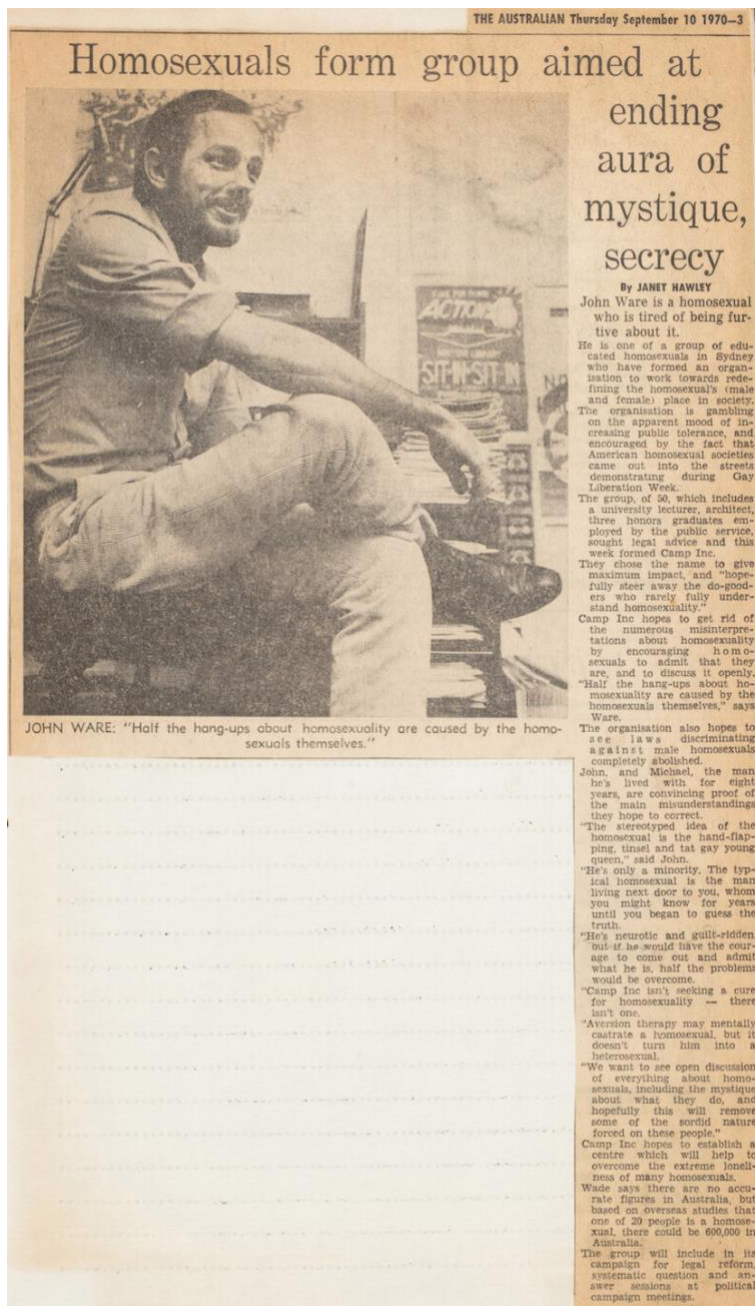


Source 1: Article in The Australian newspaper, 10th September 1970, by Janet Hawley.



In this article, published in The Australian newspaper on 10th September 1970, activist John Ware announced the founding of 'CAMP Inc.'. 'CAMP' stands for 'Campaign Against Moral Persecution'. As explained in the article, the initial goals of CAMP Inc. were to challenge misconceptions about homosexuality, to encourage LGBTQ+ people to 'come out', to offer support and community to LGBTQ+ people who might be feeling isolated, and to push for law reform (male homosexuality was still illegal in 1970). Shortly after this article was published, CAMP set up their headquarters in the Inner

West, on unceded Gadigal and Wangal land. According to [ACON](#) (a prominent Australian LGBTQ+ organisation offering support to people living with HIV), "CAMP Inc played an instrumental role in raising the visibility of lesbian and gay people in NSW, advocating for their rights, and supporting the mental health of the community".

Source 2: Article in The Australian newspaper, 19th September 1970, by Janet Hawley.



A second article was published in The Australian nine days after the article in Source 1. Journalist Janet Hawley spoke to Christabel Poll and John Ware about why they were creating CAMP Inc., as well as discussing issues that homosexuals faced at that time. For Christabel Poll and John Ware (CAMP's first co-presidents), 'outing' themselves (i.e. publicly declaring themselves gay/lesbian) was a very

brave and radical act as it was still uncommon for people to speak publicly about being homosexual. Other foundation members of CAMP included Inner West residents (and lifelong activists) Peter de Waal and Peter 'Bon' Bonsall Boone (who you can read more about in Sources 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 50, and 52). This article included contact details for CAMP Inc. and within a year the group had 1,500 members, according to the [Australian Queer Archives](#).

Image via the [Australian Queer Archives](#) website.

Source 3: The first edition of the CAMP Ink newsletter, November 1970.



In November 1970, Christabel Poll and John Ware published the first edition of CAMP's newsletter, 'CAMP Ink'. They co-authored the article below in which they made a call out to the public for contributions and ideas for how CAMP should develop. The article also explains some services they would like to provide as an organisation.

W(H)ITHER CAMP INC?

The success of CAMP INC will depend on your enthusiasm as a member. We invite you to participate actively in its development. How would you answer the following questions?..... Along what lines should CAMP INC develop? What activities should be given priority? What official stand should be taken on various issues? What social activities should be planned? What should be done for members living in isolated areas? What can be done about the law? What problems do you expect CAMP INC to encounter? Naturally we gave considerable thought to these questions before we launched CAMP INC. Here are our ideas.....

We see CAMP INC as being Australia wide with CAMP INK providing the communication link between all members. In every major city we intend to establish a branch of CAMP INC. In the smaller towns, where a branch would be impracticable, we hope to encourage, at least, regular social gatherings.

The establishment of these branches (which will mean the hiring of club rooms) and the social gatherings in the smaller towns will help to alleviate the desperate sense of isolation that many of our members have voiced.

When it is financially feasible to hire these club rooms they could be staffed by members who are doing free lance work or have plenty of free time. They

should develop into places where members can drop in at any time for a relaxed chat, a cup of coffee or, licensing laws permitting a drink. If they have problems the club rooms could be the place to talk them out. Those with more serious problems could be referred to sympathetic psychiatrists, churchmen, lawyers and doctors.

The club rooms could house an information centre; a kind of clearing house for exchange discussion, legislation, court decisions, reports and research in the field. An integral part of this would be a special library consisting of books, clippings, tapes, papers, and films. This library and clearing house would provide information not only to our members but to the public at large. Indeed, an essential part of CAMP INC's activities must be to counter public ignorance about homosexuality. We have already made a modest start in this direction by speaking on request to various groups. But it is obvious that we need to build up a large pool of qualified speakers to talk on any topic related to homosexuality to church groups, schools, universities, clubs, hospital personnel, etc.

These objectives remain to be achieved. However, we do already have some services, apart from the magazine, which we hope members will make use of.

We have established a legal aid fund (to which donations are essential) so that as many police

prosecutions as possible can be challenged. This may convince the police that homosexuals are not "easy prey".

We offer members a mail order book service whereby they can have sent to them (under plain wrapper if required) any book that is reviewed in CAMP INK. We will also try to fulfill any orders for books that members may require, particularly those which are difficult to obtain.

A comprehensive bibliography is currently being compiled and will be available in the near future. Similarly, an Australia wide directory of gay bars etc, is being produced and will be available to members on request. This directory will, with the co-operation of members, be continually revised and kept up to date.

As we stated initially, the success of CAMP INC depends on YOU. You can help by among other things.....

Writing and telling us if you agree with our ideas.

If you disagree please tell us why and what you would have us do instead.

If you have had any difficulties with the law write and tell us about them.

If you have undergone psychiatric treatment we would be interested to know what form it took and what you feel you gained from it.

If you feel you have been discriminated against in any way because of being a homosexual, we want to know.

By relating your experiences to us you will not only help us in formulating policy but you may also help other members who find themselves in a similar situation. Needless to say membership files and all correspondence are treated in the strictest confidence. Your name will never be published or disclosed in any way unless you so wish.

Help to make CAMP INC a success by contributing letters, book reviews, cartoons, poems, and major feature articles. If you have artistic ability why not do a cover design or poster which could be sold to raise funds.

Send us any relevant press cuttings you happen to come across. We could pay a press cutting agency to do this for us but this would be very expensive.

Send in names and address of gay bars, etc, that you know of in your area and your opinion of them.

Talk your friends into joining CAMP INC.

Our chance of making CAMP INC a success lies in the fact that although we are all individuals we have one thing in common. We all appreciate the difficulty of being a homosexual man or woman in a intolerant society. We must channel this common element into a unified effort. If we can so unite we will change our society so that one's sexual and emotional preferences will be no more important than the colour of one's eyes. We will then be able to enjoy the rights to which we are entitled but now denied.

This will not be easy. It will take a long time.

Source 4: Invitation to CAMP Inc's first social gathering at the parish hall of St John's Anglican Church in Birchgrove, on Gadigal and Wangal land, 1971.

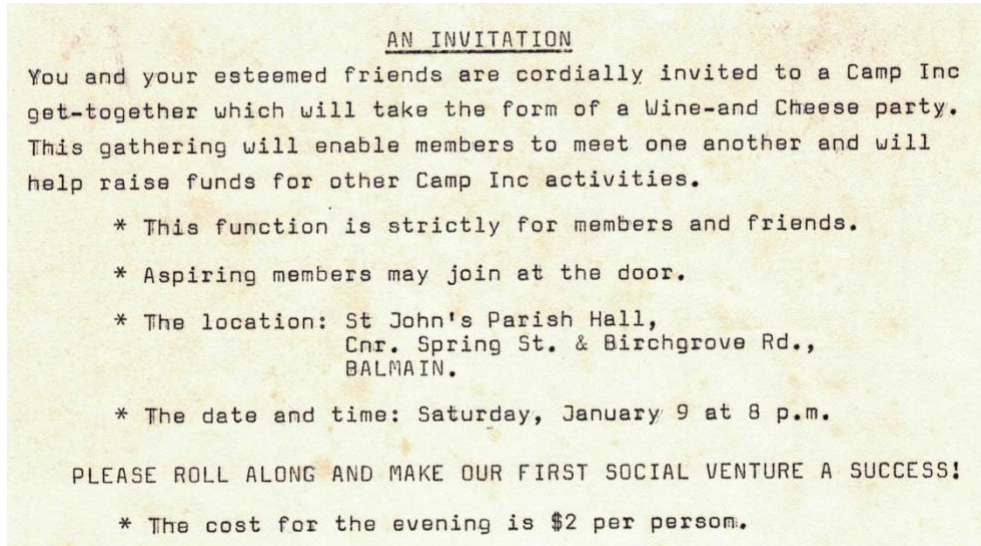


Image and information courtesy of Peter de Waal.

CAMP Inc's first social gathering, a Wine and Cheese party, took place on the 9th January 1971 at the parish hall of St John's Anglican Church in Birchgrove (on the Balmain peninsula), on the unceded lands of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples. During this event, it was announced that the group's first public meeting would take place at the same location at a later date.



Images from [the website of St. John's Church](#).

These photos show the hall (built in 1884) in which CAMP's first social gathering and first official meeting took place. It is still hired out for community events today.

Source 5: Oral History with Brian Woodward, via the Pride History Group website, in which he discusses CAMP Inc's first public meeting held in 1971.



Image (the Pride History Group logo) via the [Pride History Group website](#).

On the Pride History Group website, you can listen to [a short recording of an interview with CAMP member Brian Woodward](#) (titled 'First Meeting CAMP') in which he discusses how he came to attend CAMP Inc's first public meeting in February 1971, held at the parish hall of St. John's Church in Birchgrove, on Gadigal and Wangal land. According to [the minutes of an Inner West Council meeting](#) from 2021 (marking the 50th anniversary of the formation of CAMP), roughly 90 people (predominantly gay men and lesbians) attended this first public meeting.

This recording is part of a series of LGBTQ+ oral histories from the Sydney area that have been recorded and collected by the Pride History Group, all of which are available on their website. This organisation describes themselves as "a volunteer community group dedicated to researching, writing about and recording memories of Sydney's LGBTIQ history". Their website and collection of oral histories is an invaluable historical resource. Please note, however, that some of the recordings contain adult themes (teachers please review recordings before using them as teaching resources; the Brian Woodward recording mentioned above is suitable to use in class).

