

1997

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

Updated on 6/10/2019

Date	Location (if not Sydney)	Event	Reference
January 1997		The NSW Minister for Correctional Services, Bob Debus, announces condoms will be made freely available to the 6,000 male inmates in NSW.	CQ 222 SSO 336
January 1997		The National Association of People with HIV Australia treatments spokesperson Bill Whittaker says that in 1996 there was a 13% fall in the death rate from AIDS as a range of new treatments become available.	CQ 221
7-13 January 1997	Tasmania	The eighth annual <i>National Lesbian Confest</i> is held on the Tasman Peninsula.	SSO 335
25-26 January 97		The Gender Centre hosts <i>Diverse but United</i> the first national conference on gender issues in Australia.	CQ 223 SSO 338
31 January 1997	Brisbane	The Queensland Anti-Discrimination Tribunal sets a precedent by giving lesbians equal access to privately-run fertility programs.	SSO 340
February 1997	Cooma	Two gay inmates at the Cooma Correctional Centre call for the development of education programs that deal confidentially with issues of gay and transgender treatment in gaols.	CQ 228
5 February 1997		ACON launches its new strategy <i>Men Like Us</i> to address HIV issues that are personally relevant to gay men.	QC 224
9 February 1997		Mardi Gras Fair Day is held at Jubilee Park, Glebe.	SSO 340
15 February 1997		<i>Queer Collaborations</i> holds its inaugural conference at UTS and aims to establish state-wide year-round activism.	SSO 341 SSO 342
15 February 1997		The first <i>Maybe Baby Conference</i> about conceiving, adopting and fostering children is held.	SSO 342
21 February 1997		The <i>Second National Conference on Bi-Sexuality</i> is held in Camperdown.	CQ 228
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26 February 1997		The High Court announces it will allow Nick Toonen and Rodney Croome action against the Tasmanian government to proceed, paving the way for Tasmania's anti-gay legislation to be found to be invalid.	CQ 229



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28 February 1997	Canberra	Prime Minister John Howard hosts a forum on youth suicide. Gay and Lesbian Teachers and Students Association (GaLTaS) and Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) speak at the forum.	SSO 343 SSO 344
March 1997		At the launch of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's (HREOC) <i>Human Rights for Australia's Gays and Lesbians</i> , the Human Rights Commissioner Chris Sidoti calls for national laws to protect gay men and lesbians from discrimination.	CQ 230
March 1997		Amendments to the Commonwealth Immigration Act are passed by the federal parliament and will require applicants for residency under the Interdependency Visa Category to have lived together for a minimum of 12 months.	CQ 231
March 1997		The Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service (GLCS) co-ordinator Frank Howarth announces plans to provide counselling information over the internet.	CQ 233
March 1997	Melbourne	The HREOC upholds a discrimination complaint by three women who were denied access to a Melbourne IVF program because of their marital status.	SSO 345
March 1997		Marise Payne wins pre-selection for NSW Liberal Party senator despite attacks on her for being on the AIDS Council of NSW (ACON) Board.	SSO 347
1 March 1997		The twentieth Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade is held with a 500,000 crowd watching the parade of 200 floats, and 21,000 party goers attending the dance at the old Showgrounds.	CQ 230 SSO 344
April 1997	New York	Ellen DeGeneres comes out in <i>Time</i> magazine.	CQ 235
April 1997	Sydney	Research presented to TAFE Outreach officers indicates widespread homophobia in TAFE.	CQ 237
21 April 1997		School student Christopher Tsakalos returns to new high school in the Penrith region following a decision in his favour by the Supreme Court.	CQ 236
24 April 1997		Aboriginal gay and lesbian social group, <i>Blackout</i> meets.	CQ 237
24 April 1997		Laura Foy and Sarah Ellis are thrown out of the Maroubra Seals Club when the club manager sees them kissing.	SSO 352



