



**DiversityACT**  
COMMUNITY SERVICES

# Diversity ACT

## Community Services

### Annual Report 2022-23

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## Acknowledgement of traditional custodians

Diversity ACT Community Services acknowledges that Canberra has been built on the intersection of the lands of the Ngunnawal, Ngambri and Ngarigo people. We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and honour the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and the ongoing contributions to the ACT community of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## Acknowledgement of LGBTIAQ+ community

Diversity ACT Community Services also acknowledges the members of the LGBTIAQ+ community, past and present, who have advocated for our cause, convictions, rights, and future.

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## About Diversity ACT Community Services

Diversity ACT Community Services (DACS) is a membership-based charity registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). We operate out of the Diversity Hub in Kambah, ACT, and have a diverse membership that includes other organisations, service providers, and individuals who share our vision and values for the ACT LGBTIAQ+ community.

Strategic direction and corporate governance of DACS is provided by the Management Committee, which is composed of respected leaders from within our membership. Volunteers are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds and contribute their skills and knowledge to the services and development of DACS.

### Our vision

Safety and inclusion for LGBTIAQ+ people in the ACT region.

### Our mission

DACS is a community-led organisation that connects with all levels of society and government. We work for the community, forming partnerships that provide advocacy and support to connect, empower and build an inclusive and safe region for LGBTIQ+ people. We foster this environment through learning from and celebrating one another.

# Diversity ACT Committee members (2022-23)

## Executive

- President: Shay-Leigh Willis
- Vice President: Liz Stephens
- Acting Treasurer: Luka Musicki
- Acting Secretary: Megan Watts

## Ordinary members

- Kim Malcolm
- Daniel Putra-Jay Sudarto
- Megan Watts
- Braedan Bourke

## Public Officer

- Vacant

# From the Vice President

I open this report with an acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the land on which DACS operates: the Ngunnawal, Ngambri and Ngarigo peoples. I also honour the LGBTIAQ+ elders who have made it possible for DACS to exist and continue our work for the LGBTIAQ+ community.

The last 12 months have been busy with varying activities and events being organised.

Though not many events happened at the Diversity Hub we participated in a range of networking events and held community information stalls for various groups and organisations. 2023 commenced with Diversity having an information stall for International Pride Celebration at The National Museum of Australia. One of the highlights for 2023 was An Evening with Sophie Labelle in collaboration with Tuggeranong Arts Centre performed in the theatrette. Thanks to Megan and Jenni Atkinson for organising.

In 2024 we plan to collaborate to organise a range of performances and activities.

## Garden Upgrade

Thanks to our new gardening team Kim, Richard and Bruce for their tireless efforts to clean, tidy, remove waste and restore the garden beds. The garden looks fantastic!

During the winter months we tend not to have events at the hub as it is very cold and inside and outside in the middle of winter. We looked into installing a split system which proved very expensive so we are investigating purchasing energy efficient heaters for each room.

This year a new desktop computer was installed and an outdoor security system funded by various grants.

In August long term Diversity ACT members Shay-Leigh Willis and Megan Arthur resigned from the Management Committee. We thank Shay & Megan for all the hard work they have done over the years to help the organisation grow and become a valued support service for the LGBTQIA community.

I have found it quite a learning curve being thrust into A/G President and familiarising myself across Diversity ACT processes and procedures. I wish to thank all the committee for their continued support and assistance including all the volunteers who helped at various events and activities.

We have new volunteers to take on tasks at events, administration, web design, outreach and gardening. I particularly want to extend a warm welcome to the new committee members who have joined us in recent months.

Over the past few months I have been working with the QyouT leadership team to reinvigorate and encourage new members to join the group. We have been networking with local high schools, colleges and community organisations. Presently the team are working on a new mural for the hub and are planning 2024 activities. They also held information stalls at SouthFest in the Laneways.

I commend this annual report to the DACS membership.

Liz Stephens

Vice President of Diversity ACT

# 2022–23 Highlights

## Grants and donations

Grants and donations were received from a wide range of sources including:

- Quarterly donations from Canberra Southern Cross Club, based on spending from those people who nominated DACS as their charity of choice.
- Online through our Virtual Sausage Sizzle at GiveNow
- \$5000 from the Westfield Local Hero program, which is allocated to providing client supports

## Public events

Across the 2022-23 financial year, the recovery from COVID-19 continued, and multiple public events were held at the Diversity Hub or other venues.

