Sydney WorldPride 2023 Festival Report

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Acknowledgement of Country Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras took place on the lands of the Gadigal, Cammeraygal, Bidigal, Darug and Dharawal people, who are the Traditional Custodians of the Sydney Basin. We pay our respects to all their Elders, past and present.

Throughout the planning and delivery of this momentous festival, Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras were committed to working closely with First Nations communities to celebrate and elevate First Nations LGBTQIA+, Sistergirl and Brotherboy culture.

This commitment was reflected in the festival’s creative leadership, community engagement, advisory network, festival programming, events and marketing strategy. Sydney WorldPride was all the stronger for it.

Contents

From 17 February to 5 March 2023, Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras delivered a landmark event that welcomed the world back to Sydney. Across 17-days of inclusive and diverse programming that elevated and celebrated First Nations voices, Sydney WorldPride epitomised the festival theme - “Gather, Dream, Amplify”.

Report credits

This report has been prepared by Sydney WorldPride. We thank all stakeholders, including artists, festival participants, Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras staff and Board, volunteers and the broader community for their involvement in this remarkable project. A big thank you to IVE Group which supported us for both our Festival Guide and this Festival Report.

Date of Preparation: June 2023

Data and figures presented in this report are correct at the time of writing  
This report may include the names and images of people who are no longer with us

Foreword and Thank You Messages

Sydney WorldPride Chair

Sydney WorldPride was a big deal, not just for Australians but for everyone in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The first time in the Southern Hemisphere. It was a big, colourful shout from the rooftops of our cities and the traditional lands of our First Nations peoples, saying, "It's okay, you are okay!"

We succeeded beyond all expectations. This was a gathering of people from all walks of life. It was about the artists and activists, everyone coming together to dream, amplify and celebrate our diversity.

Sydney WorldPride gave us a platform to be visible and to hold that visibility as a bright beacon to our brothers and sisters who remain invisible. We lit a flame, a flame that lit a fire, a fire that burns a top a beacon, a beacon that shines a light on the shadows and makes us visible.

Our Human Rights Conference helped people to reshape and rethink their views, allowed our allies to embrace the fact that being an ally means living in the discomfort of inequality. Events like Sydney WorldPride lead to real change in community attitudes, policies and laws.

Congratulations and thanks to everyone who made this possible, my fellow directors, the staff and volunteers, our incredible partners who had faith in us both corporate and government, to everyone who attended, to everyone who shared and to everyone who still continues to dream.

Damien Hodgkinson(he/him)

Chair, Sydney WorldPride   
  
Sydney WorldPride CEO  
People ask me why Sydney WorldPride was so successful. My answer might seem trite, but it is simple - imagination, hard work (hours of planning and preparation) and most importantly, team. Despite many of whom said that we couldn't bid, we couldn't win, we couldn't deliver and that no-one would come. We did it all - and the team delivered it beyond what anyone could have believed.

From the volunteers, community, corporate and government partners, committees, the Board, the Sydney WorldPride team, the Australian LGBTQIA+ community, our friends from overseas, and indeed, all of our allies - you all united and coalesced to bring this wonderful festival to life. Thank you.

A visible display of what kindness, creativity, diversity and equality can achieve with tangible social impact, Sydney WorldPride represented who we are and what we value as Australians.

Sydney, one of the most beautiful and diverse cities in the world, provided a magnificent backdrop for a life changing celebration - *a party with purpose.* I am exceptionally honoured and proud to have led the team who delivered this world-class, inclusive and dynamic festival: a legacy built by many, which will last for years to come. Thank you.   
  
Kate Wickett (she/her)  
CEO, Sydney WorldPride  
  
Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Chair  
In 2019 we travelled to Athens with a vision: to host the first WorldPride in the Southern Hemisphere. We are grateful to our InterPride family for entrusting us with that vision. Sydney WorldPride 2023, for the 45th anniversary of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, exceeded our wildest dreams and brought them to life.

From the pioneers who established CAMP in 1971, to the 78ers, and all the activists thereafter, it took decades to build the strength of our local community to work together and deliver one of the largest events Sydney has ever seen. The First Nations Gathering Space -Marri Madung Butbut, and the Human Rights Conference provided unparalleled visibility to the challenges facing LGBTQIA+ communities in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world. We will continue to highlight these issues both here and abroad.

This once-in-a-lifetime event would not have been possible without the work of our incredible teams at Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Sydney WorldPride, and the 2,200 dedicated Sydney Mardi Gras volunteers who gave their time so that we could Dream, Gather and Amplify. Thank you.

To our government champions, our sponsors and all our other partners, we thank you for your incredible support and we look forward to continuing working with you as Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras celebrates our incredible LGBTQIA+ communities annually, sharing our voices with the world.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has been a part of this journey, helping knit our global pride community together. We have formed friendships and relationships that will last a lifetime, and while celebrations like Sydney WorldPride are vital, it is incumbent on each of us to continue the fight for true freedom, equality, and respect for our LGBTQIA+ communities, here in Australia, across the Asia-Pacific and the world.  
  
Giovanni Campolo-Arcidiaco (he/him)  
Chair, Sydney Gay And Lesbian Mardi Gras  
  
Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras CEO  
For 45 years, Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras has brought party, protest and remarkable creativity to Oxford Street. The flame lit by a brave group of people all those years ago, who refused to apologise for who they were and who they loved, still burns bright.

That flame roared into a bonfire in 2023 for Sydney WorldPride, the once-in-a-lifetime festival that came to Sydney to celebrate 45 years of Mardi Gras and five years of marriage equality.

Electricity was in the air as a million people celebrated pride in the bars, streets, theatres, beaches and parklands of Gadigal, Cammeraygal, Bidigal, Darug and Dharawal country. Sydney WorldPride was a powerful symbol of unity, a voice representing our communities, an exhalation after years of lockout, lockdowns lockdown and struggle, and a party for the history books.

The lasting legacy of Sydney WorldPride will be the recognition that Sydney’s incredible LGBTQIA+ communities are the lifeblood of our city. That our young people can embrace their true identities knowing there are people dedicated to protecting their safety and wellbeing, and the ongoing conversation about how we can do better to ensure all LGBTQIA+ people are equal in Australia.

As we plan for Sydney Mardi Gras 2024 and the next 45 years of our movement, we sincerely thank the people who brought this festival to life through years of dreaming, planning and sheer hard work.  
  
Albert Kruger (he/him)  
CEO, Sydney Gay And Lesbian Mardi Gras

First Nations Board Directors

The Queer/Rainbow/LGBTQIA+SB First Nations peoples of Australia welcomed the opportunity to share our beautiful Country with the world at Sydney WorldPride.

By being involved from 2019 with the bid in Greece until the conclusion in planning and evaluating to ensure our voices are heard, we can share Culture.

We have the privilege of being here on Country to build safe inclusive places for all peoples. Have some fun through, coming together to dream, amplify and celebrate our diversity.

It is perfect that Jessica Johnson a Warumungu / Wombaya artist, graphic designer and owner of Nungala Creative designed the official Logo for Sydney WorldPride 2023 and all regalia/paraphernalia for Sydney WorldPride. This showcases the commitment to First Nations continuously throughout the event with her work displayed, worn by performers and staff, coloured in and lots more. Big thanks to Jessica for her bright creation that showcased Sydney WorldPride with strong Culture.

The First Nations Gathering Space – Marri Madung Butbut (Many Brave Hearts local Sydney language) in local Redfern, the starting place for Aboriginal services, gave a stronger heart to the six days and nights of Deadly events and gatherings. Amplifying the truth, courage and strength gathered for and with First Nations peoples at Sydney WorldPride. Many thanks to all the mobs who made this safe space fun, relaxing, learning, dancing, performing, sharing and revitalising.

The Advisory committee who gave up their time for a few years to have input from around Australia staring at screens whereby ensuring that the best outcomes would be achieved. Same for the First Nations Board of Sydney WorldPride. This group now has transitioned to be the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras First Nations Advisory. The future awaits for more opportunities for First Nations mob across our varied communities and Sydney Mardi Gras. A big thank you to these selfless people for their valuable work on Sydney WorldPride.

The Human Rights Conference highlighted the huge gaps still faced by so many. First Nations peoples across the planet to have the audience see and hear gave courage to keep believing, dreaming and fighting for rights. Standing together united amplifying that dream.

How we were able to embed our Tradition with the specially designed glass rainbow Message Stick being passed to Washington DC First Nations mob for the next World Pride in 2025 that they are hosting. This is to make sure that all First Nations people in future are included with Culture and Tradition being a foundation.

Thank you for the hard work of the Boards and staff of Sydney WorldPride, Sydney Mardi Gras, Equality Australia and BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation.

Steven Satour (he/him) and Sue Pinckham (she/her)   
First Nations Board Directors, Sydney WorldPride

**Minister for Tourism**   
It is my pleasure to congratulate Sydney WorldPride on delivering an historic and incredibly successful event.

Sydney transformed into a mass of rainbows hosting nearly 70,000 visitors who celebrated the LGBTQIA+ community with friends from home and around the globe.

WorldPride is the largest international LGBTQIA+ event and Sydney was the ideal city to host this event for the very first time in the Southern Hemisphere. Sydney is a welcoming, inclusive, vibrant and creative city that celebrates our diversity.

There were always high expectations for this event. They were outperformed and well exceeded. This report highlights a festival audience of more than 1 million attendees over the 17-day celebrations. There were 471 Sydney WorldPride 2023 events across just over two weeks which provided unforgettable experiences and a huge boost to the NSW economy.

Sydneysiders are incredibly proud of what we achieved with Sydney WorldPride 2023. Hosting this event has shown the world what we are capable of, and from a tourism point of view will boost the world-famous Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras for years to come.

Sydney WorldPride 2023 was proudly supported by the NSW Government through our tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW.

The Hon. John Graham MLC (he/him)  
Special Minister of State, Minister for Roads, Minister for The Arts,   
Minister for Music and The Night-Time Economy, Minister for Jobs and Tourism, Deputy Leader of The Government in The Legislative Council

Lord Mayor of Sydney  
Now the glitter has settled, we can reflect on the exceptional occasion of Sydney WorldPride 2023. It was a festival with so many highlights: concerts, exhibitions, live theatre, parties, sports, Pride Villages together with the annual Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Fair Day and a larger-than-usual Parade.

With hundreds of thousands of visitors, including 50,000 people joining the spectacular Pride March across the Harbour Bridge, Sydney showed the world it was back after years of lockdowns and lockouts.

WorldPride was not just glamour and parties. A three-day Human Rights Conference addressed the many serious challenges facing LGBTQIA+ people around the world. Australia has made significant strides, but there is still work to do, as demonstrated by recent, high-profile homophobic attacks.

WorldPride didn’t just happen. It was built on the foundations of over five decades of advocacy, activism, and community building, beginning with CAMP in the early 1970s.

The City of Sydney was proud to provide more than $2 million towards WorldPride, partnering with the organisers from the start. Perhaps our most significant legacy will be Qtopia – a museum celebrating LGBTQIA+ history and culture in Australia, to be housed in the former Darlinghurst Police Station.

To quote Sydney WorldPride CEO Kate Wickett, “We invited the world, and we showed the world the best of Australia, and who we are – kind, compassionate and caring.”

Many thanks to Kate and everyone at WorldPride for an unforgettable event.

Clover Moore (she/her)  
Lord Mayor of Sydney

At a Glance

* First time WorldPride has taken place in the Southern Hemisphere
* Largest Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Global First Nations LGBTQIA+SB festival program
* Largest LGBTQIA+ Human Rights Conference in the world
* 45th anniversary of the first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade – A milestone in the history of Australian Pride activism
* 45 Rainbow City free public artworks – To mark 45 years of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras
* 45 Rainbow Champions – Celebrated influential figures from across Australia’s diverse LGBTQIA+ family, chosen for their contributions to our communities and culture
* 1,077,183 Festival Audience
* 274,814 Total tickets sold and issued
* 802,369 Free event attendance
* 17 Days
* 471 Events:
  + 334 Pride Amplified events
  + 82 WorldPride Arts events
  + 17 WorldPride Sports tournaments
  + 38 Sydney WorldPride and Mardi Gras Official events, including nine free events

**Economic and Social Impact**

* $235.4 million Induced visitor expenditure
* 91% agreed Sydney WorldPride enhanced Sydney’s reputation as an inclusive and diverse city
* 95% of people felt they were able to fully express themselves and their identity participating in the festival
* 89% said Sydney WorldPride positively impacted their allyship with the community
* 6,600+ Total Talent, Artists and Arts Workers across the festival
* 55% of Sydney WorldPride Official event talent was BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour)
* Over 8,000 Total festival roles employed
* 3,350+ Festival Volunteers
* 12,500 Parade Participants
* 114 Scholars including 14 First Nations Sistergirls and Brotherboys
  + Scholarships were awarded to activists and human rights defenders to enable them to attend Sydney WorldPride 2023

**Audience Origin**

* People travelled from 71 countries to attend Sydney WorldPride
* Top five countries:
  + United States
  + United Kingdom
  + New Zealand
  + Germany
  + Canada
* Nearly 70,000 visitors came to New South Wales specifically to attend the festival (\*This excludes some other Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras festival events)
* 40,731 Domestic Media Mentions - Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras combined

**Official Media Partner – ABC**

The ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) amplified key Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras Official events across TV, radio and digital.

* 1.1 million combined broadcast audience for key official events across platforms through the ABC
* Live and Proud: Sydney WorldPride Opening Concert #3 and Mardi Gras Parade #1 in metro time slot
* 23 million+ social media video views across ABC platforms
* Instagram: 9.2 million video views
* TikTok: 6.8 million video views
* Facebook: 6.3 million video views
* YouTube: 774,000 views on short clips, and 30,000 views across Live and Proud and Parade

**Social Media Overview**

* Social media audience
  + Combined total: 619,789
  + Sydney WorldPride: 70,919
  + Sydney Mardi Gras: 548,870
* Social media engagement
  + Combined total: 2.52 million
  + Sydney WorldPride: 1.35 million
  + Sydney Mardi Gras: 1.17 million
* Page views of web content
  + Combined total: 7.63 million
  + Sydney WorldPride: 5.17 million
  + Sydney Mardi Gras: 2.46 million
* Newsletter database
  + Combined total: 122,675
  + Sydney WorldPride: 69,093
  + Sydney Mardi Gras: 53,582

\*75.3% of newsletter subscribers unique to Sydney WorldPride

**Sustainability – Festival Achievements**

* Carbon neutral Human Rights Conference with 1,900 tonnes of CO2 total carbon emissions offset – Equivalent to the emissions from powering approximately 4,437Australian homes for a year
* Over 81 tonnes of waste diverted from landfill
* 130,537 plastic bottles saved during the festival thanks to sustainable water initiatives
* 5,531 trees planted in Northern NSW with ReForest Now

The Organisation, Vision and Values

WorldPride is a phenomenal global LGBTQIA+ festival on a truly staggering scale that has been staged since 2000, with cities across the globe competing to host the prestigious event.

The right to host is licensed by InterPride, which works alongside representatives from hundreds of Pride organisations worldwide. InterPride members threw their weight behind Sydney, voting for the city to host WorldPride in 2023. A momentous occasion, Sydney’s selection marked the first time the festival would be hosted in the Southern Hemisphere.

The ambition to host Sydney WorldPride was dreamt up in the hallways of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras way back in 2013, starting with a small group of dedicated individuals. The passion and vision developed over the following years which steadily grew to include a diverse team of 60 people in 2023 – all committed to delivering the Southern Hemisphere’s largest-ever LGBTQIA+ festival.

Spanning event production and delivery, creative strategy, marketing, communications, engagement and organisation operations, the Sydney WorldPride 2023 team were purposefully selected to advocate for, represent and deliver the event, as guided by the organisation’s all-important vision and values.

After some difficult years of people being disconnected in the shadow of a pandemic, Sydney WorldPride 2023 promised a long-overdue reunion for a global family of LGBTQIA+ people. Not only would it be the first WorldPride in the Southern Hemisphere, but it would also be the largest LGBTQIA+ event ever staged in the region. The year 2023 also held special significance, marking the 50th anniversary of the inaugural Gay Pride Week, the fifth anniversary of Australian marriage equality and the 45th anniversary of the very first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in June 1978.

That first mass demonstration, both protest and party, served as a vital reminder of how the movement began: with a brave group of pioneers that took to the streets to demand visibility, celebration, pride and equality – the 78ers.

Vision and Values

* Sydney WorldPride 2023 will be a world-class festival of LGBTQIA+ arts and culture that is inclusive, diverse and accessible, built through exciting partnerships.
  + We listen
  + We act with courage
  + We are curious
  + We act with respect and integrity
  + We embrace diversity

*“Looking back to those ‘idea days’ for the five years through to 2018/19, I could never have imagined the spectacular global event that the Sydney WorldPride team were able to deliver. To say it has exceeded my wildest expectations would be an understatement, yet, at the same time I am very proud that the team never strayed (in fact they built upon) the original strategic intent of bringing the event to the doorstep of Asia-Pacific and shining a spotlight where it is needed most - on the needs of some of our local and regional communities. That will continue to be our legacy for a long time to come. Congratulations Sydney WorldPride 2023!"*

– **Paul Savage, Former Co-Chair of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Former Regional Director, Asia Pacific of InterPride**

With great appreciation and awareness of the unique opportunity to showcase and celebrate the diversity of culture in Sydney, Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, Sydney WorldPride promised to pay homage to the history of the LGBTQIA+ community during this milestone year. Objectives were established to guide the development and direction of the festival, honouring our community heroes.

Running from 17 February to 5 March, Sydney WorldPride 2023 presented an LGBTQIA+ arts and culture festival that would welcome everyone. Over 17 days of festivities, incorporating all existing Sydney Mardi Gras events, Sydney WorldPride brought a *“party with purpose”* to the city, celebrating and increasing visibility and awareness plus shining a light on the challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ communities across the Asia-Pacific region.

Through collaboration with partners, advisory groups, committees and the community, and guided by curatorial priorities that reflected the organisation’s core values, Sydney WorldPride delivered a diverse festival program that greatly exceeded expectations. The festival’s economic, social, cultural and political outcomes will have lasting impacts for the LGBTQIA+ community across Australia, contributing a positive legacy for Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras to carry forward into the future.

Sydney WorldPride Objectives

* Ensure that the festival embraces First Nations perspectives and Culture
* Showcase the breadth of Australian LGBTQIA+ arts and culture to regional, national and international visitors
* Ensure that the festival is accessible
* Develop sustainable and mutually beneficial partnerships
* Ensure that our communities and audiences feel safe, welcome and represented
* Ensure a multiplicity of voices across the festival through program curation
* Deliver a financially viable program
* Develop an environmentally responsible festival

Sydney WorldPride Logo

The evolution of the Sydney WorldPride logo reflects the progression and development of the organisation and the resulting event through a rollercoaster four-year journey, from the bid phase through to festival delivery. Building on the original design envisioned for the 2019 bid, which included elements referencing Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras as well as the event’s global nature, Sydney WorldPride’s official logo was developed by queer Warumungu / Wombaya artist and graphic designer Jessica Johnson from Nungala Creative. The new official logo featured four key elements encapsulating the organisation’s ambitions:

* The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras logo, a stylised butterfly combining the symbol for infinity with entwined hearts, pays homage to the organisation’s hard-won legacy
* A circular design emphasises global connection
* First Nations iconography and the festival theme ‘Gather, Dream, Amplify’ is depicted within the globe icon, putting First Nations peoples at the heart of the festival
* The rainbow pride colours of the LGBTQIA+ community are also inspired by the Rainbow Eucalyptus tree, a native species in the Asia-Pacific region characterized by multi-coloured bark

Johnson drew from her personal experiences to develop a suite of assets that brought First Nations culture, pride, and the organisation’s identity together for the world to see.