Source 6: The cover of 'CAMP Ink' from May, 1971 (a photo of CAMP's newly established clubhouse at 393 Darling Street, Balmain).

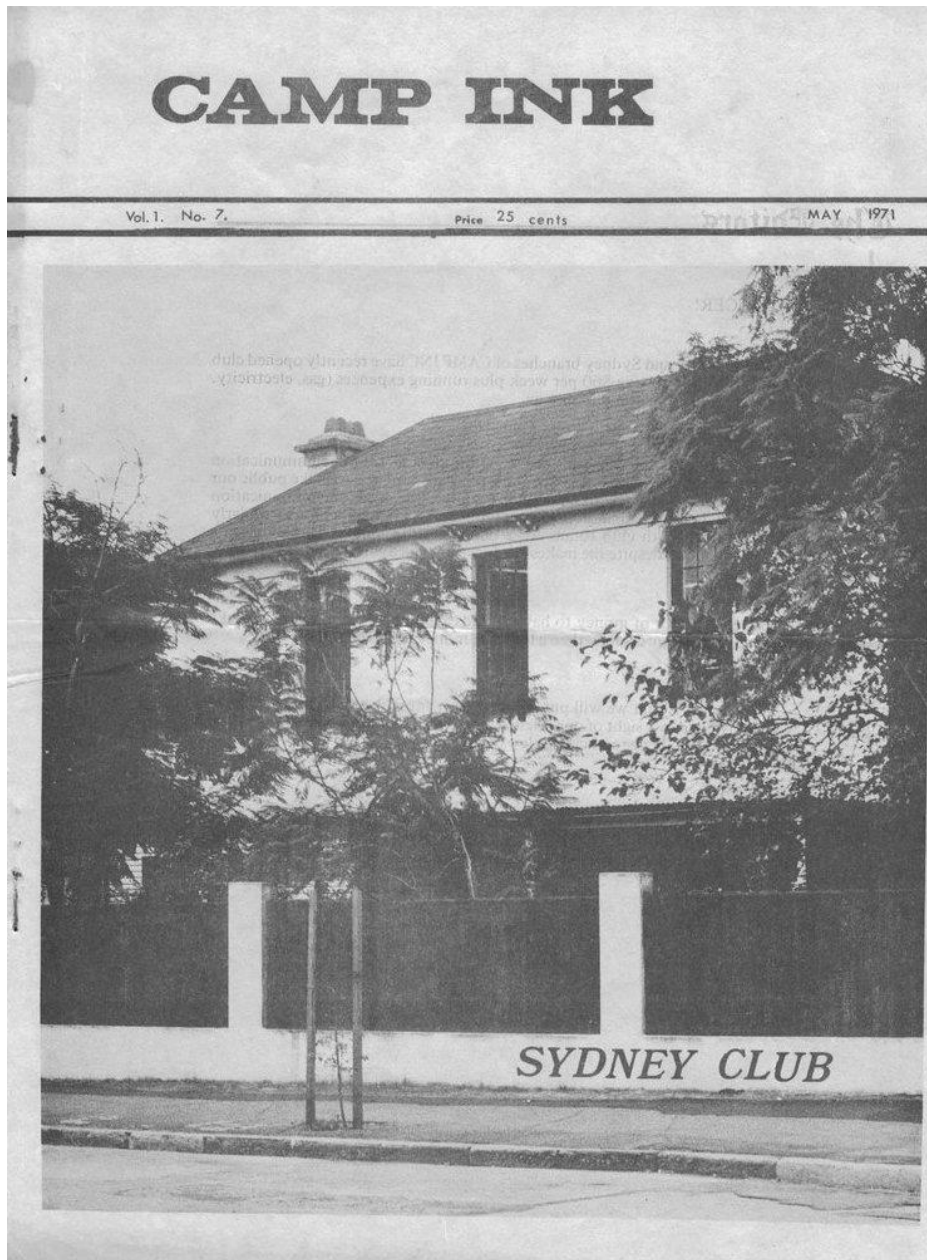


Image via the [Pride History Group website](#).

In March of 1971, CAMP began to rent this building at 393 Darling Street in Balmain, where they established their clubhouse. This building is located on the unceded lands of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples. This was a space in which they held fundraising events, social activities, talks, workshops, and meetings (to plan demonstrations, campaigns, and other activities).

Source 7: A photo of 393 Darling Street (where CAMP's first clubhouse was established) today.

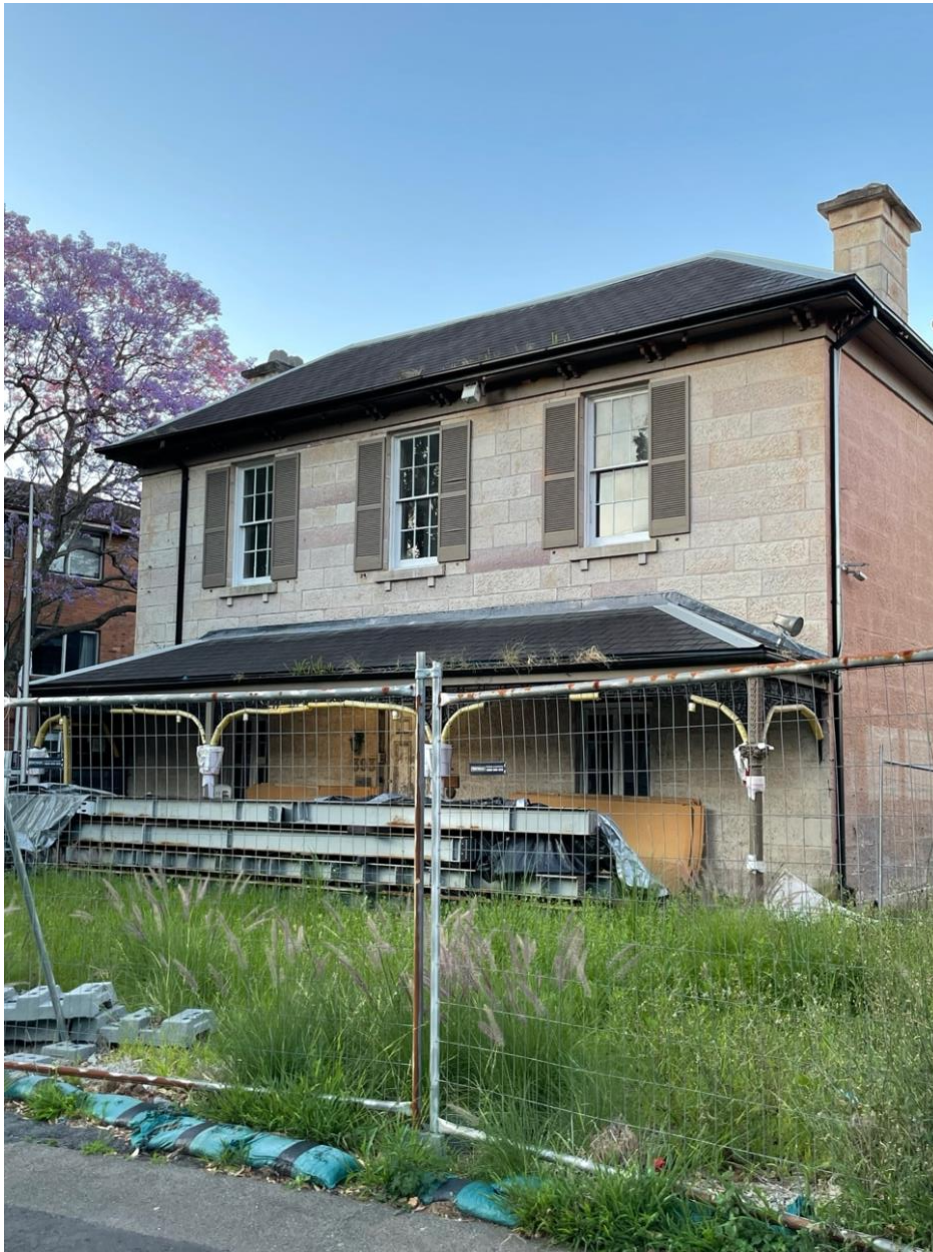
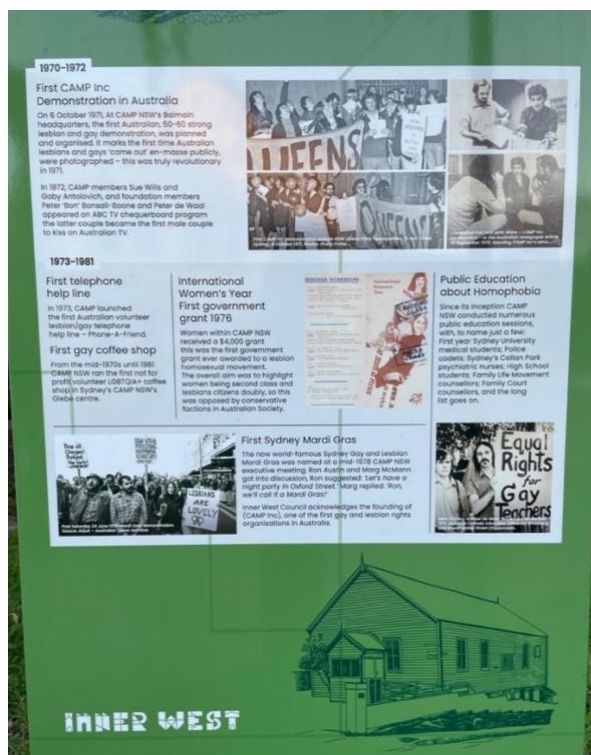


Photo by Bess Davey.

The building where CAMP first established their clubhouse (located on Gadigal and Wangal land) is still standing today and is located opposite what is now the Balmain library (393 Darling Street). According to [this website](#), the site is currently under construction, and will reopen as an Early Learning Centre in 2025.

Source 8: Photos of a plaque that commemorates CAMP Inc., located at Balmain Library (opposite 393 Darling Street).



Photos by Bess Davey.

This plaque was installed at the site of Balmain Library to mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of CAMP Inc. Both the church hall in Birchgrove (Source 4) where the first CAMP meeting was held, and the building at 393 Darling Street (Sources 6 and 7), where the first CAMP clubhouse was established (and which is directly across the road), are pictured on the plaque. One of CAMP's founding members, and one of Australia's most important LGBTQ+ rights activists, Peter de Waal (who is also a long-term Inner West resident) unveiled the plaque, along with Inner West mayor Darcy Byrne and others, as seen in [this video](#). [Here on the Inner West Council's website](#), you can read the speech given by Peter de Waal at the unveiling, in which he discusses the old clubhouse across the road, noting that "every Saturday night there was a joyful dance to pay the \$100 weekly rent. CAMP's Balmain space became an early 1970s oasis for multitudes. A homosexual haven in a hostile, loveless, hateful, oppressive, alienating, society."

Source 9: Photo of Kenneth 'Kandy' Johnson, circa. 1972.



Photo by Bruce Howard, circa. 1972, via [the National Library of Australia](#).

This photograph by Bruce Howard, which can be found in [the National Library of Australia's catalogue](#), is of Kenneth 'Kandy' Johnson who was a drag performer who ran numerous queer spaces in Sydney in the 1960s through to the 1980s. From 1965-1967, Kenneth 'Kandy' Johnson ran the drag venue 'Kandy's Garden of Eden' (also known as Kandy's Coffee House), which was located at 95 Enmore Road in the Inner West suburb of Enmore.

Source 10: 'The history of Pollys' mini documentary, produced by Charlie Jones, directed by Isabelle Whittington, 2017.



Photo is a still from [the video](#).

[This video](#) is a mini-documentary about 'The Pollys', Australia's longest-running LGBTQ+ social club, which was formed in 1964 and is still running today. As the documentary discusses, the club formed in Sydney at a time when male homosexuality was still illegal and a lot of homophobia existed in society. Social clubs, such as The Pollys, were an important way that LGBTQ+ people were able to connect and find community, so as to feel less isolated. In 2018, The Pollys had a 'Pride Seat' dedicated to them by the Inner West Council (see Source 52), to acknowledge their decades of service to the LGBTQ+ community. Their [Pride Seat nomination](#) notes that The Pollys have raised money for charities over the years by "organising LGBTIQ+ themed dances, which are safe, all-inclusive, cost effective and fabulous fun". As discussed in the mini-documentary, during the peak years of the HIV/AIDS crisis in Sydney, The Pollys donated most of the proceeds from their events to organisations supporting people living with HIV/AIDS. Their 'Pride Seat' is located outside Marrickville town hall, as this is a venue where The Pollys have regularly hosted events for many years. They have also hosted events at Petersham Town Hall and Leichhardt Town Hall (according to [the 'About' section of their website](#)).

