

1981

A chronology of LGBTIQ+ communities and movements in Sydney from 1969 to 2018

Updated on 4/10/2019

Date	Location (if not Sydney)	Event	Reference
3 January 1981		The Gay Theatre Company opens their new season with <i>Who Stole My Closet</i> at the Wayside Chapel Theatre. It is listed as an official Festival of Sydney event.	SS 2/7
20 January 1981		The final performance of <i>Wiz II</i> at International Vanities is the last upstairs show. Allyn Miller and Tommy Brown, Ross Coleman, David Penfold and David Mitchell receive tributes from the audience.	SS 2/15
23 January 1981		The NSW Gay Teachers and Students (GAYTAS) group receives the first State Government grant to produce a kit on homosexuality for schools.	KD
24 January 1981		The Festival of Sydney Parade includes gay floats from The Gay Counselling Service and The Council of Gay Groups.	SS 2/13
31 January 81		Fire destroys the Fruit and Vegetable Markets in the Haymarket, the venue for this year's post Mardi Gras Parade dance and concert.	SS 2/15
February 1981		Dax Wine Bar at 160 Flinders Street Surry Hills opens to a gay clientele.	SS 2/16
February 1981		Saddletramp at 34 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst opens.	SS 2/16
10 February 1981		The first meeting of the Gay Rights Lobby (GRL) gives the 'highest priority' to the homosexual law reform campaign. Craig Johnston is elected chairperson and Lex Watson convenor.	MM
21 February 1981		The first Summer Mardi Gras is rained out and is postponed.	KD
28 February 1981		30 people are detained by police after a raid on the Rex Hotel, Kings Cross.	RF SS 2/17 SS 2/20
28 February 1981	Newcastle	<i>The 1981 Australian Mr Leather Contest</i> is launched at the Criterion Hotel. "Dallas" wins Mr Leather Newcastle.	SS 2/17
March 1981		The first issue of <i>Girls Own</i> is published.	KD
March 1981		The Sundowners, a group which aims to maintain a home for old age pensioner lesbians and gay men, applies for registration as a charity.	SS 2/15



1981

Date	Location (if not Sydney)	Event	Reference
March 1981		The Australian Labor Party Gay Group begins advertising monthly meetings in the Sydney Star.	SS 2/15
March 1981		Meetings of a lesbian group at the Women's Health Centre Liverpool are advertised in the Sydney Star.	SS 2/15
March 1981		The new head of the Vice Squad, Detective Sergeant Sheppard orders a crackdown on Sydney's gay businesses according to <i>Sydney Star</i> sources.	SS 2/16
March 1981		The Reverend Fred Nile is given a weekly column in the Sunday Telegraph.	SS 2/17
March 1981		The Stonewall Collective advertises fortnightly organising meetings.	SS 2/17
March 1981		Chutzpah, a gay Jewish social group, advertises contact names.	SS 2/17
March 1981		The Gay Rights Lobby writes to all members of the NSW Parliament seeking their support for a bill to repeal anti-homosexual laws.	SS 2/18
March 1982		The Exchange Hotel opens.	OWN 55
1 March 1981	Victoria	The Crimes (Sexual Offences) Act 1980 comes into force removing distinctions between homosexual and heterosexual conduct.	SS RF
21 March 1981		The postponed 1981 Mardi Gras parade begins at Moore Park and 6,000 participants go up Flinders Street, Taylor Square, Oxford, Elizabeth, Goulburn and George Streets to Hyde Park. <i>Hen's Teeth</i> and <i>B-Tels</i> perform in Hyde Park.	SS 2/18
22 March 1981		Ron Moore wins Mr Leather Australia at the Stranded Nightclub.	SS 2/18
24 March 1981		GAYTAS members Eddy Ashmore and Geoff Ostling who are creating a school kit on homosexuality, come under a sustained attack from the Festival of Light, the Sun Herald and John Laws. Their grant is withdrawn.	SS 2/18
25 March 1981		George Petersen raises the homosexual law reform issue during the debate in State Parliament on the Crimes (Sexual Assault) Amendment Bill.	MM
28 March 1981		The Villagers hold a <i>Royal Purple</i> night at Liverpool.	SS 2/21



