



# Diversity Digest

The official newsletter of Diversity ACT

Autumn 2022



## President's report

I have been associated with Diversity ACT for the best part of six years now, and I think I can safely say there is no such thing as a quiet period in this organisation! So much has happened since December!

I closed my December report hoping for a slightly less challenging 2022. Omicron certainly put that wish to bed quickly, didn't it? Despite the joys of continuing updates and changes to COVID restrictions, Diversity ACT has continued to grow and change across these last three months.

I would like to formally introduce the current committee and thank all those who have returned, joined the committee for the first time, or taken on new roles:

- President: Megan Watts
- Vice President: Liz Stephens
- Secretary: Kyra Murray
- Treasurer: Luka Musicki
- General members: Shay-Leigh Willis, Daniel Sudarto, Kim Malcolm, Arun B and Arjun Mathilakath Madathil.

Daniel has taken on the Membership Secretary role and, until such time as another volunteer steps forward, I continue to manage the volunteers. I am thrilled to see the committee at full capacity and am looking forward to a successful year for Diversity ACT in 2022.

Our planning day in January incorporated a review of the Diversity ACT strategic goals for the rest of the 2021-22 financial year. The new goals are now available on our website and are informing the committee's actions moving forward.

The rejuvenation of the subcommittee structure continues, and I encourage all members to consider whether there is a role for you in one of our many subcommittees. I am particularly excited to see how the plans for improving the sustainability of the Hub develop, and further developments in our communications strategy. We have made some changes to our induction processes for new

volunteers, and the first people to enrol in our online induction course have completed that training. Thanks to Kyra, Arun and Arjun for being our test students!

I hope you enjoy the many and varied articles and reports in this newsletter. If you have any suggestions for the committee moving forward, please don't hesitate to contact me at [President@diversityact.org.au](mailto:President@diversityact.org.au).

## Southside Women's Group

Southside Women is a social group for same-sex attracted women and non-binary folk.

In late January, we enjoyed a relaxing summer evening at The Sunset Outdoor cinema to watch *Westside Story*, a lively new musical version of the original.

On 13 February, eight of us enjoyed a yummy meal at Little Istanbul in Tuggeranong.

Our next meetup was to be Saturday 5 March for Jive @ The Hive in Queanbeyan, but this was postponed due to the weather. New date to be confirmed.

There will be a range of women's bands playing songs to celebrate International Women's Day. If you would like to attend, please text Liz [0422 144 441](tel:0422144441).

Please also contact me if you would like to help organise activities.

Liz Stephens

SSW co-ordinator.



## Queer Youth Together

Queer Youth Together (QyouT, pronounced "cute") is Diversity ACT's youth group. The group caters for LGBTIAQ+ young people and allies from 12 to 24 years of age. We meet at the Diversity Hub on Saturday afternoons during school terms (except for public holiday weekends).

QyouT returned to regular meetings at the Hub on 12 February. So far, we have made pronoun badges, some more bracelets, played card games, participated in a photoshoot for the *Not So Binary* project, and decorated a donation box for Share the Dignity. (Given this report is being written on 28 February, that's a pretty impressive body of work for three weeks!)



We were sad that the Lake Tuggeranong College Community Festival was cancelled

because of COVID, but hopefully we will get a chance to chat with the Lake Tuggeranong students sometime in Term two.

Over the rest of Term one, we have planned a couple of drop-in sessions, and are hoping for a guest speaker on 26 March for the International Day of Transgender Visibility. We will celebrate the end of Term one with a marathon viewing of *Loki* season one that will probably involve a large amount of snacks and pizza.

Our leadership team of Sezi, Aster, Megan and Amelia are always happy to chat with parents and young people who are interested in getting involved with QyouT. You can contact us at [youth@diversityact.org.au](mailto:youth@diversityact.org.au).

## Share the Dignity

Diversity ACT is proud to be a donation point for [Share the Dignity's](#) March drive.

Menstruating isn't a choice, but those experiencing period poverty often have to choose between purchasing period products or other essential items just to get by. We'd rather they didn't have to choose.