Johnson’s creative approach brought to life the 2023 season theme: Gather. Dream. Amplify. A calling for our international communities to gather together for a global family reunion, to dream of a world where true equality has, at last, been achieved and to amplify the voices in our communities that too often go unheard, are left out or ignored.

*“The creation of the new logo and artworks for Sydney WorldPride was inspired by my belonging to a big, multigenerational queer First Nations community and our extended family. We embody intersectionality and I wanted the design to express that through the vibrancy, colours and textures… Each and every aspect reflects a sense of movement, like light and shadows cast through nature, the trees and water. The tactile, hands-on, textural aesthetic is a nod to the nostalgic tools of our predecessors and an era of people power and protest definitive in our existence today. The electric colour palette draws from the Rainbow Eucalyptus tree and all the wondrous magic our country has on offer.”   
–* **Jessica Johnson, Warumungu / Wombaya woman and owner of design agency, Nungala Creative**

First Nations

As the oldest continuous culture in the world today, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+ communities, including our Sistergirls and Brotherboys, have their own distinct voices to share. Their contribution was integral to the success of Sydney WorldPride in 2023 and will continue to play a crucial role in future Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras events.

Sydney WorldPride was committed to incorporating a multiplicity of First Nations voices and, as such, made particular choices about the organisation’s governance structures, staffing and advisory groups. Emphasis was placed on ensuring First Nations people were visible in all campaigns, and information about the festival was made accessible to communities. From the creative team to community engagement, ticketing access to programming, the festival needed to be grounded in First Nations Culture. This ensured Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across Australia and the LGBTQIA+ Pasifika community were seen, included, and authentically heard in the critical process of shaping the 2023 festival.

Sydney WorldPride’s theme GATHER, DREAM, AMPLIFY, which translates to MANA, NANGAMAI, DJURALLI in Gadigal language, represented Sydney WorldPride’s commitment to global equality, inclusion, and the elevation of First Nations voices. These words were provided to Sydney WorldPride by Nadeena Dixon, Gadigal Land Traditional Owner. It was of utmost importance that Sydney WorldPride work closely with First Nations people and organisations to build cultural competence and forge trusting relationships.

*“We want people to gather here, on the lands of the oldest surviving culture on the planet, to listen deeply. We want people to dream of the future they want and collectively work together to make those dreams a reality. We want to ensure that new voices and perspectives are amplified”*   
**– Ben Graetz, Co-festival Creative Director, First Nations**

* 25,079 Total audience at Marri Madung Butbut attending ticketed and free events and installations across the six days and nights of programming.
* 1,755 Total audience at Blak & Deadly: The First Nations Gala Concert
* 2,163 MobTix sold across the whole festival – MobTix were available to purchase for select Sydney WorldPride Official events, including the Human Rights Conference and ticketed shows at Marri Madung Butbut.
* 9 First Nations organisational roles from the Sydney WorldPride Board to the Executive, Curatorial Associates and wider Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras team.
* 14 First Nations Advisory Committee members
* Over 200 First Nations artists and performers from Australia and across the globe engaged throughout the entire festival.
* 29 First Nations Scholars including 14 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sistergirls and Brotherboys.
* 21 Welcomes to Country were conducted by Gadigal Nation Elders with Acknowledgements of Country also conducted throughout the festival.

Community Engagement and Representation  
To ensure the festival was culturally safe for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants and attendees, First Nations people were represented across all levels of the organisation, from the Sydney WorldPride Board to the Executive leaders, and wider team, including a First Nations Engagement Manager recruited during the infancy of the organisation.

One of Sydney WorldPride’s earliest decisions was to appoint a First Nations Advisory Committee (FNAC), including community members from across Australia. The committee’s essential role was to advise and make recommendations to Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras regarding First Nations engagement and programming.

In establishing this committee, Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras extensively consulted with First Nations communities to determine the most transparent and inclusive engagement strategy through an open Expression of Interest (EOI) process advertised and shared widely through national First Nations networks and communities.

The members appointed included:

* Tony Lee (Yawuru, Western Australia)
* Dwesmond Wiggan-Dunn (Bardi /Jawi, Dampier Peninsular, Western Australia)
* Keith Quayle (Barkindji / Malyangapa, New South Wales)
* Elsie Stuart (Biripi Mid North Coast, New South Wales)
* Jaleel Jarrett (Gumbaynggirr / Bundjalung, New South Wales)
* Colin Ross (Jinibara Dala / Bidjara, Queensland)
* Taz Clay (Kalkadoon, NSW and Bwgcolman, Palm Island)
* Crystal Johnson (Tiwi and Lajamanu, Northern Territory)
* Desmond Campbell (Nglakan and Gurindji South, Northern Territory)
* Ross Fowler (Bidigal / Dharawal, New South Wales)
* Sani Townson (Samu / Koedal / Dhoeybaw Saibal Island, Torres Strait)
* Joanna Agius OAM (Narungga, South Australia)
* Jony Berry (Palawa, Tasmania)
* Ty Madden (Gadigal / Aura Gumbaynggir, New South Wales)

The FNAC helped advise on issues impacting First Nations LGBTQIA+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities and, through regular consultation, provided ongoing assistance with First Nations Cultural protocols, advice on the festival theme, visual identity, and First Nations-led events. Community engagement and leadership across regional and rural pride activations and the First Nations Roadshow across Australia were also embedded.

It was also essential for Sydney WorldPride to work with Traditional Owners from Gadigal Land (Sydney) for Cultural advice across the festival. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders were involved as early as the bid phase, with ongoing Cultural consultation throughout the inception and delivery of the festival. Traditional Owners also provided guidance and assistance with all Welcome to Country and smoking ceremonies, ensuring support from the local community.

Sydney WorldPride worked with Traditional Owners:

* Nadeena Dixon, Wiradjuri, Yuin and Gadigal, Dharug-Boorongberigal clans (Sydney WorldPride Cultural Consultant)
* Graham Simms, Gadigal, Jerrinja Clan and Wandi-wandian, Yuin clans (a.k.a. Nana Miss Koori, a Gadigal Drag Queen central to Sydney WorldPride securing the 2019 hosting bid)
* Ty Madden, Gadigal, Aura Gumbaynggir
* Ross Flower, Bidigal and Dharawal clans
* Cammeraygal Traditional Owners

To ensure a diversity of voices, Sydney WorldPride conducted First Nations information sessions online and in person, so that community members and stakeholders across the country could engage fully. Sydney WorldPride consulted with community service providers, arts workers, artists and Elders, prioritising establishing solid ongoing relationships with organisations including:

* Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council (MLALC) which is responsible for fostering the best interests of all Aboriginal peoples and for the protection and preservation of all Aboriginal Culture Heritage within its prescribed boundaries, taking in 24 local government areas. Sydney WorldPride informed the council of all relevant festival planning, ensuring cultural protocols were followed.
* BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation, the state’s peak organisation for Aboriginal Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual + Sistergirl and Brotherboy peoples and communities. BlaQ were regularly consulted regarding festival planning and promotion of First Nations events, ensuring information was shared with their members and networks.
* ACON,New South Wales’ leading LGBTQIA+ health and HIV organisation whose work in the First Nations community helps to improve the sexual health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, sistergirl/transgender or living with HIV by providing various types of culturally sensitive HIV and sexual health education.

Vision and Strategy

The Sydney WorldPride First Nations team developed a First Nations Strategy which was implemented across both Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Gay Lesbian Mardi Gras. From the key practice of embracing First Nations perspectives and Culture came the clear vision for the festival and the guiding principles established to help achieve this goal.

**Vision and Strategic Guiding Principles**

* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+SB (Sistergirl and Brotherboy) Communities are embedded into every part of Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.
  + We empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices
  + We create safe spaces for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
  + We consider First Nations voices at the outset, not after the fact
  + We are clear about expectations
  + We allow for cultural processes to be followed
  + We are purposeful in our engagement, ensuring it is meaningful and mutually beneficial
  + We are consistent in our approach
  + We communicate appropriately, respectfully and regularly
  + We take initiative and responsibility to self-educate and do the work
  + We acknowledge the diverse realities and intersectionality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

First Nations Community Grants

Access is important, and it can be easier said than done if real effort isn’t put into opening the festival to all. Sydney WorldPride provided three $5,000 grants to hold public viewing events for either the Live and Proud: Sydney WorldPride Opening Concert or the Mardi Gras Parade, with applications open to First Nations community groups, venues, and organisations. Following an extensive application review process overseen by the FNAC plus Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras staff, funding was granted for viewing parties hosted in Sydney, Wagga Wagga and the inaugural Kimberley Blak Pride Extravaganza in Broome, Western Australia. The Extravaganza was featured in the ABC broadcast of the Live and Proud: Sydney WorldPride Opening Concert, viewed by millions across Australia and the world, representing an outstanding outcome that placed First Nations representation at the heart of the festival.

*“It was a resounding success, and the feedback that we have had from all those that attended… is that it was the best public event that they had been to in Broome. We could not have done it without your support… It was, indeed, a real out and proud celebration for our Queer Blak mob, our families, our friends and allies. The Extravaganza provided a safe and empowering space and opportunity for our Queer Blak mob to be themselves without the fear of stigma and discrimination.”*   
**– Tony Lee, Founder, Kimberley Blak Pride**

Tony Lee, Founder of Kimberley Blak Pride, shared that the viewing party was the catalyst for the creation of many new public events by and for the Kimberley LGBTQIA+ Blak community. In a brilliant example of the ongoing positive impacts of Sydney WorldPride and the festival’s inclusive community-building work, Kimberley Blak Pride is planning for a nine-day Pride Festival in 2024 and beyond, following the overwhelming success of the Extravaganza. In partnership with key sponsors, the aim is to provide ongoing advocacy, support and resources to the First Nations Kimberley LGBTQIA+SB mob and their families, affirming the legacy of Sydney WorldPride 2023.

First Nations Scholars

Expanding on the importance of access, 14 scholarships were provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+ SB peoples to attend the Sydney WorldPride Human Rights Conference, delivered in collaboration with the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) and funded by key stakeholders. As a part of this initiative, Sydney WorldPride reached out to Sistergirls and Brotherboys countrywide to ensure that First Nations people from rural and urban areas, including remote communities, were represented.

Attendees included several Sistergirls from the Tiwi Islands and Galiwin’ku on Elcho Island, both located in Australia’s Northern Territory. Many of these people had never experienced any form of Pride celebration, nor travelled outside their communities. Sydney WorldPride was excited to include these scholars, offering an invaluable opportunity to gather, dream and amplify their learnings and lived experience during this once-in-a-lifetime event. Their presence enriched us all, and Sydney WorldPride was keenly aware of the importance of boosting visibility for these groups while keeping Cultural safety front of mind throughout planning and delivery.

Sydney WorldPride is extremely proud of the incredibly diverse and culturally rich program delivered, with First Nations, art, music, language, and community deeply embedded in its DNA. By placing a First Nations lens on everything the festival sought to achieve, Sydney WorldPride set a new standard, demonstrating to the community and the world at large what is possible when First Nations people and their Culture are successfully integrated into festival planning from the very beginning.

This resulted in the implementation of a dedicated First Nations LGBTQIA+SB gathering space and a First Nations-led national LGBTQIA+SB Advisory committee, which will continue to provide ongoing advice and support to Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in future. Ultimately, the connections made with various mobs from all over Australia and the globe will be the shining legacy of Sydney WorldPride, amplifying the ongoing song lines and storytelling of the oldest surviving culture on the planet.

First Nations Roadshow

In September 2022, Sydney World Pride and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras undertook a project aimed at engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples around Australia on an unprecedented scale.

The First Nations Roadshow, supported by Coles Group, was led by Sydney WorldPride First Nations Engagement Manager Ebony Williams, First Nations Co-Creative Director Ben Graetz and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras’ First Nations and Community Engagement Officer Matika Little. The team set out to achieve the following objectives:

* Ensure First Nations communities are informed about the Sydney WorldPride 2023 Festival and options to participate, including the MobTix program
* Ensure First Nations Engagement staff connect with communities and network with key stakeholders across Australia, increasing positive organisational reputation
* Ensure First Nations communities feel that their Culture, protocols, and people are valued by Sydney WorldPride and Mardi Gras and that the First Nations community would be represented and included across the festival
* Ensure First Nations communities are confident that the festival will be safe spaces for First Nations peoples
* Ensure First Nations communities can celebrate Sydney WorldPride 2023 within their own community by providing grants to support viewing parties for the Live and Proud: Sydney WorldPride Opening Concert and/or the Mardi Gras Parade

News of the roadshow was spread through various channels in collaboration with First Nations community organisations, media organisations and First Nations-owned and operated venues across the country.

The team embarked on a three-week road trip, holding information sessions in 12 locations across Australia. The First Nations Roadshow enabled the First Nations team to engage directly with communities and facilitate Yarning Circles in each location, spreading awareness about Sydney WorldPride 2023. Meeting with community face-to-face was an essential demonstration of Cultural protocols being followed and a meaningful display that underlined the festival would centre First Nations Culture, perspectives, and voices, including those from remote communities.

* 3 Weeks on the road
* 12 Locations
  + Hobart, Nipaluna Country
  + Melbourne, Naarm Country
  + Alice Springs, Mparntwe Country
  + Darwin, Larrakia Country
  + Tiwi Islands, Wurrumiyanga Country
  + Broome, Yawuru Country
  + Perth, Whadjuk Nyoongar
  + Cairns, Gimuy Country
  + Adelaide, Kaurna Country
  + Canberra, Ngunnawal Country
  + Sydney, Gadigal Country
  + Western Sydney, Darug Country

Creative Strategy

The Sydney WorldPride Creative Strategy was developed by co-festival Creative Directors Ben Graetz and Daniel Clarke with support from Liza-Mare Syron, a Biripi woman and the festival’s First Nations Creative Consultant.

The purpose of the Creative Strategy was to lay a strong foundation on which the rest of the organisation could build from, steering the festival creatively. It also offered partner venues, producers, and independent artists a solid platform from which to build their programs and shows, ensuring they aligned with the festival’s vision, theme, manifesto and curatorial priorities.

The vision for Sydney WorldPride 2023 was to be a world-class LGBTQIA+ festival of arts and culture that was inclusive, diverse, accessible and built through exciting partnerships.

As a values-driven organisation, Sydney WorldPride’s objective was to welcome LGBTQIA+ people from across the globe, to honour our Elders and communities, acknowledge our connections and empower each other to celebrate together in new ways.

From this, the festival theme and manifesto were established.

With a focus on including compelling, bold and adventurous ideas which reflected the diversity of the LGBTQIA+ communities and encouraged participation in LGBTQIA+ arts and cultural events in the festival, the program of events aimed to ensure that all members of the LGBTQIA+ community were included and represented.

Ben Graetz and Daniel Clarke developed a set of curatorial priorities to help ensure underrepresented and marginalised voices were embraced within the festival. Sydney WorldPride prioritised including and developing events that provided opportunities and an essential platform for all LGBTQIA+ people, opening up to new audiences.

The Manifesto

GATHER, DREAM, AMPLIFY (Mana, Nangamai, Djuralli)

This is a calling. A calling to gather in person or online and participate in this global movement.  
  
It is a time to listen deeply, learn, take action, protest and party.

We invite you to participate in a gathering and conversation, celebration, and ceremony.

A time to dream. Imagine the future we want and demand it. For some, a time to step aside, making sure there is an abundance of space for everyone. New voices. New dreams. A time for new perspectives and possibilities.

Our city will open its arms wide and welcome everyone to be themselves and dream big.

It will be the first WorldPride to be held in the Southern Hemisphere. It will be playful and profound. An invitation to speak out. To look within and be proud.

It is dancing all night.

It is ripping the wound open.

It is healing.

It is a huge exhale of glitter.

It is non-stop laughter alongside heartbreak and injustice.

It is about what is possible when we amplify ourselves and each other.

This is a calling to amplify what is important to you whilst ensuring that others can turn their volumes up.

When we listen deeply, what might we hear that we otherwise may not have heard?

Curatorial Priorities

* First Nations People
* People from the Asia-Pacific
* People of Colour
* Elders
* Women
* Youth
* d/Deaf and Disabled People
* Transgender + Gender Diverse People

Curatorial Associates  
Ensuring a diversity of voices was integral along every step of Sydney

WorldPride’s commitment to showcasing the staggering breadth of LGBTQIA+ arts and culture to regional, national and international visitors. Six Curatorial Associates joined the co-festival Creative Directors.

These invaluable experts were selected through an open Expression of Interest (EOI) call-out during 2021, resulting in the recruitment of Bhenji Ra, Dennis Golding, Jennifer Greer Holmes, Felicity Nicol, Harriet Gillies and Michael Kennedy. Their creative contribution to the festival is incalculable, bringing with them a wealth of experience and expertise that spans youth arts, literature, music, visual arts, dance, digital arts, contemporary performance and house-ballroom culture.

*“It was always our vision to ensure that we had diverse opinions, expertise and experiences contributing to the Sydney WorldPride festival program. This team of Associates are exceptional and it is a privilege to have their minds on the festival program with us. Their experience, connections, ideas, insights and passion will help us make sure that the Arts and Culture Program of the Sydney WorldPride festival is relevant, inclusive and inspiring. We value their feedback on our programming ideas and look forward to rigorous discussions about the program as we develop it.”*   
– **Co-Festival Creative Directors Ben Graetz and Daniel Clarke**

Festival Model  
Sydney WorldPride 2023 coinciding with the 45th anniversary of the first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras provided a remarkable opportunity to present a truly unique global event. A festival model consisting of four streams was created. Existing events from the annual Sydney Mardi Gras festival season were incorporated alongside new Sydney WorldPride Official events under the WorldPride Official banner. Bolstering the official events, WorldPride Arts, WorldPride Sports and Pride Amplified’s open access program came together to help complete the incredible Sydney WorldPride 2023 season.

The Events

With over 470 events, Sydney WorldPride 2023 was designed to cater for a broad cross-section of the LGBTQIA+ and ally community. From parties and concerts to music and art, sports to human rights and family events, the festival aimed to ensure it was accessible to all, offering an exciting program of free and ticketed events across four streams.

Guided by the organisation’s curatorial priorities, an incredible line-up of talent and diverse range of events were programmed with the intention of representing all parts of the community. Embedding First Nations people, artists and community was a key priority from the very beginning – from the bid to host WorldPride, which took place in Athens in 2019, until the very end. Sydney WorldPride’s co-festival Creative Directors Ben Graetz and Daniel Clarke worked closely together to ensure First Nations art, music and Culture were front and centre throughout the entire festival with the festival program featuring many events aimed at First Nations audiences or including First Nations perspectives.