1981

Date	Location (if not Sydney)	Event	Reference
30 March 1981		Dax Wine Bar is no longer gay.	SS 2/19
April 1981		<i>Gayprint</i> , a newspaper by and about the Gay Community Service Centre is published.	SS 2/19
April 1981		The Cronulla Gay Group (CGG) begins advertising its social events in the Sydney Star.	SS 2/19
April 1981		The Northern Rivers Gay Group is formed.	SS 4/4
7 April 1981		Legislation to reform rape laws leave the anti-homosexual sections of the Crimes Act untouched. MLA George Petersen's amendment to do so is ruled out of order.	SS 2/19
7 April 81		700 attend a rally outside Parliament House to support George Petersen's amendments. 100 members of the Festival of Light hold a counter rally opposite.	KD SS 2/19
10 April 1981		The Gay Philhellenic Society begins to advertise meetings and social activities.	SS 2/19
25 April 1981	Melbourne	The first Australian Homosexuality and Socialism Conference is held.	SS 2/21
May 1981		<i>The 1981 Sydney Gay Guide</i> published by Gaysoc in conjunction with the Gay Counselling Service.	SS 2/21
May 1981		The Green Park Diner at 219 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst opens.	SS 2/22
May 1981		The Nelson Hotel at 232 Oxford Street, Woollahra advertises to a gay clientele.	SS 2/22
May 1981		Group 11, a social group for the Western Suburbs begins advertising fortnightly meetings in Penrith.	SS 2/22
May 1981	Wollongong	Unity, a gay community service group advertises fortnightly meetings.	SS 2/22
4 May 1981		A public meeting is called to discuss the 1982 Mardi Gras at the Heffron Hall.	SS 2/19
8 May 1981		<i>The Sydney Star</i> reveals that the newspaper is banned by Les Girls, The Barrel Inn, Patches, Flo's Palace and Kings Steam after it reported the Midnight Shift fire in 1980, police harassment and the Petersen amendment.	SS 2/20
11 May 1981		Carol and Doug McLean of Parents and Friends of Gays (PFLAG) speak with Carolyn Jones on Radio 2BL.	SS 2/22

1981

Date	Location (if not Sydney)	Event	Reference
15 May 1981		The Dolphins second run to Hartley Vale draws 19 members and guests.	SS 2/22
16 May 1981		The Boomerangs present <i>Hello Hollywood</i> at the Balmain Town Hall.	SS 2/21
21 May 1981		Gay Community Service Centre supporters meet at the Acceptance Centre in Oxford Street.	SS 2/20
22 May 1981		The Gay Counselling Service has a doctor on the premises every Friday.	SS 2/22
June 1981	Gosford	The Copper Door Restaurant hosts the Pelican Club on Tuesdays and Fridays.	SS 2/23
June 1981		The Fitness Exchange re-locates from the Signal Bar building after the bar takes over their space.	SS 2/24
June 1981		The Gay Rights Lobby collect signatures in Oxford Street and in suburban shopping centres.	SS 2/24
June 1981		The Lesbian Mothers Publications Group work to publish a practical manual on how lesbian mothers can gain and keep custody of their children.	SS 2/24
4 June 1981		The <i>Lesbian Mothers Custody Rights Support Fund</i> holds a fund-raising night of women's music at the Sussex Hotel.	SS 2/23
5 June 1981	Los Angeles	Pneumocystis jiroveci (carinii) Pneumonia (PCP) is first reported among gay men in Los Angeles by the Centres for Disease Control Weekly.	KD
6 June 1981		<i>The Party</i> , a warehouse disco, organised by The Organisers, features US DJ John Berge and innovative special effects, is held.	SS 2/22
7 June 1981		The Mountaineers hold a <i>Black and White Ball</i> at the Springwood Civic Centre.	SS 2/21
12 June 1981		The Pleasure Chest, a sex shop in George Street is fire bombed.	SS 2/24
15 June 1981		Weekly workshops for actors and others interested in developing their own dramatic material are conducted weekly by the Gay Theatre Group at the Acceptance Centre.	SS 2/23
20 June 1981		<i>The Stonewall Week Dance</i> is held at Manning House, Sydney University. The bands are <i>Stray Dags</i> , <i>Hen's Teeth</i> and <i>The Other Band</i> .	SS 2/23
20 June 1981		Stonewall Week Boomerangs Social Club Dance <i>Hello Hollywood</i> is held at the Randwick Town Hall.	SS 2/24



