

The Country Closet

Rural Lesbians in isolation



Women's Health Loddon Mallee, North Western Victoria
'Responding to Women's Needs'

Cathy Wheel

Introduction

35% of Australians over 14 years
believe lesbianism is immoral

Mapping Homophobia in Australia, Australian Institute Web paper, July 2005, Michael Flood and Clife Hamilton



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Introduction

- The closet is a lesbian response to prejudice, discrimination and stigma
- Isolation is a social determinant of health

An Institution's Response

Couples are COUPLES

All things being EQUAL



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An Individual Lesbian's Response

- Stigma
- Fear of discovery
- Societal prejudice and ignorance
- Reduced access to support and services

An Individual Lesbian's Response

It could've been worse...



One of us might've been Heterosexual

An Individual Lesbian's Response

6⁰ of separation is not a comforting thought for a rural lesbian living a double life.



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A Health Practitioner's Response

Lesbianism is a culture



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What CAN WE DO?



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