In addition to First Nations talent, there was a focus on featuring people with disability, a wider cross section of ages, body types, gender diversity, and a particular emphasis on cultural diversity. Through thoughtful and considered programming, Sydney WorldPride was successful in appealing to a much broader range of people with an overwhelmingly positive response to the diversity of events and talent representation across the festival.

The successful planning and delivery of a festival of this magnitude would not have been possible without collaboration between Sydney WorldPride and various event operational stakeholders and partners. Across the festival and throughout the community, the hard work and dedication of everyone involved was felt and greatly appreciated. With thanks to all who contributed, special acknowledgement of event-specific collaborators has been included in this report. A detailed list of key collaborators is included in the ‘Thanks and Acknowledgements’ section.

* 1,923 total unique talent engaged for WorldPride Official events
* 60% of artists agreed that participating in Sydney WorldPride has helped them grow their following
* Curatorial Results - Sydney WorldPride Official Event Talent Programming
  + Gender Identity
    - 22% Trans / Gender diverse
    - 39% Female
    - 39% Male
  + Ethnicity
    - 22% First Nations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
    - 27% CALD and POC (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and People of Colour)
    - 6% Asia Pacific
    - 45% Caucasian
* 22 Sydney WorldPride Official event talent with disability
* Over 70 Auslan Interpreted sessions across Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras Official events for events with spoken formalities and vocalist performances plus six International Sign Language (ISL) Interpreted sessions at the Human Rights Conference
* 21 Welcomes to Country were conducted by Gadigal Nation Elders with Acknowledgements of Country also conducted throughout the festival
* 55% of Sydney WorldPride Official event talent was BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour)
* One official theme song for Sydney WorldPride 2023 – ‘We The People’ by Electric Fields
  + Created by queer Aboriginal Australian electronic music duo Electric Fields – producer Michael Ross and vocalist Zaachariaha Fielding – the pumping dance-pop track ‘We The People’ spread a message of joyous unity.

*“Pride is not just about acceptance, but feeling at home in your own individuality…‘We The People’ is for all of us… Our differences help to make the world go round.”*   
**– Michael Ross, Electric Fields**

Progress Pride Flag Raising Ceremony

Presented by the City of Sydney

17 February 2023

Free Event  
On Gadigal Land  
Sydney Town Hall, Sydney  
Total audience: 1,200

The Progress Pride Flag was raised at Sydney Town Hall to mark the beginning of Sydney WorldPride 2023.

In the spirit of the theme – Gather, Dream, Amplify – leading community members came together as the international symbol of LGBTQIA+ pride shone from one of Sydney’s most iconic buildings, flying proudly for the duration of the festival.

As part of the flag-raising ceremony, Lord Mayor Clover Moore presented the key to the City of Sydney to the 78ers in recognition of their efforts in advancing the fight for equality. The key was accepted by 78er and former Secretary of CAMP (Campaign Against Moral Persecution) Robyn Kennedy.

*“Tonight we mark more than the beginning of the Mardi Gras season – we also celebrate the start of WorldPride. Sydney… is a city for all people, where we value culture, diversity, equality and inclusion.”*   
**– Lord** **Mayor Clover Moore, City of Sydney**

*“It is a great honour to accept this key on behalf of past and present heroes of the pride movement; on behalf of our pioneer activists, our advocates, our AIDS carers, our community historians and photographers… And, of course, our creative community who continue to drive a vibrant and unique queer culture of inclusion, diversity and over-the-top fabulousness”*   
**– Robyn Kennedy, 78er and former Secretary of CAMP**

Pink Salt

18 February 2023

Ticketed Event   
On Awabakal Land  
The Station, Newcastle  
Total audience: 574

Pink Salt was the first Official event of the Sydney WorldPride program, taking place in the regional city of Newcastle.

This signature culinary experience featured a spectacular three-course meal prepared by three prominent queer Australian chefs – Christine Manfield, Nornie Bero and Newcastle local Reece Hignell – served alongside an array of Newcastle entertainment curated by First Nations drag artist Timberlina.

With stellar performances from some of Newcastle’s finest talent featuring Molly Poppinz, Jojo Zaho, Cockington Black, Orlando Gloom and more. The Station was transformed into a long dinner table dinner party where guests gathered with friends, new and old, to eat, drink, connect and celebrate the beginning of Sydney WorldPride.

“As one of the only regional locations having a Sydney WorldPride event… For me, growing up here in Newcastle, it makes my little rainbow heart burst with so much glitter and sparkle… We have an amazing city here and more people need to see it.”   
**– Timberlina (aka Tim Jackson), First Nations Drag Artist and Curator of Pink Salt**

Zero Waste to LandfillSydney WorldPride was determined to deliver Pink Salt’s fabulous dining experience free from waste to landfill. The team worked closely with suppliers to ensure appropriate waste management and sustainability initiatives were in place, including prioritising digital signage over printing, using reusable bobble ties and cable trays for production equipment and partnering with a food recovery charity. In a tangible way, guests were encouraged to get involved, with all menus printed on seeded paper they could take home and plant. Styling and décor was either rented or made from compostable materials. Through these efforts, Pink Salt proudly diverted 96.99% of waste to landfill. One contaminated recycling bin prevented the event from achieving the hoped-for zero waste result, but it was a significant accomplishment nonetheless, with event delivery collaborators inspired to continue the sustainable approach, reducing waste to landfill for future events.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* Timber Productions
* Sprout Catering
* Equip Multimedia
* The Event Artists
* Beavis Event and Party Hire
* Curious Legends

Mardi Gras Fair Day

Presented by American Express

19 February 2023

Free Event   
On Gadigal Land  
Victoria Park, Broadway  
Total audience: 75,000+

Fair Day, a festival favourite during Sydney’s annual Mardi Gras celebrations, was bigger than ever in 2023, welcoming over 75,000 attendees to the much-loved free outdoor community event.

With something for all letters of the LGBTQIA+ rainbow community, everyone pulled up to the all-day extravaganza in their brightest colours. Fair Day featured a mini-Vogue Ball, the Doggywood Pageant, family-friendly picnic areas and over 300 retail, food and community stalls representing business, sports, political, government, religious and health groups. Festival goers enjoyed free entertainment from an incredible line-up of performers, including Nana Miss Koori, Penelope, Jamaica Moana, Seann Miley Moore and more, leading to a headline performance from Eurovision winner and globally renowned queer icon Conchita Wurst.

The First Nations Circle, returning for its second year, highlighted the importance of safe, celebratory spaces for LGBTQIA+SB First Nations communities. Presented by Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in partnership with BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation, the heart of the festival created a meeting place and a space for conversation, learning, celebration and Culture. Including a community tent, Elders tent, LGBTQIA+SB First Nations performances, businesses and more, the First Nations Circle was open to both mob and the wider community, serving as a powerful reminder for all of us that Sydney WorldPride and the annual Sydney Mardi Gras festivities are held on sacred Aboriginal land.

*“Sydney was painted the colours of the rainbow… as revellers from around the world celebrated the opening weekend of the global WorldPride festival, the city’s biggest “occasion” since the 2000 Olympics.”*   
**– Mikaela Wilkes, The Daily Telegraph**

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* Fourth Wall
* Hamiltons Hospitality
* Norwest
* ISEC Security

Mardi Gras Paradiso Pool Party

20 February 2023

Ticketed Event   
On Gadigal Land  
ivy Pool Club and Changeroom, Sydney  
Total audience: 797

Paradiso Pool Party saw locals, international visitors and Mardi Gras faithfuls to gather under the swaying palm trees at this iconic Sydney terrace and rooftop pool.

Making the most of the Australian heat, the ‘Retro Summer’ event theme had attendees dancing to some of Australia’s best DJs at this ‘50s-style rooftop pool party – the ultimate Sydney city party experience.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* Creative Direction: George Savoulis

**Queer Art After Hours**

Presented in partnership with the Art Gallery of New South Wales

22 February 2023

Free Event   
On Gadigal Land  
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney  
Total audience: 10,494

Art Gallery of New South Wales’ (AGNSW) annual crowd-favourite free event Queer Art After Hours was hosted this year at the Art Gallery of NSW North Building, a beautiful new architectural addition to their impressively expanded campus. Presented in partnership with Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, AGNSW offered a kaleidoscope of colourful activity encompassing breathtaking art, installations, music and performances from a myriad of LGBTQIA+ artists, plus a queer youth space hosted by the gallery’s Youth Collective. For the festival’s duration, AGNSW presented a program celebrating queer artistic practice, considering how our narratives have historically been framed within institutional contexts and showcasing the contemporary artists reimagining how these stories are told today.

*“We are excited to celebrate the LGBTQIA+ community during Sydney WorldPride and acknowledge the important role LGBTQIA+ artists have played in the evolution of art-making…We look forward to welcoming new crowds from across Australia and around the globe.”* **– Michael Brand, Art Gallery of NSW Director**

Marri Madung Butbut (Many Brave Hearts)

Pronounced: Mah-ree, Mah-dung, BootbootFirst Nations Gathering Space

23 - 28 February 2023

Ticketed and Free Events   
On Gadigal Land  
Carriageworks, Eveleigh

* Largest Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Global First Nations LGBTQIA+SB festival program
* 25,079 Total audience at Marri Madung Butbut attending ticketed and free events and installations across the six days and nights of programming.
* 120+ First Nations and Asia-Pacific artists
* Six unique ticketed shows, including 29 performances with discounted tickets available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to purchase through the MobTix program.
* Over 25 free offerings including curated events and visual art installations
* Indigiearth – Delicious food and beverage using native ingredients served up by Aboriginal-owned catering business Indigiearth.
* Trading Blak Pop-Up Store – A curated selection of First Nation wares from First Nations-owned and operated businesses.
* Walama Guwiyang (Come back to/return & Fire) – Pronounced: Wa-la-ma Gwee-yarng. A Camp Fire open to everyone across the six days and monitored by the Gamay Rangers who care for Country located on Gamay (Botany Bay) in Sydney.
* Mudjin Nura (Family Place) – Pronounced: Mood-jin Nura. A heart within a heart, Mudjin Nura was a dedicated and Culturally safe space reserved for Australian and Global First Nations People. Curated and delivered by GARUWA, this space was created to provide a safe space for the LGBTQIA+SB community to come together, connect with Elders, Culture and each other.

The Gadigal words ‘Marri Madung Butbut’ translate to ‘Many Brave Hearts’, a fitting name for the First Nations Gathering Space, the beating heart of the festival.

Curated by Ben Graetz, Sydney WorldPride’s First Nations Creative Director, in association with Jacob Boehme, Director of First Nations Programs at Carriageworks and Cultural Consultant Nadeena Dixon, Marri Madung Butbut was a place where everyone was welcome to experience the rainbow heart of the oldest surviving culture on the planet.

Over six days and nights, renowned arts organisation Carriageworks, located on Gadigal Land, came alive with creativity centred on global First Nations queer artists. Sharing their proud voices for all the world to hear, these amazing creatives presented incredible work across ticketed and free events, including theatre, cabaret, visual arts, exhibitions, workshops, talks and meet-ups, watch parties and special events. It was a vibrant celebration and recognition of First Nations LGBTQIA+SB excellence.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* dplr
* GARUWA
* Trading Blak
* Indigiearth
* Moogahlin Performing Arts
* 33 Creative

To mark the opening of Marri Madung Butbut, a Smoking Ceremony led by Gadigal Land Traditional Owner Nadeena Dixon commenced around Walama Guwiyang before the smoking of the building. First Nations mob travelled through together as the venue was cleansed before the building was officially opened to the general public.

Koorie Wirguls, the NSW-based First Nations women identified LGBTQIA+ community dance group with co-festival Creative Director, Ben Graetz. Pop-up performances choreographed by members of Jannawi Dance Clan in collaboration with and performed alongside community members, Koori Wirguls gathered to perform at selected Sydney WorldPride Official events.

The Official opening party for Marri Madung Butbut, Djarraba Disco (pronounced Djarra-ba), which translates to ‘Bringer of Fire’ Disco in Gadigal language, was curated by The Huxleys with Ben Graetz for Sydney WorldPride. Celebrating the opening of Marri Madung Butbut and The Huxleys ‘Bloodlines’ exhibition on display at Carriageworks, which honoured the legacy of legendary artists lost over time to HIV/AIDS, Djarraba Disco was a joyous evocation of dancefloors gone by, legends, icons and glamour, sparkling under the mirror ball of queer history.

A reclamation of Pasifika queer cultural defining stories, ŌVAH ŌVAH was a joyous celebration of queer Pasifika indigenous communities and femme Fa'afafine performers living in Oceania. Featuring a cast of brown queer excellence, stories and Culture were honoured and celebrated through song, pacific dance, vogue, fashion, drag, poetry and production.

Miss First Nation: Supreme Queen was the ultimate drag competition with eight queens battling it out over three nights to be crowned First Nations drag royalty. Out of the fierce competition, Meriam and Erub Kebi Le Torres Strait Queen Cerulean was ultimately crowned Miss First Nation: Supreme Queen 2023 and was joined by runners-up Chocolate Boxx and Lasey Dunaman.

Klub Village, the sensational world premiere of this new work curated by Pasifika drag performer Kween Kong combined drag, circus, dance, burlesque and spoken word comedy delivered in a cabaret experience. Championing voices from the POC (people of colour) community, the show offered a glimpse into the lived experiences and stories of the performing artists as First Nations people especially withing the queer community. The poignant storytelling and incredible display of First Nations excellence received roaring standing ovations throughout the show’s run.

*“No other WorldPride across the history of WorldPride has ever championed a First Nations gathering space, they’ve never thought that was something to be valid and valued… I’m really proud to be part of this movement but also specifically proud of being part of Marri Madung Butbut, our gathering space for First Nations people.”*–**Kween Kong (a.k.a. Thomas Fonua), Pasifika Drag Performer**

Pride Villages

24 February – 5 March 2023

Free Event   
On Gadigal Land  
Oxford Street and Surrounds, Darlinghurst

* 236,000+ Total free audience
* 308 Total Talent, Artists and Participants across Pride Villages
* 31 First Nations Artists featured in Pride Villages programming
* 65 Partnerships established with local businesses, Local Government and cultural groups and organisations
* 86 Types of creative programming including stage performances, roving entertainment, art installation and sculpture
* 9 days of free street celebrations including:
  + Community Hub – Run by community organisations, the Community Hub was a place for community members to engage and connect with a range of LGBTQIA+ organisations. The hub was open during the 2-day Oxford Street Party on the final weekend of the festival.
  + First Nations Community Space – Created in partnership with NSW Health and ACON, the First Nations Community Space was a place where First Nations people could drop in and yarn about medical questions they may have or just have a sit down with mob.
  + InterPride Hub – A dedicated space for the international Pride movement, the InterPride Hub was a place where locals and visitors alike could learn about different Prides around the world, including the next hosts of WorldPride, Capital Pride 2025 and Amsterdam 2026.
  + Sensory Quiet Space – A dedicated low-sensory area, available to patrons with sensory disabilities to calm down and decompress if feeling overwhelmed due to overstimulation or sensory overload.

Thanks to the generous support of the NSW Government through Create NSW and City of Sydney, areas of Sydney’s famous ‘gaybourhood’ turned into a fabulous festival hub as part of the WorldPride celebrations. Over nine days, road closures were placed on Crown Street and Riley Street to make way for daily stalls, dining areas, pop-up bars and free entertainment on the Travel Proud Stage, presented by Booking.com which featured performances from local and international talent such as queer icon Conchita Wurst.

The final weekend of the festival saw the closure of Oxford Street for a two-day, once-in-a-lifetime street party to mark the end of Sydney WorldPride. Additional pop-up bars, activations, public art and roving entertainment took over the street along with the Community Hub and American Express Shop Small Village which featured 18 small businesses showcasing an array of products available for purchase. The free entertainment continued with diverse LGBTQIA+ talent taking to the American Express Oxford Street Stage. From DJ sets, live performances – including a surprise performance from Australian pop star Samantha Jade – to a fierce Ballroom battle between three legendary houses, there was something for all to enjoy.

The successful delivery of an ambitious project like Pride Villages and Oxford Street Party could only be achieved through close collaboration with key stakeholders and the local community. It was crucial for Sydney WorldPride to engage with businesses and resident groups to communicate the impact of the event, outline opportunities for involvement, and consult about logistical needs throughout the planning process. After a few years of hardship faced by local businesses and retailers following COVID, the revitalisation of the precinct was a major benefit. Local businesses were encouraged to decorate their shops, host events throughout the festival and explore opportunities to extend outdoor dining and liquor licenses through City of Sydney to “trade out” onto the street to engage with festival attendees.

The result was a vibrant and dynamic atmosphere that enhanced the precinct and celebrated its rich LGBTQIA+ history and helped boost post-COVID recovery for local businesses. The entire neighbourhood was alive with rainbow activity as thousands of people gathered and danced in the streets at Pride Villages and Oxford Street Party, a highlight of Sydney WorldPride 2023.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* SoldOut Events
* INVNT
* The Oxford Village Shopping Centre

*“Pride Villages is the realisation of the vision we had to bring together the LGBTQIA+ community, Sydneysiders, visitors, businesses and performers, in an inclusive and free experience for everyone.”*   
**– Alex Daoust, Sydney WorldPride Executive Producer**

Roving Entertainment

Live and Proud: Sydney WorldPride Opening Concert Viewing Party

American Express Oxford Street Stage

First Nations Community Space

Public Artwork – “Lens” by Joel Adler

InterPride Hub

Live and Proud: Sydney WorldPride Opening Concert

Presented by American Express  
  
24 February 2023   
Ticketed Event   
On Gadigal Land  
The Domain – Phillip Precinct, Sydney  
Total audience: 19,779   
ABC broadcast audience: 463,000

A dynamic line-up of stars welcomed the world at the spectacular Live and Proud: Sydney WorldPride Opening Concert, taking place at The Domain and broadcast live around the nation on ABC.

Hosted by First Nations artist Casey Donovan and Australian drag queen Courtney Act, the show was stacked with iconic moments to commemorate the official opening of Sydney WorldPride 2023. True to the festival’s mission as a ‘party with purpose’, audiences were taken through a journey of LGBTQIA+ history and culture, balancing the celebratory party vibes with respectful acknowledgement and emotional tributes to those who have been at the forefront of the fight for LGBTQIA+ rights.

The unforgettable night featured performances from acclaimed First Nations artists Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO, Mo’Ju and music duo Electric Fields, who performed a live debut of ‘We The People’, Sydney WorldPride’s official theme song. Robyn Kennedy, one of the original ‘78ers, joined Australia’s 2022 Eurovision representative, Sheldon Riley, and the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Choir onstage to deliver a powerful spoken-word performance that paid homage to Australia’s proud history of queer activism. A Priscilla, Queen of the Desert drag spectacular and a showcase of Australian ballroom culture featuring the almighty House of Silky, House of Luna, and House of Slé also graced the stage.