Source 11: Interview with Robyn Plaister, one of Australia’s most active and influential LGBTQ+ activists, who is a long-term Inner West resident.



As part of Inner West’s History Week in 2021, Amie Zar (Coordinator of Community History and Heritage of the Inner West Council) interviewed prominent LGBTQ+ activist, and long-term Inner West resident, Robyn Plaister. A recording of the interview can be found [here](#), and the transcript [here](#). Robyn Plaister is a ‘78er (a participant in Sydney’s first Mardi Gras) and has a Pride Seat dedicated to her in Norton Street in Leichhardt (see Source 52 for more details).

Photo of Robyn Plaister, a still from the [video accompanying the interview](#).

In [this interview](#), Robyn Plaister discusses her life as an activist, including her membership in CAMP and her advocating for the rights of lesbian mothers. She also reflects on social attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people in Sydney in the 1970s, noting that: “There was a concerted effort in all walks of life to treat homosexuals as ‘others’. You weren’t recognised as next of kin if your partner happened to be in hospital; their family had more rights than you did. You had no access to medical benefits if you were in a homosexual family and lesbian mothers were losing their children due to showing affection to their partner in front of their children. As I said, yes, male homosexual activity was illegal until it was decriminalised in 1984. There was no ability to adopt children. If you were a lesbian teacher or a gay male teacher, you weren’t accepted by the Department of Education as it was seen that it was not in the best interest of the child”. In addition to a host of other activist and community initiatives that Robyn Plaister was involved with (see Sources 15, 18, 22, 30, 33, 45, and 52), in 1980 she also ran a regular lesbian night at the Town Hall Pub in Balmain, featuring lesbian singers and bands, which attracted up to 80 attendees per week.

Source 12: 'Checkerboard' episode aired on ABC TV in 1972, featuring gay couple Peter de Waal and Peter 'Bon' Bonsall-Boone, and lesbian couple Sue Wills and Gabrielle Antolovich.



Photo of Sue Wills and Peter 'Bon' Bonsall-Boone, a still from [the episode](#).

In 1972, CAMP members and LGBTQ+ activists Peter de Waal and Peter 'Bon' Bonsall-Boone (who were a couple), and Sue Wills and Gabrielle Antolovich (who were also a couple), featured in an episode of the Australian TV program 'Checkerboard'. A recording of the episode can be found [here on youtube](#).

In this episode, both couples discuss their relationships, as well as the importance of changing societal attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people and relationships. The episode would have been very eye-opening to many viewers, at a time when homosexuality was still considered to be a 'taboo' topic by many people. This episode is the first known example of a gay (male) couple kissing on Australian television. This kiss was filmed at Peter de Waal and Peter 'Bon' Bonsall-Boone's house in Balmain, where the couple lived for almost 50 years, and where Peter de Waal still lives today (Peter 'Bon' Bonsall-Boone passed away in 2017).

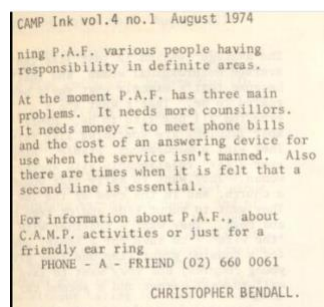
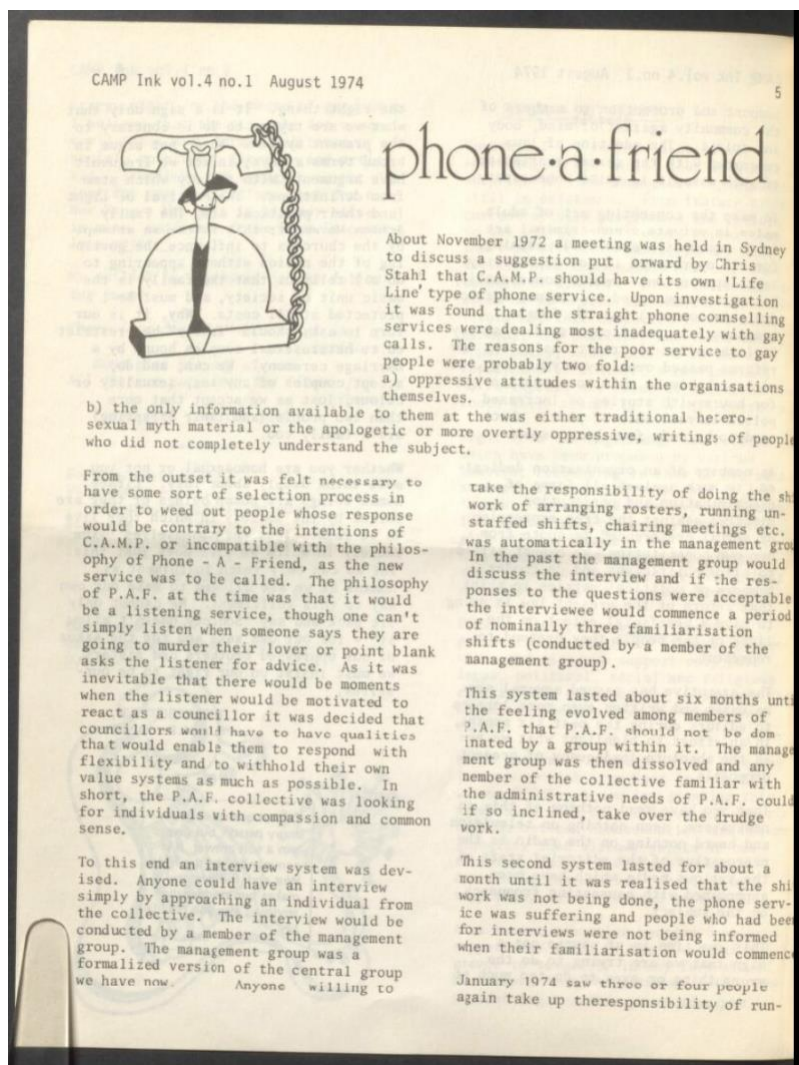
Source 13: 'Pink Bans' artwork by Sam Wallman.



Image via [the National Library of Australia website](https://www.nla.gov.au), 2024.

During his 2023 Creative Arts Fellowship with the National Library of Australia, artist Sam Wallman researched the 'Pink Bans' and created this artwork to commemorate this important historical event in Australia's LGBTQ+ history (he is currently working on turning his research into a long-form comic). As Sam Wallman explains on [the National Library of Australia's website](https://www.nla.gov.au), "The Pink Bans were industrial work stoppages carried out by unionised construction workers in support of persecuted queer people back in the 1970s. These industrial actions are significant because they took place prior to the emergence of the mainstream gay rights movement". The most impactful of these bans occurred in 1973 when Jeremy Fisher, a student at Macquarie University, was expelled for being a homosexual. After campaigning by the Student Council and gay liberation activists (many of whom had links to the Inner West, such as Lance Gowland who was a member of CAMP), the Builders Labourers Federation union (the 'BLF', which eventually evolved into the CFMEU) agreed to hold a strike to protest Jeremy Fisher's expulsion. The BLF said they would stop all works on Macquarie University's campuses until the university reversed its decision (an action that would later become known as a 'Pink Ban'). The union's strike was successful, and Jeremy Fisher was given the option to return to his studies. You can learn more about 'The Pink Bans' in [this very interesting talk by Sam Wallman](https://www.nla.gov.au).

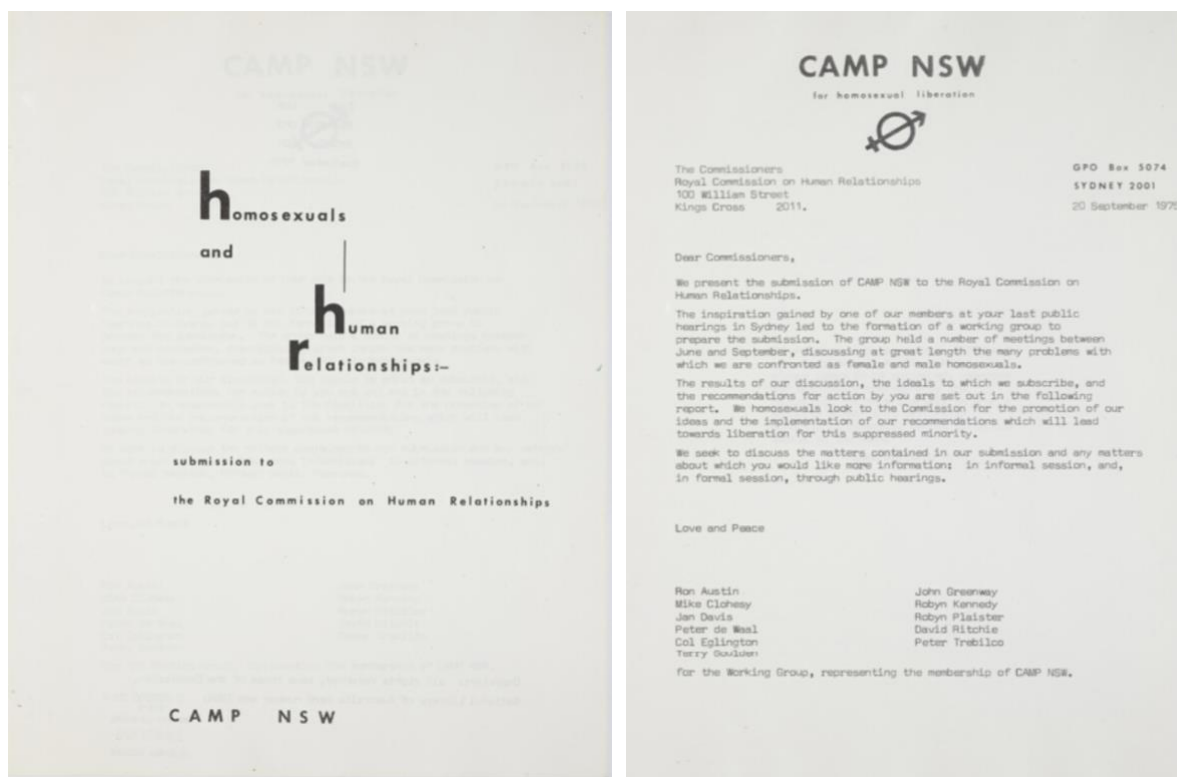
Source 14: Article explaining CAMP's 'Phone a friend' service, 1974.



Images from CAMP Ink, vol. 4, no. 1, via [the National Library of Australia](#).

This article, published in CAMP Ink in August 1974 (vol. 4, no. 1), discusses CAMP Inc's 'Phone a Friend' service, which was a support hotline for LGBTQ+ people. This service commenced operating on the 13th April 1973, in the front room of Peter de Waal and Peter 'Bon' Bonsall-Boone's house in Balmain, on unceded Gadigal and Wangal land. This was an important service for the local LGBTQ+ community, given that queer-friendly mental health services were almost non-existent at that time. 'Phone a Friend' later evolved into the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service which ran for many decades and still exists today (it merged with the organisation Twenty10 in 2012, which is the organisation that is currently leading the new Inner West Pride Centre).