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30 April 1997		Federal Health minister Michael Woolridge announces funding to extend the Roche Products viral load testing scheme.	CQ 238
May 1997		The Bobby Goldsmith Foundation (BGF) reports the highest demand this month for financial assistance.	CQ 247
1 May 1997	Hobart	Homosexual law reform passes the Tasmanian Legislative Council without amendment.	RF
4 May 1997		3,500 walk from Green Park to the Domain for the annual candlelight AIDS Memorial down from the 10,000 in 1996.	CQ 239
11 May 1997		A report by Jenni Millbank for the Coalition of Active Lesbians (COAL) titled <i>Lesbian Families and Australian Laws</i> highlights widespread discrimination and makes a series of recommendations.	SSO 354
July 1997	Canberra	Attorney General, Darryl Williams states that the Federal Government will not support moves to equalise homo- and hetero-sexual ages of consent.	CQ 248
July 1997		The Uniting Church's national director of missions Dorothy McRae-McMahon, announces that she is a lesbian.	CQ 248
July 1997		NSW Community Services Minister, Ron Dyer vetoes a proposal for homosexual couples to adopt children in a review of the <i>Adoption Act 1965</i> .	CQ 251
July 1997		A report by Dr Gary Cox <i>The preliminary economic impact assessment of the Sydney 2002 Gay Games</i> calculates that the games could garner up to \$140m in increased revenues.	CQ 251
12 July 1997		A <i>Significant Personal Relationship</i> bill forum at the PRIDE centre is split between MLA Clover Moore's broad ranging bill and other options such as the GLRL minimalist amendments to the <i>De facto relationships Act</i> .	CQ 249
14 July 1997		Brett Halliwell, a 30-year-old heterosexual male fails to use the Anti-Discrimination Act to include protection for heterosexuals after he was refused entry to the lesbian venue <i>Sirens</i> in 1996.	CQ 249
August 1997		Trials begin at St Vincents Hospital of a new anti-HIV treatment which uses ribozyme to create harmless HIV infected T cells to replace HIV infected T cells in a HIV positive patient.	CQ 252



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August 1997	Canberra	The federal Family Services minister, Judi Moylan rejects a proposed poster aimed at gay and lesbian teenagers that was to be a part of a youth suicide prevention campaign, because it was a "recruitment aid for homosexuality".	CQ 254
August 1997		A new compassionate access program for the new anti-HIV drug Glaxo-Wellcome 1592 starts.	CQ 254
August 1997		The NSW Parliament rejects the Wood Royal Commission's recommendations to equalise the age of consent.	CQ 255
August 1997		Australian evangelical and charismatic organisations call for the resignation of lesbians Reverend Dorothy McRae-McMahon and Reverend Jennifer Byrnes from their senior jobs in the Uniting Church.	CQ 255
August 1997		Civil liberty groups express concern over the Wood Royal Commission's recommendations to give police the power to warn the community of the presence of child sex offenders.	CQ 255
2 August 1997	Kansas	William Burroughs dies aged 83.	CQ 252
13 August 1997		Reverend Dr Gordon Moyes calls for a boycott of the Uniting Church's national governing body saying that it was "racked by the agenda of the gay and lesbian lobby".	CQ 253
20 August 1997		Tony Ayre's short film <i>Mrs Craddock's Complaint</i> , a film about male beats, screens on the ABC.	CQ 250
20 August 1997		The <i>Cross Campus Sexuality Network of NSW</i> meets to discuss ways to further the interests of queer university students.	CQ 252
26 August 1997		Gay man Gary Lysaght is refused employment as a store manager with the Salvation Army because his presence might "give the Salvation Army a bad name."	CQ 255
September 1997		The Uniting Church Synod votes down a motion calling for the banning of gay men and lesbians from the ministry.	SSO 374
1 September 1997		Dorothy McRae-McMahon resigns as the Uniting Church's National Director for Mission following threats of a split in the church after she came out in July.	CQ 256
October 1997		Labor State Conference fails to debate a resolution for same-sex relationships to be recognized in the <i>De Facto Relationships Act</i> .	CQ 261