International video messages from the likes of Stephen Fry, Jennifer Coolidge and Katy Perry beamed in, joining tributes from local Australian LGBTQIA+ legends, including Matthew Mitcham, the first openly gay Olympian, all wishing the gathered community a happy WorldPride. The celebrations also took to the skies as a 500-drone display symbolised love by assuming various shapes, ultimately morphing as if by magic into the progress pride flag.

As if this spectacle wasn’t enough to wow everyone assembled,iconic pop royalty commanded the concert stage, setting the tone for the festival. First Nations Australian pop powerhouse Jessica Mauboy was followed by international sensation Charli XCX, both acts dazzling the crowd with their high-energy performances. To top it all, there was an unforgettable headline performance from Australia’s very own Pop Princess and LGBTQIA+ hero, Kylie Minogue. A mesmerising display of her greatest hits, her act was taken to another level as she welcomed a surprise guest – sister Dannii Minogue – for a duet of ‘All The Lovers’ to close out the evening. The superstar siblings sang in each other’s arms as the crowd euphorically swayed with them – a reflection of the loving community sentiment across Sydney WorldPride 2023.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* SUBVRT
* The Squared Division
* Yellow Studio
* Mandylights
* ATN

*“You’ve been incredible tonight, thank you so, so much. We have so much love for you! I have a little surprise…”*   
**– Kylie Minogue** as sister Dannii joins her on the Live and Proud: Sydney WorldPride Opening Concert stage

Kylie and Dannii Minogue

Jessica Mauboy

Charli XCX  
MO’JU

Drag Spectacular

Hosts Casey Donovan and Courtney Act

The Ballroom

Mardi Gras Parade

25 February 2023 | Free event with ticketed viewing areas   
On Gadigal Land  
Oxford Street and surrounds, Darlinghurst

250,000+ Free audience

13,764 Ticketed audience

646,000 ABC broadcast audience, #1 ranked in metro timeslot

12,500 Parade Participants

Over 200 floats

First time a sitting Prime Minister has marched in the Mardi Gras Parade – a historic moment!

Sydney Mardi Gras Parade route added to the NSW State Heritage register

First Nations Float – Rainbow Serpent   
Following a Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony, the First Nations float always marches at the head of the modern Mardi Gras Parade. In 2023, this tradition was marked by a massive 20-metre-long inflated Rainbow Serpent leading the way.

Jinny-Jane Smith, Wiradjuri Walbunja woman and Team Leader for First Nations projects at ACON, the NSW-based LGBTQIA+ health organisation, was tasked with designing the float and wholeheartedly seized the opportunity to place the beauty of Blak life on display to the world, as proudly led by a shining symbol of First Nations Culture.

*“We wanted to ensure that we showcased a Dreaming story that represented not only our culture but also our connection to our queerness…The Rainbow Serpent is our creative spirit that created the world, and everybody kind of has a connection story to the Rainbow Serpent."*   
**– Jinny-Jane Smith, Wiradjuri Walbunja woman and Team Leader for First Nations projects at ACON**

After years of lockdown-related workarounds, the world-renowned Mardi Gras Parade finally returned to its true home on Oxford Street just in time to celebrate Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras’ 45th Anniversary.

The cornerstone of the Sydney WorldPride festival, the Parade was a dazzling display of LGBTQIA+ excellence, showcasing the beauty and strength in pride and self-expression as we continue the fight for equality.

For the first time since 2020, over 200 glittering floats adorned Oxford Street as 12,500 joyous marchers danced, sang and partied their way through the spiritual home of Sydney’s LGBTQIA+ community, commemorating the parade’s homecoming.

Sydney Mardi Gras began in 1978 as a proud celebration of "gay liberation” and quickly descended into violence when the police withdrew the permit to hold a rally at the last minute. As a result, the Mardi Gras Parade is a victory march for our community, a call to remember where we have come from and how hard we have fought to get here. It’s also a salient reminder that the fight will only be over once we all stand equal, worldwide.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* SoldOut Events
* Hamiltons Hospitality
* ACES
* Foti Fireworks

Labor leader [Anthony Albanese](https://www.9news.com.au/anthony-albanese) made history, becoming the first ever sitting Prime Minister to march in the [Sydney](https://www.9news.com.au/sydney) Gay and Lesbian [Mardi Gras](https://www.9news.com.au/mardi-gras) parade, joined by Foreign Minister Penny Wong, the first openly gay female in Australia's parliament and the first Asian-born person to hold an Australian cabinet position.

*“When the first Mardi Gras march was held in 1978, you could still be arrested for being gay. In the decades since, people dedicated their lives toward the campaign for equality… To be accepted as equal and recognised for who they are and who they love. I’ve been proudly marching in Mardi Gras since the ’80s. This year I’m honoured to be the first Prime Minister to join the march.”*   
**– The Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia**

78ers

Parents for Trans Youth Equity (P-TYE)  
Dykes on Bikes

Lord Mayor Clover Moore and Member for Sydney Alex Greenwich

Mardi Gras Party

25 February 2023

Ticketed event   
On Gadigal Land  
Hordern Pavilion, Liberty Hall, Watson’s, Mary’s EQ, Forecourt, Peter Finch Lawn and The Courts  
Total audience: 10,000+

The Mardi Gras Party was an adult playground of music and performance where over 10,000 attendees gathered across seven venues for the biggest and longest-running LGBTQIA+ overnight party in the Southern Hemisphere. After two years of Covid restrictions halting the post-Parade tradition, Mardi Gras Party was back to scale filling multiple dancefloors and immersive spaces with sets from acclaimed DJs including HAAi and i. JORDAN, pop-up performances and the time-honoured Midnight Show. Featuring performances by Swedish pop sensation, Agnes, The Sugababes from the UK, Australia’s own Electric Fields and more, the adult playground returned to its’ dance party roots after a long hiatus.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* Fourth Wall
* New Ground Collective
* Playbill Venues
* Creative Direction: George Savoulis

Domain Dance Party

26 February 2023

Ticketed Event   
On Gadigal Land  
The Domain – Phillip Precinct, Sydney  
Total audience: 21,299

Astounding in its scale, the Domain Dance Party was officially the biggest LGBTQIA+ circuit event Australia has ever seen. Curated by our very own DJ Dan Slater who assembled a dazzling array of local and international talent, including DJ Suri, Isis Muretech, Tackthai, OMEO and DJ Du Jour. The theme ‘Summer Sweat’ was especially fitting on a sweltering Sydney summer’s day open-air in the Domain, with the crowd matching the energy onstage and that of pop-up performances from go-go dancers and the LA Rams Cheerleading Squad. Headlined by an electrifying performance from international superstar Kelly Rowland, the four-time Grammy award-winning vocalist ensured the crowd went wild as she performed some of her best solo songs alongside iconic Destiny’s Child anthems.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* SUBVRT
* Yellow Studio
* Mandylights
* Dan Slater
* LA Rams

*“Sydney WorldPride, thank you so much for having me! I had the best time! It felt so good to be back onstage again! Thank you to all the talented beings who help me put this show together!”***– Kelly Rowland**

Mardi Gras Laneway

26 February 2023

Ticketed Event   
On Gadigal Land  
The Beresford and Hill Street, Surry Hills  
Total audience: 3,000

A fan-favourite for perpetual party-goers, Mardi Gras Laneway kept the Parade weekend vibes soaring. Evolving over the years from a low-key event with portable speakers and milk crates to a massive recovery party held during the biggest weekend of the annual Mardi Gras calendar, Laneway can only be described as the epitome of ‘kick-ons’, a quintessential Aussie party experience.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* SoldOut Events
* Creative Direction: George Savoulis

InterPride Reception

27 February 2023

Private Event   
On Gadigal Land  
Sydney Town Hall, Sydney  
Total audience: 500

A glamorous invite-only cocktail reception held in Sydney Town Hall’s stunning Centennial Hall, Sydney WorldPride and InterPride welcomed distinguished guests, colleagues from international Prides, scholars and a bevy of LGBTQIA+ organisations to enjoy an elegant night of mingling and light entertainment, celebrating the Southern Hemisphere’s first-ever WorldPride.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* INVNT
* Restaurant Associates

Mardi Gras Kaftana Pool Party

1 March 2023

Ticketed Event   
On Gadigal Land  
ivy Pool Club, Sydney  
Total audience: 812

Kaftana Pool Party is renowned for being the campest event on the annual Mardi Gras calendar, and the fabulous Sydney WorldPride iteration did not disappoint. Guests adorned in their best frocks sipped on cocktails as a glittering array of drag stars and remarkable performers mingled amongst the cabanas at one of Sydney Mardi Gras’ most-loved events.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* Creative Direction: George Savoulis

Sydney WorldPride Human Rights Conference

1 – 3 March 2023 | Ticketed event   
On Gadigal Land  
International Convention Centre, Sydney

* 3 days (+3 days of caucuses and pre-conferences)
* 2,000 In-person audience
* 1,200 Registered online audience
* 1,500+ People from 55 countries helped to create the program
* 227 presenters and facilitators from 43 countries
  + 85 International presenters – Global North
  + 41 international presenters – Global South
  + 26 from Asia Pacific
* 101 presenters from Australia including 15 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander presenters
* 23 activators from 5 countries, including Bangladesh, USA, Fiji, Australia and Canada
* 154 Volunteers
* 114 Scholars
* 55.2% of tickets sold to visitors
* 56% of attendees attended for free or at a discounted rate
* 1,195 Media mentions (44 Print / 258 TV / 347 Radio)
* 106 sessions curated around 5 key themes
* Carbon Neutral Human Rights Conference with 1,900 tonnes of CO2 Total Carbon Emissions Offset – Equivalent to the emissions from powering approximately 4,437 Australian homes for a year4

*“When you leave this place and go back to your homes – whether that be across the bridge, across the country or across the seas ­– we want you to feel part of an unstoppable movement for change.”*– **Anna Brown OAM, CEO of Equality Australia**, lead community partner for the Conference

An impressive achievement, the Human Rights Conference, the centrepiece of the Sydney WorldPride festival, was the largest of its kind the world has ever seen.

Immersive and interactive, the event took over multiple spaces across three levels of the International Convention Centre (ICC) from March 1 to 3, 2023. The outstanding program combined inspiring, world-leading LGBTQIA+ keynotes, panels, and roundtables with enlightening presentations, performances, and facilitated networking events.

This landmark event set a new standard, particularly in its design and curation led by community partner Equality Australia. During a 12-month consultation process, more than 1,500 people from around the world shared their ideas, experiences and insights to help shape the program. Further developed by Equality Australia and a coalition of leading LGBTQIA+ human rights and health groups (LGBTI Health Australia, Australia Federation of AIDS Organisations, APCOM, BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation, ACON, Intersex Human Rights Australia, and youth and disability consultant Paige Burton) with ongoing oversight and input from an International Advisory Board, guiding them to come together to address the shared challenges experienced by our communities.

Together with conference lead partner Equality, Sydney WorldPride set out to achieve the following **objectives** to ensure a multiplicity of voices participate and to help build the community’s vision for the future whilst developing the strategies, skills and connections to realise it:

* Increase awareness of the human rights issues facing our LGBTQIA+ communities
* Encourage and build partners and allies for change
* Grow support for LGBTQIA+ people in every corner of the globe
* Provide people with the skills, networks and experiences, so they could return to their local communities better equipped to continue their work
* Solidify government and corporate commitments to supporting the human rights of LGBTQIA+ communities.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* Arinex
* Mr Tom Wright
* Eat the Elephant

Conference Consultation Process  
The extensive consultation process undertaken by Equality Australia and the coalition of community partners was ground-breaking in its scope and implementation, resulting in an event built for community, by community*.*

The process included:

* An online community survey, which received 1,334 responses from 55 countries
* 23 stakeholder workshops (online and in person)
* Expressions of interest (EOIs) were sought from individuals and organisations to contribute to the content and program, with 186 applications received
* Equality Australia worked with community partner BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation, to consult First Nations people through a series of workshops, as well as the Sydney WorldPride First Nations Advisory Committee to ensure the inclusion and representation of Indigenous voices
* The program was developed with input and advice from the Human Rights Conference **International Advisory Board (IAB),** comprised of representatives from leading global LGBTQIA+ human rights organisations bringing a cross-section of geographic, disciplinary and subject matter expertise.

Members included:

* Kevin Haunui – PhD scholar, Ti Whanawhana Trust of Aotearoa, Aotearoa New Zealand
* Dr Yvette Abrahams – Feminist / environmentalist scholar and lecturer, University of Cape Town, South Africa
* Zhan Chiam – Deputy Director, Transgender Europe (TGEU), Singapore / Germany
* Dr Brenda Alegre – Trans academic, STRAP Philippines / University of Hong Kong
* Martin Blais – Gender studies lecturer, University of Montreal, Canada
* Mauricio Albarracín-Caballero – Deputy Director, LGBT Rights Program, Human Rights Watch, USA
* Ruth Baldacchino – Associate Director of Programs, Intersex Fund, Astraea Lesbian Foundation of Justice, Malta
* Maria Sjödin – Executive Director, Outright International, USA
* Lana Woolf – Director, EdgeEffect, Fiji / Australia
* Ryan Joseph Figueiredo – Executive Director, Equal Asia Foundation, Thailand
* Matt Beard – Executive Director, AllOut, Europe
* Kimahli Powell – Executive Director, Rainbow Railroad, Canada

Conference Themes and Program  
The Conference was expertly designed and planned around the Sydney WorldPride theme “Gather, Dream, Amplify” and was curated around five key themes:

1. Health and Wellbeing
2. Community and Culture
3. Visibility and Inclusion
4. Justice and Freedom
5. Development, Education and Digital

Common areas were transformed with interactive, purpose-driven experiences for delegates, activated by local and international LGBTQIA+ organisations, government organisations and festival partners selected through a competitive process, ensuring values alignment and relevance.

Across three days, presenters explored key human rights issues faced by LGBTQIA+ people worldwide by addressing these themes, taking attendees through the journey of where the community is now, and on to their vision for the future.

**Day 1: ‘Gather’ – The world we want to create**Changemakers illuminated their vision for the future, shared experiences, compared lived realities and identified barriers, challenges and opportunities to realising a shared dream of a better, more equal world.

*“First we change the laws, then the rest will follow.”*– **Victor Madrigal Borloz,** **UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation**

**Day 2: ‘Dream’ – Case studies, skills and strategies for success**Expert-led panels centred on case studies enabled a focus on best practice. Facilitated roundtables and networking sessions fostered knowledge, sharing and connection, with skills-based workshops equipping participants with the practical tools necessary to effect change.

*“It’s difficult to be what you can’t see. When I was a young person, the idea that someone like me could get elected to public office in the United States seemed so impossible that it was almost incomprehensible.”   
–* **Senator Sarah McBride, the first openly transgender state senator in American history.**

**Day 3 ‘Amplify’ – Legacy for the future**A call to action for participants to take what they learned over the course of the Conference and apply it in the real world. We focused on solutions and a shared commitment to create a lasting legacy for future generations.

*“The work is to keep it alive, to keep the fight, to keep the fire under everyone’s butt.”*   
– **Feminist icon and musician, performance artist Peaches.**

Scholarship Program  
Funding provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and donations by philanthropists supported a key activity within the Human Rights Conference, the Scholarship Program. Project managed by the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisation (AFAO), the program brought 114 scholars from around Australia and the world, providing global human rights defenders and activists with the opportunity to attend and participate, where financial reasons or hardship may have otherwise prevented them.

*“I connected with activists from across the world and I learned different interventions on human rights and mental health.”   
–* **Anonymous Scholar response to Human Rights Conference survey**

Impact and Legacy  
Sydney WorldPride provided a unique moment for Australia to demonstrate leadership on the LGBTQIA+ human rights campaign globally, building a vital platform for queer voices and perspectives and bringing together our many communities to foster greater awareness, understanding and collaboration.

The Human Rights Conference secured its place in history as the centrepiece of the first WorldPride festival ever to be held in the Southern Hemisphere. To commemorate the significance of this landmark event, a glass **Message Stick**, handcrafted in remote communities by Australian Queer First Nations people, was gifted to Washington DC Pride, the upcoming WorldPride host city, who will, in turn, hand it on to the next custodians.

*“Our intention, in passing on this piece of cultural significance from the First Peoples of these lands, is to encourage each next host to acknowledge the First People of those lands. In doing so, it creates a lifelong legacy piece; amplifying the voices and stories of our Indigenous LGBTQIA+SB family.”* **– Felix May, Sydney WorldPride First Nations Coordinator**

Tangible Human Rights Conference OutcomesDuring the event, Australian Federal and State governments showed their commitment to LGBTQIA+ communities through the following announcements:

* Australia’s first dedicated fund ($3.5million) to promote international LGBTQIA+ rights and support civil society organisations from across the Asia Pacific region
* Committed $26 million in research grants for LGBTQIA+ health research, which represents the largest-ever investment in the field by any Australian government
* A national 10-year action plan on LGBTQIA+ health
* Commitment by the ACT government to protect the rights of Intersex people in medical settings

Community Partners   
The Conference could not have happened without Sydney WorldPride’s Community Partners especially Equality Australia who dedicated significant time, energy, expertise and resources to ensure the Conference was a success.

Human Rights Conference Scholarship Program

The Human Rights Conference Scholarship Program, project managed by the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO), allowed financially disadvantaged human rights defenders and activists from across Australia, the Indo-Pacific and other regions to participate in Sydney WorldPride thanks to funding from the Australian Federal Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and other philanthropists.

The program included three key scholarship streams, each with varying inclusions and support provided as part of the overall scholarship package. The three streams were International, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and Domestic ticket holders.

Application Process, Review, and Selection  
As project managers, AFAO worked closely with Sydney WorldPride and DFAT to establish a safe and considered process for all applicants for the scholarship program, prioritising the sensitivity of international applicants’ safety.

1. A questionnaire application was developed in collaboration with AFAO and DFAT and accessible via the Sydney WorldPride website
2. Scholarship applications for all three programs were open from 22 August until 18 September 2022
3. Three independent review panels were created by Sydney WorldPride and the Human Rights Conference International Advisory Board to review the applications
4. Eligible applicants were required to be LGBTQIA+ human rights defenders and activists with a proven track record working with relevant community groups
5. The program prioritised International First Nations peoples, people with disabilities, women, non-binary people and people from the Indo-Pacific region
6. Due to the high level of applicants, multiple shortlists were created before making the final selections

Over 1,400 applications across the three scholarship streams were assessed, narrowing the selection down to 800 following the shortlist process. A key aim of the scholarship program was to ensure a large proportion of international scholars were from the Indo-Pacific region. A total of 100 successful applicants were selected through the formal Scholarship Program process, with a further 14 scholarships provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+ Sistergirl and Brotherboys, an initiative funded and managed internally by Sydney WorldPride with the guidance and support of the First Nations Advisory Committee.

Sydney WorldPride prioritised representation of First Nations peoples from across Australia, including rural and remote communities, like Galiwin’ku on Elcho Island and the Tiwi Islands in Australia’s Northern Territory.