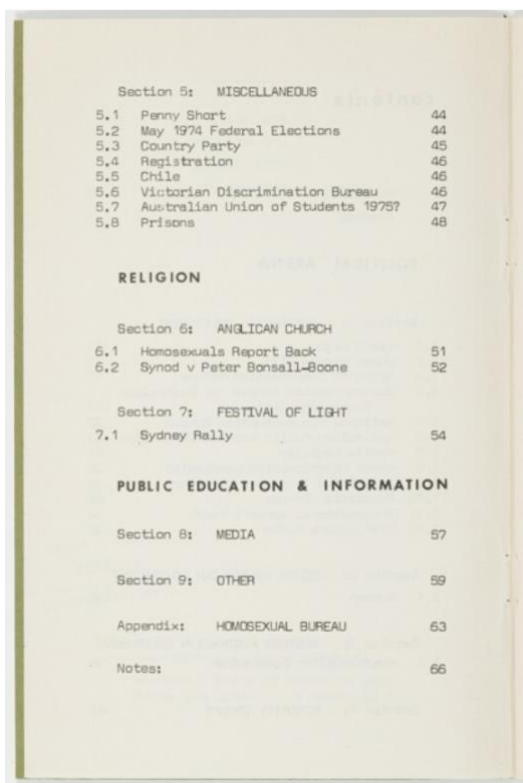
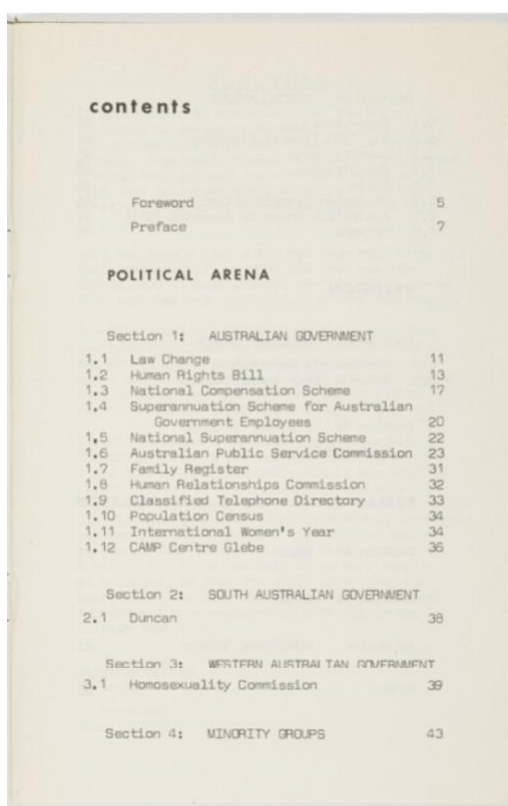
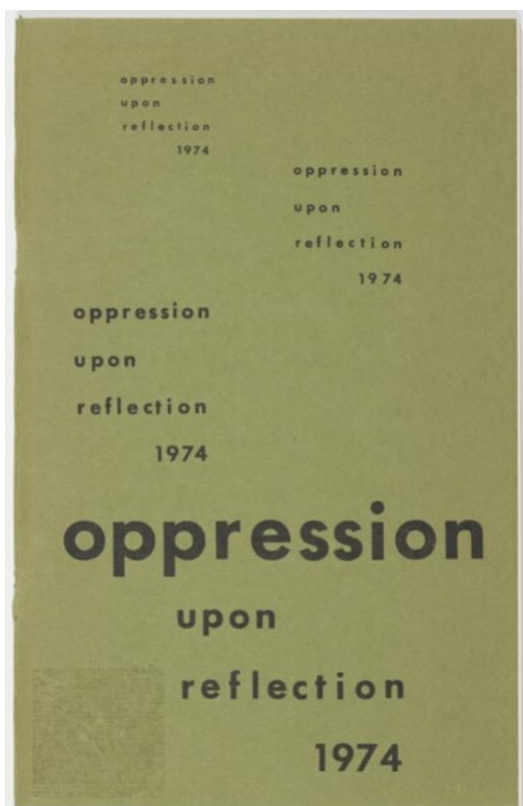
Source 15: CAMP's submission to the Royal Commission on Human Relationships, 1975.



Images via the [State Library of NSW](#).

A key goal of CAMP as an organisation was to push for law reform, at a time when male homosexuality was still illegal, and LGBTQ+ people faced numerous legal barriers. In September of 1975, CAMP made a formal submission to the Royal Commission on Human Relationships. A complete copy of the submission can be found [here on the State Library of NSW's website](#). The working group who wrote this submission included activists Robyn Plaister and Peter de Waal (who are both long-term Inner West residents), Robyn Kennedy, Ron Austin, Mike Clohesy, Jan Davis, Col Eglinton, Terry Goulden, John Greenway, David Ritchie, and Peter Trebilco. According to this [history seminar from The Australian National University](#), the result of this submission was that in 1977 the commissioners made “thirteen recommendations about homosexuality [which] was testament to the success of gay and lesbian activists in placing their concerns on the Commission’s agenda”.

Source 16: 'Oppression upon reflection' publication, 1975, by Peter de Waal and Mike Clohesy.



Images via [the State Library of NSW](https://www.library.nsw.gov.au/).

This 1975 publication written by CAMP members Peter de Waal and Mike Clohesy gives an overview of the political action and campaigns undertaken by CAMP members in the year 1974 which, as the publication states, had been their most politically active year to date. The complete publication can be found [here in the State Library of NSW's collection](https://www.library.nsw.gov.au/).

Source 17: Peter de Waal's 'Queerstories' talk, January 2019.



Photo via [the Queerstories website](#).

In [this 20-minute recording](#), prominent activist (and long-term Inner West resident) Peter de Waal discusses his life as an agent of change within the LGBTQ+ rights movement in Australia. As stated on [the Queerstories website](#), "his decades of activism encompass gay rights, the establishment of Phone-A-Friend, the precursor of the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service, early Sydney Mardi Gras organising, health promotions, immigration rights and campaigning for marriage equality", all of which he touches on in this recording.

In 2018, Peter De Waal and his life partner Peter 'Bon' Bonsall-Boone had a 'Pride Seat' dedicated to them by the Inner West Council (see Source 52). [Their Pride Seat nomination](#) states that "Bon and Peter featured in the 1972 ABC documentary series Chequerboard and during the program they shared what became the first male same sex kiss on Australian television. They were founding members of CAMP NSW and set up the first gay and lesbian phone counselling service in NSW Phone-A-Friend at their Balmain home in 1973. They continued to be active in the gay rights movement and took part in the first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in 1978. Throughout their lives they have continued to campaign for justice and equality and have been active members of Sydney's Pride History Group." You can read more about Peter de Waal in Sources 2, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 50 and 52.

Source 18: Flyer for the Seminar on Female Homosexuality, 1975.

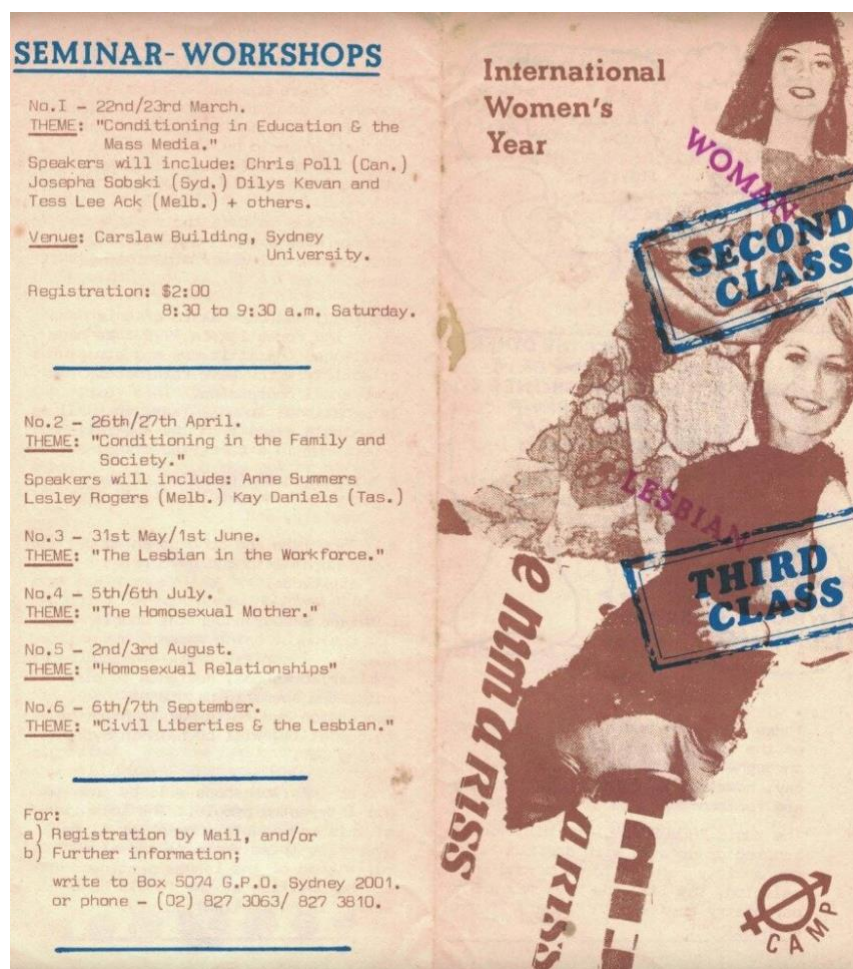


Image via the [Pride History Group website](https://pridehistorygroup.com.au/).

1975 was International Women's Year and the Whitlam government was giving out grants to women to develop programs and community resources. As Robyn Plaister explains in her interview with Amie Zar (see Source 11), she, Marg McMann, and some other women from CAMP put in a submission to run six seminars and create pamphlets and a book about female homosexuality. They were given a small part of the money they asked for and were told that if the first seminar was successful, then they would receive funding for the rest. Unfortunately, they received no further funding but the first seminar (as seen here in this flyer) went ahead. For the mid-1970s, it was quite a progressive gesture that the government were willing to fund a seminar on female homosexuality.

Source 19: Oral histories about 1970s lesbian households 'Crystal Street' (also known as Crystal Palace) and 'Canterbury Castle', both located in Petersham.



Photo of Diane Minnis at Crystal Steet lesbian house in Petersham, 1975, taken by photographer Heather Anne Grey, via [the State Library of NSW](#).

Here on [Pride History Group's website](#), you can listen to short interviews with Diane Minnis, Penny Gulliver, and Sandra Mackay, discussing two well-known lesbian share houses located in Petersham (in the Inner West, on unceded Gadigal and Wangal land) that operated in the 1970s, called Crystal Street and Canterbury Castle. These share houses were community gathering places, and at times operated almost like refuges (rates of homelessness amongst LGBTQ+ young people were significant in the 1970s, often due to hostile and homophobic family environments). The photograph above, taken by Heather Anne Grey, shows Diane Minnis at Crystal Street where she lived temporarily during the 1970s. Diane Minnis is a '78er (a participant in Sydney's first Mardi Gras) and a long-term LGBTQ+ activist. You can see another short video interview with her [here](#).

Source 20: Poster for the first Mardi Gras (before it was given the name 'Mardi Gras').



Image via [the Australian Queer Archives website](https://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/auqarchives/).

In June 1978, numerous Sydney gay liberation organisations (including CAMP members and others who were based in the Inner West) worked together to plan a 'Day of International Solidarity', to mark the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall uprising in NYC (an international turning point in the LGBTQ+ liberation movement). [The University of Sydney Library website](https://www.library.usydney.edu.au/) notes "The march included 2000 participants and ended in unprovoked police violence near midnight. The march promoted on this poster is considered the first Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. The organisers and participants in the first Mardi Gras are now known as 78'ers." From 1978 until the present day, the yearly Mardi Gras parade has been held on the unceded lands of the Gadigal, Bidjigal, and Birrabirragal peoples.

Source 21: Article in the Tribune newspaper by Anne Roberts, 28th June, 1978.

Mardi Gras ends in violence

by Anne Roberts

SYDNEY: Fifty-three people were arrested and charged last Saturday in a savage end to International Homosexual Solidarity Day. Some of those arrested needed hospital treatment after being bashed by police.

The day began peacefully with a march commemorating the beginning of Gay Liberation in 1969. It was followed by a forum on the homosexual movement overseas.

That night, about 2,000 people took part in "Mardi Gras" celebrations, beginning in Taylor Square, the centre of Sydney's Gay community.

The Mardi Gras moved towards the city where it was hoped to have a sing-song before people went home. But the police confiscated the truck carrying the PA system. It was then that the festival became a march.

It was spontaneously decided to march to Kings Cross. The police did not order the march to disperse, but when it reached the Cross they set a trap.

Fearing a confrontation, the march organisers asked the police if they were going to read the Summary Offences Act. They were told "to fuck off".

Queer-bashing
When the marchers tried to make their way back, paddy waggons closed in and the police attacked. "It was the worst violence I've ever seen", one witness said. "It wasn't just violence — it was queer-bashing of an institutionalised nature."

One of those arrested had a paddy wagon door slammed repeatedly on his leg. Another, a woman, was grabbed by the hair. The police bashed her head on the pavement, and she had to be treated for concussion.