Share the Dignity collects period products and distributes them to registered charities across the country. They accept all products in original packaging, including pads, tampons, maternity pads, period undies, menstrual cups, incontinence products.

You can donate these products at the Diversity Hub and [other collection points](#) during March.



## Win free double passes to the Mardi Gras Film Festival!

You could win one of three double passes to see the best of the [Mardi Gras Film Festival](#) (MGFF) right here in Canberra!

The festival, at Dendy Cinemas from 18 to 20 March, features a wide selection of movies featuring lesbians and queer women, gay and queer men, and films highlighting transgender and non-binary people.

A few of the highlights are:



- 'The Divide', from out filmmaker, Catherine Corsini (Summertime, MGFF16 Opening Night) fresh from winning the Queer Palm Award at Cannes, 2021
- animations, coming-of-age tales, comedy, documentaries and more in 'My Queer Career', Australia's richest queer short film prize
- a stirring portrait of a man repeatedly imprisoned for homosexuality in post-war Germany, and the relationship he slowly develops with his cellmate Viktor in 'Great Freedom'
- a bunch of the best short films from the 'Best of MGFF22 Shorts'.

To get into the draw, head to our posts on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#) and tell us your favourite LGBTIAQ+ movie moment by 13 March!

And if you don't win, you can still [check out all the details and get your tickets](#).

## Research

### Ensuring health and bodily integrity: towards a human rights approach for people born with variations in sex characteristics

This report by the Australian Human Rights Commission seeks to provide a pathway forward to address a challenging set of human rights issues that can have significant personal impacts if not addressed. Past consideration of the issues in this report has not resulted in the introduction of adequate protections, despite the significance of the issues. Ultimately, this report is about putting into place better protections for children who do not have the legal capacity to make life-altering decisions for themselves.

### Walking the Talk: LGBTQ Allies in Australian Secondary Schools

Sexual culture(s) are an active presence in the shaping of school relations, and LGBTQ issues have long been recognized as a dangerous form of knowledge in school settings. Queer issues in educational domains quickly attract surveillance and have historically often been aggressively prosecuted and silence enforced. This paper examines the intersections of straight allies in promoting an LGBTIAQ+ visibility and agency in Australian secondary schools.

[Read the report](#)

[Read the paper](#)

## Treasurer's report

Hi folks! It's your fabulous and nerdy Treasurer, Luka, here to give you a quick update on the financial situation with Diversity ACT. In short, our financial health is doing well!

Here is a breakdown of what is important to know about the financial health in February 2022:

- closing bank balance: \$25,796.70
- equity balance: \$13,599.24
- revenue during February 2022: \$1,233.81 (donations, events, fundraising, square revenue)
- expenses during February 2022: \$1,182.51 (utilities, accountancy, fees)
- net surplus for February 2022: \$51.30.

If you want to donate to Diversity ACT, check out the [GiveNow website!](#)

In other news, we are considering various grant opportunities to boost our financial reserves at the moment, including those from Federal Government, ACT Government, and other charity organisations.

We have applied for a Technology Upgrade Grant for much-needed IT and security upgrades for the Hub.

Finally, thanks to FUSE magazine for giving us a free listing in the [CBR LGBTIQ Directory](#).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at [Treasurer@diversityact.org.au](mailto:Treasurer@diversityact.org.au).

## Secretary's report

Hi, my name is Kyra, and I am delighted to be joining the Diversity ACT management committee as Secretary. I am looking forward to supporting the committee's effectiveness and getting to know the Diversity ACT members, volunteers and community.

Just so you know a bit about me, I am a recent Biomedical Science graduate with a major in Anatomy and Human Biology and minoring in Women's Health and Science and Policy: Climate Change, Environmental Planning and Urban Environments. I also come with over twelve years of varied administrative experience in the aviation, legal and, most recently, healthcare industries. I've worked in WA, NT and now in the ACT across private and state sectors and as a small business owner.

In 2021 I was involved with the Audrey Fagan Board Mentorship program run by the ACT Office for Women, which I continue to build on to this day.



I am keen to utilise my prior governance, secretariat, and stakeholder engagement experience with my involvement at Diversity ACT.

