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MEDIA RELEASE – 4 May 2020

As a community legal centre that has served the local St Kilda community for over 40 years and as the provider of the LGBTIQ Legal Service (Victoria's only LGBTIQ+ legal service, delivered in partnership with Thorne Harbour Health and Transgender Victoria) we are deeply concerned about events connected with the arrest of Dean Laidley over the weekend.

The leaking of photographs taken inside the station, including one that appears to be taken from police records, represents an appalling breach of privacy. It may also constitute offences against laws that protect the community against police misconduct and the human rights of individuals in police custody.

These events speak to discriminatory and transphobic attitudes that sadly still appear to exist within some elements of Victoria Police, as evidenced by these actions. As a service that provides legal assistance to transgender and gender diverse people in Victoria, we are concerned these events will only further embed the distrust many people in this community already feel towards Victoria Police.

We call on Victoria Police to take immediate action against those responsible. This incident requires an independent investigation as the first of many steps that are required for Victoria Police to do better for trans and gender non-conforming Victorians, many of whom have already experienced discrimination.

It is important to note that Laidley has not yet made any statement about their current name or correct pronouns. We encourage the media and the public to use respectful and gender-neutral language when discussing this case and consider the impact their reporting may have on marginalised communities.

This incident will potentially cause feelings of humiliation and hurt for many members of the LGBTIQ+ community. If you have been affected, please contact Switchboard Victoria on 1800 184 527 or Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Media contact: Adam Valentine 0411 302 769