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# First Mardi Gras Inc. Newsletter

## August 2020

In this August edition of the **First Mardi Gras Inc. Newsletter**, we have:

- Robert French on next month's anniversary – **Fifty Years of Coming Out!**
- An invitation from the SGLMG 78ers Committee to the 30 August zoom meeting: **Support and Connection in a COVID World**
- Robyn Kennedy's update on **Oceania InterPride**
- Information on how to register for the online **2020 InterPride World Conference**
- Karl Zlotkowski on **Poland – the View from Here**
- My report on 78ers and First Nations Rainbow **Black Lives Matter** meeting with Police
- Our announcement of the occasional journal **Salon78**
- A link to the *Impact of COVID-19 on Older LGBTI Australians* booklet.

**Diane Minnis**

## First Mardi Gras Inc. AGM

The **Annual General Meeting** of First Mardi Gras Inc. will be held on **Saturday 19 September** at **4pm** and will be conducted by Zoom.

The Annual Report and Financial Report will be presented at the meeting and members of the Management Committee will be elected. Following the AGM, we will have reports and general discussion of current and planned projects.

Please make sure that you make sure your membership is up to date, so that you can vote at the meeting. Members will receive further information and a meeting link early next month.

## Fifty Years of Coming Out!



*CAMP Inc. being honoured in October 2018 with the prestigious ACON President's Award. Accepting on behalf of CAMP Inc. were 78ers Peter de Waal and Robyn Plaister and Ian Black, who chaired the first public CAMP Inc. meeting in 1970. From [video by William Brougham](#).*

***By Robert French***

***78er and Committee Member of First Mardi Gras Inc.***

***Member Pride History Group***

As we all know, September and October mark important anniversaries for us all.

First, the anniversary of the public announcements of the formation of CAMP Inc.

Interviews with John Ware on 10 September 1970, and Christabel Poll, John and Michael Cass, his partner, in the Couples article in The Australian on 19 September. This was followed by an interview with John and Michael on ABC-TV's This Day Tonight two days later.

Secondly, with the TDT interview with a lesbian couple – Francesca Curtis and Phyllis Pappas of the Australasian Lesbian Movement shortly afterwards.

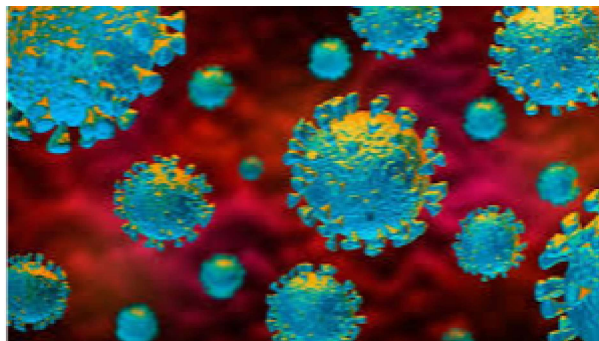
It is not just that these were brave people for the time but that these events mark the beginnings of LGBTQ visibility in Australia. And with the following 50 years of achievement, they are worthy of commemoration.

I have been trying to stir up some media interest in this anniversary but with little success so far. One newspaper might be interested but not, it seems, The Australian. But, then no one is surprised by that! If you have contacts in the media who might be able to assist, please let us know.

Note that the State Library exhibition has now had a name change to – **Coming Out in the 70's**. It is to be divided into three sections – Being Seen, Being Heard, Being Together. The opening is still planned for late November 2020.

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## **Support and Connection in a COVID World**



Hello fellow 78ers,

This message is from the **78ers Committee** of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

Many 78ers say they would like to be more connected to our communities, especially in these strange COVID-19 times.

We thought we would run a Zoom meeting to share with each other about how we're all coping in this COVID-19 world.

**You are invited to join us on Zoom at 2pm on Sunday 30th August 2020. To RSVP, please reply to [78ers@mardigrasarts.org.au](mailto:78ers@mardigrasarts.org.au) and we will send you the Zoom link a few days before the meeting.**

We look forward to seeing you!

