

Help Us Fight The New Homophobia

We are asking that women and men (perhaps some gay men?) join us in this campaign of complaint to the Victorian Pride Centre. We want to bombard them. We ask that you keep communication civil, yet strong, so as not to prejudice our exemption application.

You can email them at the list of names at the end of this document (the more emails to as many as possible the better). There are also sample letters at the end of this document.

- Or phone them on (03) 7035 3592 and ask to speak to management
- Or comment on their Facebook site
- Or contact their Patron and ambassadors
- Or contact their sponsors
- Or contact the groups that use the centre

Or you can take to social media and spread the word. Please do take to social media and spread the word far and wide!

Contact them:

- To register concern that lesbians have been refused a booking to celebrate International Lesbian Day
- To register concern that LAG has been refused a meeting with management to discuss the refusal
- To ask why this is the case
- To question why transgender groups are allowed to have their own specific events but not lesbians <https://pridecentre.org.au/event/t4t-a-transgender-showcase/2023-06-08/>

Use the slogan

Help Us Fight The New Homophobia

Followed by subheadings eg

- Lesbian: same-sex attracted not same gender identity attracted
- Lesbians excluded in the name of inclusion
- No pride without lesbians
- Help lesbians come back out of the closet
- Lesbian, not queer
- Why have lesbian spaces disappeared?

Our message is that:

- Lesbians in Australia have not been able to hold public lesbian-only events for twenty years or more. Most, if not all, lesbian specific venues, groups, events and so on have disappeared. Consequently lesbians have had to go underground, and back in the closet. [Lost Lesbian Space — LGB Alliance Australia](#)
- Lesbians have been silenced for fear of intimidation, litigation, loss of jobs, loss of family and friends, harassment, violence.
- As we are born female and grow up as female and as lesbians, we have a shared lived experience. We are a distinct cultural group. We have our own celebrations, our own music traditions, our own language, a unique herstory, shared experiences that go back decades.
- Lesbians in Australia are being discriminated against, in funding opportunities, in freedom of assembly, in law, with refusal of use of facilities (Pride Centre)
- Young gender nonconforming girls and teenage young women who are most likely lesbian, are being sent on a pathway towards transition, medicalisation, sterilisation and life altering surgery. This is a form of conversion practise.

Some resources to use

QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT 29/8/23

Sam, Louise and I had a really fruitful day at State Parliament. Joe McCracken my local upper house member hosted us as reps of LGB Alliance Australia.

It was an informal chat with his Lib colleagues and I peaked a couple of them. I met Moira Deeming too. In any case, the Libs are very aware of what's happening for sex based rights and also the transing of LGB kids.

Moira mentioned us in Parliament this morning and has asked Harriet Shing to provide an explanation as to why lesbians have been turned away from the Pride Centre.

Sam and I think a good strategy is to go and have a conversation with Harriet who is minister for "equality" and I think it's also worth having a chat with the Liberal shadow Minister for Equality about this issue. He is James Newbury MP.

I honestly cannot believe that I'm courting Liberal members in all this as I have been a Labor/Greens voter my entire voting life. But they were honestly just lovely to us today and it's doing my head in a bit to be honest. **Nicole Mowbray**

Here is what Moira said in Parliament.

Moira Deeming MP Vic- Question for the Minister for Equality

"The erasure of biological sex-based rights in the law is impacting many vulnerable members of our community. Recently, it was reported in the news that Victoria's new Pride Centre- which has held 'trans only events' which legally discriminated on the basis of gender, rejected an application to hold a lesbian-only event which would have legally discriminated on the basis of sex and sexuality.

The Lesbian Action Group, a group of lesbians from Melbourne and Central Victoria, were told by Justine Dalla Riva, CEO of the Pride Centre that their request to hold a Lesbian only event "seeks to legally discriminate against people" via an Australian Human Rights Commission exemption and is inconsistent with the Pride Centre's purpose.

My Question is, will the Minister seek to reinstate biological sex-based rights into Victorian law so that- among other things- same sex attracted men and women don't have to apply for an exemption and be labelled 'uninclusive' just to host their own events?"

Supplementary "Nicole Mowbray from LGB Alliance Australia and the Lesbian Action Group said, "The irony is we can legally get married now but we can't exclusively meet in a single-sex space".