## Subcommittee news

We are seeking new members for our sub-committees, so if you're interested in being part of the work we do, this is your chance! Find out more [on our website](#), and [watch our video](#).

To apply for one of these roles, email [info@diversityact.org.au](mailto:info@diversityact.org.au) with a paragraph on why you want to join the committee and what you will bring. Preference will be given to people who bring a form of diversity not currently represented in the existing sub-committee membership.

### Communication

- Angel Hellyer (chair), Arjun Mathilakath

We've got a new member of the subcommittee—welcome to Arjun! We are so lucky to have such passionate people volunteering with us.

Great news: you can now follow [Diversity ACT](#) and [QYouT](#) on Instagram!

We've also got other exciting things coming up: follow us on Instagram and [Facebook](#) to find out more!

### Education and Training

- Shay-Leigh Willis (chair), Daniel Putra

Four members of Diversity ACT completed Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Australia training on 18 February and are now Accredited MHFAiders! The training group also included participants from other organisations such as the Conflict Resolution Services and the Multicultural Hub Canberra.

This bootcamp-style training provided many valuable perspectives and skills. Some take-away points from our members are:

- One in five Australians aged 18 or 85 experience some form of common mental illness in any year.
- It's always worth taking the time to chat to someone if you have seen changes in behaviour that are causing you concern for that person's mental health and wellbeing.
- It's so uncomfortable to think that if I am in a room with nine other people, at least two of us are likely to suffer from mental illness. I feel that these statistics are an indication that we still have a long way to achieve better mental health in our network, that we must do better to look after our peers.
- I really appreciate how there are many ways of showing respect through language when expressing concern for someone's mental health.

### Events & Outreach

- Liz Stephens (chair), Megan Watts, Luka Musicki

Liz and Megan had the pleasure of being interviewed by ACT Desi at the February Repair Cafe. You can watch the clip on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

See elsewhere in the newsletter for all the upcoming events.

## NOT SO BINARY

Representation matters. Far too often, people who sit outside the gender/sexuality binary are only represented in the media as victims of violence and discrimination. We are changing that by representing the power and creativity of bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and non-binary people in the [Not So Binary project](#).

*Not So Binary* is a photographic exploration and unpacking of gender. It explores and responds to the use of language as a weapon against the LGBTIAQ+ community. It features members of the Canberra LGBTIAQ+ community, arranged and shot by their peers.

The project was hard hit by COVID in 2021, but is back up, with our wonderful models and photographer working hard in February, and another shoot happening in [late March](#).

The 26 February photo shoot went well, despite the occasional rain shower. It was beautiful to see people's different responses to the brief of 'unpacking gender'. The members of Queer Youth Together certainly had a lot of fun demolishing a very gendered pinata and eating the chocolate afterwards!



There is still space available in the March shoot, so interested people can register via email at [info@diversityact.org.au](mailto:info@diversityact.org.au)

We'll be announcing the exhibition dates soon.

*Not So Binary* is funded through the Capital of Equality grants program.

## Finance and Fundraising

- Luka Musicki (chair), Megan Watts

The Finance and fundraising subcommittee is looking at new ways to raise funds for Diversity ACT, especially given the continued COVID-19 situation has hampered some of our in-person events.

## Health and wellbeing

This subcommittee has not had a chairperson for a couple of years but is very important to achieving our strategic goals. If you are a person who is passionate about seeing better health and wellbeing in the LGBTIAQ+ community, then please get in touch with us at [info@diversityact.org.au](mailto:info@diversityact.org.au).

## Research and Analysis

- Megan Watts (chair)

The big focus for this subcommittee across November to February has been the Religious Discrimination Bill. In the last newsletter, we reported on our lobbying of all ACT federal representatives. We never did get a response from Senator Seselja to our letter of 23 November 2021, which matches the track record from the Senator's office.

In January, the subcommittee prepared a [submission on the Bill](#) to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee. Many thanks to the Management Committee for their input into that submission, which we turned around quickly in the Christmas/New Year period.

