Social desirability bias is when people respond in a way they think they're meant to respond, because that's what society deems to be 'right' - we see this in surveys from time to time and can be why there was such a high percentage of people saying they'll stay mates in the older poll."

The peeing poll "may be people taking the piss, literally, and not caring about the results. Or they've had a couple of drinks and now they're responding more honestly than they would in a formal survey."

Joseph Johnson/Stuff

Pubgoers are asked to aim left or right to answer questions on masculinity as a fun way to make them question their beliefs about what it means to be a man.

Surveys might not be an accurate way of measuring really complicated situations, he says.

"Let's be fair, most people haven't been in a situation where their mate has come out as trans, so they probably don't really know what they'd do. We have a friend who is male to female trans and she did lose a lot of friends."

Rainbow Youth communications manager Toni Duder says the urinal survey results are not surprising.

"Christchurch is known as a more conservative area of the country and we know from our work in Otago and Southland, that homophobia and transphobia is quite entrenched in the smaller towns of the area."

The results give an "interesting insight" into the levels of intolerance queer and gender diverse people experience in New Zealand.

Joseph Johnson/Stuff

Images on coasters and posters around Christchurch challenge stereotypes about masculinity.

Fox says the answers suggest "we still have work to do as a society around inclusion".

The masculinity campaign is needed because many men still believe they need to live up to the Kiwi bloke stereotype, he says.

"It's time to let go of the idea that a good Kiwi bloke should be strong, silent and stoic, and to lose the whole 'harden up' or 'get over it' mentality," he says.

"Suppressing the real you in order to live up to the expectations of your mates or society can be incredibly damaging. We need to move beyond those narrow stereotypes of the past and look to the future of manliness."

Joseph Johnson/Stuff

This image reassures men they are manly even if they like yoga.

- Stuff