1981

Date	Location (if not Sydney)	Event	Reference
21 June 1981		The Stranded Nightclub holds <i>Dragathon</i> featuring Chanelle, Theresa and Chris, Michael Matou, Phaedra, Monique and Carlotta.	SS 2/22
22 June 1981		32 gay men and women attend the first meeting of the Sydney Gay Business Association (SGBA) at Xavier's Restaurant, Surry Hills.	SS 2/26
23 June 1981		The Gay Rights Lobby holds a public meeting on <i>the need for law reform</i> at the Heffron Hall. George Petersen MLA, Chief Justice Elizabeth Evatt and solicitor Virginia Bell speak.	SS 2/23
23 June 1981		<i>Stonewall Week Film Program</i> screens over three days at the Filmmakers Co-Op.	SS 2/23
24 June 1981		<i>Stonewall Week Public Forum on police harassment of homosexuals</i> is presented by Gay Left	SS 2/23
27 June 1981		The Gay Liberation Quire debuts in Belmore Park as 1000 assemble for the Stonewall march.	KD
27 June 1981		500 - 1000 strong <i>Stonewall Week March for Gay Rights</i> begins at Belmore Park and ends at Hyde Park with a concert with <i>Hen's Teeth</i> .	SS 2/23
27 June 1981		<i>Stonewall Week Council of Gay Groups Dance</i> is held at the Glebe Town Hall.	SS 2/23
27 June 1981		<i>Stonewall Week Women's Concert</i> with Lavender Blues and Jull and Jenny is held at Leesmoore Centre, Lilyfield.	SS 2/23
28 June 1981		The Metropolitan Community Church holds a <i>Stonewall Day Commemorative Service</i> at the Uniting Church, Oxford Street, Paddington.	SS 2/23
July 1981		Sydney Star produces the first article on what was to become AIDS – <i>New Pneumonia linked to gay lifestyle</i> . It quotes five cases detected between October 1980 and May 1981 in the US.	KD SS 2/25
17 July 1981		The NSW Premier, Neville Wran opens Radio Skid Row.	SS 2/26
19 July 1981		Clover Women's Group holds its annual dance at St Augustine's Hall, Balmain.	SS 2/25
26 July 1981		<i>Winter in the West Disco</i> is held by Group 11 at Mulgoa.	SS 2/25
August 1981		Lesbian separatist leader, Mary Daly speaks to 1000 women in Sydney.	KD



1981

Date	Location (if not Sydney)	Event	Reference
August 1981		The Australian Association of Homosexual Rights Lobbies is formed.	SS 3/2
August 1981		The Gay Rights Lobby prepares for an intensive campaign in the electorate of Bligh for the upcoming state election.	SS 3/3
1 August 1981		The Sundowners holds a <i>Soup Kitchen Night</i> at the Heffron Hall.	SS 2/25
1-2 August 1981		The <i>Annual Convention of the Young Liberal Movement</i> adopts a policy to repeal all laws prohibiting homosexual acts between people aged 16 and over.	SS 3/2
8 August 1981		The Polynesians <i>City Lights</i> review and dance is held at Coronation Hall, Mascot.	SS 3/1
9 August 1981		The Nelson Hotel presents <i>Showtime</i> starring Chase Manhattan, Tracy Diamond, Cynamone Jones and Pepper Stevens.	SS 3/1
10 August 1981		CAMP Lobby Ltd agrees to change its name to the Gay Counselling Service of NSW.	SS 3/4
10 August 1981		Robert Lovett is convicted for "behaving in such a manner as to be likely to cause reasonable persons in a public place to be seriously alarmed or seriously affronted" at Flo's Palace in February 1980.	SS 3/2
11 August 1981		Members of the Lesbian Teachers Group and GAYTAS take part in a deputation to the Director-General of Education Mr Swan to discuss welfare issues for gay teachers and students and issues surrounding the proposed kit on homosexuality.	SS 3/4
15 August 1981		400 turn up for the Boomerangs party <i>86 - A Woman's Disco</i> .	SS 3/10
17 August 1981		60 people tongue kiss outside the Central Court, Liverpool Street to protest the court decision finding Robert Lovett guilty of offensive behaviour.	SS 3/3
29 August 1981	Adelaide	300 people attend the seventh National Conference for Lesbians and Homosexual Men. Its emphasis is on organising within the gay community.	SS 3/5
September 1981		The first study in Australia to look at the incidence of bisexual feelings by the School of Psychiatry at the University of NSW, reveals that 40% of 'normal' people are aware they have homosexual feelings.	SS 3/5