**Number of successful applicants**

* International Scholarship Program: 50
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program: 15
* Domestic Ticket Program: 35
* Sistergirls and Brotherboys: 14

*“I loved that we gathered and got to know each other on the first day. It helped significantly in having me feel that I belonged and was connected to people. I felt great warmth, connection and community throughout the Conference. It was a foundation to me.”*   
*–* **Anonymous Scholar response to Human Rights Conference survey Scholarship Program Inclusions and Outcomes**

Scholarship Program Inclusions and Outcomes

Sydney WorldPride and AFAO worked closely to coordinate scholars’ attendance and participation in the Human Rights Conference and a range of events scheduled in association with the Conference or as part of the broader Sydney WorldPride festival program. Across the streams, the program included return airfares to Sydney, Australia, travel and accommodation costs and visa reimbursements for international scholars. It also covered a three-day pass to the Human Rights Conference, including participation in pre-conference caucuses and networking events, plus tickets to select Sydney WorldPride Official events like the milestone Pride March across the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

In the days before the Human Rights Conference, self-organised pre-conference caucuses provided a safe space for scholars to gather and connect with other attendees, building relationships with like-minded people with whom they shared a common identity. One of the key outcomes of the Scholarship program was to aid the development of an LGBTQIA+ civil society in the Indo-Pacific region and build a stronger collective of understanding of the key issues faced by LGBTQIA+ people worldwide.

The program enabled these civil society representatives to share their knowledge and experiences and learn through their peers, developing strategies to progress positive reform in their own countries and communities.

*“I am deeply touched that you gave me a scholarship. I live in such a low income and have disabilities. I am usually kept out of almost everything that I am interested in and that is significant because of those factors. You’ve touched my heart and enriched my life.”*   
*–* **Anonymous Scholar response to Human Rights Conference survey**

Scholarship Experiences – Galiwin’ku Sistergirls

Led by Yolŋu women and supported by the broader community, the Galiwin'ku Women's Space, is the only organisation dedicated to the support and empowerment of women on Elcho Island in the Northern Territory. In alignment with the First Nations vision and strategic principles, some Sistergirls from Galiwin’ku were able to take part in the WorldPride experience through scholarships provided by Sydney WorldPride.

Parts of their Sydney WorldPride journey were documented and shared on socials by the Galiwin'ku Women's Space, giving insight into their lived experiences and what their time at Sydney WorldPride meant to them.

*“They are off!!! Our Sistagirls from Galiwin’ku and Gapuwiyak are on their way to Sydney WorldPride.*

*There is a high rate of domestic, family, and sexual violence (DFSV) in the community of Galiwin’ku and surrounding homelands especially for the LGBTQIA+ community. Sadly, incidents of violence and abuse against our clients from the LGBTQIA+ community are so prevalent that it has become an inevitable and an innocuous part of everyday life for many community members. There was no safe space for the Sistagirls on the Island until the Galiwin’ku Women’s Space started the Sistagirls wellbeing program. Every Tuesday night, the Sistagirls alongside their allies meet to connect and feel safe from the outside social pressures.*

*It was during these Sistagirls nights that the dream to attend the Sydney WorldPride was made possible! We want to express our gratitude for [the Sydney WorldPride First Nations Scholarships].*

*This experience would not be possible without our continued support from family, allies and community members that believe we are valued and have the right to be who we truly are.”***– Via @galiwinku\_womens\_space**

The Sistergirls onstage at Mardi Gras Sissy Ball with Curator Kilia Tipa and First Nations Drag Queen Miss Ellaneous (a.k.a. Ben Graetz, Sydney WorldPride Creative Director)

Blak & Deadly: The First Nations Gala Concert

2 March 2023

Ticketed Event   
On Gadigal Land  
Sydney Opera House, Sydney  
Total audience: 1,755

Curated by and for First Nations people, Blak & Deadly: The First Nations Gala Concert marked a historic moment as the first Blak Queer event of its kind to grace the Sydney Opera House. The venue itself was a site of cultural significance, inviting guests to Tubowgule, a place where Aboriginal people have feasted, sung, danced and told stories for thousands of generations. Hosted by the brilliant ‘Faboriginal’ comedian Steven Oliver, the concert featured unforgettable performances by Jessica Mauboy, Casey Donovan, Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO and Indigenous Canadian tenor Jeremy Dutcher. Electric Fields, Mo’Ju, Kween Kong, Samuel Gaskin, the Merindas, along with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, added to the remarkable line-up of First Nations LGBTQIA+ talent and artistic expression.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* The Company We Keep
* 33 Creative

*“[Sydney] WorldPride's Blak and Deadly First Nations Gala was everything it promised to be: a showcase of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Global First Nations excellence on stage”*  
**– Jarred Cross, National Indigenous Times**

Mardi Gras Laugh Out Proud

3 March 2023   
Ticketed Event   
On Gadigal Land  
Enmore Theatre, Newtown  
Total audience: 1,606

One of the most sought-after tickets of the festival calendar, the raucously joyous Mardi Gras Laugh Out Proud 2023 event featured the crème de la crème of the queer comedy community, including Dazza and Rosie Delaney Rudy-Lee Taurus and Spankie Jackzon. As hosted by the sparklingly charismatic Rueben Kaye, replete with his rapid-fire comedic brilliance, the evening delivered non-stop side-splitting laughter.

Ultra Violet

3 March 2023

Ticketed Event   
On Gadigal Land  
Sydney Town Hall, Sydney  
Total audience: 2,646

Ultra Violet was Sydney WorldPride’s premiere event aimed at LGBTQIA+ women and the largest event of its kind Australia has ever seen. Curated by DJs and Producers Sveta Gilerman and Jess Hill, this extravaganza showcased the power of female creativity and artistry through immersive visual art, burlesque and cabaret alongside an exceptional musical line-up.

With sensational sets from the likes of Jesswar, Bec Sandridge, Okenyo and international icon Peaches, plus a surprise appearance from Aussie darling Sharon Strzelecki from Kath & Kim (portrayed by Australian actress Magda Szubanski), Ultra Violet championed inclusivity and celebrated the multifaceted talents of women in the LGBTQIA+ community.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* INVNT
* Jess Hill
* Sveta Gilerman

*“WorldPride has been AMAZING but Sharon dancing with [Peaches] to F\*ck the Pain Away at Ultra Violet last night is a career hoighloight!! …And so proud of the body positivity of middle-aged women rockin’ out!! Bellies and all.”*   
**– Magda Szubanski AO** in reference to her surprise appearance as Sharon Strzelecki, her fictional character from Australian comedy series Kath & Kim, at Ultra Violet

Mardi Gras Sissy Ball

4 March 2023   
Ticketed Event   
On Gadigal Land  
Sydney Town Hall, Sydney  
Total audience: 1,989

Returning to the regal surrounds of the Sydney Town Hall for its fifth year, the annual Sissy Ball brought forth a spectacular display as legendary houses from across the globe faced off in fierce competition to mark Australia’s biggest vogue ball.

Vogue families were born across the country out of necessity and to strengthen safety in defiance of the increasingly harsh realities faced daily by the transgender community in Australia. Sissy Ball was formed in 2019, uniting scenes across Australia with those of Aotearoa, celebrating their survival by forging new joyous realities that embrace embodiment and beautiful fantasy.

Curated and hosted by Godmother Kilia Tipa and co-hosted and commentated by Rocky Stallone, together they witnessed over 100 walkers serving it to the judges, with Sissy Ball founder Bhenji Ra becoming the first in Oceania and the Southern Hemisphere, to be deemed legendary. Sissy Ball is a testament to the strength and tenacity of the transgender community worldwide, affirming their survival and triumph over adversity.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* Curated by Kilia Tipa with support from Rocky Stallone

Galiwin’ku Sistergirls at Mardi Gras Sissy Ball Thanks to the Scholarships Program, Sistergirls from Galiwin’ku who have never left their community before, travelled to Sydney for the festival, attending various events including the Mardi Gras Sissy Ball. In a welcoming celebration of their attendance, the Sistergirls were invited onstage by one of the judges, First Nations Drag Queen Miss Ellaneous (a.k.a. Ben Graetz, Sydney WorldPride Creative Director) to experience walking the runway. This later led to an impromptu dance onstage with Australian rapper and Malyangapa and Barkindji woman Barkaa. An incredible experience with 10s across the board!

Bondi Beach Party

Presented by Optus

4 March 2023

Ticketed Event   
On Bidjigal, Birrabirragal and Gadigal Land  
Bondi Beach, Bondi  
Total audience: 14,901

On the final weekend of the festival, Sydney’s iconic Bondi Beach was transformed into the hottest club, hosting thousands of attendees for an unforgettable experience. It was the perfect Aussie Summer’s day soundtracked by an all-Australian DJ lineup including DJ Charlie Villas, dameeeela, DJ Dan Murphy, Jarred Baker, and Jacqui Cunningham. With pop-up performances and an epic headline performance from pop sensation Nicole Scherzinger, guests danced from day to night, enjoying the fresh ocean breeze as the beach stage transitioned from camp pop fun to fiery house beats and heaving electro beats into the night. This iconic event will be remembered for years to come.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* SUBVRT
* Yellow Studio
* Mandylights
* New Ground Collective

*“In the dressing room after coming off stage at Bondi. Hot, sweaty, out of breath, and so so SO very happy. Absolute bucket-list moment playing on my favourite beach for my favourite people, best gig ever.”*   
**– DJ Dan Murphy**

Pride March

5 March 2023

Free Event via Ballot Entry  
On Gadigal and Gamaragai Land   
Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney  
Total audience: 49,111

A historic event to mark the conclusion of 17 days of celebrations with over 40,000 people in their brightest colours marching in solidarity across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, in a powerful international statement – we are here, we are united, and we will be relentless in our demand for equality, not only in Australia, but for all LGBTQIA+ people around the world.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Foreign Minister Penny Wong were greeted by cheers as they joined the crowd at an opening ceremony of the Pride March where Kate Wickett, Sydney WorldPride CEO declared “We dedicate this walk to those in other countries who are not free or safe to live their lives openly – let alone march with Pride”.

The march was led by the First Nations people with the iconic Sydney Mardi Gras Rainbow Serpent laying the path for everyone to follow. The 45 Rainbow Champions, influential queer Australians representing each of the 45 years since the first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras as well as its original participants, the 78ers also led the 40,000+ strong crowd across the bridge.

It was an emotional celebration as the LGBTQIA+SB community and allies took to the iconic landmark to march for global equality, acknowledging those who had fought to advance human rights, celebrating all that has been achieved whilst also looking to the future and what still needs to be done. The momentous occasion was made even more special with a few mid-bridge marriage proposals taking place during the fifth anniversary of marriage equality in Australia and this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* Pont 3

*“A bridge symbolises bringing people together. And this is about bringing together the Australian community, celebrating diversity… Also acknowledging that around the world, at WorldPride, that many people still suffer because of who they are, because of their sexuality. This is a great global city. And we benefit from the diversity that’s here in this great city. And we’re celebrating that today.”*  
**– The Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia**

*“Today for me is like a pilgrimage I started in 1970. I think of many different events, including the AIDS epidemic, when we go across the bridge. Remember the thousands of mainly young men we lost. It’s an amazing achievement we’ve made in those 50 years… It’s really emotional. I lost my own partner five years ago. We were a couple for 50 years. He died seven months before we could get married, and we wanted to get married. So it’s a very emotional journey and pilgrimage for me.”*   
**– Peter De Waal, LGBT activist, 78er and a Sydney WorldPride Rainbow Champions**

Ben Graetz, Sydney WorldPride First Nations Creative Director; Ebony Williams, Sydney WorldPride First Nations Engagement Manager; Prime Minister Anthony Albanese; Kate Wickett, Sydney WorldPride CEO; Robyn Kennedy, 78er; Penny Wong, Foreign Minister; and Anna Brown, Equality Australia CEO.

The Rainbow Serpent and First Nations People led the Pride March across the Sydney Harbour Bridge. It marked the first time since 2000 that the bridge was closed for a march, with the last event bringing 250,000 across the bridge for reconciliation with Australia’s First Nations people.

Rainbow Republic

Presented by Optus

5 March 2023

Ticketed Event  
On Gadigal Land   
The Domain – Phillip Precinct, Sydney  
Total audience: 21,292

After 17 epic days, a mammoth celebration and party with purpose that brought our city to the world stage, Sydney WorldPride ended on a high with the Closing Concert: Rainbow Republic. A queer mega mix of international and local acts, our LGBTQIA+ festival family came together for one last time as the baton was handed over to the next WorldPride hosts, Washington DC.

The diversity of the festival and our rainbow community was reflected in the sensational line-up with performances from local acts such as Alter Boy, the Perth based queer-electro pop act comprised of Deaf/Hard-of-Harding and trans band members, and Sydney based Hip Hop/R&B Artist and Queer Person of Colour, BVT. DJ duo Kinder kept the energy pumping between stellar performances from G Flip, Keiynan Lonsdale, Peach PRC and Vetta Borne. In the final hours, the international acts took to the stage - Queer girl band MUNA, “tranny with a Grammy” Kim Petras and pop star Ava Max, closing out the festival on a euphoric high.

**Event Delivery Collaborators**

* SUBVRT
* The Squared Division
* Yellow Studio
* Mandylights

*“[It’s] like the FIFA World Cup of queer energy and I think the city has done a really good job. Everyone has had so much fun. The whole city is full of love.”*

**– G Flip**

**WorldPride Arts**

February - March 2023

Ticketed and Free Events   
On Gadigal, Cammeraygal, Bidigal, Darug and Dharawal Lands  
Greater Sydney

* 124,136 Total audience throughout the WorldPride Arts Program
* 4,500+ Total Talent, Artists & Arts Workers
* 2,255 Volunteers
* 82 Projects
* 50+ World premieres
* 58% Attended free events
* 42% Attended paid events

The WorldPride Arts program was possible thanks to the generous support of the NSW Government through Create NSW. We also thank the Australia Council for the Arts, the many funders of specific projects and the extensive support of our arts partners.

*”A seismic shift in LGBTQIA+ arts programming, serious long-term issues around queer representation are being addressed”***– Jeremy Goldstein – The Queer Review on WorldPride Arts**

WorldPride ArtsWorldPride Arts was a curated LGBTQIA+ arts and cultural program that featured 82 projects, in a partnership model, taking place across Greater Sydney. Over 50 of these projects were world premieres. We believe the scale, participation, investment and attendance of this program, where queer artists (both emerging and at the top of their game) told their stories, in their way to queer and allied audiences, is unprecedented in Australia.

The program was curated by Daniel Clarke, WorldPride Arts Festival Creative Director and Ben Graetz, Sydney WorldPride First Nations Creative Director and produced by Lisa Freshwater, Festival Producer with support by Gabriel Gerard, Festival Coordinator. The curation of the program was also supported by Liza-Mare Syron, a Biripi woman and the festival’s First Nations Creative Consultant, plus a team of Curatorial Associates: Bhenji Ra, Dennis Golding, Jennifer Greer Holmes, Felicity Nicol, Harriet Gillies and Michael Kennedy.

Program Model  
WorldPride Arts was delivered through a partnership model in which the program was presented by external producers and presenting organisations across the sector, including small-to-medium and independent companies, as well as major cultural institutions, local government art centres and major performing arts companies.

CurationIn alignment with the festival’s Curatorial Priorities, the packed program provided a platform and opportunity for LGBTQIA+ voices and communities that havetraditionally been under-represented whilst developing new audiences for LGBTQIA+ arts and cultural events.

Projects were rigorously selected through direct approach and two open call outs in which over 165 applications were received. The WorldPride Arts team, accompanied by two Create NSW assessors, evaluated the projects based on relevance, viability, innovation, impact and track record.

**Curatorial Priorities**

* First Nations People
* People from the Asia-Pacific
* People of Colour
* Elders
* Women
* Youth
* d/Deaf and Disabled People
* Transgender + Gender Diverse People

Financial Support  
Sydney WorldPride invested funds into projects with support from Create NSW, Australia Council for the Arts, City of Sydney, the British Council, the Consulate General of Canada, Sydney, philanthropic supporters and through the generosity of the festival’s passionate presenting partners.

Sydney WorldPride’s investment into the program amounted to approximately $1.5 million, with the total program cost exceeding $8 million.

Engagement  
From Sydney Theatre Company to the Seymour Centre, Belvoir and Riverside Theatres to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Campbelltown Arts Centre and Sydney Symphony Orchestra, LGBTQIA+ arts and culture was profiled to over 120,000 local, national and international audiences throughout the festival. More than 4,500 artists and arts workers were involved in WorldPride Arts generating significant employment opportunities across the industry.

*"Seymour has a long legacy of partnering with Sydney Mardi Gras to become of a hub of outstanding queer performance each year. We are absolutely ecstatic we can build on this legacy to present six brilliantly diverse performances as part of WorldPride Arts 2023."*   
**– Timothy Jones, Seymour Centre Artistic Director**

It was a priority and a privilege for Sydney WorldPride to showcase the diversity, creativity and artistic talent of the LGBTQIA+ community through the WorldPride Arts program, allowing artists to connect with new audiences in the context of a global festival. Our diverse networks enabled an understanding of the multiple projects that could be programmed and partnering with presenting and producing organisations that already had audiences engaged was a successful approach. The diverse, expert opinions, input and feedback through close collaboration was invaluable in the curation of the final supported projects.

**Artform**

The diversity of artforms included in WorldPride Arts spanned:

* Community
* Contemporary performance
* Cabaret, burlesque and circus
* Dance and physical theatre
* Digital art
* Theatre, musical theatre and opera
* Visual arts and exhibitions
* Words and ideas

Funding provided strategic opportunities for LGBTQIA+ work from independent artists to major performing arts companies to participate in a global LGTBQIA+ festival and as such, the program was agile and responsive to new projects and ideas that captured the zeitgeist. Artists gave valuable feedback about the cultural representation and the centring of First Nations and POC voices across the program. The WorldPride Arts program was truly inclusive and demonstrated strong leadership. The development of strategic creative relationships between LGBTQIA+ artists, performing arts companies and presenters across the sector was a significant achievement and we hope that other LGBTQIA+ festivals and arts festivals in Australia more broadly will follow the examples demonstrated during Sydney WorldPride.

**Still Thriving**

Still Thriving by proud Yuwi, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander artist, Dylan Mooney, transformed Darlinghurst’s Top of the Town building. Towering over King’s Cross, this stunning mural had significant impact and promoted a powerful message of pride, live and visibility for all to see. The project was made possible through City of Sydney’s Art and About program.

*"My work focuses on authentic representations of the queer Indigenous community, representing connection to Country and our love for each other. It means a great deal that those often under-represented can stand proudly and defiantly sharing tender moments."*   
**– Dylan Mooney, Yuwi, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander artist**

**Club Chrome: Fxckery**

Club Chrome: Fxckerywas a world premiere featuring a dynamic high-production pole dance performance that showcased the work of diverse local pole artists from within the intersections of Sydney’s LGBTQIA+, BIPOC and sex worker communities.