The Darlinghurst police were the worst. At Darlinghurst police station they bashed one man's head against a steel door. Homosexual activist, Peter Murphy, was singled out for special attention. He was taken to a cell and bashed for 20 minutes.

Police refused to let a doctor see him for several hours.

even though he was unconscious.

More arrests
On Monday morning about 100 police refused to let supporters of those charged enter Central Court. They even stopped two defendants from entering because they didn't have their bail documents.

Eight were arrested in several scuffles outside the court. Police kicked one woman, a defendant, so hard she vomited.

Solidarity demonstrations were held on Monday in Adelaide and Brisbane, outside NSW government buildings.

The organisers of Saturday's Mardi Gras have called for an inquiry into the conduct of the police, especially their bashing of Peter Murphy. They want a royal commission on the behavior of police towards homosexuals.

The Sydney District of the Communist Party has backed the inquiry call.

There will be a public meeting on Saturday July 1 at Stanley Palmer's Culture Palace at 2pm to discuss further action.

• Gay Mardi Gras soon to become a political march when police confiscated truck

PERTH: Nuclear reactor attack

Image via [the National Library of Australia](https://www.nla.gov.au).

This article, written by Anne Roberts and published in the Tribune newspaper on Wednesday the 28th June, 1978, describes what happened during what became known as the first Sydney Mardi Gras. As explained in the article, the demonstrators/participants were met with extreme police brutality. Activist Peter Murphy was beaten so badly by one police officer that he had to be hospitalised (as noted in this newspaper article). In [this article published by the ABC in 2023](#) (which gives a detailed overview of what happened during the first Mardi Gras), Peter Murphy describes the harrowing experience, noting that he was beaten so badly that he was convulsing. "I thought I would die there", he says.

Source 22: Photo of Robyn Plaister resisting arrest at the first Mardi Gras.



Photo via [the Women's Library website](#).

This iconic photo of activist and long-term Inner West resident Robyn Plaister was taken on the night of the first Mardi Gras, as police tried to break up the festive demonstration. This photo was published in the Telegraph newspaper a few days later (as can be seen in newspaper clippings in Source 23 below). This public 'outing' via the photo being published impacted Robyn Plaister's life in several ways. As she notes in her interview with Amie Zar (Source 11), "The result for me was that the next day I was called up by my principal and she asked me if I had been arrested. Now, I could honestly say I wasn't arrested, although I could have quite easily been but I wasn't, but she was very worried about what the parents and the children would think and so after grilling me – and I tried to avoid any direct answers to her – she let me go but she came and stood outside the classes I was teaching for the next week and watched me. And the kids, of course, were not very good. I taught maths and I would walk, obviously, down the aisle and help people – you know, you lean over the desk to help people in their books as they were working and when I walked down the aisles the girls would all move away from me. It took a long time, you know, for them to sort of get over it and realise I was still the same person."

Source 23: Scrapbook compiled by filmmaker and '78er Digby Duncan.



Image via [the Australian Queer Archives website](https://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/auflaunt/queer/archives/).

This scrapbook, which can be found on [the Australian Queer Archives website](https://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/auflaunt/queer/archives/), was compiled by filmmaker and '78er Digby Duncan. The scrapbook is a collection of newspaper clippings related to the gay liberation movement in Sydney, from the years 1978-1979 (including some articles about the first Mardi Gras). Many people featured in these newspaper articles were Inner West residents. Digby Duncan also made a documentary about the community response to the police violence faced by the participants in the first Mardi Gras. Elements of this documentary were turned into the 2018 ABC TV movie called 'Riot' (it is well worth a watch). 'Riot' explores the gay liberation movement in Sydney in the 1970s (many of the key characters were Inner West residents).

Source 24: Article acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander '78ers, SBS news.



Image via [Stephen Russell's article for SBS](#).

[In this article published in 2017](#) author Stephen Russell discusses the participation of First Nations activists in the history of Sydney's Mardi Gras, including during the first Mardi Gras in 1978. The article notes that "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have been a part of the evolving nature of Mardi Gras from the very beginning... Aboriginal women Chris Burke and Annie Pratten were among that number [who attended the first Mardi Gras] and are celebrated in today's march as the '78ers." You can find Chris Burke and Annie Pratten's names on the official list of ['Who was there in 1978?'](#) on the '78ers website.

An interesting Inner West connection is that Chris Burke (Darug nation), along with fellow '78er Mystery Carnage, played in a feminist post-punk band in Sydney called 'The Stray Dags' from the late 70s until the early 80s. The Stray Dags were known to have played at Inner West venues including the Petersham Town Hall (according to [this article](#)). You can watch a videoclip of their song 'Let's have a party' [here](#) (Chris Burke plays drums).

Source 25: Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras 1978–2022 Timeline.



Image via [the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras 1978–2022 Timeline](#).

[The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras 1978–2022 Timeline](#) is a fantastic resource that was compiled in the lead up to the 'World Pride' celebrations that were held in Sydney in 2023. The timeline includes posters, photographs, and anecdotes relating to every Mardi Gras ever held in Sydney (from 1978 until 2022, though the Mardi Gras is of course still running today), as well as recorded interviews discussing significant moments in the parade's history. Reading about the history of the Mardi Gras gives insight into the history of the LGBTQ+ community of NSW (and Australia) more broadly. Key events in LGBTQ+ history, such as marriage equality, have often been reflected in the floats and costumes of the parade. Many Inner West residents and collectives (too many to name!) have participated in the Mardi Gras over the years, and are featured in this timeline.

Source 26: 'History of First Peoples entries in the Sydney Mardi Gras Parade' (an online timeline initiated by Inner West resident and activist Tim Bishop).



Image via the [History of First Peoples entries in the Sydney Mardi Gras Parade](#).

The online timeline ['History of First Peoples entries in the Sydney Mardi Gras Parade'](#) is a project that was initiated by Tim Bishop, a long-term Inner West resident of Murrawarri decent. In 2018 Tim Bishop had a 'Pride Seat' dedicated to him by the Inner West Council (see Source 52). His [Pride Seat nomination](#) acknowledges that "long-term Inner West resident, Tim Bishop, has been instrumental for the past 25 years in enhancing the inclusion and equity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the Australian LGBTIQ+ community".

This timeline is a rich historical resource which shows that First Nations peoples have always been part of the history of the Mardi Gras since its inception in 1978. The timeline notes that "like many of the main thoroughfares in Sydney, Oxford Street lays over a pathway of the Gadi People on whose custodial country the parade is held each year". In discussing LGBTQ+ venues in Sydney in previous decades, the timeline notes that "the social spaces for First Nations gay men, lesbians and transgendered brotherboys and sistergirls to gather as a community were... less openly available (especially on Oxford Street), than they were for the white community. And less welcoming. Consequently, and along with other marginalised communities, safer spaces were to be found in venues of the more culturally diverse and accepting suburbs of the Inner West (Newtown, Erskineville, Petersham, Leichhardt, Annandale)".

Source 27: Parliament of NSW's 2016 apology to the '78ers.



Image via [the Parliament of NSW's website](#).

Almost 40 years after the first Mardi Gras, on the 25th February 2016, members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of NSW issued a formal apology to the '78ers (as the participants of the first Mardi Gras had by then become known), many of whom were current or former Inner West residents. As stated on [the Parliament of NSW's website](#), Mr Bruce Notley-Smith, the former Member for Coogee, stated the following as part of the apology:

“For the mistreatment they suffered that evening, as a member of this Parliament who oversaw the events of that night, I apologise and I say sorry. As a member of the Parliament which dragged its feet in the decriminalisation of homosexual acts, I apologise and say sorry. And as a proud gay man and member of Parliament offering this apology I say thank you. The actions they took on 24 June 1978 have been vindicated. The pain and suffering meted out to them on that night and afterwards was undeserved. On that evening they lit a flame of the gay rights movement in Sydney that burned its way to law reform and societal acceptance. To the 78ers I say sorry, but also thank you”. You can also listen to an ABC radio segment about this apology [here](#).

Source 28: Police apology to '78ers, 2016.

4 MAR 2016

**NSW Police Force
apologises to
the '78ers**

Just over a week after the NSW government and Fairfax media issued their apologies to the '78ers, on the eve of Mardi Gras 2016, the NSW Police Force issued their apology.

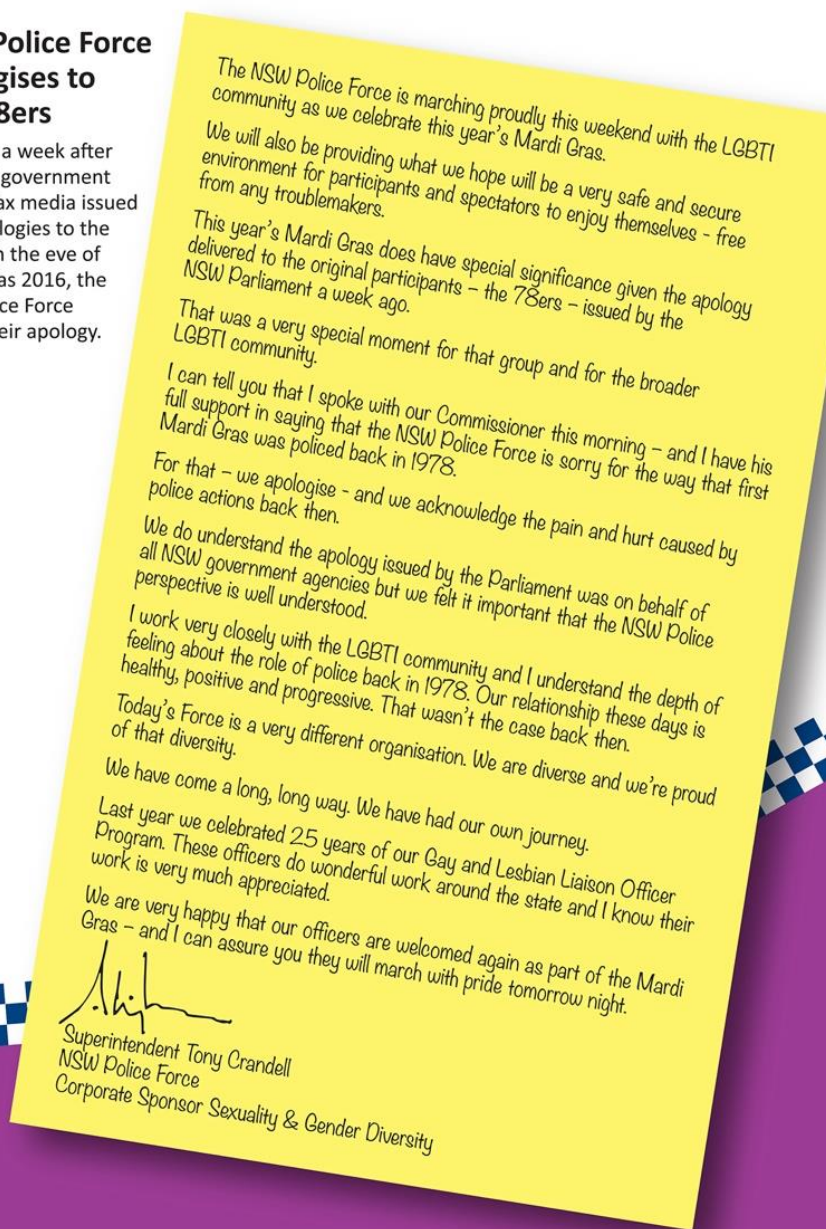


Image via the NSW Police Force website.

Just over a week after the NSW parliament apologised to the '78ers (see Source 27), the NSW Police Force issued [this apology](#), acknowledging the "pain and hurt caused by police actions back then". You can read the full apology speech given by NSW Police Commissioner Michael Fuller [here](#).

Source 29: Video of David Patricia Abello interviewed by The Guardian in 2024, reflecting on parliamentary apologies.



Photo of David Patricia Abello and Norie Neumark, circa. 1978, taken by Heather Anne Grey, via [the State Library of NSW catalogue](#).

[In this short interview](#), long-term Inner West resident and activist David Patricia Abello discusses his thoughts about the Parliament of NSW issuing apologies to the LGBTQ+ community for past wrongdoings. David Patricia Abello (pictured above circa. 1978) is a '78er and has been an important campaigner for LGBTQ+ people living with disabilities. According to [the State Library of NSW website](#), he “was a founding member of the queer disability activist group Access Plus”. In the above photo David Patricia Abello and Norie Neumark are pictured wearing 'Gaywaves' Radio Station t-shirts. Gaywaves was Sydney's first ever LGBTQ+ radio program which first aired on 2SER radio station in 1979.