1981

Date	Location (if not Sydney)	Event	Reference
September 1981		<i>Gaycare</i> , a gay counselling service begins at the Wayside Chapel.	SS 3/5
7 September 1981		The Gay Rights Lobby's fund raising party at Ken's Karate Klub features the Gay Liberation Quire.	SS 3/2
8 September 1981		At a public meeting is organised by the Gay Rights Lobby where candidates for Bligh declare their support for gay rights.	SS 3/4
10 September 1981		Lex Watson and the candidates for the State seat of Bligh are interviewed on the Mike Willesee Show.	MM
14 September 1981		The Gay Business Association convenes a public meeting and invites candidates for the electorate of Bligh to speak.	SS 3/3
15 September 1981		The NSW Council of Civil Liberties present a forum, <i>Offences in Public Places</i> at the Heffron Hall.	SS 3/3
15 September 1981		The <i>Lesbian Line Coffee Shop</i> opens every Tuesday evening at the Leichhardt Women's Health Centre.	SS 3/4
18 September 1981		The Acceptance National Conference, <i>On Being Human</i> is held.	SS 3/3
19 September 1981		The pro-gay ALP candidate Fred Miller wins the State seat of Bligh. The Lobby for Equality (Gary Beauchamp, Michael Glynn & John Marsden) distribute anti-ALP how-to-votes. Fred Nile is elected to NSW Upper House.	KD
19 September 1981		The Sydney Gay Centre holds a gala opening at 51 Holt Street, Surry Hills.	SS 3/4 SS 3/5
19 September 1981		The Wran Labor Government is returned. Fred Miller, ALP, unseats the Liberal member for Bligh of the past 13 years.	SS 3/5
25 September 1981		The US Consulate is picketed on the International Day of Action against harassment of gay tourists.	KD
26 September 1981		The 19 th annual <i>Formal Ball</i> featuring the <i>Gown of the Year Award</i> and the <i>Eighth Empress of Sydney Awards</i> is held at Kei-Ron.	SS 3/1
October 1981		The Gay Rights Lobby writes to the newly elected members of the NSW Parliament calling on them to support repealing the anti-homosexual sections of the Crimes Act.	SS 3/6
October 1981		Peter John Parkes, a member of the Gay Counselling Service is found gagged, bound and stabbed to death in Potts Point.	SS 3/7

1981

Date	Location (if not Sydney)	Event	Reference
9 October 1981		The Ox, a small leather bar, at the corner of Crown and Oxford Streets, is destroyed by fire.	SS 3/7
10 October 1981		The Gay Counselling Service holds a workshop <i>Gays and Their Families</i> at the University of NSW, targeting counsellors who want to understand their gay clients.	SS 3/5
17 October 1981		The first official manifestation of the Sydney Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence is held at Longnose Point.	KD
18 October 1981		First reports of US AIDS cases appear in the Sydney gay press.	KD
31 October 1981		The Albury, Beresford, Flinders Hotels and the Midnight Shift encourage gay men and women to adopt the gay American trend of <i>Halloween</i> with a joint-venue party.	SS 3/7
November 1981		Greek Consul-General, Constantine Giannaris, is murdered at Darling Point.	KD
November 1981		27 representatives of gay groups and organisations meet to re-affirm support of full equality and oppose the Wran Bill which is being put up to replace George Petersen's <i>Homosexual Law Reform Bill</i> .	SS 3/8
November 1981		<i>Kandy's Kandid Kamera Show</i> review plays at Yvonne's Place, 107 Anzac Parade, Kensington.	SS 3/8
November 1981		100 prominent people endorse a statement of support for the principle of equality before the law for homosexuals.	SS 3/10
November 1981		The 39 th Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney refuses to receive a petition from Fabian LoSchiavo from Angays calling for more open discussion of homosexual issues.	L 15
1 November 1981		The seventh annual Polympics, held at the Northern Suburbs Athletic Field, Lane Cove, is washed out.	SS 3/2
1 November 1981		A feminist fun-run-walk-crawl fund raiser is held at King Georges Park Lilyfield.	SS 3/8
1 November 1981		The Gay Solidarity Group is denied access to the Polympics to hand out leaflets for the next rally outside Parliament House.	SS 3/8
4 November 1981		200 people demonstrate outside Parliament House in support of the Petersen Bill.	SS 3/8
11 November 1981		A Homosexual Law Reform rally of 200 is held outside State Parliament	MM SS 3/9



