



# Damien

Ozanam Community Centre Volunteer

## LGBTIQ Case Vignette

I began volunteering at the old Ozanam Community Centre (OCC) about 8 years ago, long before there was any talk of a Rainbow Tick. I was loved from the beginning and it was made clear to me I was valued there.

My history since coming out at 15 (now 46) was one of chronic drug use, prison, homelessness and community services like the OCC.

VincentCare Victoria allowed me to be me. I was made the official Decorating Coordinator and every "Day" we had I could decorate and set it up. World Aids Day, IDAHOBIT day, Transgender Awareness Day, NAIDOC Week, and Wear it Purple Day. I'm sure there were more events we honored. For Transgender Awareness Day 2019 we had a day of celebrations like never before. They hired me and several others to sing and do drag shows. It was amazing. So much love in the centre.

We purchased the Rainbow, Trans, and Intersex flags which are displayed right in the middle of the Homeless Resource Centre. You can't miss them. There have been complaints from a few people over the years but they stay up and the Progress and Gender Fluid flags are on the way.

I have been proud to march with VincentCare Victoria in the last 2 Pride Marches. And I'm very grateful to have been awarded VincentCare Victoria's Volunteer of the Year 2019 for my work as a valued volunteer and being involved with helping them work towards receiving the Rainbow Tick.

Once Covid permits and the centre opens up again to volunteers my focus will be on setting up the LGBTIQ safe space. But anywhere in the VincentCare Victoria organisation, the Homeless Resource Centre or Ozanam House is a safe space for LGBTIQ people. That is reflected in the staff they hire and the training they are given.

I'm very proud to have been involved with VincentCare Victoria as it has nurtured and supported me. I'm now in the best place I have ever been in my life because of them (and me).

**Damien Chandler, Volunteer**  
**Ozanam Community Centre**



\*Name changed