Source 30: Robyn Kennedy interviewed by Holly Zwalf (2022)



Photo of Robyn Kennedy (left) and Robyn Plaister (right) by Anne Morphett via [the '78ers newsletter](#).

In [this interview](#) with Holly Zwalf, from 16th November 2022, '78er and CAMP member Robyn Kennedy talks about growing up in Ashfield in the Inner West, and her years of activism within the LGBTQ+ rights movement in Australia. She discusses participating in the first Mardi Gras, campaigning for the custody rights of lesbian mothers, and many other political actions that she took part in, as well as challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community in the 1970s. In 2023, to coincide with the World Pride celebrations in Sydney, Robyn Kennedy and Robyn Plaister published their book 'CAMP: Australia's Pioneer Homosexual Rights Activists' (as seen in the photo above) which provides a thorough and informative overview of the founding and operations of CAMP, through to the disbanding of the organisation. Copies of this book are available in the Inner West Library collection.

Source 31: Daniel Browning interviews Sue Pinckham (First Nations LGBTQ+ activist).



Photo by Joseph Mayers, via [the Australian Queer Archives' website](#).

[This interview with Birripi elder and LGBTQ+ activist Sue Pinckham](#), recorded in 2023, forms part of a series called 'Muru-ba: First Nations LGBTIQ+ Trailblazers'. 'Muru-ba' is a Dharug word that means trailblazer or 'path maker'. The series is made up of photographic portraits of ten First Nations LGBTQ+ elders, taken by Yorta Yorta photographer Joseph Mayers, accompanied by recorded interviews conducted by Bundjalung/Kullilli journalist Daniel Browning. Both the audio and a transcript for this interview with Sue Pinckham can be found [here on the Australian Queer Archives' website](#). In this interview, Sue Pinckham talks about growing up in Birchgrove and Balmain (she was born at Balmain hospital in 1956), as well as her life of activism, which focused on creating safe spaces and community connections for First Nations and LGBTQ+ people.

Source 32: Video of Sue Pinckham and Louise Bell's large shiny lamé Indigenous flag in the 1996 Sydney Mardi Gras.

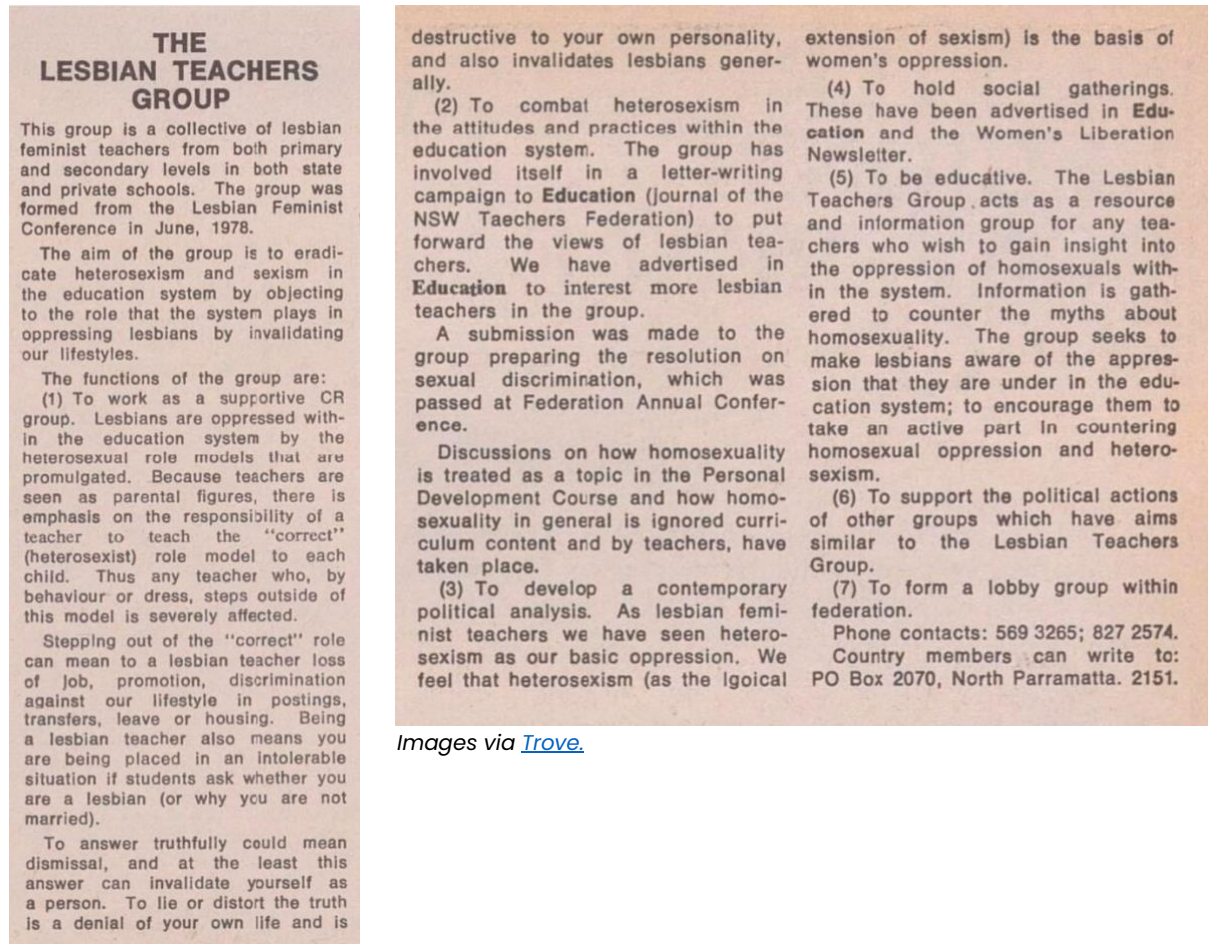


Image is a still from [the video uploaded to Vimeo by Tim Bishop titled '1996 Lamé Aboriginal Flag'](#).

[This video](#) is a snippet of ABC's televised coverage of the 1996 Sydney Mardi Gras (uploaded to Vimeo by Tim Bishop who features in Source 26). In the video we see footage of the large, shiny, lamé Indigenous flag created by Sue Pinckham (who grew up in the Inner West; see Source 31) and Louise Bell. The flag has since appeared in multiple exhibitions and events and is an important cultural and historical relic.

This [short segment by ABC Radio National](#) discusses the significance of this flag, which was created in memory of Sue Pinckham's friend Malcolm Cole who died of complications relating to HIV the previous year. Malcolm Cole was also an important First Nations LGBTQ+ activist and performer based in Sydney (you can read more about his life and legacy [here](#)). This Radio National segment also includes an excerpt from Sue Pinckham's interview with Daniel Browning (see Source 31) in which they discuss what 'pride' means to them. [The excerpt from 1:43- 8:36](#) is a very poignant and insightful exploration of the idea of pride within the LGBTQ+ community (particularly for First Nations LGBTQ+ individuals and communities) and it is highly recommended listening.

Source 33: Newspaper clipping discussing the NSW Lesbian Teachers Group, published in the journal 'Education', 10th September 1979.



Images via [Trove](#).

In 1978 activist Robyn Plaister (see Sources 11, 15, 18, 22, 30, 45 and 52) started the NSW Lesbian Teachers Group, which was based in the Inner West. In 1979, the group published [this statement](#) of their aims in both the journal 'Education' (the journal of the NSW Public School Teachers Federation) as well as the Teachers Union Newspaper. As stated in these aims, the group functioned as a support group as well as a social collective. At the same time the group aimed to cultivate political awareness amongst its members and advocate for necessary changes within the education system. The statement above notes that "as lesbian feminist teachers we have seen heterosexism as our basic oppression. We feel that heterosexism (as the logical extension of sexism) is the basis of women's oppression".

Source 34: 1983 photo of Roberta Perkins with Minister Frank Walker, at the opening of Tiresias House in Petersham, Sydney.



Roberta Perkins and Minister Frank Walker at the opening of Tiresias House, photo by Zakaras, 1983, via [the Australian Queer Archives](#).

[This photograph](#) from 1983 shows ground-breaking trans rights activist Roberta Perkins at the opening of a refuge for trans people in Petersham called Tiresias House, located on the unceded lands of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples. Pictured with her is Minister Frank Walker, who helped Roberta Perkins to acquire the government funding to open Tiresias House. The demand for the accommodation and services offered by Tiresias House was significant, and by the following year (1984) Roberta Perkins and her colleagues had acquired further funding from the Department of Community Services to open two more refuges in the Inner West suburbs of Ashfield and Haberfield. In 2018, Roberta Perkins had a 'Pride Seat' dedicated to her by Inner West Council (see Source 52), in the same year that she passed away. [Her nomination](#) states that "Roberta was a trail blazer for Australian transgender people. She was an academic and writer... Roberta established a refuge in Petersham for homeless trans people, which later became The Gender Centre."

The Gender Centre (originally Tiresias House) is now located in Marrickville and continues to offer vital services to Sydney's trans community. You can read more about the history of the Gender Centre [here on their website](#).

Source 35: 1984 Televised interview with Lex Watson and Robert French after they publicly declared their homosexuality in a push for law reform.



Photo of Lex Watson (left) and Robert French (right) signing statutory declarations, via Newmatilda.com.

In 1983, Lex Watson and Robert French publicly declared themselves to be homosexuals (signing statutory declarations), at a time when homosexuality between men was still illegal in NSW. Lesbianism was somewhat 'invisible' in the eyes of the law and was never declared illegal in Australia. Lex Watson was a long-term Inner West resident and served as a co-president of CAMP from 1972 until 1974. He also served as president of the Pride History Group from 2010 (before passing away in 2014) and had an Inner West 'Pride Seat' dedicated to him in 2018 (see Source 52). Robert French also briefly served as president of Pride History Group after Lex Watson passed away, was a co-convenor of the NSW Gay Rights Lobby for five years and served for two years as the vice-president of ACON (an important Sydney LGBTQ+ advocacy organisation, that supports people living with HIV). [This is a video of Lex Watson and Robert French appearing on Good Morning Australia](#) in 1983, discussing their decision to publicly push for law reform by declaring themselves to be homosexuals. Due to the efforts of activists like Lex Watson and Robert French (among countless others), male homosexuality was finally decriminalised in NSW in 1984. [As stated on the NSW Government's website](#), an official state government apology was issued "to those convicted under discriminatory laws that criminalised homosexual acts" to mark the 40th anniversary of the decriminalisation of male homosexuality.

Source 36: Crimes (Amendment) Bill 1984 NSW

CRIMES (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1984, No. 7

New South Wales



ANNO TRICESIMO TERTIO

ELIZABETHÆ II REGINÆ

Act No. 7, 1984.

An Act to amend the Crimes Act, 1900, in relation to certain sexual offences.
[Assented to, 31st May, 1984.]

Image is an excerpt of the [Crimes \(Amendment\) Bill 1984 NSW](#).

[Here](#) you can read a copy of the Crimes (Amendment) Bill 1984 NSW, which is the official piece of legislation that decriminalised male homosexuality in NSW (female homosexuality was never declared illegal in Australia). This piece of law reform was the result of decades of activism from members of the LGBTQ+ community who came from a broad range of political, social, and cultural backgrounds. The legal age of consent for homosexual sex was set to 18, whereas it was 16 for heterosexual sex, which many people considered to be unfair. Despite this, the decriminalisation of homosexuality was a huge milestone.

Source 37: Photo of The Feminist Bookshop (date unknown).



Photo of The Feminist Bookshop in Lilyfield, copyright Gail Hewison, via the [University of Sussex blog](#).

[This](#) is a photograph of The Feminist Bookshop in Lilyfield, located on the unceded lands of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples. Originally established in 1974, The Feminist Bookshop moved to Shop 9, Orange Grove Plaza, Lilyfield, in 1982. During the 80s, 90s, and 2000s it was run by three sisters; Gail Hewison, Libby Silva and Jane Waddy, all of whom are part of the LGBTQ+ community. The bookshop was an important hub for Sydney's lesbian community, as well as the broader LGBTQ+ population. In 2018, The Feminist Bookshop had a 'Pride Seat' dedicated to them by the Inner West Council (see Source 52). Their Pride Seat is located directly opposite the shopfront pictured in this photo, in Orange Grove Plaza in Lilyfield. [Their Pride Seat nomination](#) states that "The Feminist Bookshop was known and valued all over Sydney and beyond as a safe and welcoming place for all in the LGBTIQ+ rainbow families. It was not just a bookshop but a meeting place, offering support and advice to women coming out, or questioning their sexuality, and looking for community. Transgender people were always especially welcomed". After the three sisters sold the bookshop in 2011, it closed shortly afterwards. You can read more about the bookshop in [this article](#).

