



DiversityACT

Diversity Digest

Issue 2 2019

President's Report – Shay-Leigh Willis

Where did that three months go? How on earth is it time for the next newsletter already?

It's been a massive couple of months for our organisation. We have had to farewell a few people from the roles that they were doing, have been struggling to operate while the Hub was a construction site, and had a couple of major fundraisers.

The Hub was a construction site from March until July, as we dealt with a termite infestation in the floor and walls of the meeting room. Across this period we have had no telephone, no Internet connection and a massive hole instead of a meeting room. I'd like to thank all the members of the committee, and the members of the Youth Group, for finding creative solutions to all the challenges that this presented. To celebrate our new floor and

walls, we are going to have a grand re-opening party on September 7th – there's more information about this elsewhere in the newsletter.

Since the last newsletter, Delia Quigley has moved on from Diversity ACT to a couple of new roles within the Uniting Church in Australia. While we are very much noticing the gaps in our corporate knowledge, we are confident that Delia will bring her incredible passion for the LGBTIQ+ community into her new roles, and that the Uniting Church in Australia will benefit greatly. I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank Delia for her devotion to Diversity ACT since its earliest beginnings, and acknowledge the fact that this organisation would not exist were it not for her dedication and incredibly hard work. The members of the committee are working hard to cover the shifts at the Hub that Delia used to do, and if anyone out there is keen to join us, please let me know.

Sam Edwards has recently had to resign from the committee due to ill-health. I'd like to thank Sam for her input into the Committee while she was with us, wish her all the best in recovering her health, and hope that she will come back to us once she is recovered.



Figure 1 Shay and Sian at the Canberra Young Citizen of the Year Awards

I was very pleased to attend this years' Canberra Young Citizen of the Year Awards at the start of ACT Youth Week. I'm pictured here with one of our members (Siân Brigid) who

received a Highly Commended in the Arts Category.

It's been a huge couple of months for fundraising. Aside from the ongoing BBQs at Woolworths, we participated in giveOUT Day, and Music at Midday. Those two events combined raised over \$4000, which is almost enough to pay the insurance bill up front for an entire year (and that's what we are going to do). Many thanks to all those who volunteered their time and energy to get those fundraisers happening.

Looking ahead, the next few months look pretty busy too. We have the Wear It Purple Trivia Night in August, our re-opening party in September, a couple of events for Mental Health Month in October and SpringOUT in November. I hope you can come and join us at some/all of our upcoming events.

Introductions

Last newsletter, we met up with one of our General Committee members. This edition, it's time for our Vice President to take the stand.

Bruce Moore



Figure 2 Vice President Bruce Moore

Bruce Moore turned up to his first Diversity ACT function at the end of 2016.

This happened to be the AGM

and, to his surprise, he found himself elected to the Committee. He remained on the Committee during 2017 and 2018, and at the 2018 AGM was elected to the position of Vice-President.

Bruce comes from an academic background. In the first half of his career he was a medievalist, researching and teaching Old and Middle English language and literature, from Beowulf to Chaucer. In the second half of career he reinvented himself as a dictionary editor and expert on Australian English at ANU. He edited many dictionaries for Oxford University Press, and wrote books such as *Speaking our Languages: The Story of Australian English*.

His final big academic work was the new two-volume edition of the Australian National Dictionary. It was from this historically-based dictionary that he took the Australian LGBTIQ-related words that form the focal point of a paper given at the 2017 Australian Homosexual Histories Conference—'Queering the Lexicon'.

Now retired, Bruce has time to devote to the activities of Diversity ACT, especially its governance and fundraising. In 2018 he developed the Diversity ACT library, so that it now has a good collection of LGBTIQ+ texts, especially novels—from early 'classic texts' such as works by Radclyffe Hall and James Baldwin to more recent 'classics' by such writers as Alan Hollinghurst and David Levithan. The library books are all available for borrowing by Diversity ACT members.

Seeking a website designer

You are probably aware that Diversity ACT has a website. You can check it out at

<https://diversityact.org.au/>

The committee are confident that the layout of the website could be improved, but none of them have the required skills. Is there anyone out there who would consider volunteering some time to help us rejig the website? If not you, then maybe someone you know?