- Wear It Purple Trivia Night (August 2022) - Tuggeranong 55+ Club
- T-shirts & Tea (October 2022) - at the Hub
- QyouT Halloween Party (October 2022) - at the Hub
- Purple Dance Party (October 2022) - at Weston Creek Community Centre
- SouthFEST Community & Sustainability Day (November 2022) - at the Hub. A combined event with SouthFEST and the Kambah Community Garden
- Christmas Soiree (December 2022) – at the Hub
- Afternoon Tea & History Walk (February 2023) - at the Hub. A combined event with the Kambah People's Map
- An Evening with Sophie Labelle (March 2023) - Tuggeranong Arts Centre
- Tuggeranong Pride Walk (June 2023) - Tuggeranong Town Centre

## Other highlights

- Continued growth of the membership base
- Completion of three major projects: Not So Binary, Inclusive Forms and the Purple Dance Party
- Continuation of a rental agreement with ABC Dog Training, which ensures people at the Hub at least 2.5 days a week. This increases the Hub's security and adds to the organisation's financial stability.
- Continuation of our working relationship with SEE-Change, and the beginning of a collaboration with Tuggeranong Arts Centre
- Hub hires for activities such as parties and community events, and a regular booking for 2.5 days/week across the entire financial year
- Acquittal of the Community Services Directorate Technology Grant, which saw an upgrade to the front desk computer, installation of security cameras in the yard, and extension of the WIFI network into the yard

# Our goals and activities

In the reporting period, the following goals guided the Management Committee's practice:

*Diversity ACT Community Services will take action to assist in the growth of health and wellbeing in the LGBTIAQ+ community in South Canberra and the wider ACT region. We will achieve this through:*

- *Building community by*
  - *running community events in South Canberra for LGBTIAQ+ people and the wider community, which target opportunities to build relationships, skills, and a sense of place*
  - *increasing our links with community organisations and government agencies*
  - *increasing our membership by 25%*
  - *increasing member involvement in subcommittees*
- *Increasing member involvement in subcommittees:*
  - *Monthly email President's Updates*
  - *Quarterly newsletters shared via email and the website*
  - *Media releases on topics relevant to LGBTIAQ+ people in South Canberra and the wider ACT region*
  - *Online and face-to-face training courses provided by Diversity ACT members or external providers*

As previously mentioned, the events program has recovered well from the impact of COVID-19. In the reporting period, nine community events were held. Two of these events were collaborations with other organisations, which served to increase our reach and profile.

Links with community organisations and government agencies have continued to improve. In 2022 we had links with 45 organisations, and in 2023, that number increased to almost 50.

The membership numbers have again increased, as is discussed in more detail in the Membership Secretary's report later in this document. We continue to struggle with member involvement in subcommittees, except for Events and Outreach and Communications.

Across the 2022-23 financial year, we used our online mailing system to send out 43 communications, including monthly President's updates, quarterly newsletters, media releases, welcoming new members, and setting up new volunteers in the volunteer training course.



## Client Services

During the reporting period we did not receive any client referrals from external organisations. Of our current clients, two have been with us for over 12 months, as they have complex support needs across a range of areas.

Across the reporting period, the most common issues presented by self-referred clients related to education, welfare payments, family conflict and emergency support.

The bulk of the funds received from Westfield is reserved for improving our client services.

Year	DACS	LGB	T	H	Nb	I	A
2023	3	1	2				
2022	4		2		2		
2021	4	1	1		2		
2020	8	1	3	3	1		
2019	4		2	1	1		1

## Media and communication

Across 2022–23, DACS engaged with a range of media. The organisation has Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Discord accounts. Discord is used most often by the members of Queer Youth Together. Across the reporting period, the Communications subcommittee have focussed on implementing the Diversity ACT Social Media Plan.

Management committee meetings have continued online throughout the reporting period, either on Discord or Zoom.

The value of our improved website is clear, with webforms for membership & volunteer applications, Hub bookings, and general enquiries arriving regularly. Comments on the blog can also be swiftly and easily moderated, as the Communications team receives an email whenever a comment is added.

