

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras 2024

Parade Participant Visual Story



WHAT IS A VISUAL STORY?

- Visual stories are used to prepare a person for and increase the predictability of a new environment or situation.
- This helps bring familiarity to a process and to reduce anxiety and stress.
- This visual story is written in plain English and uses pictures to make it accessible for everyone.
- Developed in partnership with Autism Spectrum Australia

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ABOUT MARDI GRAS

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (SGLMG) is an LGBTQIA+ organisation that hosts the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade and Festival. There are also other events and supportive initiatives throughout the year.

SGLMG began in 1978 as a political protest for equality and now:

- celebrates LGBTQIA+ identity
- advocates for equality
- promotes diverse voices

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras was established on the values of acceptance and inclusion. We are dedicated to making it an accessible and inclusive event for all visitors.



ABOUT MARDI GRAS PARADE:

The Mardi Gras Parade is:

- A celebration of LGBTQIA+ people and allies
- An opportunity for LGBTQIA+ people to connect with each other
- Held on multiple streets in the city that follows some of the route of the original protestors.



OUR FUTURE...

2024 Theme: No future, is a match for a future, where we're together...

No future, is a match for a future, where we're together...

The 2024 Festival will call on our communities to imagine and demand the world for ourselves we rightfully deserve under the theme *Our Future...*

Our Future... beckons all to participate, influence, and champion LGBTQIA+ causes. It's a chance to look forward while honouring the past, and will be a testament to the power of coming together to manifest endless possibilities.

"Our Future... is not just a theme but a call to action, a bold invitation to define and shape our path forward as a community. It acknowledges our past, but encourages us to envision what comes next. It's a statement that is open to interpretation and engagement, irrespective of geographical location or physical attendance. It's our collective journey and story to share."

Gil Beckwith, Acting CEO of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

WHEN AND WHERE IS PARADE?

- The Mardi Gras Parade will happen on Saturday 2nd of March 2024
- **3:00pm:** The Marshalling Area opens
- The Marshalling Area is located at Hyde Park. This is where I will meet my float and the other people marching with me. My float organizer will tell me what time to arrive.
- **6:45pm:** Smoking Ceremony and Dykes on Bikes

