



IT'S TIME FOR OUR FUTURE:

SYDNEY GAY AND LESBIAN MARDI GRAS REVEALS DAZZLING 2024 PROGRAM

The iconic **Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras** Festival returns from **16 February to 3 March 2024**, charging into our future with its biggest and boldest program in years.

Bursting at the sequined seams, the expansive Festival program celebrates the entire LGBTQIA+ community, boasting over 100 electrifying community events, dance parties, theatre and music, culminating with the globally renowned **Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade** on **Saturday, 2 March 2024**.

Fresh off the heels of its 45th anniversary in 2023, this year's Sydney Mardi Gras shines even brighter with a forward-focused theme: ***Our Future***. The theme embodies a commitment to inclusivity, acceptance and optimism, celebrating past achievements while illuminating the path to a dazzling future.

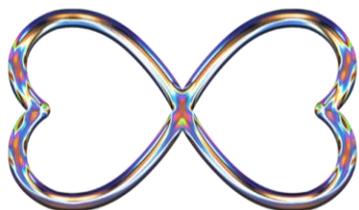
"For 45 years, the energy, vibrancy, and unity of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras has made it a globally significant event. And each year, our commitment to bringing forth an even more fabulous celebration grows," said **Sydney Mardi Gras CEO Gil Beckwith**. "In 2024, we embrace our roots and look forward with eager anticipation to our future. Our mission is clear: to echo the voices of our communities, to champion progress and instigate impactful change."

"Beyond the individual events, and there are many, the 2024 festival underscores our commitment to inclusivity, unity and remembrance. The 2024 Festival celebrates our past, our present and most crucially, the promising future we're building. Here's to another unforgettable Sydney Mardi Gras," said *Beckwith*.

The theme *Our Future...* is brought to life through a mesmerising creative campaign that reimagines iconic tarot cards to honour local LGBTQIA+ legends. Celebrating trailblazers from HIV+ campaigners to trans and gender-diverse icons, activists and artists, each card captures the essence and diversity of queer communities. These chosen community members, deeply respected within Sydney's LGBTQIA+ circles, offer a harmonious blend of past recognition and future vision, with the creative campaign standing as a testament to an unwavering commitment to genuine representation, and a call to imagine a bright future for us all. Read about each of the community members featured in the campaign at mardigras.org.au

This year's program features a range of new and major events:

- **Bondi Beach Party**, a grand beachside celebration that captured hearts at Sydney WorldPride returns. Bringing together 15,000 revellers as the iconic Bondi Beach is the backdrop to international DJs and performances for that distinct Sydney Mardi Gras flair.
- **Ultra Violet**, another WorldPride favourite, this invigorating day-to-night party is tailored for LGBTQIA+ women, set within the artistic walls of the National Art School, and curated by luminaries *Sveta Gilerman* and *Jess Hill*;



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- **Festival First Light**, a city-wide Welcome to Country ceremony led by Elders from across the Sydney Basin;
- **Hot Trans Summer**, a total trans and gender-diverse takeover of floating luxury venue Glass Island. It is set to be a celebration dedicated to the trans and gender diverse communities, boasting an all-trans line up.
- **Queer Futures**, a series of talks and ideas, with conversations ranging from sport to the arts, politics and education.
- **Diamond Dance**, presented by *Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras*, *Pollys Club*, and *Dykes on Bikes*, is a party celebrating *Pollys Club's* 60th year through nostalgic rhythms and standout acts.
- **Oxtravaganza and Darlo Big Drag Brunch**, presented by the *Darlinghurst Business Partnership*, is an eclectic two-week fringe festival pulsating with nightly performances, art showcases, a dedicated family zone and more. Also returning from 2023 is **Darlo Big Drag Brunch**, where the glittering Oxford Street and surrounds will be taken over by simultaneous Drag Brunches to kick off the **Bondi Beach Party** day.
- **Marks Park Dawn Sunrise Service of Reflection**, in collaboration with the *Bronte Surf Club*, *ACON* and *Waverley Council* is a poignant dawn service to remember and honour victims of homophobic and transphobic violence in the 1970's and 1990's.
- **& JULIET**, presented by *Michael Cassel Group* in association with *MTM/LeyLine*, a one-night-only Mardi Gras special performance of the smash hit musical starring *Lorinda May Merrypor*, *Rob Mills*, *Casey Donovan* and *Amy Lehpamer*.

Longstanding events beloved by the community also make a return in 2024 including, **Progress Pride Flag Raising**, **Fair Day**, **Paradiso Pool Party**, **Kaftana Pool Party**, **Laugh Out Proud**, **Sissy Ball**, **Queer Art After Hours**, **Mardi Gras Party**, **Laneway**, and the jewel in the Mardi Gras crown, **the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade** and its posse of four premium **Parade Viewing Areas**.

Events are also on sale through Mardi Gras +, an open access program for LGBTQIA+ arts, culture, community events and parties.

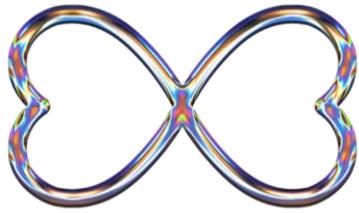
There's an array of events including **Drag Storytime** at SEA LIFE Aquarium, **Mardi Gras Martial Arts Championships**, **Daywash dance parties** at ivy Pool Club and Establishment Bar, and comedy performance **Nurse Blake** at the Sydney Opera House. More events will be added to the Mardi Gras + program over the coming weeks.

"Sydney Mardi Gras is an annual highlight on Sydney's calendar, and the City of Sydney is proud to support this celebration of protest and pride," **Lord Mayor Clover Moore AO** said.

"The Progress Pride Flag will be flown above Town Hall as a symbol of inclusion, acceptance and diversity. The lasting legacy of this year's Mardi Gras will be the opening of Qtopia: Sydney's newest museum, dedicated to telling the stories of our wonderful rainbow community.

"On a personal note, this will be my 32nd year marching in the parade, although I started judging floats in the 80s! I am proud to be an ally and champion of the LGBTQIA+ community and look forward to Sydney being awash in glitter and sequins once more!"

As Australia's only truly global city and gateway for international arrivals, Sydney's cultural diversity makes it the perfect playground for the Sydney Mardi Gras Festival. As well as enjoying the



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excitement of the 2024 Program, visitors can also explore renowned galleries, museums and theatres, the booming creative scene, eclectic arts, music and culture all in one city.

Minister for the Arts, Jobs and Tourism the Hon. John Graham said: “Now in its 46th year, Mardi Gras has grown from a human rights protest to become one of the largest LGBTQIA+ events in the world that each year attracts tens of thousands of visitors to Sydney. I urge everyone to enjoy the celebration that is Mardi Gras but also find time to reflect on its historic significance. The Minns Labor Government has made a commitment to preserve the history and stories of the LGBTQIA+ community through a permanent home for the Qtopia Sydney Museum at the former Darlinghurst Police Station, a site of great historical significance for Mardi Gras and the original 78ers.”

The massive Sydney Mardi Gras program goes on sale at **10am on Monday 20 November**. Mardi Gras Members will get early access to tickets from 10am Wednesday 15 November and American Express Cardholders will have early access to tickets from 10am Thursday 16 November. Both Mardi Gras Members and American Express cardholders will be able to access the presale until 9am AEDT Monday 20 November, or until allocations are exhausted – whichever comes first.

Browse all the events online now at www.mardigras.org.au

The 2024 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival is proudly supported by Government Partner of the Sydney Mardi Gras Festival, the *City of Sydney*, and Strategic Sponsor the NSW Government through its tourism and major events agency, *Destination NSW*.

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