1981

Date	Location (if not Sydney)	Event	Reference
11 November 1981		George Petersen introduces a homosexual law reform Bill into the NSW Legislative Assembly.	MM
17 November 1981		Michael Cornwell and his 16 year old accomplice are charged with the murders of Greek Consul Ginnaris and Peter John Parkes.	OW 12
22 November 1981		A discussion of lesbian culture and lesbians and children is held at Women's Liberation House, 62 Regent Street, Chippendale.	SS 3/8
24 November 1981		A candlelight rally of 800 from Hyde Park to Parliament House takes place to support the Petersen Bill is held.	SS 3/9
25-26 November 1981		The NSW Legislative Assembly debates the Petersen Bill.	MM
27 November 1981		<i>Beat Crazy</i> with 3d and Jacqueline Hyde opens at Syds nightclub, Darlinghurst.	SS 3/9
29 November 1981		The Beresford's <i>Royal Wedding Party</i> is a glittering event with hundreds attending.	SS 3/2
29 November 1981		<i>An Aussie Summer</i> party is held co-jointly at the Albury, Flinders, Beresford Hotels and the Midnight Shift.	SS 3/9
30 November 1981		The Gay Rights Lobby and the Gay Business Association adopt a neutral position on the Petersen and the Knight Bills.	MM
December 1981		The Women's Warehouse closes.	KD
December 1981		The Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) and Acceptance launch <i>Identity</i> a new group for under 18 gays.	SS 3/10
December 1981		The Gay Liberation Choir is prevented from performing at the Exchange Hotel because it was considered 'too political'.	SS 3/13
2 December 1981		A Homosexual Law Reform candlelight rally ends outside Parliament House. The Gay Rights Lobby calls for the defeat of the Egan Bill.	KD
2 December 1981		The NSW Parliament rejects the Petersen, Knight and Egan moves to reform anti-gay laws.	KD
5 December 1981		A Gaywaves fund-raising dance is held at Leichhardt Town Hall.	SS 3/8

1981

Date	Location (if not Sydney)	Event	Reference
8 December 1981		The Gay Rights Lobby (GRL) holds an emergency meeting and reaffirms its policy on equal age of consent. Lex Watson leaves GRL.	MM SS 3/10
11 December 1981		The Honest Irishman Hotel at 138 Parramatta Road, Camperdown, opens.	OWN 50
24 December 1981		The Gay Liberation Quire carols cause Fred Nile to demand banning Gaywaves.	KD
26 December 1981		The Warehouse Party is raided by the police after The Organisers fail to obtain a liquor licence. Three people are arrested.	SS 3/12
31 December 1981		The Gay Theatre Company begins a season of two plays – <i>Writers Cramp</i> and <i>Hormones</i> .	SS 3/5

Sources:

MM = Murray McLachlan “Appendix One: Homosexual Law Reform in NSW, Timeline of Significant Events”

KD = Ken Davis

RF = Robert French

Based partly on previous listings by:

- Craig Johnston
- Maurice Blackman, Lex Watson and Robert French
- Kendall Lovett, John Cozijn and Ken Davis

Brisbane: by Nick Ward and by Carol Low in association with the Qld Association for Healthy Communities LGBT History Project and the Museum of Brisbane’s Prejudice and Pride exhibition and with the assistance of Clive Moore

Melbourne – by Jamie Gardiner and Graham

Hobart – by Rodney Croome and the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Group website

Adelaide – by David Hilliard, the late John Lee, Chris Smith, Malcolm Cowan and Dino Hodge

Perth – by Neil Roberts

Northern Territory – by Dino Hodge

SS = The Sydney Star

L = Libertine

OW = Oxford Weekender