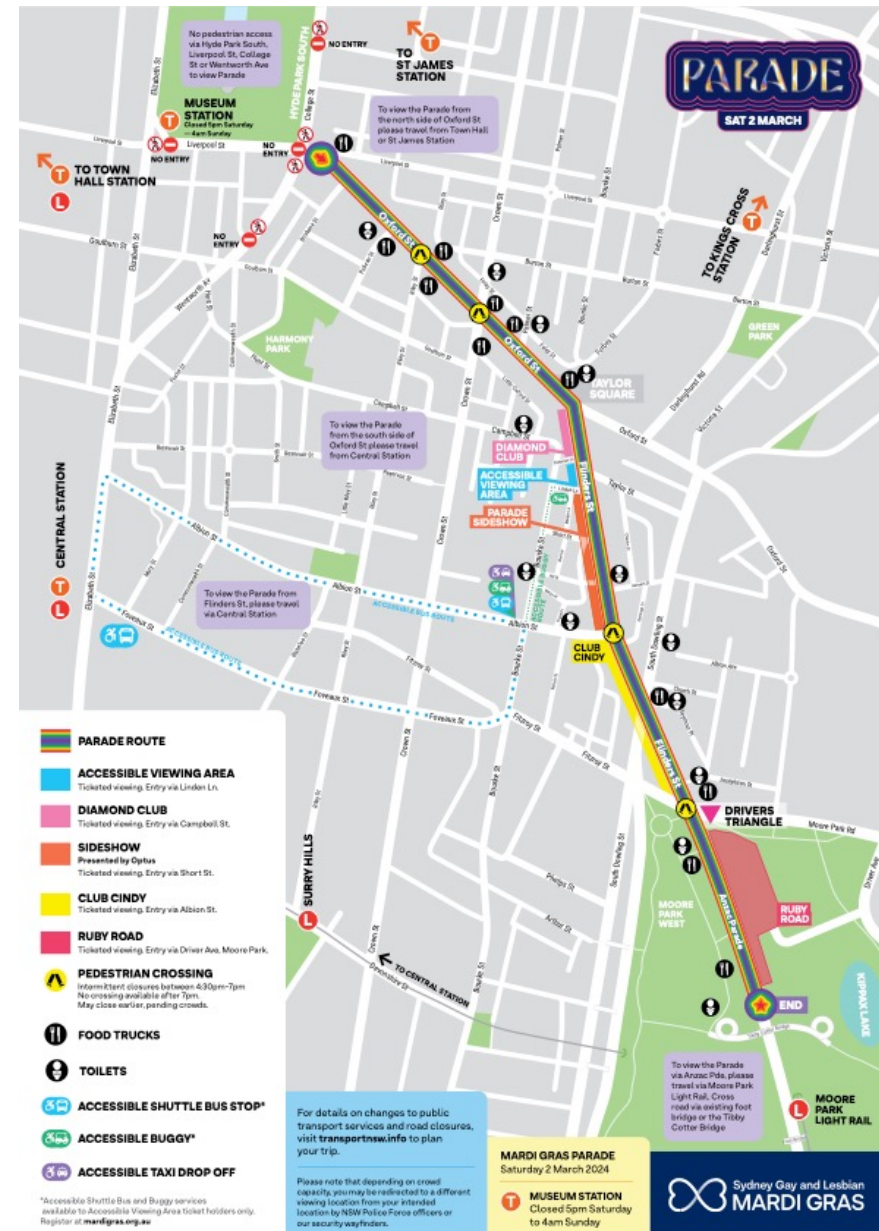
Before the parade, there will be a Smoking Ceremony. Then Dykes on Bikes will ride their motorbikes along the parade route.

- **7:30pm:** Parade starts

The parade will start at Hyde Park. Parade floats and participants will travel along Oxford St, Flinders St and Anzac Parade.

- **11:00pm:** Parade ends

All parade participants and spectators will leave



ACCESSIBILITY AT THE PARADE:

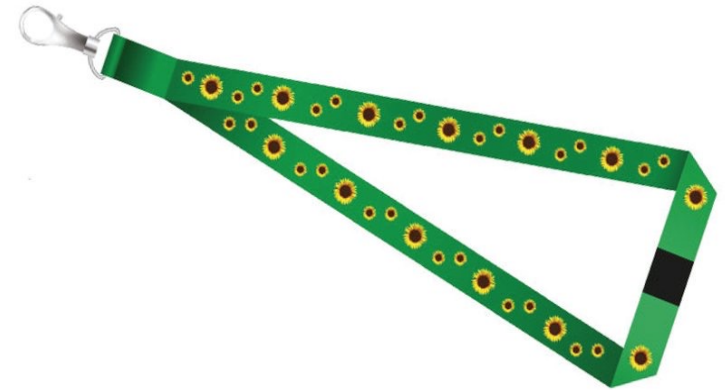
Mardi Gras have worked to ensure that the Parade is as accessible as possible.

Accessibility features include:

- Accessible drop off area for parade participants
- Wheelchair accessible toilets
- Assistance animals are welcome.
- A Quiet Space available in the marshalling area for people who feel overwhelmed or need a break
- Hidden Disability Sunflower Lanyards are recognized at the event.
Event staff are trained to identify and support people wearing the lanyard

If I need more information about accessibility I can:

- call 02 9383 0900 or
- email accessibility@mardigrasarts.org.au
- Visit <https://www.mardigras.org.au/parade-accessibility>



PLANNING MY JOURNEY:

I will plan my journey to and from the parade before the event.

Driving

- There won't be any parking near the parade route. I can get someone to drop me off at a street nearby and walk to the Parade.

Public Transport

- I can plan my trip on the TransportNSW website transportnsw.info/sydney-mardi-gras-parade
- I will tap on & off when using public transport.
- It will be busy, with lots of people, so I might have to wait, or give myself extra time to get to the Parade.