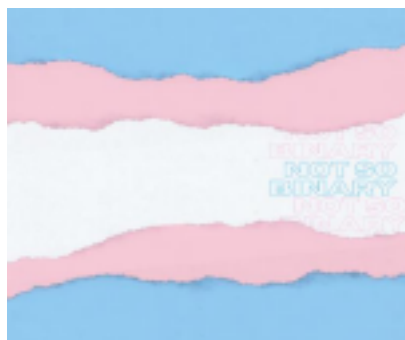
Media releases have been sent out on various topics, including public events and our advocacy campaign for inclusive forms.

# Projects

DACS had three major projects in train across this reporting period.

## Not So Binary

This project carried across from the previous financial year. Funded through the Capital of Equality grant program, 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 nine members of the Canberra LGBTIAQ+ community, arranged and shot at the Diversity Hub Empress Eyrie (a member of the Canberra LGBTIAQ+ community).



The Not So Binary exhibition took place at the Wellbeing & Sustainability Day on 5 November. Empress Eyrie provided an introduction to each of the photos, and some of the project participants also spoke to what they had gained through their involvement.

While some of the Not So Binary photographs have been purchased by participants, others remain the property of DACS. They are on show at all Hub based public events, and also at information stalls.

## Inclusive Forms Campaign

We all deserve forms that reflect the wide diversity of our community. Yet too often, gender-diverse people and people with variations of sex characteristics must provide incorrect information on forms because there is no option that accurately reflects them. DACS is calling on all organisations to ensure their forms are inclusive.

This project began in September 2021. The project management team of Angel Hellyer and Megan Watts engaged in consultations with Meridian, A Gender Agenda, Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT, and Intersec Human Rights Australia across late 2021 and early 2022. The campaign collateral was developed through these consultations and was launched in August 2022.



## Purple Dance Party

The Purple Dance Party took place on 29 October 2022. The project management team was chaired by Liz Stephens and included members of the DACS Events and Outreach Subcommittee and the Southside Women's Group.

The event was a financial and community building success, but wore out the management team. It has been agreed that Diversity ACT's



involvement in any future redevelopment of a SpringOUT women's dance will require collaboration with another group.

## **Membership and volunteer engagement**

### **Volunteer engagement (Volunteer Coordinator: Megan Arthur, she/her)**

The Management Committee has continued to engage with our members through regular emails, social media posts and our newsletter.

Since the online volunteer training course was created eleven people have completed the course. Unfortunately, this increase in trained volunteers has not translated into a noticeable increase in the number of volunteers engaging with the organisation.

Opening the Hub for community drop-in opportunities can only be achieved through the availability of volunteers. Our currently minimal opening hours continue to result from the limited availability of appropriately trained and mentored volunteers.

### **Membership (Membership Secretary: Daniel Putra-Jaya Sudarto, he/they)**

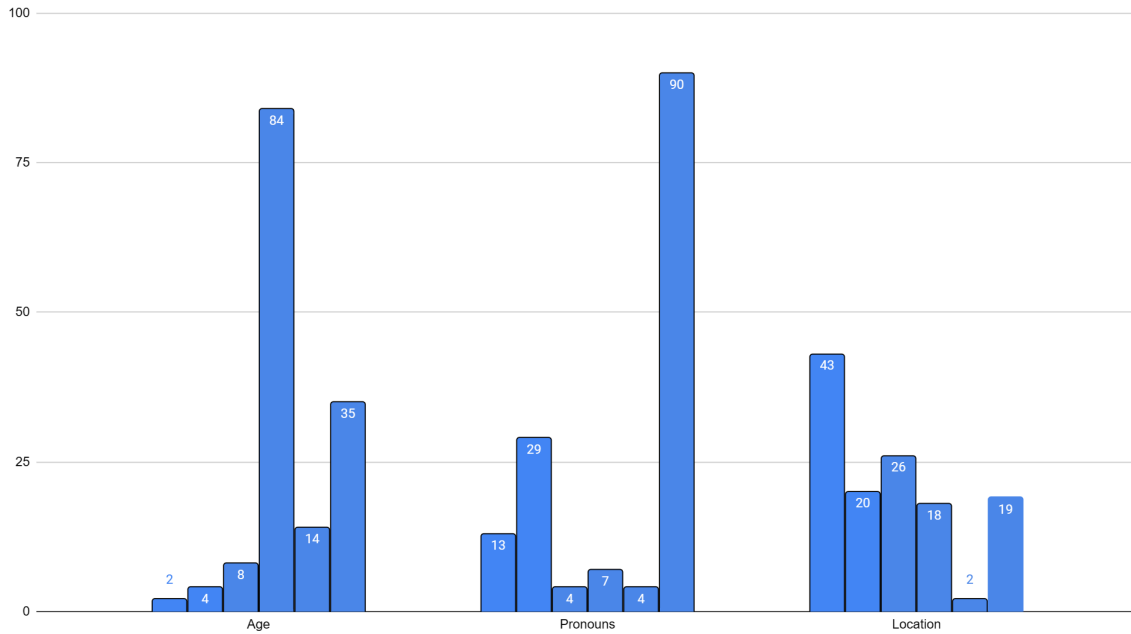
At the end of 2022, the DACS Management Committee was able to reach our goal of increasing the membership base by 25% - it grew by 52% in one year, against the whole baseline since the birth of the organisation.