On social media, we publicised a wide range of opportunities for our members to participate in research and other ways of information gathering to support further research and analysis, including:

- the Department of Social Security online consultation for the Draft National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 (closed in late February)
- research relevant to the LGBTIQ+ community conducted at Australian universities, such as Western Sydney University's current survey about [LBTIAQ+ contraceptive experiences](#)
- [the Equality Australia survey for the 2022 election](#) (which is currently open).

Like many subcommittees, we are always keen to have more members to spread the load of seeking out research opportunities, creating submissions and hopefully conducting some research of our own. Please contact us at [research@diversityact.org.au](mailto:research@diversityact.org.au) if you would like to get involved.

If you're keen to help us do more in this space, [watch this video](#) about what we do and apply for a role!

## Policy and Governance

- Angel Hellyer (chair), Sarah Hanrahan

We're starting our review to ensure all our policies and governance documents are consistent and determine if there are any gaps. This is a crucial part of guaranteeing Diversity ACT has the highest levels of transparency and accountability.

We can always use more people, so if you're keen to help out, [watch this video](#) about what we do and apply for a role!

## Property Management

- Liz Stephens (chair), Michael Still

We had our first gardening group meeting on Saturday 26 February at the Diversity Hub. We came up with some great ideas, including:

- setting up a rainwater garden and water tank
- a seed raising hothouse, wicking beds
- a composting site where people can drop off their scraps (similar to the [Capital Scraps](#) social enterprise project in the inner north)
- developing an urban farm project providing a space for locals to grow their veggies.

We will consider which of these we can implement.

We are also planning an Autumn Garden Party on Saturday 2 April at Diversity Hub at 1.30pm, with a range of guest speakers.

We are looking for more people to join our group, which aims to help maintain and develop a garden for all to enjoy.



# Volunteer Coordinator role

We're seeking a motivated, passionate and organised person to be our Volunteer Coordinator!

The Volunteer Coordinator reports to the Membership Secretary. The time commitment is approximately 10 hours/month.

The duties of the Volunteer Coordinator are:

1. Interview potential new volunteers, introduce them to the organisation and arrange completion of membership/volunteer registration if appropriate.
2. Establish and maintain a Volunteer Register (as a separate sheet on the Membership Register)
3. Ensure the currency of volunteer WWVP registration.
4. Provide a monthly list of new volunteers requiring induction to the President.
5. After volunteers are inducted, arrange contacts with the appropriate subcommittee chair.
6. Arrange thank you certificates for regular volunteers/one-off special events.
7. Provide an article for each newsletter highlighting the contribution of volunteers.

The Volunteer Coordinator should have:

- mandatory attributes: over 15 years of age, Diversity ACT membership, WWVP registration
- highly desirable attributes: administrative skills, people management experience
- personal qualities: passionate, looking for mentoring/growth opportunities

Find out more or apply by emailing [info@diversityact.org.au](mailto:info@diversityact.org.au)

## Upcoming events

### Drop-in sessions

Drop-In currently happens at the Hub most Saturday afternoons across the year. Anyone interested in our work, or who has some free time and wants to have a chat, is most welcome to join us at the Hub.

We would love to open the Hub more often, but that requires a few more people who can donate some time. If

### Repair Café

Diversity ACT has once again been providing refreshments, including home-baked goodies, at the [Tuggeranong Repair Café](#). This event, run by SEE-Change, has volunteers who help repair broken household items at no charge to prevent them from going to landfill.

It is held from 1 to 4pm on the fourth Sunday of each month at 245 Cowlshaw

you are interested in volunteering in this way, there's training and support available for you.

St Tuggeranong. The next event is on 27 March 2022.

Want to help out? We would love more volunteers to provide sweet and savoury food options, as well as staff the café.

## Autumn Garden Party

2 April 2022. Keep an eye on our social media for more information.

## Wear It Purple Trivia Night

Date TBA (will be close to Friday 26 August)

## Purple Dance Party.

6.30 to 11.30pm on 29 October 2022 at the Weston Creek Community Centre. We are urgently seeking a disco hire mobile sound system to provide music on the night.



Do you like the newsletter? Share it!



## Diversity ACT Community Services

8 Laidlaw Pl, Kambah  
Australia

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