*“By centring our queer, POC and sex worker bodies as vessels of our lived experiences,*Fxckery*has become a joyous celebration of queer sensuality and a call to claim the right to self-representation both individually and collaboratively,”*   
**– Oryx and Sela Vai, Club Chrome Lead Choreographers**

**The Coming Back Out Salon**

The Coming Back Out Salon is a spectacular celebration and aims to spotlight older people as leaders and pioneers in LGBTQIA+ communities. Produced and presented by All The Queens Men in association with ACON and the Love Project and supported by Australia Council for the Arts, Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund (an Australian government Initiative), Create NSW and City of Sydney, the Salon was inspired by growing research around the isolation and loneliness experienced by LGBTQIA+ Elders and was all about reconnecting with others in-person following the pandemic.

*“The need for this is growing and it continues to be an important space for older people to come together and be who they are.”*   
**– Tristan Meecham, All the Queens Men**

WorldPride Sports

17 – 24 February 2023

Community Program   
On Gadigal, Cammeraygal, Bidigal, Darug and Dharawal Lands  
Greater Sydney

* 6,698+ Total audience throughout the WorldPride Sports Program
* 17 Different sport types represented across multiple days
* 17 LGBTQIA+ sporting organisations received funding from Sydney WorldPride to host events
* Football, hockey, basketball, roller derby, kickball, water polo, ten-pin bowling, squash, swimming, boxing, running, wrestling and more!

*“The WorldPride Sports Program runs the full gamut of activities and events: using sport as the proper fulcrum for inclusivity that it has the potential to be… Sport will be showcased at Sydney WorldPride for its ability to take in the kaleidoscopic backgrounds, identities, and abilities of its players, and provide the blueprint for other sporting bodies to increase their inclusivity.”*  
**- Will Lennox, GQ**

WorldPride Sports was a community sports program which featured 17 events, including tournaments, competitions, leagues, derbys and championships taking place across Sydney during the first week of the festival.

Community sports organisations applied through an EOI process in 2021 for up to $10,000 funding from Sydney WorldPride to elevate their plans. 17 applicants demonstrated a strong track record in community engagement, inclusion and event management and proposed an exciting event for the festival.

These projects were notified of success in February 2022. The timing allowed the teams to engage with potential participants throughout the 2022 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras season and enough lead time to plan and connect with international participants.

On acceptance each organisation signed Sydney WorldPride’s Sports Inclusivity and Diversity Commitment, which was developed in collaboration with Pride in Sport. This policy set out best practice for inclusive and accessible sport and aligned to our shared goal of creating trans-inclusive, accessible events and activities to welcome our community’s kaleidoscope of LGBTQIA+ identities, diverse backgrounds, and everyone, including people with disability. Pride in Sport also delivered sports inclusion workshops and worked with the various organisations on their inclusion policy. Each organisation now has a long-lasting legacy policy and guideline for the inclusion of the LGBTQIA+ community within these far-reaching community sporting clubs and teams. Thanks to the work of Sydney WorldPride, in some cases these initiatives have put these clubs well ahead of their State and National sporting bodies.

Over 6,500 LGBTQIA+ sports people, from novices to professionals, participated and/or attended WorldPride Sports events at venues across Sydney. Titles were won, records were broken, and lifelong friendships were made.

Tennis Sydney WorldPride Open

Emerald City International Kickball Tournament

Roller Derby Extravaganza

Tom Galluzzo Wrestling Tournament

PinkHockey Sydney

Rainbow Racquets Squash Sydney

Pride Amplified

17 February – 5 March 2023

Ticketed and Free Events   
On Gadigal, Cammeraygal, Bidigal, Darug and Dharawal Lands  
Greater Sydney

* 194,914 Total audience throughout the Pride Amplified Program
* 346 Events registered for Pride Amplified featuring 1,281 sessions
* $55,000+ worth of fees waived for 133 eligible organisations/events
* 197 Venues across Sydney held Pride Amplified events many of which were new to presenting LGBTQIA+ events
* 7 in 10 agreed that WorldPride brought more visitors in the area and was beneficial for business

Pride Amplified was the Sydney WorldPride open access program for arts, culture, community, experiences, and parties. It was vital to promoting inclusion, participation, and creativity within the festival and amplifying pride across the region.

From family-friendly days out, to radical and immersive experiences, this was our community’s chance to present LGBTQIA+ creativity on an international stage.

Works proposed by artists, producers, promoters, community or business organisations for inclusion in Pride Amplified, were required to take place in Sydney during the Sydney WorldPride festival. The work also had to be created and presented by and/or for the LGBTQIA+ community.

Event Presenters registered and paid a registration fee, were assessed for eligibility and once approved took all creative, production and financial risk on the delivery of their event. A fee waiver was offered to 133 not-for-profit / unfunded organisations who demonstrated their events were not going to make a profit, leading to over $55,000 worth of fees being waived by Sydney WorldPride.

*“As a Queer non-binary vegan, I am absolutely thrilled that Sydney Vegan Market is part of Sydney WorldPride… Bringing together my two wonderful communities like this feels like a dream come true! With a deep commitment to safety, we have worked hard to ensure that Sydney Vegan Market is inclusive and fun for everyone, and I am excited to be showcasing the vast array of vegan food and products, and platforming amazing LGBTQI+ vegan artists!”*   
– **Jones (they/them), Event Program Manager for Vegan NSW**

Partnership with the Sydney Fringe Festival

Sydney WorldPride looked to partner with an organisation that was well versed in the open access arts environment and the Sydney Fringe Festival was engaged to deliver the program.   
  
The Sydney Fringe Festival has spent the past five years building a unique model of working with artists from all genres and all levels of experience in an Arts festival context, via their open access programming platform. The process is sensitive to the local community, existing venues business models and local audience trends. It has been developed to create a streamlined process from registration to ticketing - with a full suite of integrated digital tools to reduce resourcing and leverage data. Working with a skilled artist liaison team who understood the local environment and needs of the sector was extremely beneficial, as was being able to utilise existing Sydney Fringe Festival digital infrastructure and IP for the open access registration process.

**Outcomes**

Pride Amplified provided an open access platform for artists, producers, promoters, community and business organisations to participate in Sydney WorldPride. It ensured a diverse range of intersectional community events and opportunities for both emerging and established producers. The number of events in this program highlighted Sydney’s willingness to embrace and participate in Sydney WorldPride. The program increased visibility for participants and enabled them to connect with new audiences and visitors to Sydney. Event producers were supported throughout the city by venues keen to host Sydney WorldPride events in a show of solidarity and commitment to LGBTQIA+ equality. Pride Amplified exemplified the truly city wide collaboration which contributed to its success, welcoming local, national and global audiences.

The partnership with Sydney Fringe Festival was an excellent collaboration and demonstrated what can be achieved when organisations understand their individual strengths and work collaboratively to achieve an outcome.

Sustainability

Sydney WorldPride committed to ensuring that care for the environment was applied to the planning and implementation of all events across the festival~~.~~ Sydney WorldPride developed Sustainable Supplier Guidelines, based on best practice and internationally agreed standards which the festival aimed to adhere to, all the while encouraging suppliers to deliver sustainable practices.

Pride Planet Program   
Ensuring that sustainability was highlighted as a key organisational value of Sydney WorldPride, a unique tagline and logo was designed to identify our proudly green credentials. The Pride Planet Program integrated six key environmental focus areas to assure sustainability was embedded into every aspect of the festival, providing a framework through which sustainability messaging could be amplified and inspiring festival participants to work with us to minimise environmental impacts.

**Festival Collaborators**

* Sydney Water
* Clean Vibes
* Precise Waste Management
* TerraCycle
* Verra

*“As the world becomes more aware of the importance of sustainable practices, events like Sydney WorldPride are stepping up to make a positive impact. The event’s organisers [were] committed to making the celebration as eco-friendly as possible.”*   
**– Wallop Water, Event Water Solution Supplier**

Highlights

* **Waste Initiatives**
  + Over 81 tonnes of waste diverted from landfill
  + 92% of all festival signage recycled or reused
  + Pink Salt achieved 96.99% waste diversion
  + Sydney WorldPride Official events featured four disposal streams: Container Deposit Scheme (CDS), co-mingled recycling, organics and general waste
  + Wristbands were made from 100% recycled PET bottles (170,000+ wristbands issued)
  + 100kg of wristbands recycled through the TerraCycle Wristband Recycling Program post-festival
* **Carbon Emissions**
  + Carbon neutral Human Rights Conference with 1,900 tonnes of CO2 offset – equivalent to the emissions from powering approximately 4,437Australian homes for a year
  + 5,531 trees planted in Northern NSW with ReForest Now
* **Water Initiatives**
  + 130,537 plastic bottles saved during the festival through free drinking water program and switch to plastic-free bottles

Sustainable Procurement

Sydney WorldPride provided all suppliers, sponsors and partners with the Sustainable Supplier Guidelines, which included compliance with NSW Single Use plastics legislation. Sustainability Manager Jen Kyna ran online workshops to brief suppliers and partners on the guidelines, resulting in lots of positive feedback and engagement, helping the festival to achieve significant environmental outcomes.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

All Sydney WorldPride attendees were encouraged, through festival comms, to reduce their carbon impact by walking, riding or catching public transport. Free public transport was available to ticketholders on the final weekend of the festival thanks to Transport for NSW and other key stakeholders. Visitors were given the option to offset their flights via the Sydney WorldPride Carbon Offset Program and to plant a tree to help offset the festival’s carbon footprint through ReForest, an organisation that works on regenerating Northern NSW’s rainforest.

Environmental Awareness And Education

All staff, performers, venues, volunteers, vendors and suppliers were engaged to align with our sustainability values. Information on sustainability initiatives and education on how attendees could reduce their environmental impacts was amplified through festival marketing and pre-event comms. Representatives of the ‘Green Volunteer Program’ were present at major events to educate attendees on correct waste disposal and assist in managing litter and bin overflow.

Towards Zero Waste

Attendees were encouraged not to bring any items that might end up in landfill via pre-event comms and there was the continuation of the ban on non-compostable confetti and glitter implemented by Sydney Mardi Gras in 2019. The distribution of digital tickets also helped minimise waste. Furthermore, 92% of all festival signage was recycled or reused. Through collaborative efforts, Pink Salt was produced with the aim of zero waste to landfill. In the end, due to one contaminated recycling bin, 96.99% of waste was diverted, which was still a significant achievement in a sustainable approach to event delivery.

Environmental Impacts Measuring

The impact of sustainability initiatives across Sydney WorldPride was tracked through post-festival debriefs and data evaluation. Event delivery collaborators reported positive learnings and new practices they intend to continue in their work moving forward, affirming the impact and legacy of the festival. The results have been passed on to Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in a transfer of knowledge we hope will be carried forward.

No Virgin / New Single Use Plastics

Sydney WorldPride Official events were proudly single-use plastic free. Beverages sold across all festival events, were available in aluminium and glass. All serve ware (cups, coffee cups, plates, bowls, napkins, straws) provided by food vendors were 100% Australian certified compostable. Wristbands were made from 100% recycled materials with 100kgs of wristbands recycled post festival. Free drinking water stations, in partnership with Sydney Water, were provided across greenfield event sites and participants were encouraged to use refillable bottles.

Accessibility

It was Sydney WorldPride's aim to make the festival as accessible and inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ disability community as possible. We aimed to achieve this by implementing a diverse, considered, and co-designed approach to accessibility so that the festival incorporated best practice inclusions for all people with disability.

An Access Consultant was brought on early in the festival planning process to advise on the development of an overarching Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) in collaboration with internal and external disability advisory groups. This plan served as a roadmap for how access and inclusion would be embedded across the entire organisation, as well as in the delivery of the events.  By ensuring that accessibility was ‘front of mind’ throughout the planning and delivery, we aimed to set a new inclusive standard of what a festival in the future could achieve.

Working with an Accessibility Manager with personal and intersectional lived experience with disability, who could collaborate with all departments within the organisation was key to ensuring the festival was as accessible as possible. Akii Ngo – a proud, disabled, transgender non-binary and LGBTQIA+/Queer person of colour with a deep passion about disability rights, intersectionality, inclusion and co-design was an invaluable addition to the Sydney WorldPride team. Their expertise and insight, in addition to ongoing consultation with the external disability advisory committee was key to ensuring accessibility needs across the festival were met.

Sydney WorldPride was able to provide 23 types of accessibility offerings that ranged from online accessibility features to physical accessibility and sensory/wellbeing spaces. Thoughtful consideration was given to a broad range of access requirements to ensure that numerous aspects of disability diversity – and especially intersectionality – were implemented through our accessibility and inclusion offerings.

We provided education through Diversity and Inclusion training sessions delivered to nearly all of our stakeholders and partners. In addition, we disseminated capacity building and educational Disability Etiquette and Access Need Inclusion resources to all our Sydney WorldPride agencies, stakeholders, partners, volunteers, and staff.

Our ongoing engagement with internal and external disability advisory panels allowed us to continually assess and refine our accessibility event inclusions and protocols.

Based on survey feedback, Sydney WorldPride 2023 made substantial progress towards improving accessibility at major events, and this was done through the collaborative efforts of the organisation, event operators, government agencies, stakeholders, partners, volunteers, and staff.

Whilst the positive impacts are to be celebrated, significant progress still needs to be made – Sydney WorldPride hopes the experience and learnings gained by all those involved in this landmark event are carried forward, and the legacy of Sydney WorldPride leads to continued improvements regarding access and inclusion within the LGBTQIA+ community, local businesses and the events industry more broadly.

**Key Festival Collaborators**

* Auslan Stage Left
* Captions Live
* Charley Sanders - Audio Description
* Conference Interpreter Services
* Deadly Hands Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation
* Deaf Aboriginal Services
* Deaf Connect
* Morwenna Collett – Access Consultant

Sunflower Lanyard Program   
Sydney WorldPride was proud to support the Sunflower Hidden Disabilities Program which is a globally recognised symbol for hidden or non-obvious disabilities. The Sunflower Lanyard enables people with hidden disabilities the choice to let the people around them know, so they have access to any support they may need such as additional help, understanding, empathy, guidance, or patience. This may mean the person can’t stand for a long time in the queue to use the bathroom, may need the use of an accessible bathroom, patience when their order is being taken, may need fast-tracked support, more time to move around (e.g. due to pain or mobility challenges) or can feel overwhelmed, sensory overload or stressed out in large crowds and loud environments.

Sunflower Lanyards were available from specific onsite collection points at Official events and patrons who already owned a Sunflower Lanyard were encouraged to use them across the festival. Over 500 Sunflower Lanyards were handed out to patrons to keep for use at future events, programs, services, and beyond where the Sunflower Hidden Disabilities Program is accepted. The program was positively received by the community with incredible feedback from an international visitor who picked up a lanyard for themselves and shared that they worked in event management in the United States. After learning that Sunflower Lanyards are globally accepted and are reusable at events and venues (beyond Sydney WorldPride), they were excited to share information about the program and work towards implementing it in the work they were involved in back home.

Volunteers

Year on year, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Volunteer Program is a vital component to the success of the annual festival. Sydney WorldPride would like to thank Sydney Mardi Gras for running the festival volunteer program.

Volunteering is “…time willingly given for the common good without financial gain” and with the mission statement of “engaging, leading, representing, and supporting the community through a world-class volunteer program”, the Sydney WorldPride 2023 Festival season was no different as hundreds of thousands of local, interstate and international guests were welcomed to Sydney and to the many Official events to celebrate.

With roles such as talent-running, wayfinding, guest services management (wrist-banding, ticket scanning and ushering upon entry), and the management of various event and operational areas including crowd flow, accessibility features, media and more, volunteers are a welcoming presence the valuable contribution of all volunteers is greatly appreciated by Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, Sydney WorldPride and the community.

**Volunteer Acquisition and training strategy:**

* Development of a communications plan to clearly set expectations and deliver key event information.
* Explore new opportunities to reach a broader volunteer community.
* Engage with the partnerships team to engage corporate workforces.
* Development of a robust multimedia training program with clear learning outcomes that are quantifiable.

**Volunteer Training:**

Comprehensive training was available through an online platform and volunteers were asked to complete four learning modules prior to undertaking any volunteer shifts during the festival. All the learning modules ended with a knowledge check, and a small multiple-choice quiz to make sure that an understanding of the topic had been gained. Additionally, we offered in-person briefings leading up to the events, on the day briefings and event-specific volunteer handbooks were sent via email to all volunteers.

*“The enthusiasm, talent, and commitment from volunteers this year was mind blowing. Our incredible volunteers are what makes Mardi Gras a truly inclusive and beautiful experience.”*   
**– Bel West, Workforce and Operations Manager (Volunteer Manager) Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras**

* 2200+ Volunteers managed by Sydney Mardi Gras across 8 SGLMG and 11 SWP events with 3626 shifts in 17 days
* 700+ hours of training delivered
* 7189 learning modules completed

The contribution of all volunteers to Sydney Mardi Gras and Sydney WorldPride is highly valued. Given that a key to volunteer retention is appropriate recognition, every effort was made to thank volunteers and recognise their contributions.

Appreciation was shown to volunteers using the following strategies:

* Volunteer Thank You Function
* Thank you emails and speeches at key events
* Volunteer Discounted/Free Tickets to events
* Letters of reference/certificates
* Volunteer feature on website and/or social media
* Sponsorship gifts
* Free Public Transport for all volunteers

**Training modules included:**

* LGBTQIA+ Diversity and Inclusion
* First Nations Cultural Awareness (Created in collaboration with the First Nations Engagement Officer and Manager)
* Access and Inclusion (Created in collaboration with the Department of Premier and Cabinet and our Accessibility Manager)
* Managing Challenging Behaviours

Diversity & Inclusion

The LGBTQIA+ community comprises of various smaller communities with distinct needs, making it a formidable task to deliver a diverse and inclusive program.

This endeavour extended far beyond merely attracting a wider audience; it necessitated ensuring that the festival participants felt included, represented and safe. Our aim was to establish a new benchmark, not only for the festival participants, but all stakeholders and suppliers who worked with Sydney WorldPride.

By establishing clear curatorial priorities, Sydney WorldPride prioritised First Nations inclusion and was dedicated to creating a welcoming and safe environment for all members of our beautifully diverse LGBTQIA+ community. Our approach encompassed engagement, branding, marketing, programming, and creative choices, in collaboration with community, government and corporate partners, down to the meticulous implementation of accessibility measures on-site.

Sydney WorldPride aimed to cater for and represent all parts of our community, embodying the development and delivery of diversity and inclusion in every facet. Sydney WorldPride was extremely pleased that feedback from the festival participants was that marginalised parts of the community not only felt acknowledged but also celebrated within the festival. Sydney WorldPride hopes that the level of inclusion and diversity represented throughout the festival provides a clear template for not only LGBTQIA+ festivals, but for all festivals in the future.

Chloe Logarzo, the professional football player who plays in the Australian women’s national team, The Matildas, was named as a Sydney WorldPride Rainbow Champion for her contribution to Australian LGBTQIA+ community and culture. Logarzo received her Rainbow Champion medal in front of a packed stadium on the pitch at half-time of the Cup of Nations Australia-Spain match where Matildas players proudly donned LGBTQIA+ Pride-coloured numbered jerserys.