L Light Rail

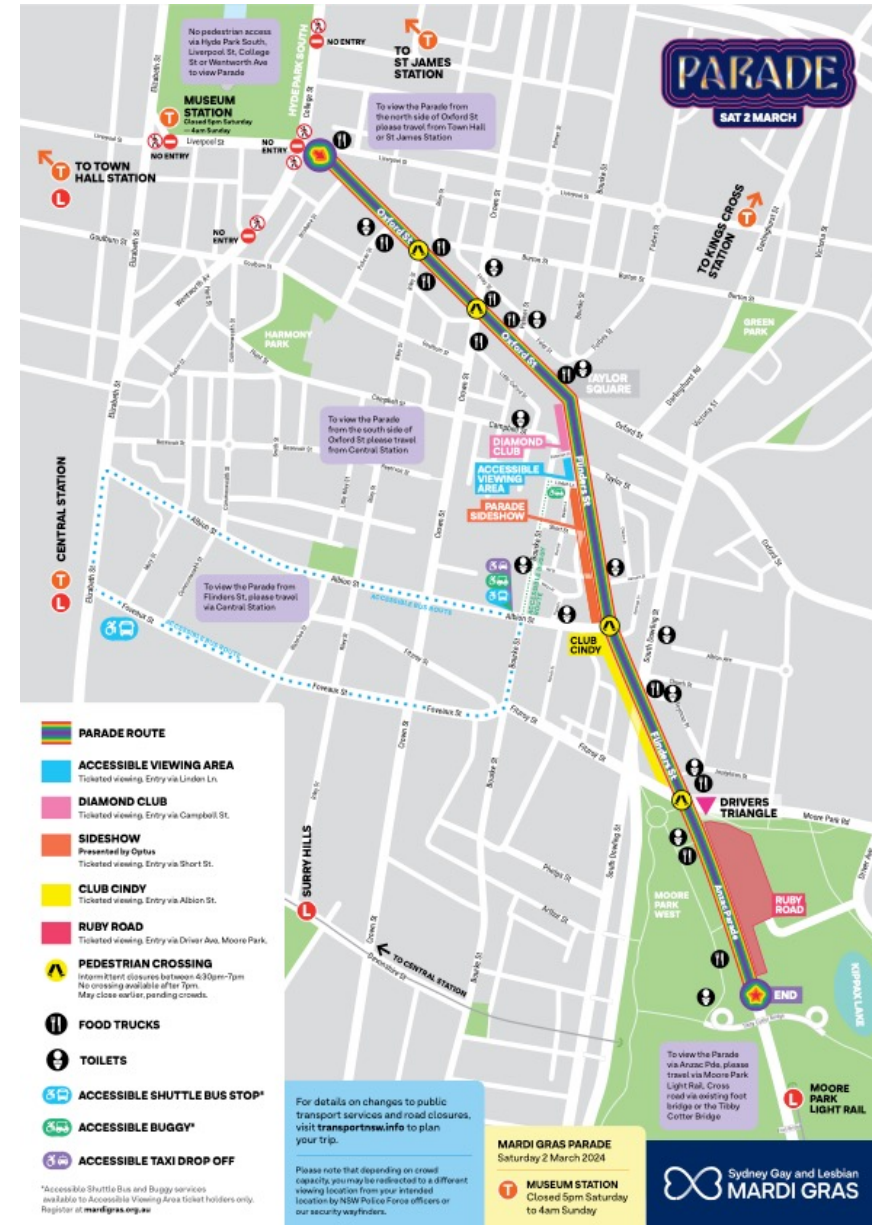
I can catch the light rail to Central and walk or wheel to the Parade.

B Bus

I can catch a bus to Central or Albion Street and walk the rest of the way.
I can catch the free accessible shuttle bus from Central station to get closer to the Parade.
Details for this are on the next page.

T Trains:

I can catch a train to Central Station or Town Hall Station and walk or wheel to the Parade.



WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

The Sydney Mardi Gras Parade is an outdoor event. I will check the weather conditions on the day.

If it is going to be a sunny day, I could bring:

- A hat
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen

If it is a rainy day, I could bring:

- Warm and weatherproof clothing
- Plastic ponchos

If the Parade is delayed or cancelled due to severe weather conditions, Sydney Mardi Gras will let me know via social media.

I can follow Sydney Mardi Gras on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram for the latest updates and information.

I should also bring:

- A phone with key contacts saved, and an “In Case of Emergency” (I.C.E) phone number stored
- Name and contact details of my float organiser
- Anything that may help me to cope with crowds, lights and noise (e.g. headphones, earplugs, visor/sunglasses, sensory items)
- A refillable water bottle, and preferred food and drinks
- Something to do while I wait (e.g. a device, games or books)
- A Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard or wristband (if I have one)
- Phone charging device



WHAT NOT TO BRING -

There are things that I am not allowed to bring to the parade.

This is to keep everyone safe.

Things that I am not allowed to bring include:

- Alcohol
- Fireworks or Explosives (includes flares and sparklers)
- Illegal Drugs or Substances of any kind (prescription medication is OK)
- Promotional Material including Banners, Stickers, Signs and Flyers
- Any materials that display racist, sexist or homophobic attitudes
- Weapons of any kind
- Glass bottles/items



BEFORE THE PARADE -

Entering the Marshalling Area

I will need to check-in at the Marshalling Area at Hyde Park. When I arrive at Hyde Park, I can follow the signs to the entrance.

I can use the accessible entrance if I have a disability and need extra time or support or find waiting in the line difficult. If I need to use the accessible entrance, I can follow the signs to find it, or ask security. When I get to the accessible entrance, I will let the security guard know that I need to use this entrance.

Checking in

When I am checking in, I will need to show the QR code ticket that I have been sent. Only people participating in the parade are allowed into the Marshalling Area. A security guard will check inside my bag to make sure that I don't have anything that I shouldn't. Then I will be given a wristband.

Once I have my wristband, I can exit and re-enter the Marshalling Area until 7pm using the same gate I entered. I must be back in the Marshalling Area before 7pm, otherwise I will be locked out and won't be able to participate in the parade.

MARSHALLING AREA MAP -

The Marshalling Area Map will be available in January 2024.

THE MASHALLING AREA -

The Marshalling Area is where all the parade participants will wait before they march. These are some of the things that I should know about the Marshalling Area.

Food and Drink

There will be food trucks where I can buy food and non-alcoholic drinks. There will also be a water station where I can refill my water bottle or drink from the bubblers. I can bring my own food, snacks and drinks if I like. I am not allowed to bring any alcohol.

While I wait

I might be waiting for a while before the parade starts. While I wait, I can go and look at other people's costumes. I can also bring a device or games to use, or a book to read.

First Aid

There will be ambulances and first aid support available. If I need help, I can go to the First Aid tent, or call 000. I can also download the 'What 3 Words' App. This can help emergency services to locate me if I or someone near me needs help.

Police

There will be police officers located in the Marshalling Area, inside the Anzac Memorial. I will see police officers coming and going.

ABOUT THE QUIET ROOM

- The **Quiet Space** is located in the Marshalling Area.
- The **Quiet Space** is for anyone who may feel overwhelmed and need a calm space to recover.
- It is a relaxing and supportive environment to calm down if I feel overwhelmed or feel safe to meltdown.
- The room is supported by Aspect volunteers who are trained in supporting people with hidden disabilities. It is a relaxing and supportive environment to calm down if I feel overwhelmed.

The Quiet Space has:

- Seating and bean bags
- Low lighting
- Stimming / fidget toys
- Earplugs if things are too noisy for me
- Bottled Water
- Charging stations for devices
- Signage about expected use of the space and how to get help
- I can ask security or Mardi Gras staff to help me find the Quiet Space.