Sex, gender and sexuality are listed as separate protected attributes in Victorian law- but in practice, they don't seem to be equally protected. Will the Minister take action to stop the widespread practice of unfairly and unequally applying anti-discrimination laws against females and same sex attracted people in Victoria?"

Harriet Shing MP for equality was away today, but Moira will post her answer when she replies.

REJECTION LETTERS FROM THE PRIDE CENTRE

From: Justine Dalla Riva <justine.dallariva@pridecentre.org.au>

To:

Cc: Bookings at Pride Centre <bookings@pridecentre.org.au>

Sent: Tuesday, 22 August 2023, 05:58:12 pm AEST

Subject: Re: Lesbian Action Group booking on 15 October 2023

Dear Jean,

Thank you for your patience while the VPC assessed the Lesbian Action Group's booking request for October 15th 2023.

On this occasion the Victorian Pride Centre must reject your booking request.

Your initial booking request, which resulted in a quote for services, did not indicate the nature of your event or the subsequent identification that you would be seeking an exemption from the Australian Human Rights Commission and naming the Pride Centre in your submission.

The Pride Centre exists to support the LGBTIQ+ community. Inclusion, diversity, acceptance and belonging are essential to the organisation's values. The VPC's purpose is to connect, support and amplify LGBTIQ+ voices, resources, services, and groups so that our communities are cohesive, resilient and thrive.

Our Constitution provides that the Pride Centre's object is to promote the reconciliation, mutual respect and acceptance between groups and individuals in Australia and the promotion and protection of human rights. The VPC achieves this in part through facilitating within the Pride Centre events in support of equality, diversity and inclusion for the LGBTIQ+ community. The centre is a beacon of hope, a welcoming and inclusive space for all LGBTIQ+ community members and their allies.

Your request to hold an event that excludes and seeks to legally discriminate against people on the bases of their sex, sexuality and gender is inconsistent with the Pride Centre's purpose.

I would be very happy to have a further discussion with you regarding our decision, along with representatives of the organisations that call the Pride Centre home (if they so wish).

Yours sincerely,

Justine

On Tuesday, 29 August 2023, 09:24:14 am AEST, Justine Dalla Riva <justine.dallariva@pridecentre.org.au> wrote:

Dear Jean,

Thank you for the reply and indicating that you would like to meet.

I believe that it might be more appropriate for a meeting to occur post the determination of the AHRC so that we can discuss your concerns and the Victorian Pride Centre's purpose within a broader context.

For clarity, the Victorian Pride Centre, consistent with the purpose set out in its constitution, is an independent, Not-for-Profit, apolitical organisation, and we currently receive no recurrent funding from federal, state or local government.

The Victorian Pride Centre will be making a submission to the AHRC in response to the submission by the Lesbian Action Group to clarify our position in respect of the booking, and the reasons why we have determined to reject the booking consistent with the Centre's purpose and values.

I will reach out after the determination is made with some suggested dates and times.

Kind regards,

Justine

MEDIA RELEASE

Media Statement

For Immediate Release

Lesbian group excluded from Victorian Pride Centre

Government funding is not supporting Victorian lesbians

Help Us Fight The New Homophobia

The Lesbian Action Group, a group of lesbians from Melbourne and Central Victoria, applied to hold a lesbian-only event at Victoria's Pride Centre, in order to celebrate International Lesbian Day on 8th of October. They have also applied to the AHRC for an exemption to do so.

'During the 1980s and 1990s,' explains Nicole Mowbray, a founding member of the Lesbian Action Group, 'I was able to go out to any number of lesbian only events in Melbourne and

have fun with my lesbian friends. For the past 20 years the lesbian community has had to go underground and meet in private. We applied to book a space at the Pride Centre so we could once again hold an event that lesbians could enjoy.'

Victoria's Pride Centre rejected the booking saying it went against their "diversity and inclusion" policies.

Members of the Lesbian Action Group say that the Victorian Pride Centre is discriminating against lesbians and that public funding is not being directed to the best interests of lesbians. They have asked that the Pride Centre management explain why they are excluding lesbians from the purpose-built LGBTIQ centre. The Pride Centre management has refused their request for a meeting.