**Staffing and Team**

* First Nations staff lead First Nations Strategy
* 9 First Nations organisational roles from the Sydney WorldPride Board to the Executive, Curatorial Associates and wider Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras team
* 14 First Nations Advisory Committee members
* Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras staff completed Cultural Training sessions facilitated by Genevieve Grieves from GARUWA
* The Sydney WorldPride First Nations Engagement team led internal cultural safety training for staff on an ongoing basis

**77% LGBTQIA+ employees within the two host organisations**   
Throughout recruitment and hiring, Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras strived to maintain a balance and ensure representation of various groups within the team. Each of these folks became an internal ambassador and kept festival planning and delivery on track.

**First Nations Education**The First Nations team also created a terminology and language document - housed on the Sydney WorldPride website – which had an overview and description of common words and terms used by First Nations people, visitors, and non-First Nations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) people. This was also shared with International Scholars who were travelling under the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) program to attend the Sydney WorldPride Human Rights Conference during the festival. This resource enabled people to read and educate themselves on terminology prior to attending events, particularly the Marri Mudung Butbut (First Nations Gathering Space) and Blak & Deadly: The First Nations Gala Concert.

**Training**

Diversity and Inclusion training was provided for all staff, subcontractors, key stakeholders including event operators, suppliers, government agencies, partners and other relevant stakeholders. This training was positively received widely across all groups involved in the festival. Topics included:

* Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras history
* LGBTQIA+ acronym and pronouns - what it all means
* How to welcome LGBTQIA+ guests - inclusive language
* Accessibility and Sustainability
* Supporting our LGBTQIA+ community
* First Nations culture overview

Event Impacts

The economic and social impacts of Sydney WorldPride have been widely experienced by many, from attendees and participants to global communities and advocacy groups.

The festival made a substantial contribution to stimulating the Sydney economy and generated broader social value for the community. As well as revitalising Sydney, common themes of belonging and community can be seen across the significant outcomes of the festival, giving insight into its reach and impact on the community.

Allyship

This festival encompassed inclusivity for all, not only the LGBTQIA+ community but also for our Allies. The event placed a strong emphasis on education and raising awareness about the challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community, with a particular focus on empowering Allies to provide support and solidarity. Of those surveyed:

* 95% agreed that Sydney WorldPride increased the level of acceptance for LGBTQIA+ people in Sydney
* 94% said they connected with LGBTQIA+ allies through the festival
* 95% said Sydney WorldPride positively impacted their allyship with the community
* 81% said Sydney WorldPride increased their sense of belonging within the LGBTQIA+ community
* 88% said Sydney WorldPride increased their sense of hope for the future of LGBTQIA+ inclusion and safety
* 51% said they were more likely to call out comments that are offensive to the LGBTQIA+ community after attending Sydney WorldPride where they wouldn’t have before

Belonging

Sydney WorldPride extended a warm welcome to the global community, making it a top priority to create an environment where everyone, regardless of their identity, felt safe, embraced, and included. Ensuring a sense of belonging for all attendees was a fundamental aspect of the event. Of those surveyed:

* 95% felt they were able to fully express themselves and their identity participating in Sydney WorldPride
* 92% said they felt welcome at Sydney WorldPride
* 92% said they felt safe at Sydney WorldPride

*“I’m full of beautiful emotions…Sydney really put on an incredible show….it is the best WorldPride the world has ever seen.”*   
**– Narelda Jacobs, Network Ten**

Intersectionality

Sydney WorldPride aimed to ensure that every individual, irrespective of their cultural, sexual, or gender identity, could find a reflection of themselves throughout the event. Our intention was to extend an invitation to everyone and offer a diverse program that resonated with their personal experiences. Of those surveyed:

* 96% agreed they would encourage family and friends to attend WorldPride
* 72% agreed that Sydney WorldPride increased their understanding of the issues faced by LGBTQIA+ people

Respondents agreed they gained a greater understanding of the issues faced by the following communities:

* First Nations people - 59%
* Gender-diverse people - 63%
* People from across the Asia-Pacific - 74%

Respondents felt the following communities were well-represented at Sydney WorldPride

* First Nations people - 73%
* Gender-diverse people - 84%
* People from across the Asia-Pacific - 73%

*“I felt the most safe I’ve ever been in public as a transgender person. So much acceptance, safety, inclusion, belonging.”   
–* **Anonymous Scholar response to Human Rights Conference survey**

Revitalising Sydney

Sydney WorldPride 2023 achieved significant tangible economic impacts and meaningful social outcomes, enhancing Sydney’s reputation and revitalising sentiment towards the city as a global event capital:

* $235.4 million Induced visitor expenditure
* $185.6 million In value added to the New South Wales economy
* 84% of those surveyed agreed Sydney WorldPride enhanced Sydney/New South Wales’ reputation as an inclusive and diverse city
* 89% said Sydney WorldPride made them proud to be from Sydney / New South Wales
* 88% agreed Sydney WorldPride helped to make Sydney a more enjoyable place to live
* 89% agreed Sydney WorldPride was a popular event and was positively embraced by the wider Sydney population
* 84% agreed Sydney WorldPride enhanced Sydney’s reputation as an arts and entertainment capital

Marketing and Media

Sydney WorldPride was buoyed by enthusiastic community, business and government goodwill determined to see the festival succeed, but marketing the diverse program in the shadow of a pandemic would have its challenges.

Some of the challenges we faced included low awareness of the WorldPride brand outside of the Northern Hemisphere, having to explain the relationship between Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras and ensuring the festival could meet ambitious sales, attendance and tourism targets on a modest budget. With a much broader festival program to promote than a standard Sydney Mardi Gras year, that necessitated finding new audiences both domestically and internationally.

Sydney WorldPride’s marketing team, with six full-time employees, would lead the delivery of the festival’s campaign, working closely with Sydney Mardi Gras’ three full-time marketing professionals and assembling support from freelancers and agencies for publicity (Original Spin), advertising (M&C Saatchi Sports & Entertainment) plus the travel trade (Smile Marketing).

Campaign phases

The festival campaign was concentrated in the 12 months from February 2022 and was broken into three campaign phases:

* **Phase 1 – You’re Invited (March to October 2022) –** Focused on explaining what Sydney WorldPride would be, establishing the festival would be an inclusive environment with a diversity of programming, driving pre-sale signs up, and sales through the first ticket release, particularly aimed at international tourists
* **Phase 2 –Proudly Out Now (November 2022 to January 2023)** – Focused on raising awareness of the scale of Sydney WorldPride through the release of the Festival Guide, driving sales through a final release, promoting interstate visitation and encouraging itinerary enhancement for existing guests
* **Phase 3 – Let’s Get Proud (February to March 2023)** – Focused on activating the city and creating a sense of excitement, driving attendance to free Official events and sales for remaining Official events, and driving attendance of aligned events in WorldPride Arts and Pride Amplified.

*“Sydney WorldPride 2023 drove the market’s hotel average daily rate (ADR) and revenue per available room (RevPAR) above pre-pandemic levels…”*   
**– STR**

*“February saw Sydney WorldPride reign over Sydney…”*   
**– Media Week**

The budget for advertising was modest, necessitating delivering exceptional earned and owned marketing. In practice, this meant:

* Prioritising building the pre-sale/newsletter database so Sydney WorldPride could communicate directly with the festival audience.
* A commitment to a publishing a steady stream of high-quality social content, to rapidly grow organic reach. There was an emphasis on ensuring the content reflected a broad cross section of the community.
* Creating a series of five key moments designed to get mainstream media coverage, be highly shareable on social media and create a bank of content that could be built into the broader campaign.   
    
  Those five key moments were:
  + 24 June 2022: A Human Progress Flag was formed by 1000 community members on the steps of the Sydney Opera House in a visible sign of welcome to the world’s LGBTQIA+ people and commemorating the date of the first Sydney Mardi Gras.
  + 21 July 2022: The first of 45 Rainbow Champions were revealed, whereby LGBTQIA+ people from around the nation were honoured for their contribution to the community. Rolling announcements were staged over a series of media calls from July to December, with each Rainbow Champion representing a year since the first Sydney Mardi Gras.
  + 21 September 2022: The Amsterdam Rainbow Dress was brought to Australia for the first time, drawing attention to the global fight for LGBTQIA+ rights and how the Sydney WorldPride Human Rights Conference could be a vehicle for change.
  + 9 November 2022: Working with Destination NSW, a giant rainbow sandcastle was installed on the Bondi Beach foreshore marking ‘100 days to go’ before the festival would commence. A showcase performance was held in the Bondi Pavilion Theatre to give media a sense of the festival, plus the 144-page Festival Guide was released.
  + 17 February 2023: The first day of Sydney WorldPride was marked in spectacular fashion with the Sydney Opera House sails lit up with the pride progress rainbow. The activation was one of 45 free public artworks staged as part of Rainbow City, where place holders from the Blue Mountains to the CBD staged large-scale rainbow inspired installations. A souvenir map was printed in the Sydney Morning Herald, and Australian Museum’s Progress Shark became an accidental icon.

The marketing campaign exceeded all KPIs in terms of ticket sales, income, attendance, tourism, media coverage, social media engagement and awareness. More detail is included overleaf.

However, the true success of the marketing campaign lies in the legacy for both Sydney Mardi Gras and Sydney itself:

* 75.3% of Sydney WorldPride subscribers were not Mardi Gras subscribers, which is a significant new audience now connected with Australia’s largest pride event.
* The marketing campaign literally said, “You’re Invited,” and LGBTQIA+ people and allies of all walks of life RSVP’d “yes,” in a big way. With a festival audience of over 1 million, there can be no doubt Sydney is equipped to host global LGBTQIA+ events.
* Sydney WorldPride CEO Kate Wickett spoke about the festival being a “party with purpose.” A central feature of the publicity campaign was the facilitation of media coverage profiling the huge range of LGBTQIA+ lived experience and the challenges the community still face globally.
* The explosion of colour generated by the Rainbow City project, coupled with the festival’s outdoor advertising (most of which was donated), had a profound impact on many attendees. This was welcomed on a grand scale.

Special thanks to the marketing and publicity teams at Destination NSW, Tourism Australia and the City of Sydney for their unwavering support.

The Marketing Story in Numbers

* 1,077,183 festival audience across 471 events
* 107,388 WorldPride Official event tickets sold
  + 32,726 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Official event tickets sold
  + 74,662 Sydney WorldPride Official event tickets sold
* 116% of target for Sydney WorldPride Official event by volume
* 115% of target for Sydney WorldPride Official event by dollar value
* 44.9% of Sydney WorldPride official event tickets sold to tourists
* 630,310 total audience at WorldPride Official free events
  + 307,672 total audience at free Sydney WorldPride Official events
  + 325,000+ total audience at free Sydney Mardi Gras Official events
* 3,594 subsidised tickets sold

**Media**

* 40,731 Domestic Media Mentions – Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras combined
* 31,140 printed Festival Guides distributed
  + With 100,000+ views of the Digital Guide (+334% YoY)
  + Read from over 50 countries across the world
* 1.1 million combined broadcast audience for key official events across platforms through the ABC

**Social Media Overview**

* Social media audience
  + Combined total: 619,789
  + Sydney WorldPride: 70,919
  + Sydney Mardi Gras: 548,870
* Social media engagement
  + Combined total: 2.52 million
  + Sydney WorldPride: 1.35 million
  + Sydney Mardi Gras: 1.17 million
* Page views of web content
  + Combined total: 7.63 million
  + Sydney WorldPride: 5.17 million
  + Sydney Mardi Gras: 2.46 million
* Newsletter database
  + Combined total: 122,675
  + Sydney WorldPride: 69,093
  + Sydney Mardi Gras: 53,582  
    \*75.3% of newsletter subscribers unique to Sydney WorldPride
* 354 unique pieces of advertising assets dispatched
* $654,000 in cash media buy
* $2.7 million in value-in-kind media spent
* 6,547 items of merchandise sold

Progress Shark

“Progress Shark”, one of 45 rainbow moments spread across Sydney to mark the arrival of WorldPride in Sydney, captured the hearts of many and became an accidental queer icon and the unofficial mascot of Sydney WorldPride 2023.

The 10-metre-long installation, located at the Australian Museum on one of the busiest intersections in the Sydney CBD, was part of the ‘Rainbow City’ large public art project commemorating 45 years of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. The Australian Museum wanted to create a vivid and unique sign to welcome the hundreds of thousands of visitors to the city for Sydney WorldPride and worked with Artist George Buchanan who brought the creation to life by sewing together the shark-sized lycra leotard.

The final result was a custom rainbow lycra suit with 11 colours sewn together with 25lb fishing line to form two progress flags for the now iconic Progress Shark that garnered international attention, sparking countless memes and was a highlight of the Sydney WorldPride 2023 festival.

*“[Progress Shark] is a queer celebration – a bold, colourful and tasselled homage to lycra… And it's inherently Australian – funny, irreverent and, stereotypically, dressed for the beach.”*  
**– Tiffanie Turnbull, BBC News, Sydney**

Partnerships

Sydney WorldPride 2023 received a momentous level of sector-wide support, including from government, corporate, not-for-profit and community organisations.  
  
Working alongside our partners enabled Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras to offer an exciting range of free and ticketed events appealing to a wide cross-section of the LGBTQIA+ community and their allies, working collaboratively to amplify positive social messaging that speaks to shared values of equality, diversity and inclusion.  
  
Partner designations include the following:

* Principal
* Presenting
* Government
* Premier Network
* Major Media
* Major
* Supporting
* Media
* Community
* Festival and venue

Funding Ecosystem

Sydney WorldPride ensured community was at the centre of all funding received

* Sydney WorldPride and Community surrounded by:
  + Federal Government
  + NSW Government
  + Local Government
  + International
  + Corporate
  + Philanthropy

Government Partners

Sydney WorldPride would like to thank **Destination NSW**, the lead government agency for the New South Wales tourism and major events sectors, and **Create NSW**, the NSW Government’s arts and cultural driver across the arts, culture and screen sectors, for their strategic partnership and core funding that enabled Sydney WorldPride to be a global event in its scale and impact.

**City of Sydney** continued their support of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras with the iconic Parade on Oxford Street and assisted Sydney WorldPride with the inaugural major outdoor event – Pride Villages.

**Tourism Australia** provided comprehensive support to the festival right from its initial stages and served as a significant partner in the International Roadshow, playing a crucial role in amplifying global awareness and understanding of the festival.

**The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade** played a pivotal role as a primary partner in the Human Rights Conference, notably through the International Scholarship Program. This program enabled the participation of LGBTQIA+ advocates and activists from across the globe, facilitating their attendance at the conference.

**Sydney WorldPride also wishes to thank the following Government partners for their contributions to the festival:**

* Place Management NSW (BE Sydney)
* Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
* Australian Trade and Investments Commission

*“An event of this magnitude could not have happened without the unbelievable support of the City of Sydney, who have been with WorldPride since we bid in 2019.”*   
**– Brooke Ravens, Sydney WorldPride Director of Partnerships and Sales**

Corporate Partnerships

Sydney WorldPride 2023 and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras established an integrated three-year corporate partnership strategy for the 2022 to 2024 events. The purpose was to work collaboratively, strengthening their shared corporate portfolio, securing their future funding model.

All corporate partners are reviewed via a rigorous process – through the Ethical Charter Framework established by Sydney WorldPride 2023 and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras – which audits past and current advocacy for the LGBTQIA+ community and demonstrated corporate leadership in order to be approved as a value aligned organisation.

Ethical Charter Framework Values

* Demonstrate ongoing commitment to the LGBTQIA+ communities within their organisation and externally with the broader community
* Actively promote, advocate and celebrate diversity and inclusion, including First Nations People
* Commit to long-term support for Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and/or LGBTQIA+ community organisations
* Promote the safety and wellbeing of the global LGBTQIA+ community
* Honour, preserve and celebrate LGBTQIA+ history and achievements

**American Express** (AMEX) was the Principal Partner for the Sydney WorldPride festival and will continue to partner with Sydney Mardi Gras in 2024. With unwavering dedication, AMEX was an invaluable collaborator, embracing the causes championed by Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras standing side by side with us 365 days a year. We are grateful for their ongoing support and collaboration.

Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras joined forces with another 31 corporate partners for the 2023 event, welcoming Coles Group as Presenting Partner and Optus as the Premier Network Partner.

The top tiered partners’ major highlights included the American Express stage at Fair Day and Pride Villages, American Express VIP Marquee at Domain Concerts, Coles Group BBQ after the Pride March and support of the First Nations Roadshow across Australia and the Optus Arena at Fair Day.

Major Partners included the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation), the official broadcast partner promoting both the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade on Oxford Street and the Live and Proud: Sydney WorldPride Opening Concert to both local and international audiences. Deloitte became the Research and Insights Partner associated with the Human Rights Conference, and travel insurance company Cover-More supported the international scholarship program.

Qantas has a long-standing history with Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras as the official airline partner alongside W Hotels as the official accommodation partner. Booking.com joined the Sydney WorldPride stable of partners as the world’s leading digital travel company promoting ‘Travel Proud’ – transforming LGBTQIA+ travel worldwide and Proctor and Gamble created a series of impactful video content series focusing on underrepresented voices within the LGBTQIA+ communities.

Sydney Airport and oOh!Media assisted in marketing Sydney WorldPride campaigns and welcoming interstate and international guests to Sydney. Partnerships with digital platforms Google, TikTok, Meta and Canva assisted in creating and distributing content and advocating the LGBTQIA+ community to a global audience.

Beverage partners included Archie Rose, Little Creatures, Absolut, Squealing Pig, RedBull, Johnnie Walker, Casamigos Tequila and Coca-Cola.

Our sporting apparel partner Under Armour created a bespoke pride range and supported the WorldPride community sports program whilst MECCA MAX as the colour make-up partner activated across various events and provided talent and audience interaction with the brand. Oreo created a bespoke rainbow cookie, Durex promoted sexual lifestyle products whilst Douglas Hanly Moir advocated STI and other medical testing to the LGBTQIA+ community.

MINI’s branded vehicles could be seen driving across Sydney in addition to activating at major event sites. Sydney WorldPride engaged the legal services of Herbert Smith Freehills whilst MinterEllison continued their on-going partnership with Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

Corporate partners executed 360-degree campaigns that included staff engagement initiatives via Pride networks, creation of bespoke products, integrated marketing and brand campaigns and on-site activations at Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Official events.

These partnerships have placed an unparalleled spotlight on the LGBTQIA+ community in Australia and on the global stage. They have demonstrated corporate leadership in their commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion both within the workplace and broader community.

Legacy

Sydney WorldPride encouraged attendees to envision a better future for all while using the platform to strengthen advocacy for marginalized communities.

The festival's cornerstone event, the Human Rights Conference, brought together thousands of individuals from over 60 countries, allowing it to represent diverse LGBTQIA+ experiences from across the globe. This Conference shed light on the progress made and challenges faced in the Asia Pacific region, fostering lasting collaborations among LGBTQIA+ communities, allies, state and federal governments, business and philanthropy.

The focus on LGBTQIA+ inclusion also emphasised the need for investment in our communities at a domestic and regional level. At the Sydney WorldPride Human Rights Conference, the Federal Government announced a substantial $26 million investment in healthcare and medical research and 10-year national LGBTQIA+ health plan, specifically supporting LGBTQIA+ individuals, together with policy commitments to advance LGBTQIA+ human rights in our region and beyond. At the state and territory level, a multipartisan commitment was made to end so-called 'conversion' therapy, and the ACT announced it would legislate to protect intersex people from unnecessary medical treatment. These commitments followed intensive advocacy by LGBTQIA+ community organisations and underscore the festival’s role as a platform to generate positive policy and legal change.