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October 1997		The NSW National Party opposes the distribution of copies of Ian Robert's biography <i>Finding Out</i> , to country schools.	CQ 263
October 1997	Canberra	The Australian Council of Lesbian and Gay Rights (ACLGR) criticises new federal rules on aged care services, which will see same-sex couples not have their homes exempted from the aged care assets test if one partner moves into care.	CQ 263
October 1997	Melbourne	In response to a Rainbow Sash action, the Archbishop of Melbourne Dr George Pell states that if an individual declares they are a practising homosexual they will not be entitled to receive Holy Communion.	SSO 378
1 October 1997		The new drug nevirapine, marketed as <i>Viramine</i> used in HIV combination therapy is listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.	CQ 262
11 October 1997		GalTaS's <i>How to Stop Classroom Homophobia</i> conference is held and hears calls for a systematic approach to anti-homophobia campaigns.	SSO 376
21 October 1997		A special commission of inquiry is set up after Labor MLC Franca Arena tables documents she claims are evidence of a high-level conspiracy to suppress the names of prominent paedophiles.	CQ 263
22 October 1997		A 5,000 strong rally is held outside Parliament House as the <i>Crimes Amendment (Sexual Offences) Bill</i> is introduced by Labor MLC Jan Burnswoods.	CQ 262 CQ 263
November 1997		Michael Thomas Green's conviction for the murder of Donald Gillies in the Supreme Court of NSW is quashed by the High Court. Green had accused Gillies of making homosexual advances.	CQ 266
November 1997		<i>Homophobic Violence</i> edited by Gail Mason and Stephen Tomsen is published.	CQ 266
November 1997		The <i>Women Partners of Bisexual/Gay Men project</i> at ACON launches a video aimed at assisting health care workers in counselling and support roles.	CQ 268
November 1997		John Godwin, the first salaried legal officer at ACON and who also ran the successful Hope-Brown vs NIB health care case, is named the Law Society's Pro Bono Solicitor of the Year.	SSO 379



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November 1997	Canberra	The <i>Seen and Heard</i> report by the Joint Australian Law Reform Commission and HREOC recommends that the age of consent should be the same for heterosexual and homosexual sex and that all states and territories legislate to this effect.	SSO 383
11 November 1997		The ALP fails to expel Franca Arena MLC from the NSW parliament following the findings of the Special Commission of Inquiry found that her claims about a paedophile conspiracy were false and she knew them to be false.	CQ 266
14-15 November 1997		<i>Re:ACTIVATE</i> a conference on LGBT activism is organised by the ACLGR.	SSO 379
21 November 1997		Sydney is announced as the Gay Games VI venue.	CQ 267
21 November 1997		Jason Oldershaw, an ex-prisoner of Junee Correctional Centre takes a complaint of harassment, violence and discrimination by Australian Correctional Management whilst he was an inmate, to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal.	SSO 380
24 November 1997		A march and rally are held to launch World AIDS day with marchers carrying a symbolic coffin to Parliament House from the Museum of Contemporary Art.	CQ 267
25 November 1997		A picket of twenty people organised by GLRL in support of equal rights for same sex relationships is held at the rear entrance to the NSW Parliament House.	CQ 268
29 November 1997	Melbourne	The Sixth National Women and Labour Conference calls on all Australian governments to address inequities in the health care system which discriminate against lesbians.	SSO 383
December 1997	Canberra	The 1996 census reveals that there are 8,913 same-sex couples in NSW.	CQ 269
December 1997		The South Sydney Council agrees to donate \$14,400 to the Sydney Games Bid Ltd towards accommodation, administrative and promotional costs.	CQ 270
December 1997		Nick Toomen and Rodney Croome accept the national human rights Community Award on behalf of the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group for its successful ten-year campaign to repeal Tasmania's anti-gay laws.	SSO 384



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December 1997		The NSW Government launches a suicide prevention package but fails to mention young gay men and lesbians as a risk group.	SSO 386
11 December 1997		The Versa project commences. It provides people with HIV an opportunity to participate in a live phone forum, one on one support and information around treatment issues.	CQ 270

Sources:

SSO = Sydney Star Observer

CQ = Capital Q

RF = Robert French

Based partly on previous listings by:

- Craig Johnston
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- 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