Lesbians are a distinct cultural group that should have a right to freedom of association. The Pride Centre is discriminating against lesbians and is breaking several international human rights mandates that the Australian Government is signed up to.

'Lesbians should have a right to assemble in a single-sex space' says Lesbian Action Group spokeswoman, Carole Ann. 'It's about celebrating our lesbian culture in company with our lesbian community as we used to be able to do.'

Carole Ann lesbian.action.group@gmail.com

Nicole Mowbray nicole.mowbray@lgballiance.org.au

Available for interviews by the media.

CONTACT LIST

justine.dallariva@pridecentre.org.au CEO Justine Della Riva

craig.bell@pridecentre.org.au Chair of the Board

david.imber@pridecentre.org.au Deputy Chair of the Board

scott.hartley@pridecentre.org.au Treasurer

judy.tang@pridecentre.org.au Board director

melinds.rich@pridecentre.org.au Board director

alan.wu@pridecentre.org.au Board director

tara.laurenson@pridecentre.org.au Board director

jane.crawley@pridecentre.org.au Board director

contact@pridecentre.org.au Staff: Kerry Taylor, Anita Fiorenza, Max Haywood, Bree McKilligan

Patron Hon Michael Kirby AC CMG

Ambassadors

Amao Leota Lu amaoleotalu@gmail.com

Benjamin Law <http://benjamin-law.com>

Courtney Act <http://courteyact.com>

Julie McCrossin www.juliemccrossin.com

Tony Briffa <http://briffa.org>

G Flip

Greg Axtens

Rhonda Galbally

Zoe Coombs Marr

Tony Ayers

You might want to hit them where the money comes from...

PARTNERS: Vic State Gov; City of Port Phillip; Chemist Warehouse; Lifeview; L'Oreal Australia; Splunk; Cashman & Wakefield; Hall & Wilcox; Minter Ellison; Harvest Insights; Scotchmans Hill; Broadtree; Sydney Myer Fund; Lord Mayors Charitable Fund; Gandel Foundation

There are also groups who use the centre (Who lives here)

and groups who are supported by the centre (Directory) found on their website

MPs

The Hon Harriet Shing Minister For Equality

(03)9637 9654 harriet.shing@parliament.vic.gov.au

Mr James Newbury Shadow Minister For Equality

(03)9592 1900 James.Newbury@parliament.vic.gov.au

Useful Links

<https://www.lgballiance.org.au/news/the-acon-word-count>

[More mainstream LGBTQ+ organisations failing the LGB — LGB Alliance Australia](#)

<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/legal/exemption-applications-under-sex-discrimination-act-1984-cth>

SAMPLE LETTERS

Dear

I am writing to express my deep concern that lesbians have been denied the use of Pride Centre facilities.

I am pretty sure this is illegal under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth). If it isn't illegal it certainly isn't fair and just.

I am curious as to why, in the name of inclusion, the pride Centre is excluding a group which is supposedly under the LGBTQIA+ banner. Lesbians who were born female have a particular culture, needs, experiences of discrimination not shared by other groups. They need their own spaces.

I wholeheartedly support the right of any group to meet on occasion with those from their own particular subset of LGBTQIA+. I don't understand why this is a problem for you. I believe in fact that I have seen events and groups exclusively for trans people. How is this different?

I look forward to your explanation.

Etc etc etc

Dear.....

I am part of the group of people currently being denied use of the Pride Centre facilities.

I am heartbroken that I am being excluded from what is supposed to be a place I should feel safe in. I would love to attend a celebration of International Lesbian Day with my sisters, at the Pride Centre. Please explain why I can't do that.

Etc etc etc

Dear

Are you aware that a significant group within the LGBTIQ+ community have been denied the right to hold a function there to celebrate International Lesbian Day on October 8th. Pride Centre management have refused our booking, and further refused a meeting to discuss the matter.

The group wish to hold an event specifically for lesbians. We/they would like to be able to celebrate this special day amongst themselves. It is unconceivable that they have been turned down.

Etc etc etc

Dear

I believe you are a sponsor for the Victorian Pride Centre. Are you aware that they are discriminating against a group that they claim to be under their umbrella, namely lesbians.

They have refused.....

Etc etc etc