



Press Release: 25th September 2013

MINISTER COVENEY LAUNCHES MACRA & GLEN INITIATIVE FOR LGBT PEOPLE IN RURAL IRELAND

Today, Wednesday 25th September at 12 noon at the GLEN stand at the **National Ploughing Championships**, the Minister for Agriculture, Food & the Marine, Simon Coveney TD launched a **new initiative by Macra na Feirme and GLEN to support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people living in rural Ireland**. The new booklet promotes positive mental health and highlights the community and support services for LGBT people. **This is also the first time that any LGBT organisation has attended the National Ploughing Championships.**

“Ireland has experienced great progress for LGBT people over the past 20 years and we want to ensure that this **visibility and positive change is equally enjoyed by those who are LGBT in rural Ireland**” said **Brian Sheehan, Director of GLEN**.

“Macra are delighted to develop our work in the area of **positive mental health and to support GLEN**. Macra is an open and inclusive rural organisation and we hope that the wider rural community will reflect our ethos.” said **Kieran O’Dowd, Macra na Feirme National President**.

“With civil partnerships being celebrated across every county and more people being open with their families, friends and communities, **the visibility and status of LGBT people across every part of Ireland has increased very significantly over the last decade**” said Sheehan.

“**In rural areas, however, it can be harder for LGBT people to get to know other LGBT people or to find support, and sometimes LGBT people can experience discrimination or harassment or may feel isolated**. This can impact on mental health” said Sheehan.

“This new resource which we’ve developed in partnership with Macra provides LGBT people with helpful information on mental health and wellbeing and on the range of supports available for LGBT people living in rural Ireland” continued Sheehan.

“As an organisation that provides opportunities for young farmers and rural young people to build friendships, learn skills and build communities, we are delighted to partner with Macra to promote LGBT people’s awareness and inclusion across all of Macra’s activities. We are also delighted to be at the National Ploughing Championships – it’s the first time that a gay organisation has been present.” concluded Sheehan.

Ends

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Editors Notes:

1. The Launch by Minister Coveney will take place at 12 noon at the GLEN stand.
2. GLEN's Stand is at Dunmaise and Nore; Stand 508; Row A1; Block 1.

About Organisations:

Macra na Feirme is a voluntary organisation for young people between the ages of 17 and 35. The organisation consists of a nationwide network of clubs with six key areas of activity: agriculture, sports, travel, public speaking, community involvement and performing arts.

Macra na Feirme is committed to the personal development of members and puts emphasis on social interaction and participation. Find us here – www.macra.ie

Facebook – www.facebook.com/macranafeirme

Twitter – @MacranaFeirme

GLEN (Gay and Lesbian Equality Network) is a national NGO working for equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual people in marriage, at home, at school, at work and in the wider community. GLEN celebrates 25 years this year, and has been instrumental in delivering wide-ranging changes in legislation, policy and service delivery for lesbian and gay people.

For more information – please visit us at www.glen.ie

GLEN's Mental Health Programme is funded by the HSE and the National Office for Suicide Prevention.

Facebook – www.facebook.com/GLENLGBT

Twitter – @GLEN_News