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Media Release – for immediate release

Same-sex ball-goers given an alternative as schools put up barriers

What would you do if you couldn't take your partner to your school ball? How would you feel? Discriminated against, excluded, belittled? This is something many students around New Zealand are facing, because they are non-heterosexual.

Rainbow Youth, an Auckland-based organisation that supports non-heterosexual youth, say they have become aware of a number of schools that don't allow students to bring same-sex partners to their balls, or are requiring them to sign a form saying that they are in fact 'non heterosexual'.

'The Alternative Ball' is being held on Saturday 6 September in Auckland Central and is being promoted as an event where it doesn't matter who your date is or who wears a dress.

The school ball alternative is for 13-20 years old non-heterosexual youth and all those who support them. The event is completely drug, alcohol and smoke free.

A spokesperson for Rainbow Youth says that the Human Rights Commission is aware of a number of incidents involving non-heterosexual youth being prevented from attending their school balls, and that these are potentially unlawful.

This is something many MPs support as well, with former Education Minister Trevor Mallard saying in 2001 that he was against schools barring students attending their balls with their same sex partners. Exposing these occurrences in the media is one of the best ways of showing that this discrimination won't be tolerated.

Tickets can be purchased from iTicket.co.nz for \$20. Visit www.rainbowyouth.org.nz/prism.

Ends

For more information, please contact Rainbow Youth, prism@rainbowyouth.org.nz or 09 376 4155