Source 38: 1985 flyer for public meeting titled 'AIDS: What can we do?', published by ACON.

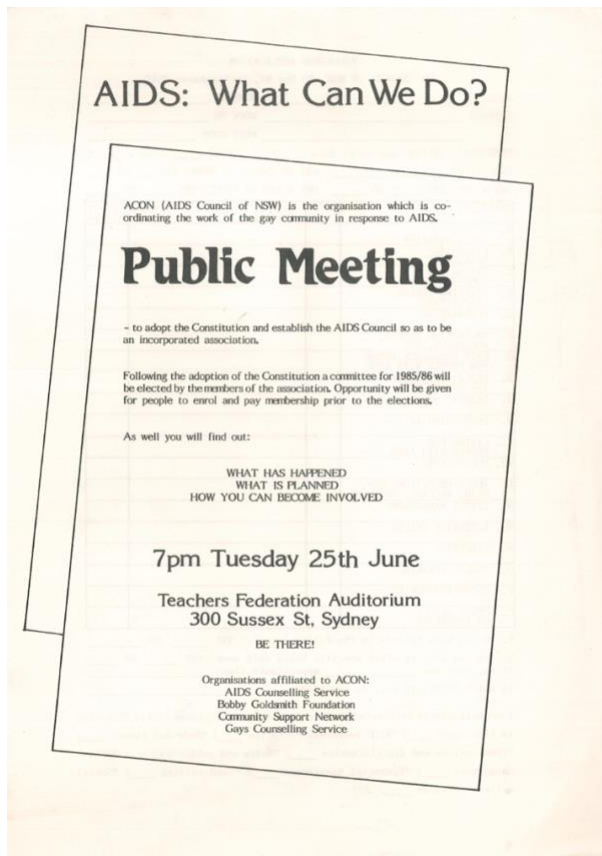


Image from the Australian Queer Archives, via the website [A City Responds to Crisis](#).

ACON (which at the time stood for AIDS Council of NSW) was founded in 1985 as a coalition of pre-existing organisations that were responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in NSW. [This flyer](#) for a public meeting would have been published shortly after the organisation was established. ACON still exists today and is a prominent Sydney organisation that has fought (and continues to fight) for the rights of LGBTQ+ people, as well as people living with HIV. While ACON is not based in the Inner West (their head office is located in Surry Hills), countless residents of the Inner West have benefited from their services over the years, as they have been Sydney's leading organisation in relation to responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic that began in the 1980s. As [this very detailed timeline published by ACON](#) describes, the first case of AIDS in Sydney was reported in 1982. While HIV/AIDS can affect people of any gender or sexuality, this epidemic has been particularly devastating for the gay community.

Source 39: 'A City Responds to Crisis: Volunteers and the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Sydney 1980s-1990s' website.

Prejudice hits the new 'untouchables'

THE inevitable by-product of the AIDS panic is discrimination — justified or not — and many members of the homosexual community fear that homosexuals and AIDS carriers are becoming the new "untouchables".

Mr Lex Watson, unofficial spokesman for the homosexual community, believes AIDS is being used as a justification for prejudice. He says a significant amount of discrimination is being felt by gays in terms of employment and in service-related areas.

"People see this as a good opportunity to vent their homophobic feelings," he said. "At last they believe they have found a way of rationalising their distaste."

Homosexuals fear that the new AIDS screening test, available in the next few weeks, will serve only to fuel discrimination.

Greg Tillet, conciliation officer at the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board, says the board is receiving dozens of calls a week from homosexuals complaining of overt discrimination.

"It is unlawful to discriminate against a gay person on the assumption that he is carrying AIDS," he said. "This ruling covers such matters as employment, accommodation, education and the provision of goods and services."

Anyone who discriminated in this way was breaking the law and could be penalised if the victim chose to lodge a complaint.

"I think the public hysteria over AIDS has made gay people very wary about coming forward," he said. "It has had a negative effect on the use of the anti-discrimination Act."

As for the legal position of people either carrying or suffering from AIDS, Mr Tillet explained that the law was unclear but it was likely they would be covered by the physical impairment section. A person cannot be discriminated against because of a physical impairment unless there are *justifiable* medical grounds.



● Lex Watson, unofficial spokesman for the homosexual community

Article in the Sydney Morning Herald, 3rd February 1985, via [A City Responds to Crisis](#) website.

The website '[A City Responds to Crisis: Volunteers and the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Sydney 1980s-1990s](#)' compiles stories and evidence related to the public's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Sydney in the 1980s and 1990s, with a particular focus on the work of volunteers. Many Inner West residents and organisations appear on this website, including the above newspaper clipping featuring Lex Watson, who was an influential LGBTQ+ rights activist, a long-term Inner West resident, and a co-president of CAMP from 1972-1974. The above newspaper clipping highlights the increase in discrimination faced by the LGBTQ+ community (particularly gay men) during the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Sydney. On the Pride History Group's website, you can listen to first-hand accounts from [Ron Smith and Terry Rolfe](#), and [Ivy Richter and Colin Wiseman](#) about the impact of this epidemic on the gay community in Sydney.

Source 40: 'Origins' page of The Flying Bats' website (a lesbian/queer soccer club formed in 1985 in the Inner West).



Image via [The Flying Bats' website](#).

[The Flying Bats' website](#) states that “we are a not-for-profit LGBTQIA+ community football club for women and non-binary people based in Sydney’s Inner West”. The club was formed in 1985 and is still running today. In the early years, the team trained in Lilyfield. The [‘Origins’ page of their website](#) is a rich historical resource that explores the club’s history via recorded oral histories, photos, a video, and text. Among other things, this page explains that The Flying Bats were not the only lesbian/queer soccer team that was operating in the Inner West at that time (though they are the longest surviving of these clubs). The Cronos (based in Marrickville) and St Joan’s were two other predominantly lesbian teams that competed against the Flying Bats. In the early days of the club, the team would often meet at Bar Italia in Leichhardt (which still exists today) after their games.

Source 41: 'Our History' section of the Dykes on Bikes website.



Photo of the Dykes on Bikes in the late 80s via the [Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras website](#).

The Dykes on Bikes are an iconic lesbian/queer motorcycle club that originally started in the US, with a Sydney branch (the first in Australia) forming in 1988. In the ['Our History'](#) section of their website, you can read about some important events in the club's history that spans over four decades. While their members are from all over NSW, the club was known to congregate at the Leichhardt Hotel (see Source 42 below) during the 1990s, as well as other pubs in the Inner West (as [this article](#) and many other online sources will attest to). It is important to note that if used in the wrong context, the word 'dyke' can be offensive, however many members of the lesbian community have reappropriated this word (in a similar way to how the word 'queer' has been reappropriated by the broader LGBTQ+ community), such that when used by people from within the community it is a celebration of a lesbian/queer identity, rather than an insult. However, if you are not a member of the LGBTQ+ community, it is best not to use the term yourself.

In [this short documentary](#), you can learn more about the ethos behind the Dykes on Bikes club, as well as their role in patrolling Oxford Street in Sydney (a hub for the LGBTQ+ community) in the 1990s and 2000s to make sure that members of their community were safe from violence such as gay-bashing.

Source 42: A photo of the Leichhardt Hotel today.



Photo by Bess Davey.

The Leichhardt Hotel, located on the corner of Short Street and Balmain Road in Leichhardt, on unceded Gadigal and Wangal land, is no longer in business but was once a hub for Leichhardt's thriving lesbian community. [An article in the University of Sydney's student newspaper](#) explains that after the 1970s "Leichhardt became an integral landmark of Sydney's lesbian scene. The development of community organisations and services such as... the Leichhardt Women's Health Centre and regular lesbian nights at the Leichhardt Hotel helped foster a strong sense of community and further attract queer women to the area... By the end of the 1990s, this uniquely lesbian village began to dissipate... queer women migrated to other areas in Sydney's inner west such as Newtown, Marrickville, Enmore and Erskineville". The Leichhardt Hotel was lesbian-run for a number of years, and as mentioned in Source 41 above it was a known meeting place for the Dykes on Bikes motorcycle club.

Source 43: A page from the 'Boys will be boys' newsletter, 1992.



'Boys will be boys' was a newsletter for trans men/transmasculine people, that was started in 1992 by Sydney-based trans advocates Jasper Laybutt and Max Zebra-Thyone. Jasper Laybutt worked as an educator, counsellor, and designer for the Gender Centre in the Inner West (see Source 34). This newsletter article discusses the invisibility of trans men at that time, as well as a campaign they were planning to help trans men and transmasculine people to

get support from Medicare to undergo gender affirmation surgery (some Medicare support was available for trans women at that time, but not for trans men). Please note that this article uses a term to describe trans people that is now considered to be outdated. As noted in the [New South Wales Trans History](#) report, "the slang term tranny/tranny is now considered a slur but was common lingo in the 1990s". The [New South Wales Trans History](#) report notes that "just as terminology has changed over time, so too have the meanings and connotations attached to them". Today, words with derogatory connotations (such as this one) should be avoided.

Source 44: Transgender (Anti-Discrimination and Other Acts Amendment) Bill 1996



Transgender (Anti-Discrimination and Other Acts Amendment) Bill 1996

Image is an excerpt of the [Transgender \(Anti-Discrimination and Other Acts Amendment\) Bill 1996](#).

In 1996, after many years of campaigning by trans activists and their allies, the [Transgender \(Anti-Discrimination and Other Acts Amendment\) Bill 1996](#) was passed in NSW Parliament, meaning that transgender people were finally included as a protected category in anti-discrimination law. According to [this special commission report](#), at the same time that the above bill was passed in 1996, “there were amendments were made to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1995 to provide a mechanism for trans people to change their sex markers on their birth certificates”, however changes to birth certificates were only permitted when people had undergone gender affirmation surgery. This caveat (the requirement of surgery) was considered by many people to be unjust, and it took almost three decades to overturn it (see Source 57 for more details).

Roberta Perkins’ 1994 report “Transgender Lifestyles and HIV/AIDS Risk” is considered to be a vital piece of research that helped achieve this legislative change. Roberta Perkins set up Tiresias House (a refuge for trans people) in Petersham in 1983 (see Source 34), which was later renamed the Gender Centre. Lobbying and research by ‘Transgender Liberation Coalition’ members Aidy Griffin, Jesse Hooley, Nadine Stransen and Norrie (who all had strong ties to the Gender Centre) were also vital to the success of this law reform campaign. The [‘New South Wales Trans History’](#) report, written by Noah Riseman and published in 2022, is an excellent resource if you would like to do further reading on transgender law reform.

Source 45: Photo titled '78'ers at the SGLMG Workshop Erskineville for the 20th Anniversary of the parade', 1997.



Photo via the [City of Sydney Archives](#).

[This photo](#), from the City of Sydney Archives, shows a meeting in 1997 of a group of the original participants in the first ever Mardi Gras (held in 1978). Inner West resident Robyn Plaister can be seen in the front row. The group met to discuss the 20th anniversary of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras which was happening the following year. During the planning for the 20th anniversary, the group started to call themselves 'the '78ers'. Since that time, they have continued to connect with other '78ers, and their group has now grown to over 600 members (some of whom are now deceased) who attended at least one of the events in 1978 (the first Mardi Gras and/or the subsequent protests). The '78ers now have [their own website](#), where you can see a full list of 'Who was there in 1978?'.

In 1998, to mark the 20th anniversary of the parade, the '78ers led the Mardi Gras for the first time (after the Dykes on Bikes who traditionally ride out in front) and have done so ever since. From 1978 until the present day, the yearly Mardi Gras parade has been held on the unceded lands of the Gadigal, Bidjigal, and Birrabirragal peoples.

Source 46: Article titled 'NSW Government lags on age of consent', 2002.



Image via [Trove](#).