*Sallie Colechin, Rae Giffin, Helen Gollan, Diane Minnis, Lance Mumby, and Kate Rowe – your elected SGLMG 78ers Committee.*

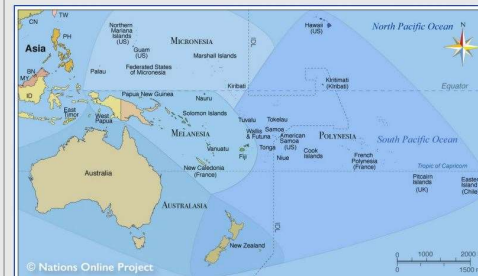
*Photo below by Sally Colechin*



## Oceania InterPride

American Samoa  
Australia  
Fiji  
French Polynesia  
Guam  
Kiribati  
Marshall Islands  
Federated States of Micronesia  
Nauru  
New Caledonia  
New Zealand  
Niue  
Northern Mariana Islands  
Palau  
Papua New Guinea  
Samoa  
Tokelau  
Tuvalu  
Vanuatu  
Wallis and Futuna Islands

### Region 20 Oceania



***By Robyn Kennedy  
78er and First Mardi Gras Inc. Member  
InterPride Interim Region 20 representative  
Co-Chair InterPride Human Rights and Diversity Committee***

**Co-Chair InterPride Strategic Planning Committee**

[robyn.kennedy@interpride.org](mailto:robyn.kennedy@interpride.org)

Pride organisations in the InterPride Oceania region met for the second time as a network on 17 August. There were 24 people in attendance from 17 organisations. It was great to see participation from new members from Guam and the Northern Marianas Islands.

InterPride members from Oceania include Prides from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, New Caledonia, Samoa, French Polynesia, Tonga and Tuvalu.

We are now going through a formal process to appoint two delegates to the Global Advisory Council to ensure our region has a recognised voice in InterPride.

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EXIST. PERSIST. RESIST



## 2020 InterPride AGM and World Conference

The InterPride and European Pride Organisers Association (EPOA) Annual General Meetings and World Conference that was to take place in Oslo on October 1-3, 2020, has now moved online due to COVID-19.

There is no charge for registration, but all participants must be from a member Pride

organisation. First Mardi Gras Inc. is a member organisation.

For security and connection reasons, the deadline to register, for all participants, is **20 September 2020**. If you would like attend the online InterPride World Conference from 1-3 October 2020, please email us at [info@78ers.org.au](mailto:info@78ers.org.au).

## Poland – the View from Here



***By Karl Zlotkowski  
78er and Committee Member of First Mardi Gras Inc.***

Most Australians understand very little about Poland, and probably don't care. It's a long way away, and when we were travelling very few of us had Warsaw on our bucket list. The

language is almost incomprehensible to English speakers, and the locals can appear stolid and resentful.

In the old days we visualised Warsaw in shades of grey, but it isn't like that now. If you Google Warsaw you see a modern glass city. Right now they're topping out the tallest shimmering tower in Western Europe. It's just across the road from the old Palace of Culture – a gift from Stalin that Varsovians love to hate.

Yet modern Poland is showing all the signs of social dislocation as a result of rapid economic change. The push to modernise and liberalise society to qualify for membership of the EU has alienated traditionalists, who associate the Rainbow Flag with the encroachment of western neo-liberalism. And populist politicians have exploited this using tactics of division and scapegoating under the guise of promoting social cohesion and public order.

This is happening elsewhere in countries with similar challenges – Hungary and Turkey come to mind – but in Poland the anti-LGBTI agenda has become especially vitriolic. Much of this has been driven by the Law and Justice Party, to which the President (Andrzej Duda) and the Prime Minister belong (though Duda has resigned his *formal* membership). Law and Justice have a history of appealing to “family values”, and most recently summoning up the spectre of something called “foreign LGBTI Ideology”.

This slogan surfaced in the June Presidential elections, along with a statement from Duda opposing same sex marriage and adoption. In July, following his (very close) re-election, he drafted an amendment to the Polish Constitution to that very end. At the same time he also apologised, confusingly, “if anyone felt offended by my actions”. Meanwhile, the crackdown on LGBTI activists has continued.

'LGBTI-Free Zones' have been declared by many local authorities, even though LGBTI rights are enshrined in Poland's constitution. For this reason, at least, the declarations are not legally enforceable (for now). Clashes between LGBTI activists and police continue, and a recent campaign of placing rainbow flags on public monuments has resulted in arrests for “insulting religious feelings and insulting Warsaw monuments.”