In 2023, our Management Committee set out to better understand who made our core and our members. As the focus this year moved away from increasing membership base to systems improvement, the decline in quantitative growth is to be expected - from approximately 52% against the whole baseline in 2021/2022, to 55% of the previous year's growth.

It has been my absolute pleasure to serve the organisation and the community as the Membership Secretary for two years now, and I have served as a General Management Committee Member for three years. I am delighted to share that we have been able to make some improvements in our systems, and this has borne the outcome of improved understanding of the people we serve, which is a good step towards making sure the organisation is responsive.

We look forward to another wonderful year contributing to the improvement of the health and wellbeing of our LGBTIQA+, allies and families in the ACT. Meanwhile, here is a brief visual data on our strong 148 members to date. Noting that in actuality, we serve more people than our 148 members - as some of our members are family units but are reflected in our systems as a single person unit (this is work in progress), as well as that throughout the year our services are accessible by the wider community.

Diversity ACT Community Services Members as of 2022-2023



Members by Age					
0-11	12-17	18-24	25-64	65+	Unidentified
2	4	8	84	14	35

Members by Pronouns					
He/Him	She/Her	He/They	She/They	They/Them	Unidentified
13	29	4	7	4	90

Members by Location					
Tuggeranong	Woden	Belconnen / Gungahlin	City	Outer ACT	Unidentified
43	20	26	18	2	19

## Subcommittee reports

Policy and governance – Kim Malcolm (Chair)

The Policy & Governance Subcommittee was chaired by Kim Malcolm for the Financial Year with the assistance of 2 people in Shalah and Jane who provided editing support. Thank you to the DACS committee for their support.

The work of previous chair Angel Hellyer was continued and the recommendations for consideration were reviewed by the DACS Committee in January resulting in the reduction of redundant documents and finalisation and confirmation of those in draft. Work needs to be done to convert the drafts to policy and retire outdated or redundant policies, procedures, standard operating procedures (SOPs), plans, forms and other documents. Familiarity and skills in Google Docs has limited their finalisation.

From the January 2023 Planning Meeting the DACS Committee agreed to the following:

- Develop a Diversity Hub booking & procedures document as a matter of priority.
- The next priority for the subcommittee is to Create a register of Diversity HUB bookings OR an SOP for using Google Calendar.
- Develop policies and SOPs around Client Management as priority 3.
- Phone Management SOPs to go to the Communications Subcommittee for development and maintenance.
- The Induction Powerpoint document to be overseen by the Communications Subcommittee.
- Roles, responsibilities and procedures to be included in the Finance and Funding Subcommittee (F&F).
- Draft Delegation Schedule to be provided by Secretary to F&F.

A draft Diversity Hub Booking and Procedures Document was provided to the DACS Committee Members for review and consideration. Further work to be reported in the next financial year. NB: Work in Policy & Governance ceased in August 2023 after major resignations in the DACS leadership team, and the focus turned to Property Management. Hopefully this can change after the AGM.

## Finance and Fundraising – Vacant

In the absence of a treasurer, there is no report from this subcommittee.

