

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Embargoed 15 May 2009**

## **CELEBRITIES SPEAK UP FOR AN INCLUSIVE AUSTRALIA**

Olympic champion Matthew Mitcham, MTV VJ Ruby Rose, Greens Leader Sen. Bob Brown and former High Court judge Michael Kirby are among many famous and everyday faces that are part of a new campaign to fight discrimination against Australia's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community.

Called *This Is Oz*, the project is an online photo gallery where participants can upload pictures of themselves with messages that challenge homophobia or celebrate diversity and social inclusion. The web address is [www.thisisoz.com.au](http://www.thisisoz.com.au)

Launched today in Sydney's Martin Place to mark the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO), the project aims to improve services and opportunities for GLBT Australians by demonstrating public support for GLBT rights as well as illustrating the impact that homophobia has on the whole community.

ACON, Australia's biggest GLBT health promotion agency, is organising the project in partnership with the City of Sydney, NSW Police Force, the NSW's Attorney General's Dept, Diversity Council of Australia, Amnesty International, The Gender Centre, Twenty10, the NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby, the National LGBT Health Alliance, NSW Law Society Young Lawyers, Highschoolers Against Homophobia and media partners Evolution Publishing and [samesame.com.au](http://samesame.com.au).

ACON CEO Stevie Clayton says *This Is Oz* is all about making Australia a place where everyone belongs. "As Australians, we pride ourselves on the principles of freedom and equality that have become hallmarks of our society," Ms Clayton says. "However, unjust laws and unfriendly attitudes mean that GLBT Australians don't always get a fair go.

"While the reforms that have been made recently at the Federal level are a step in the right direction, there's still a long way to go before the journey's over. We know that a great many Australians share our vision for an inclusive Australia. *This Is Oz* offers them a simple yet powerful way to speak up and show their support for a society that embraces diversity and accepts people on face value."

"We'd like to thank all our project partners, especially the City of Sydney for helping to finance the project as well as our media partners Evolution Publishing and [samesame.com.au](http://samesame.com.au) for helping to promote the campaign."

Below are some of the celebrity photo messages that are helping to launch *This Is Oz*.

*"Thank you Mum and Dad for making me just the gay I am"* – Matthew Mitcham, Olympian

*"What's fear got to do with it?"* – Ruby Rose, celebrity VJ

*"Celebrate love in all its diversity"* – Sen. Bob Brown, Leader of The Greens

*"Judge not"* – The Hon. Michael Kirby, former High Court judge

*"Pride not prejudice"* – The Hon. Tanya Plibersek, Federal Housing Minister

*"Dare to be different"* – Christine Manfield, chef and author

*"Tolerance and acceptance is the message and the messenger is you"* – The Hon. Clover Moore, Lord Mayor of Sydney

To view these images, find out more about the project or to get involved, please visit [www.thisisoz.com.au](http://www.thisisoz.com.au)

### **ENDS**

For more information or to arrange an interview or photo opportunity, please contact

**Michael Badorrek, ACON Media and Communications Manager**

**T: (02) 9206 2001 M: 0400 358 109 E: [mbadorrek@acon.org.au](mailto:mbadorrek@acon.org.au)**