Article 196 of the Polish criminal code prescribes up to two years in prison for a public



action that "...offends the religious feelings of others...". This particular article was invoked in 2019 when an activist, Elzbieta Podlesna, was arrested for publishing a poster showing the Virgin of Czestochowa (Poland's most celebrated religious icon) with a rainbow halo. The poster was a protest against homophobic statements by the Roman Catholic church.

The arrest was ruled to be legal, though unreasonable (which presumably means she was let off with a warning). She had, however, made her point: "Sexual orientation is not a sin or a crime and the Holy Mother would protect such people from the Church". Though, not surprisingly, the Church would not agree. And while a bad law is on the books, the police can enforce it.

More recently, in July an activist known as 'Margo' was arrested over an incident the previous month, when she had thrown paint over a truck covered with anti-LGBTI slogans that was broadcasting homophobic statements in the streets of Warsaw. The prosecutors requested a pre-trial detention period of three months, subsequently reduced to two months. The charges included "participating in a riot", which may have some resonance for 78ers.

And yet, up against this campaign of intimidation, members of the Polish parliament staged a dramatic challenge to Duda on the day he was sworn in, wearing rainbow themed dresses (and masks). As one of the MPs put it: "We wanted to remind President Andrzej Duda that ... in the constitution there is a guarantee of equality for all".

The struggle continues...

*Above: Left MPs WOJTEK RADWANSKI/AFP via Getty*

*Below: [https://remybonny.com/2020/08/09/poster-polish-stonewall/?](https://remybonny.com/2020/08/09/poster-polish-stonewall/)*

*[fbclid=IwAR20cEGLfXCnFVkcAp7FMcXPTUSqTFMX\\_6oYJjr3O9gE9If4g0oJtwkP-h4](https://remybonny.com/2020/08/09/poster-polish-stonewall/?fbclid=IwAR20cEGLfXCnFVkcAp7FMcXPTUSqTFMX_6oYJjr3O9gE9If4g0oJtwkP-h4)*





## 78ers and First Nations Rainbow meeting with Police

*By Diane Minnis*

*78er and Secretary First Mardi Gras Inc.*

Following our Joint Statement on the Black Lives Matter demo, 78ers working on anti-bullying initiatives with Police and First Nations Rainbow reps met with NSW Police. On 30 July we met with Assistant Commissioner Gelina Talbot, Corporate Sponsor LGBTI and key staff.

First Nations Rainbow's Russell Weston and Ricky Macourt along with 78ers Sue Fletcher, Diane Minnis and Peter Murphy, conveyed their anger at Police tactics used at the protest.

Russell made it very clear that for First Nations people it is the colour of their skin that

determines their first level of harassment from Police.

While undertakings were made to pass our comments on to operational Police, there were some positive outcomes of the meeting. First Nations Rainbow will be invited to meetings of the Police LGBTIQ Stakeholder Forum and are now working with Police on improving their education on First Nations issues.

*Photo Star Observer*

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## Salon78 Journal

Due to COVID-19, we are taking our **Salon78** forums into print – as an occasional journal for 78ers and our friends. **Salon78** aims to include articles, essays, reviews, poetry, short fiction, photographs, art works, videos and interviews. We are hoping to have our first issue out for next year's Mardi Gras festival.

If you would like to join our **Salon78 Working Group** or submit a contribution, email us at [info@78ers.org.au](mailto:info@78ers.org.au). KZ

*Photo Anne Morphett*



## Impact of COVID-19 on Older LGBTI Australians

*Teresa Savage says: 'One of the last things I did when working at the National LGBTI Health Alliance was write this report. It was such a privilege to speak with older LGBTI people about how they have coped with COVID-19. I'm so grateful for their generosity and insight. Please share this around – with the current situation in Victoria we need*



*all the wisdom we can get.'*

The booklet was published in July 23, 2020 and is available at:

[https://www.lgbtihealth.org.au/impact\\_of\\_covid\\_19\\_on\\_older\\_lgbt\\_australians?fbclid=IwAR0DggpbTiO-TRDI4Hsn-t6sqLRZGGEUxr1LXg6HGafutZ3lxY4uEN65cz0](https://www.lgbtihealth.org.au/impact_of_covid_19_on_older_lgbt_australians?fbclid=IwAR0DggpbTiO-TRDI4Hsn-t6sqLRZGGEUxr1LXg6HGafutZ3lxY4uEN65cz0)



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