## Events and outreach – Liz Stephens (Chair)

A range of events and activities were held at Diversity Hub during the reporting period which included:

- The Christmas Soirée in December 2022 attracted around 25 people of all ages who enjoyed a relaxing afternoon of outdoor games, chalk drawing, rock painting, BBQ dinner, Xmas Bingo and an engaging performance by The Lost Larrikan. Our volunteers who helped at the Purple Dance Party received a certificate of appreciation at this event.
- An Afternoon Tea & History Walk in February 2023. Around 10 people attended and many conversations were held with a local historian providing an interactive discussion and photos showcasing Kambah's history.

## Outreach

Diversity ACT held multiple information stalls across the reporting period:

- February - National Museum of Australia for World Pride.
- March - FreshOut Day Glebe Park.
- May - Canberra Volunteer Expo Campbell High School and Communities at Work Tuggeranong
- June-Stall at Canberra Roller Derby Denman Prospect.

## Collaborations

July - Nov 2022 - SEE-Change providing Refreshments at Tuggeranong Repair Cafe

Feb-May 2023 - SEE-Change providing Refreshments at Tuggeranong Repair Cafe

March 2023 - Tuggeranong Arts Centre An Evening with Sophie Labelle

## Communication – Megan Arthur (Chair)

During the 2022 – 2023 financial year, the Communication subcommittee's main aim was to have a stable social media presence, thus increasing the brand awareness of DACS. As of November 2023, Facebook reach has increased by 136.9%, with 187 new followers. The DACS Instagram page has 394 followers, almost double the following from the last reporting period. The Instagram reach has increased 1.7K%. (This must be qualified by the fact that the Instagram account had only existed for a couple of months in the previous reporting period.) DACS posts were seen more than 21,000 times through these mediums last year.

A strong presence in media, both mainstream and social, has improved DACS brand recognition, increasing our membership base and increasing attendance at events.

## Education and training – Vacant

While there is no current chair for this subcommittee, work within the education and training space has continued.

We have fostered links with Canberra College, Gold Creek High School, Lake Tuggeranong College, and Stromlo High School to engage with at-risk LGBTQIA+ youth, provide staff and young people with resources, and raise DACS' profile in the community. We have maintained our relationship with the Canberra Institute of Technology and other service providers, with two students successfully completing placements with us.

## Property Management – Liz Stephens (Chair)

During the reporting period a building report was provided by ACT Property Group which states Kambah Cottage is in need of extensive repairs in the future.

Over the last 12 months a number of repairs and maintenance have been completed at the Diversity Hub:

- Repair of hole in fence caused by a breakin.
- Installation of smoke detectors.
- Removal of paint from the windows to enable opening and closing.
- Repair of dripping outside tap

- Repair of tiles in the bathroom
- Repair of leaking toilet
- Installation of security cameras

In April 2023 an Esky was placed on the hot plates in the kitchen. Unfortunately the esky bumped the hot plate controls to the "on" position. Fortunately a fire was averted, though the hot plates were extensively damaged. They are in the process of being removed and replaced with a new bench top.

## Garden Management

While the yard was maintained through the reporting period, the vast majority of garden improvements occurred outside the period covered by this report. Stay tuned for next year's report for lots of action in this space!

## Our finances

### Treasurer's report

Diversity ACT has not had a treasurer since the 2022 Annual General Meeting. While the members of the Management Committee have done their utmost to ensure the continued viability of the organisation, they have been unable to finalise the financial papers, arrange an audit or create a draft budget for approval at the 2023 Annual General Meeting. They are aware of the implications of this situation, and will do their utmost to resolve it early in 2024.

The bank account balances at 30 June 2023 were:

ANZ Business Essentials account: \$2,038.72

Business Advantage account: \$30, 190.54

## Acknowledgements

Diversity ACT would like to acknowledge the volunteers who have assisted us throughout the year, both at events and in maintaining and improving the Diversity Hub.

We also thank our kind corporate sponsors and private donors, who make it possible for Diversity ACT to continue developing and providing services to the LGBTIAQ+ community of the ACT.

## How you can help

1. Become a member using the form on our website <https://diversityact.org.au/support-us/membership/>
2. Volunteer your time, whether that's at an event, around the Diversity Hub or on one of our subcommittees: <https://diversityact.org.au/support-us/volunteer/>
3. Make a donation so we can continue our work: <https://diversityact.org.au/support-us/donate/>
4. Take part in our events
5. Follow us on social media and share our posts
  - a. Facebook: @diversity.act
  - b. Instagram: diversityact
  - c. Twitter: @DiversityACT