If you are the person we're looking for, please send an email to Shay at shay.willis@diversityact.org.au

Treasurer's Report – Morgan Sedaitis

Hey all, my name's Morgan

I found out about Diversity through Shay. Seeing her passion and devotion to the organization and cause has fuelled me to take on a more active role. I've been slowly learning more and more throughout my time, becoming more active in our fundraising, BBQs, planning of events and so forth, enjoying the wonderful atmosphere the current committee brings to the table.

I would take this moment, for anyone reading this, to encourage you to help out in whatever ways you can to help us reach more of the community. Currently one of our big aims is to have two BBQ fundraising teams going (our current one almost pays the insurance bill), so if you can spare literally just an hour or two once a month, it would have a hugely positive impact on Diversity and you would be welcomed with open arms!

Queer Youth Together – Melissa Norman

Queer Youth Together is affectionately known as QyouT (pronounced "cute"). It is Diversity ACT's Youth Program, that caters for young people between the ages of 12 and 25. Melissa is one of the QyouT members.

We have been very busy at the Hub this term with activities including a games night, nights where we flexed our creative muscles with badge making, FIMO clay pendant making,

drawing games and of course mural painting. The finished product of our painting is 'Our Queer Space', which was launched in April.

We have had the opportunity to delve into the world of Dungeons and Dragons with the help of Morgan and Shay, who helped us create our own characters. Other activities included dinner at the Copper Dragon in Tuggeranong, participating in the painting of another mural at Lovett Tower in Woden, and many drop-in sessions with yummy food and great conversation.



Figure 3 - Mural at Lovett Tower

There have been a lot of new faces this term, and we are looking forward to others joining us when we move into Term Three.

Rainbow Christian Alliance

RCA Canberra has turned 4. Happy birthday to our joint venture with Tuggeranong Uniting Church. LGBTIQ+ Christians, family & friends are always welcome. Check out RCA at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1025029234182558/>



Figure 4 - The new banner at Tuggeranong Uniting



Figure 5 - Birthday Cake

Southside Women

Southside Women provides regular social activities to lesbian women living on the Southside (and all areas of Canberra). There has been some action recently in terms of grant

applications, and the group is hopeful that there will soon be some funds to provide for publicity and subsidised events.

The winter cold and associated illness has limited attendance at some of their recent events, but there are plans for furniture restoration and gardening at the Hub once the weather improves.

Sharing Our Stories

Sharing Our Stories had its third iteration at Smith's Alternative during ACT Youth Week. This time around the guest speakers included Andrew Barr (the ACT Chief Minister), the Reverend Miriam Lacey (from the Uniting Church in Australia) and Tombo (who works in Early Childhood Education).

The stories shared were powerful, the questions asked of the speakers were challenging, and there was a ridiculous amount of cake. Diversity ACT is thankful for the grant funding from Pink Tennis which allowed this event to occur.

Our Queer Space Launch – Madelaine Blackmore-Warren

Earlier this year the QyouT group created a mural for the Diversity ACT Hub! It was a creative challenge lead by one of the QyouT members, and made possible by everyone at Diversity ACT and the team at Pink Tennis, who provided us with the grant funding.

The mural is titled "Our Queer Space", and its main themes are around community; the identities of our diverse community, an acknowledgement of country, and the queer

experience of exploring different ways of existing and occupying space.



Figure 6 - The final result

I'm proud of what we've come up with and created. Starting out with just a brainstorm of ideas, some sketching together and talks, and coming out a beautiful large mural piece was a rollercoaster! It was a challenge for me as I've never done a mural before, and a challenge for the group as many of us didn't feel confident in our creative skills but working together and learning together we made it happen, and the result is fantastic. I hope to organise more artistic adventures like this in the future!

Maddie – Mural Artistic Director and QyouT peep.

Music at Midday – 4th June

In the words of one member of the volunteer team, "That was the best fundraiser we've ever done". A team of volunteers held buckets at the doors of the Canberra Theatre, and patrons dropped in their money. Over \$1500 was raised.

When added to some of the other fundraisers of recent months, for the first time in the memory of the members of the current committee, we are in the position of being able to pay our insurance bill up front rather than having to pay monthly instalments. Many thanks to the Canberra Theatre, the Royal Military College Band, and all those who helped out on the day.