Sydney WorldPride magnified the contributions of community leaders, minority groups, and small businesses. Independent organizations delivered events through Sydney WorldPride under the Pride Amplified program.

The Official events organised by Sydney WorldPride and the annual program produced by Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras collectively contributed a total value add of $185.6 million into the New South Wales economy. This highlights the economic significance of LGBTQIA+ celebrations and why these events should be championed.

Festival Survey results revealed a positive shift in the attitudes of attendees towards LGBTQIA+ individuals and a better understanding of the challenges faced by the Asia Pacific community. Approximately three out of four attendees, both LGBTQIA+ individuals and allies, reported learning something new about a community within the LGBTQIA+ spectrum, reflecting the educational impact and importance of the event.

Sydney WorldPride had an early vision of what the festival could leave as positive, tangible and lasting impacts across the community. Legacy outcomes were identified for the following groups / areas:

* **InterPride**
* **Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras**
* **Sydney, New South Wales and Australia**
* **First Nations**
* **Human Rights Conference**
* **LGBTQIA+ Community**

*“WorldPride was a gift to Sydney and to our LGBTQI+ community, one whose legacy will continue to strengthen our values of fairness and equality. Today our Parliament says thank you.”*   
**- Alex Greenwich, Member for Sydney NSW Parliament**

*“We will all leave here with a deeper understanding of the work that needs to be done… You’ve shown the world how an empowered diverse community is central to a more peaceful and prosperous world. I’m looking forward to the sharing that will happen with First Nations people in the United States.”*

**– Caroline Kennedy, U.S. Ambassador to Australia**

InterPride

* Strengthened the global pride network and the reach of InterPride
* Increased the commercial value of WorldPride to InterPride and future host cities
* Provided a positive experience for sponsors and partners
* Created a festival template for future host cities
* Relevant event project management information was passed on to future hosts
* Provided resource material for future WorldPride events to use to deliver great events, including playbooks and "lessons learned" summaries
* Increase the number of InterPride members globally but in particular within the Asia-Pacific region

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras

Deliverables and outcomes:

* Provided a financial surplus
* Increased the subscriber database
* Three-year partnership deals (creating financial certainty for Sydney Mardi Gras); including the transfer of partnerships knowledge and expertise
* Jointly developed Ethical Charter for partnership arrangements
* Handover information for future WorldPride hosts and Sydney Mardi Gras
* Deeper relationship with other pride organisations around the world and with the InterPride Network, including an international roadshow with Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Mardi Gras staff and boards
* International perspective to local issues
* Established new relationships with other parts of Government, including at a federal level and with other state based departments
* Expanded program across Sydney and the New South Wales Region

Sydney, New South Wales and Australia

* Deliver the “event that reopens Sydney to the world” after the pandemic and associated negative publicity overseas
* Support the NSW Government in its drive to make Sydney The Event Capital of Asia-Pacific
* Promoted Sydney and Australia as a hub for LGBTQIA+ people from across the Asia Pacific and the globe
* Promoted LGBTQIA+ led and owned businesses to improve community capacity and experience, particularly through Pride Villages
* Provided an event to showcase Sydney’s natural attractions: fabulous beaches, unique wildlife, fantastically varied landscapes and glorious summer weather

First Nations

* Strong elements of Sydney WorldPride 2023 delivered by and reflecting the issues of Global First nations people
* Co-design of program with First Nations people, particularly Australian First Nations
* First Nations Message Stick handover to First Nations people of next Host city, placing the inclusion of First Nations people in the Human Rights Conference and WorldPride in future.
* Setting up Cultural standards and Protocols in place at Sydney WorldPride and future WorldPride and Human Rights Conferences
* First dedicated First Nations Program and physical hub Marri Madung Butbut
* First dedicated First Nations queer event ever to be held at Sydney Opera House
* First Nations Advisory Committee now joined to be Advisory to Sydney Mardi Gras
* The inclusion of the official Sydney WorldPride theme song, ‘We the People’ by Electric Fields, at Handover and then debuted live at Live and Proud: Sydney WorldPride Opening Concert
* The contribution of First Nations Drag Queens Nana Miss Koori and Miss Ellaneous, from the Bid phase and their active involvement all throughout the planning and delivery of the festival.
* Nungala Creative (Jessica Johnson) designing the logo, visual identity and costumes for Sydney WorldPride, showcasing First Nations design internationally.
* Welcome to Country following Cultural protocol

Human Rights Conference

* The Human Rights Conference secured its place in history as the centrepiece of the first WorldPride festival ever to be held in the Southern Hemisphere. Our communities came together and brought to the world’s attention vital LGBTQIA+ issues, shining a spotlight on injustices in every corner of the globe, hearing about lived experiences first-hand and giving a voice to the marginalised.
* Australian Governments used the platform to make significant announcements that will drive change for LGBTIQA+ people on the ground both at home and in our region, responding to concerted and strategic advocacy by LGBTQIA+ community organisations in the months and years leading up to the festival.
* Caucuses, receptions, and multilateral meetings connected law and policy makers with the leaders of our movement, building momentum for change the world over.
* The format of the Conference was cutting edge, immersive and experiential whilst also being accessible, safe, and inclusive.
* We listened and learned and left this landmark event informed, inspired and ready for the challenges ahead. Together, we laid new ground to help build a world where all of us are safe, free, and equal.

LGBTQIA+ Community

* Promoted the visibility and rights of LGBTQIA+ people globally and within the Asia Pacific
* Provided a Scholarship program allowing human rights activists from across the globe, and particularly Asia Pacific, to attend Sydney WorldPride
* Representation of Asia Pacific cultures across the program of events
* Elevated the voices of Australian LGBTQIA+ artists with a focus on First Nations LGBTQIA+ artists

Rainbow Champions

From high-profile figures to grass-roots change-makers, Sydney WorldPride celebrated 45 influential figures from across Australia’s diverse LGBTQIA+ family, chosen for their contributions to Australian LGBTQIA+ community and culture and their work in promoting the rights and interests of LGBTQIA+ communities everywhere.

The 45 Rainbow Champions represent the 45 years since the first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, which took place on 24 June 1978.

Narelda Jacobs (she/her)

Peter de Waal (he/him

Rudy Jean Rigg (they/them)

Katherine Wolfgramme (she/her)

Deborah Cheetham (she/her)

Steven Oliver (he/him)

Steph Lum (they/them)

Caroline Bowditch (she/her)

Keiynan Lonsdale (he/him)

Jessica Johnson (she/her)

Kerry Chin (he/him)

Crystal Love (she/her)

William Yang (he/him)

Lawrence Bing (he/him)

Jane Marsden (she/her)

Jojo Zaho (she/her)

Zoe Terakes (they/he)

Chloe Logarzo (she/her)

G Flip (they/them)

Fran Kelly (she/her)

Casey Donovan (she/her)

Mo’Ju (they/she)

Trevor Ashley (he/her/she/him)

Alex The Astronaut (she/her)

Jordan Raskopoulos (she/her)

David Parsons (he/him)

Courtney Act (she/her)

Magda Szubanski AO (she/her)

Maria Thattil (she/her)

Teddy Cook (he/him)

Mon Schafter (they/them)

Paul Capsis (he/him)

Katie Brennan (she/her)

Vanity (she/her)

Daniel McDonald (he/him)

Deni Todorovic (they/them)

Bhenji Ra (she/her)

Josh Cavallo (he/him)

Joel Creasey (he/him)

Kylie Kwong (she/her)

Patrick Abboud (he/him)

Electric Fields

Georgie Stone (she/her)

Ian Thorpe (he/him)

Robyn Lambird (they/them)

Thanks and Acknowledgements

The Boards and Executive Team of both Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras would like to pay special thanks to the staff of both organisations without whom this Festival would not have come to life. Every individual contributes their own lived experiences and expertise, and the breadth of the diversity was evidenced by the positive feedback provided not only by the LGBTQIA+ community but the Sydney community more broadly.

Sydney WorldPride

* **Board of Directors**   
  Damien Hodgkinson (he/him) CHAIR   
  Amanda Lampe (she/her) DEPUTY CHAIR  
  Margy Osmond (she/her) DEPUTY CHAIR  
  Abs Osseiran (he/him) SGLMG REPRESENTATIVE  
  Adrian Phoon (he/him)   
  Charmaine Belfanti (she/her) COMPANY SECRETARY   
  Giovanni Campolo-Arcidiaco (he/him) SGLMG REPRESENTATIVE  
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  Phillipa Harrison (she/her)   
  Steven Satour (he/him)   
  Sue Pinckham (she/her)
* **Executive Team**  
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  Gabriel Pinkstone (she/her) CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER   
  Dave Berry (he/him) CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER   
  Alex Daoust (he/him) EXECUTIVE PRODUCER   
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  Brooke Ravens (she/her) DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIPS AND SALES   
  Daniel Clarke (he/him) FESTIVAL CREATIVE DIRECTOR – WORLDPRIDE ARTS   
  Lauren Winters (she/her) HEAD OF PEOPLE AND CULTURE   
  Natasha Smale (she/her) FINANCIAL CONTROLLER   
  Naureen Shah (she/her) EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE CEO   
  Scott Dawkins (he/him) DIRECTOR OF MARKETING   
  Sophie Curtis (she/her) HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras

* **Board of Directors**   
  Giovanni Campolo-Arcidiaco (he/him) CHAIR  
  Abs Osseiran (he/him)  
  Brandon Bear (he/they)  
  Charmaine Belfanti (she/her) COMPANY SECRETARY   
  Jan Hutton (she/her)Louis Hudson (he/him)Mel Schwerdt (she/her)  
  Skip Blofield (he/him/they/them)
* **Executive Team**  
  Albert Kruger (he/him) CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER   
  Gil Beckwith (she/her) CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER   
  Bianca Blancato (she/her) HEAD OF FESTIVAL MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS   
  PJ Gahan (he/him) DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS AND PROGRAMMING   
  Samantha Hans (she/her) HEAD OF PARTNERSHIPS   
  Soane Tupou (he/him) EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT / OFFICE MANAGER

Committees

* **First Nations Advisory Committee (FNAC)**  
  The role of the FNAC is to advise and make recommendations to Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras on matters relating to First Nations programming. Their work with SGLMG will continue into the future.
* **Pride Committee**  
  The Pride Committee provided strategic advice to the Board to help Sydney WorldPride fulfil its commitment to the diversity and inclusion of our LGBTQIA+ communities.
* **Nominations Committee**  
  The role of the Nominations Committee is to make recommendations to the Board about proposed appointments of Directors and Committee members and advising the Board of the CEO’s remuneration.
* **Risk and Planning Committee**  
  Tasked with assisting the Board in discharging its responsibilities including considering and reviewing operational planning and activities and the risks arising including terrorism risk.

**Audit and Finance Committee**  
Constitution to assist the Board in discharging its statutory and regulatory responsibilities with regards to finance and audit matters.

First Nations Roadshow

The following organisations either attended or received communications about the First Nations Roadshow, as well as a variety of First Nations media organisations and First Nations owned and operated venues.

* VIC - Koorie Pride Victoria
* NSW - Moogahlin Performing Arts Inc
* SA - Moolagoo Mob & Blak Lemons
* ACT - National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)
* QLD - Sistergirls & Brotherboys
* NT - 2Spirits
* National - Sisters & Brothers NT
* National - Take Blaktion
* NSW - BLaQ Aboriginal Corporation
* National - ACON Aboriginal Project
* ACT - ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQI Network
* NT - Black Rainbow
* WA - First People's Rainbow Mob WA
* QLD - Haus of BlackStar
* QLD – IndigiLez

Pride Villages

* **Community Hub**78ers

Girl Guides

Rainbow Families  
Rainbow Shoelace Project  
SWOP NSW

Sydney Gaymers

The Scarlett Alliance

* **First Nations Community Space**  
  ACON  
  NSW Health

**InterPride Hub**

* Capital Pride Washington DC - WorldPride 2025
* Chicago Pride
* Inclusive Bangladesh
* Mazz Images
* Pride in London
* Queer Britain Museum
* San Diego Pride
* Stichting Pride Amsterdam - WorldPride 2026

WorldPride Arts

The WorldPride Arts program was possible thanks to the generous support of the NSW Government through Create NSW. We also thank the Australia Council for the Arts, the many funders of specific projects and the extensive support of our arts partners.

WorldPride Sports

* Bentstix Hockey Club on behalf of PinkHockey International
* Different Strokes Dragon Boat Club
* Emerald City Kickball
* Flying Bats Football Club and Sydney Rangers Football Club
* Gay and Lesbian Martial Arts
* GSquash
* Harbour Lights Ice Hockey and LGBT Ice Hockey Australia
* Inner West Roller Derby League
* Queer Sporting Alliance
* Rainbow Racquets Squash Sydney
* Sydney Frontrunners
* Sydney Rainbow Golfers
* Sydney Rams Tenpin Bowling Club
* Sydney Roller Derby League
* Sydney Silverbacks Wrestling Club
* Sydney Stingers Water Polo Club and Wett Ones Swimming Club
* World Gay Boxing Championships Limited

Festival Collaborators

* Accredit Solutions
* ACES
* ACON
* A List Travel Group
* ALG Management Pty Ltd
* A&P Artist Management
* Ann Jeffery – Catering Consultant
* Creative Artists Agency (CAA)
* CSM Live
* DanceWize NSW
* Fire and Rescue NSW
* Foti Fireworks
* Great + Small Studio
* George Savoulis
* Inner City Legal Centre (ICLC)
* Inside Out Agency
* ISEC Security
* IVE Group
* Liquour and Gaming NSW
* Mardi Gras Medical
* M&C Saatchi Sport & Entertainment
* MoshTix
* Motti & Smith Events
* Northbourne Group
* North Sydney Council
* Norwest
* NSW Ambulance
* NSW Health
* NSW Police Force
* Original Spin
* Planetdwellers
* Playbill Venues
* SEC Newgate
* Sheraton on the Park
* Sheridan Consulting
* Smile Marketing
* Sydney Trains
* Sydney Water
* The Eagle Sydney
* This is Ikon
* The Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust
* The Thread Shop
* Ticketmaster
* Transport for NSW
* Trent Titmarsh
* United Talent Agency
* Wallop Water
* Wats On Events
* Who Dares
* WME Agency

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Thanks to our Valued Partners

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* **Festival & Venue Partners:**   
  Australia Council for the Arts  
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  Darlinghurst Business Partnership   
  Darlinghurst Theatre Company  
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  Original Spin   
  Potts Point Partnership   
  Queer Screen   
  Seymour Centre   
  Sydney Fringe Festival   
  Sydney Opera House   
  University of Sydney   
  University of Technology Sydney  
  Waverley Council

Special Thanks

Thank you to the entire Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras team, who worked tirelessly rom developing the winning bid to secure the hosting rights for WorldPride, including planning, preparation and assisting in the delivery of a truly unforgettable festival.

WorldPride is licensed by InterPride and promotes visibility and awareness of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) issues on an international level.

Special thanks to all our amazing volunteers who made Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Sydney WorldPride fabulous!

Thank you to all our partners, suppliers, friends and families, and our spectacular staff across both Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Sydney WorldPride.

This festival guide was designed by Andy Hearne and project managed by Regina San Juan, with the support of Stephen Russell, Marie Shultz and staff across the broader Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Sydney WorldPride teams. It was printed with the support of IVE Group, Allkotes, Touchkote Laminate, Goldcraft Embossing, and Ball & Doggett.

Sydney WorldPride 2023 would not have been possible without the support of the countless people who shared our vision and were committed to bringing this phenomenal global event to life. We thank them for their time, expertise and support throughout this incredible four-year journey and are deeply proud of the outcomes achieved and connections fostered as a result of this historic event.

Event Map

From Bridge to Beach  
February 17 – March 5, 2023

Sydney WorldPride and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Official events that took place across the city during Sydney WorldPride 2023.

For more information head to: [www.mardigras.org.au](http://www.mardigras.org.au)

1. Mardi Gras Fair Day Presented by American Express  
   Victoria Park — Sun 19 Feb
2. Marri Madung Butbut / First Nations Gathering Space

Carriageworks — Thu 23 Feb – Tue 28 Feb

1. Pride Villages

Crown and Riley Streets – Fri 24 Feb – Sun 5 Mar

1. Live and Proud: Sydney WorldPride Opening Concert Presented by American Express  
   The Domain — Fri 24 Feb
2. Mardi Gras Parade  
   Oxford Street — Sat 25 Feb
3. Mardi Gras Party  
   Hordern Pavilion, Liberty Hall, Watson’s, Mary’s EQ and The Entertainment Quarter — Sat 25 Feb
4. Mardi Gras Laneway  
   The Beresford and Hill Street — Sun 26 Feb
5. Domain Dance Party  
   The Domain — Sun 26 Feb
6. Sydney WorldPride Human Rights Conference  
   ICC Sydney — Wed 1 Mar – Fri 3 Mar
7. Blak & Deadly: The First Nations Gala Concert

Sydney Opera House — Thu 2 Mar

1. Ultra Violet

Sydney Town Hall — Fri 3 Mar

1. Mardi Gras Sissy Ball  
   Sydney Town Hall — Sat 4 Mar
2. Bondi Beach Party Presented by Optus  
   Bondi Beach — Sat 4 Mar
3. Pride March  
   Sydney Harbour Bridge — Sun 5 Mar
4. Rainbow Republic Presented by Optus  
   The Domain — Sun 5 Mar

Source Materials

**Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and Sydney WorldPride ticket sales:** Data for Official events comes from Sydney Mardi Gras and Sydney WorldPride official ticketing provider reporting (MoshTix, Ticketmasker, Ticketkek, Sydney Opera House/Tessitura).

Sydney Mardi Gras and Sydney WorldPride Official free events: Attendance data comes from various crowd counting across event sites.

WorldPride Arts: Ticket sales and free attendance are self-reported by producer/promoter organisations from ticketing provider data and estimations of free event attendance.

WorldPride Sports: Sales/attendance data for WorldPride Sports is self-reported by Sports organisations from ticketing provider data, participant data and estimations of free attendance/participation.

Pride Amplified: Attendance at Pride Amplified events was conservatively estimated by Sydney WorldPride based on informal information provided by

promoters/producers and the following calculation: 30% sales/attendance for events under 500pax; 75% sales/attendance for events over 500pax.

Viewing: ABC viewing stats provided by ABC (broadcast and iView combined); Human Rights Conference stats include Joyn (livestreaming platform) and ABC iView. Viewing stats do not include YouTube/socials.

Social and Economic Impact: Data provided by Deloitte Access Economics.

Sydney was proud to have hosted the first WorldPride in the Southern Hemisphere in 2023 – a party with purpose.

A year of special significance, 2023 also marked 35 years of progress, pride and community for Sydney Mardi Gras, one of the largest pride movements in the world.

The mission of Sydney Mardi Gras continues, working for inclusion and equality year-round and into the future for our LGBTQIA+ family.

mardigras.com.au