PARADE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS -

- I can exit and re-enter the Marshalling Area until 7pm. I must be back in the Marshalling Area before 7pm, otherwise I will be locked out and won't be able to participate in the parade.
- I must be with my float group or vehicle 1 hour before our scheduled time to start the parade.
- My float organiser will show me where to meet my float/vehicle. It will either be on College Street, Liverpool Street or Wentworth Avenue.
- I cannot return to the marshalling area after I have marched in the parade, so I should make sure to take everything with me.
- Sydney Mardi Gras Volunteers will tell us when it is time for us to start marching.
- Then it is time for us celebrate, dance, sing and enjoy marching in the parade!

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

What I will see during the parade:

- People of all ages
- Same-sex or non-binary couples
- People who do not appear as either male or female
- Groups of people marching along the street
- Brightly coloured floats
- People in costumes (some might not be wearing much clothing)
- Some nudity
- People hugging and kissing
- People dancing, yelling and singing
- Drunk people
- Security, police and ambulance paramedics. They are here to keep me safe
- Cameras from the media and the general public taking pictures of me and my float



BEFORE LEAVING...

Some sensory experiences I might notice during the parade include:

- Fireworks and bright lights
- Smoke effects
- Confetti
- Announcements over speakers
- Loud music and performances
- Sirens from emergency services vehicles
- Loud Helicopters
- Crowd noise (e.g. singing, chanting, cheering and shouting over the music)
- Busyness and crowding, or people very close to me
- Smells from food vendors
- People from the crowd trying to touch me
- Walking for two kilometers along the parade route (that's a lot of walking!)

WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

Parade teams and Parade volunteers:

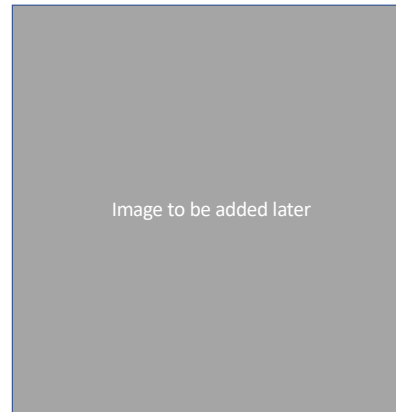
If I feel sick, overwhelmed or tired, I should ask security or volunteers for help. They will be along both sides of the parade route. I will not stop, or try to get out of the parade, as this is unsafe. I should also listen to security and volunteers and follow their directions. They are here to keep me safe. Parade volunteers will be wearing different coloured shirts, depending on their role. This includes:



First Aid: someone needs immediate medical attention, I need to notify Parade volunteers or security. They will help to organise medical teams who are located on site. If I request help, I must make sure that I can be easily found by medical teams.



Security: are here to keep me safe. They are also trained to identify that people wearing a Sunflower Lanyard might need a bit of extra time, support or understanding.



Quiet Room: the Quiet Space. I can let them know if I need help. They are trained to support people with hidden disabilities and can help to organise medical teams if needed.



Mardi Gras Volunteers: I can ask Mardi Gras staff if I need help, or if I am lost.

AFTER THE PARADE -

The parade will end on Anzac Parade. I will be directed to Driver Avenue, outside of the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG).

At Driver Avenue, there will be:

- Food Trucks where I can buy food
- Water Station where I can refill my water bottle or drink from the bubblers.
- Toilets and Accessible Toilets
- First Aid Tent, if I feel sick or overwhelmed

If I have any questions, or need any help I can ask the Mardi Gras volunteers.

LEAVING THE PARADE -

I will plan how to get home before I attend the parade. I can plan my trip on the TransportNSW website transportnsw.info/sydney-mardi-gras-parade

It will be very busy, with lots of people trying to leave at the same time. I might need to line up or wait to catch public transport. I will do my best to stay patient.

TIPS FOR TRAVEL -

- The closest Light Rail station is Moore Park.
- The closest train station is Central Station.
- There won't be many buses available.
- It might be hard to find a taxi or rideshare.

HAPPY MARDI GRAS!