This article, which can be found [here via Trove](#), was published in the journal 'Education: Journal of the NSW Public School Teachers' (volume 83, number 7) on the 1st of July, 2002. It explains the key issues involved in the campaign to achieve equal age of consent for homosexual and heterosexual sex in NSW (at the time it was 18 years old for male homosexual sex and 16 years old for heterosexual sex). As the article states "There is no good reason for an unequal age of consent and no evidence that it is of benefit to anyone. The law in NSW already recognises that young people are capable of consenting to sexual relations at 16, yet separate laws make it a criminal offence for a 16 or 17 year old gay man to have sex... An unequal age of consent supports discrimination and legitimates homophobic violence". After many years of campaigning by LGBTQ+ activists (some of whom were Inner West residents), equal age of consent was achieved in NSW in 2003 via the [Crimes Amendment \(Equal Age of Consent\) Bill 2003](#).

Source 47: Photos of 'Monsta Gras'; an event held at Red Rattler theatre, Marrickville, from 2008–2020.



Photos taken at Monsta Gras events, via the [Art, Climate, Transition website](#).

Monsta Gras was a yearly event that was put on by the Glitter Militia collective between 2008 and 2020 and held at the Red Rattler theatre in Marrickville, which is located on the unceded lands of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples. It “evolved out of an inner west arts community” (according to [this article](#)) and was programmed to coincide with Sydney’s Mardi Gras, however its aims were distinct. The organisers “aimed to reinvigorate the artistic and political intentions of the 78ers” (according to [the website of Justin Shoulder](#), a key organiser of the event), and offer an alternative space to the mainstream Mardi Gras, which they felt had become too commercial. In [this article](#), Matthew Stegh (another key organiser of the event, and Justin Shoulder’s partner) noted that “One thing that’s really important to us ... is that the party remains very inclusive... [It’s] a space for people that don’t have that autonomy to move through other spaces or to go to other parts of the city.” If you would like to read more about the creative partnership behind Monsta Gras [this is an excellent article](#), which includes an interview with Justin Shoulder and Matthew Stegh, as well as photos of their home studio in Summer Hill, in the Inner West.

Source 48: Adoption Amendment (Same Sex Couples) Bill 2010 (No 2).



New South Wales

Adoption Amendment (Same Sex Couples) Bill 2010 (No 2)

Image is an excerpt of the [Adoption Amendment \(Same Sex Couples\) Bill 2010 \(No 2\)](#).

On the 9th of September 2010, the 'Adoption Amendment (Same Sex Couples) Bill 2010 (No 2)' was passed in the NSW Parliament, finally allowing same-sex parents to adopt children. Same-sex adoption had already been legalised in the ACT and Western Australia. According to [this article published by ABC News](#), Sydney's mayor Clover Moore had "moved this reform in the house in 2000", however the amendment took 10 years to pass. This legislative change benefitted (and continues to benefit) LGBTQ+ families across NSW, including those in the Inner West. As with all LGBTQ+ law reform, this legislative change was largely due to many years of campaigning and organising by LGBTQ+ activists and their allies.

Source 49: Newspaper article 'Third gender must be recognised by NSW after Norrie wins legal battle', written by Helen Davidson, 2014.



Photo by Daniel Muñoz, via [this article in the Guardian, 2014](#).

Norrie is a Sydney resident who has contributed significantly to LGBTQ+ rights campaigns in the Inner West and beyond. Norrie was one of the leaders of the 'Transgender Liberation Coalition' (TLC) which was founded in 1991 to help campaign for further state government funding for Tiresias House (now called the Gender Centre, located in Marrickville on unceded Gadigal and Wangal land). In 2018, Norrie was nominated for an Inner West 'Pride Seat'. [Norrie's nomination reads](#) "Norrie mAy-Welby has tirelessly worked since the early 1990s for those who are gender diverse, as well as the other segments of the LGBTIQA+ population... In 2009, Norrie commenced the process of changing her classification from 'F' to 'X' for 'unspecified' with the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. This was granted and rescinded one day after the decision was made public. Norrie took the case to the Supreme Court and... became the first person in Australia to achieve the status of an official 'Non-Specified' gender on non-medical ground". [This article](#), written by Helen Davidson and published in The Guardian in 2014, explains Norrie's landmark legal battle, which resulted in the High Court recognising "that a person may be other than male or female and therefore may be taken to permit the registration sought, as 'non-specific'". You can read the official case and judgement on [the website of the High Court of Australia](#).

Source 50: Photo of Peter de Waal and Peter 'Bon' Bonsall-Boone campaigning for marriage equality (circa 2016/1017).



Photo via [2018 article published by SBS](#).

This photo (published in [this 2018 SBS article](#)) shows long-term Inner West residents and influential LGBTQ+ activists Peter de Waal and Peter 'Bon' Bonsall-Boone campaigning for marriage equality. In 2016, the Coalition government committed to consulting the Australian people on whether or not they would support this change in legislation. When they were not able to get senate approval to conduct a plebiscite, they opted to conduct a voluntary postal survey, which took place in late 2017. The lead up to the postal vote was a time of mixed emotions for the LGBTQ+ community. While the possibility that marriage equality might finally be passed was exciting and hopeful, the 'No' campaign fuelled discriminatory discourse, and many LGBTQ+ people felt like their very existence was being scrutinised and questioned (a winding back of the clocks to another time when everyday people thought they had a right to question whether or not LGBTQ+ communities should have the right to exist). Unfortunately, as you can read about in [this article](#), Peter 'Bon' Bonsall-Boone passed away just six months before marriage equality was achieved, and the couple were never able to fulfill their dream of getting married (after fifty years of partnership).

Source 51: 'Australia said YES!' video by Australian Marriage Equality, 2017.



Image is a still from [the video](#).

[This video by Australian Marriage Equality](#) shows highlights from the 'Yes' campaign and the lead up to the historic postal vote, as well as the public response when the results of the vote were announced. As you can read about [via the National Museum of Australia](#), the postal survey results were released on the 15th November 2017, showing that 61.6 percent of people had voted 'Yes'. Marriage equality was passed in parliament three weeks later, on the 9th December 2017, and people of the same gender finally had the right to marry in Australia. This result was thanks to decades of campaigning by dedicated LGBTQ+ rights activists, including many residents of the Inner West.

As you can read about [here on the Inner West Council's website](#), to celebrate the passing of marriage equality, "Inner West Council Mayor Darcy Byrne has... officially opened bookings for same sex marriages to take place free of charge in Council's town halls, community centres and parks for 100 days."

Source 52: Photos of Inner West Council's 'Pride Seats'.



Photos by Bess Davey.

In 2018, the Inner West Council accepted nominations for seven 'Pride Seats' which would be installed across the Inner West LGA, at sites that hold significance for local LGBTQ+ history, all of which are located on the unceded lands of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples. You can read about each of the nominees [here](#). The winning nominees (all of which now have a Pride Seat dedicated to them) were Alexander 'Lex' Watson (see Sources 35 and 39), The Feminist Bookshop (see Source 37), Roberta Perkins (see Source 34 and 44), Robyn Plaister (see Sources 11, 15, 18, 22, 30, 33 and 45), The Pollys Club (see Source 10), Timothy J Bishop (see Sources 26 and 32), and Peter Bonsall-Boone and Peter de Waal (see Sources 2, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 50).

Source 53: Photo of Bhenji Ra and House of Slé members at Sissy Ball, 2019.



Photograph by Teresa Tan via [The National Gallery of Australia website](#).

This photo shows artist and LGBTQ+ community leader Bhenji Ra (wearing blue) together with other members of her collective, House of Slé, at their event Sissy Ball in 2019. Bhenji Ra has been hugely influential in bringing the ballroom scene (which you can read about in [this article](#)) to Sydney and Australia more broadly. She is the mother of the House of Slé and has been a driving force behind creating visibility and creative platforms for trans women and LGBTQ+ people of colour in Sydney and Australia. In describing House of Slé, the [Performance Space website](#) notes that “the house members are made up of artists, dancers and activists who identify culturally beyond the secular LGBTQI+ community as their respective roles as Fa’afafine, Fakaleti, Mahu, Balka and Femme Queens”.

House of Slé have held many events in the Inner West of Sydney, including three iterations of the ‘Muva Ball’, all held at Addison Road Community Organisation in Marrickville, between 2018 and 2023. The Addison Road Community Organisation is located on the unceded lands of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples.

Source 54: Video 'Talking Trans Aging with Rusty Nannup', 2021.



Photo of Rusty Nannup via [this 2021 SBS article](#).

Rusty Nannup is a Yamatji/Noongar LGBTQ+ community elder who lives in the Inner West. She identifies as a 'Black woman with a trans experience'. In [this video produced by the University of NSW in collaboration with BLAQ Aboriginal Corporation](#), she talks about her early life, about coming to Sydney in the 1980s, and about the different spaces in which she has found belonging and acceptance. She reflects on the fact that just being in the world as a trans person can challenge people to open their minds and be more inclusive in their worldview. When speaking about the local community where she grew up she says that "when they realised that I was going to be different, I guess their own vision and version of life somewhere had to find space for me, and I'm so glad that they did". She also talks about aging, and some of the challenges she faces as a trans person in her later years of life.

Source 55: Video 'This is the Red Rattler Theatre' presented by Kilia Tipa, 2023.



Photo is a still from [the video](#).

[This video](#), presented by Kilia Tipa, is a guided tour of the Red Rattler Theatre, an iconic queer-run performance space located on Faversham Street in Marrickville, which is located on the unceded lands of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples. In addition to being a safe space for the LGBTQ+ community, 'The Rat' (as it is known by locals), actively creates platforms for the voices of trans people and people of colour. The Rat was established in 2009 and is still running today. [Its website](#) says, "we hope to contribute to a world where communities have space to build solidarity, flourish and create arts, activism and queer culture that is inspiring and influential". In addition to theatre, concerts, and live performance, The Rat also hosts talks, workshops, and community events (some examples of talks they have facilitated include 'Racism, do we know what it is?' and 'Decolonize the dancefloor').

The Rat is a contemporary manifestation of a longstanding practice in the LGBTQ+ community of building spaces that incorporate socialising and entertainment on the one hand, and education, activism, and the opportunity to develop political consciousness on the other.

Source 56: Photo of the Pride Centre and Pride Square, 2024.



Photo by Bess Davey.

On the 10th August 2024, what was once the Newtown Town Hall was officially reopened as the new Inner West LGBTQ+ Pride Centre. The space in front of the Pride Centre was renamed 'Pride Square' in 2023, and the sculptural work 'Pride Square Beacon' (pictured in the photo, designed by SUPERSENSE collective) was installed at the site. Both the Inner West LGBTQ+ Pride Centre and Pride Square are located on the unceded lands of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples.

In 2023 the organisation Twenty10 won the bid to lead the Pride Centre, and they are now operating out of this site. As stated on [the Inner West Council's website](#), "Twenty10 is Australia's largest, and longest running organisation supporting young LGBTQIA+ people in NSW. They offer a broad range of health and mental health services and supports including housing, counselling, social support groups and events both online and in-person". Twenty10 began in the early 1980s, under the leadership of LGBTQ+ community organiser and activist Garrett Prestage, and opened housing refuges to address the growing problem of homelessness among LGBTQ youth in Sydney. In 2012, Twenty10 merged with the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service NSW (which was originally started by CAMP in Balmain in the early 1970s), and they continue to provide free and anonymous LGBTQ peer support, via online chat or on the phone. You can read more about Twenty10 [here on their website](#).

Source 57: Fact sheet for the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQA+) Act, 2024.



Photo of MPs and advocates celebrating the passing of the amendment, October 2024, via [QNews](#).

[This factsheet](#), produced by Equality Australia, explains the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQA+) Act (2024), which passed in the NSW Parliament in October 2024. This Act, which will commence in July 2025, includes a suite of legislative changes that will improve the lives of NSW's LGBTQ+ residents, including the many LGBTQ+ residents who live in the Inner West. A huge milestone in this Act is the ability for people over the age of 18 to be able to 'alter their record of sex' without having to undergo gender affirmation surgery (which was a previous requirement). According to Equality Australia's factsheet, "a person updating their record of sex will be able to use the following sex descriptors: male, female, non-binary, and non-specified". The legal recognition of non-binary gender, and improved freedoms for people to determine their own gender, is a huge win for the trans and gender-diverse community and is the result of many decades of advocacy and campaigning by trans activists and their allies. The Act also includes a range of other legal protections for LGBTQ+ individuals and families, which you can read about in [the factsheet](#).