Exploring the Library at the Hub

Last edition's book review introduced us to *Call Me by Your Name*, which is well on the way to becoming part of the LGBTIQ+ literary canon.

This month, for a complete change of pace, Megan is introducing us to one of her favourite children's books. Perhaps you might want to join those who are borrowing books from the library? Or even provide a review for the next newsletter?

Introducing Teddy. A gentle story about gender and friendship

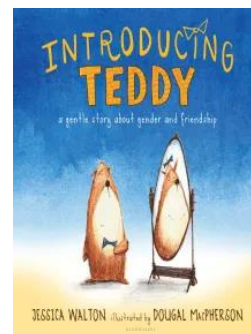


Figure 7 Introducing Teddy

Jessica Walton and Dougal MacPherson have created a sweet and very gentle story about being a good friend and being true to who you are. Even the story of how this book came into being is heart-warming. The book exists because

Walton (an Australian author) wanted a story to read to her young son that reflected the diversity that exists in her family. Walton's dad Tina had come out to the family a few years earlier. The book was funded through a Kickstarter project, which doubled its target and was shared by none other than Neil Gaiman.

Errol and his teddy, Thomas, are best friends who do everything together. Whether it's riding a bike, playing in the tree house, having a tea party or all of the above, every day holds something fun to do together. One sunny day, Errol finds that Thomas the Teddy is sad, and Errol can't figure out why. Then Thomas the Teddy finally tells Errol what Thomas has been afraid to say: *"In my heart, I've always known that I'm a girl Teddy, not a boy Teddy. I wish my name was Tilly."* And Errol says *"I don't care if you're a girl teddy or a boy teddy! What matters is that you are my friend."*

This story makes my heart sing every time I read it. I know of at least one Canberra Early Learning Centre where there is a copy of this book in every room. Maybe you know someone who needs to read or own this book?

Upcoming Events

Fundraising BBQs



Figure 8 Bruce and Kim at the BBQ

The BBQs are continuing and are an important source of regular income. It's been great to see more members of the Diversity community involved. The addition of

cupcakes to the food options spiked some interest at the June BBQ! And the BBQ volunteer of the month award for July goes to Maddie, who dealt with major challenges with great aplomb, and compliments from repeat customers.

2019 Wear It Purple Trivia Night



Figure 9 Wear It Purple 2019 Theme

Save the date –
Saturday 31th

August 2019.
Tuggeranong 55+
Club, 101
Cowlshaw St,

Greenway ACT 2900

If you know an organisation or an individual who might be willing to donate a prize, please email info@diversityact.org.au and we will give you a letter to share.

Grand Re-Opening Party

September 7th, 11am-3pm at the Hub. Come along and celebrate our new floor and walls. Marvel at the beautiful mural that the Youth Group created. Eat way too much party food!

Mental Health Month 2019

We have been awarded a grant to run a public event during Mental Health Month (October).

We are also waiting for news on a separate grant application for Southside Women to run a free Mental Health First Aid course. October could be a busy month!

Community News

Canberra Together 23-24 September

Canberra Together is a community symposium for LGBTIQ+ people and their allies to be held at

the Ainslie Arts Centre in Braddon. Check out the details at

<https://www.theequalityproject.org.au/lgbtiq-community-symposium>

Trans and Gender Diverse People: Health and Social Needs Assessment

The Gender Centre and Positive Life NSW have designed a survey to ask trans and gender diverse people, including those who identify as sistergirls and brotherboys, to complete a survey about health care and social needs. The link to the survey is

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TGDSURVEY?fbclid=IwAR1OFHexjCyppHyypgkSytdLyq-iLDwxAdBVVU7JIKe4Hx91KITQQeUK1u0>

Awards



Figure 10 ACT Volunteering Awards

Our Volunteers were nominated for the Team Award at the 2019 ACT Volunteering Awards. While we didn't win, the nomination alone is a great reflection of how much the community values your volunteer work in supporting

Diversity ACT.

As mentioned in the President's Report, Siân Brigid received a Highly Commended in the Arts Category at the 2019 ACT Young Citizen of the Year Award. Congratulations Siân!

Social Workers

Don't forget that Helen is available for appointments. She can assist you with applications, support and advocacy, or you can

just sit down and have a chat. Please contact Diversity ACT (send us an email at info@diversityact.org.au) to make a time to meet with Helen.