

2003

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

Updated on 8/10/2019

Date	Location (if not Sydney)	Event	Reference
February 2003		Beit El Hob, a social group of queer Middle Easterners, is formed	SSO 701
April 2003		Canterbury/Bankstown Social Group President, Alex Day, Fairfield City Councillor Thang Ngo, Luncheon Club Convenor Carole Ann King, Executive Director of AFO Don Baxter, Academic Garry Wotherspoon, AMA president Dr Kerry Phelps, playwright Alana Valentine, public servant Bev Lange, designer Brian Thompson and opera singer Debora Cheetham, receive Centenary Medals for significant contributions to Australian society.	SSO 659
April 2003	Sth Aust	A group of students representing Queer Block take part in a protest outside Baxter Detention Centre.	SSO 659
April 2003	Adelaide	The South Australian parliament votes in favour to amend its superannuation laws to include same-sex couples.	SSO 661
May 2003		Lesbian poet, Jill Jones is awarded the NSW Premier's Literary Award for Poetry.	SSO 663
May 2003		The Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby releases a report on same sex parenting, <i>And then ... The Brides Changed Nappies</i> by Jenni Millbank.	SSO 663
2 May 2003		The president of the NSW Anti-Discrimination Board (ADB), Chris Puplick resigns. He rejects media reports accusing him of a conflict of interest in a gay harassment case the ADB considered in 2000.	SSO 661
8 May 2003		The boundaries of the City of Sydney are expanded, taking in South Sydney suburbs of Glebe, Camperdown, Darlinghurst and Elizabeth Bay.	SSO 661
10 May 2003		The new board of the New Mardi Gras is elected with five previous board members being re-appointed.	SSO 662
21 May 2003		The NSW Legislative Assembly votes in favour of a lower age of consent for gay males in the Crimes (Sexual Offences Amendment Bill).	SSO 663



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21 May 2003		The NSW Upper House accepts the equal age of consent legislation with a number of child protection amendments.	SSO 664
31 May 2003		Transsexuals, Andrew and Jessica Blair are married by in the Ecumenical Catholic Church. This follows on from the successful <i>Kevin and Jennifer</i> case in the Family Court.	SSO 663
June 2003	Canberra	Australian Democrats Senator, Brian Greig fails to include same sex couples in superannuation reforms to federal legislation.	SSO 668
23 June 2003		Sydney City Council removes a clause exempting Darlinghurst Road anti-clustering of sex industry businesses.	SSO 668
July 2003		The AIDS Trust of Australia gives less than \$30,000 of a promised \$144,000 to the Australian AIDS Councils in the financial year 2002-2003.	SSO 670
July 2003		Gay reality television couple, Warren and Gavin reach the halfway point of their on-screen renovations on Channel 9's <i>The Block</i> .	SSO 670
July 2003	UK	Section 28, the law prohibiting the "promotion" of homosexuality by local authorities in UK schools, is repealed.	SSO 671
July 2003		Members of the Canterbury Bankstown District Gay and Lesbian Social Club boycott the <i>Bankstown Canterbury Torch</i> for the consistent homophobic content of the paper's letter page.	SSO 672
July 2003		Social club Harbour City Bears changes its meeting place from the Palace Hotel to Oxford Hotel Friday nights.	SSO 673
July 2003		The inaugural Business Leaders' Awards organised by the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Business Association, is held.	SSO 674
17 July 2003		The Uniting Church votes in favour of ordaining openly gay and lesbian ministers.	SSO 671
25 July 2003		Gay film director, John Schlesinger dies aged 77.	SSO 673
31 July 2003	Rome	A papal statement <i>Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons</i> , which claims homosexuality is disordered and depraved, calls on civil authorities to oppose "the legislation of evil".	SSO 674
August 2003		Pride posts a \$130,000 loss. A \$40,000 loss on its New Year's Party and \$120,000 annual rent contribute to the loss.	SSO 675



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August 2003		South Sydney Council votes 7-2 in favour of a motion to pursue its own partnership registration scheme.	SSO 675
August 2003	Boston, US	The Sydney Rangers gay soccer team, wins a silver medal at the Gay and Lesbian World Cup.	SSO 676
August 2003		The Australian Council of Trade Unions adopt a policy protecting GLBTI workers from discrimination and endorsing the 2002 Workers Out conference resolution requiring unions to eliminate discrimination based on "sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression".	SSO 677
August 2003		The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Business Association members elect former President Vicki Brackenber and her team. The Association soon after closes its Newtown office.	SSO 678
August 2003	Tasmania	A bill recognising same sex couples in almost all Tasmanian laws and setting up a registry for all significant personal relationships passes the Legislative Council 9-5.	SSO 678
August 2003	Melbourne	Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby and the ALSO foundation receive a \$20,000 grant to run a national gay and lesbian rights campaign in the lead up to the federal 2004 election.	SSO 678
August 2003	UN	The United Nations Human Rights Committee decrees Australia must amend its discriminatory relationship laws that allow Edward Young to be refused payment and a surviving widow's pension by the Department of Veterans Affairs after the 1998 death of his partner who served in WW2.	SSO 679
5 August 2003	US	Gene Robinson is confirmed as the first openly gay Episcopalian bishop.	SSO 674
18 August 2003		Vida Las Vegas wins Entertainer of the Year and Sydney's Most Popular Drag Queen, and David Wilkins is inducted into the DIVA Hall of Fame at the DIVA Annual Awards at Royal Randwick.	SSO 676
27 August 2003		ABC staff threaten industrial action unless disciplinary proceedings against openly gay religion correspondent Stephen Crittenden are halted. Crittenden had been taken off the air in July following his publication of an article in the <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> . In September he is ordered back to work despite a finding of "serious misconduct" against him.	SSO 677, SSO 678



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September 2003		John Marsden and the Seven TV network come to a \$9 million settlement that brings to an end the longest running defamation case in Australian legal history.	SSO 679
September 2003		<i>I'm Not that Kind of Girl</i> a biography of transgender performer Carlotta by Prue MacSween is published.	SSO 679
September 2003	Toronto Canada	Canadian-Australian John Richardson and his partner Peter Bayfield marry. The marriage licence is still not recognised by the Family Court of Australia.	SSO 681
September 2003		Catholic Archbishop George Pell is promoted to the position of cardinal by the Vatican.	SSO 682
September 2003		The video installation, <i>Welcome to the Jungle</i> , a drag king performance by the Kingpins is shown as part of the annual Museum of Contemporary Art Primavera Exhibition.	SSO 682
3 September 2003		Claims that radio broadcaster 2UE presenters John Laws and Steve Price's comments about the openly gay stars of the Channel 9 program <i>The Block</i> would 'incite the reasonable listener to hatred' are heard in the Administrative Decisions Tribunal.	SSO 678
4 September 2003		<i>The Home Movies of Ken Garrahy</i> screen at Queerdoc. It is a compilation of Super 8 footage of friends involved in camp social groups in the 1960s.	SSO 676
13 September 2003		The New Mardi Gras new home at 297-299 Trafalgar Street Petersham is opened by the deputy premier and local member Dr Andrew Refschaug.	SSO 679
14 September 2003		30 NSW police officers raid the Arq night club and find 200 different drug items.	SSO 680
16 September 2003		NSW Liberal backbencher Charlie Lynn, apologises for making an allegation of paedophilia against an unnamed minister of the Carr Labor Government in May.	SSO 680
17 September 2003	Canberra	A bill aimed at ending discrimination for same sex couples in the private sector is passed by the federal Senate.	SSO 680
24 September 2003	Canberra	The federal government commits itself to developing a fifth national HIV/AIDS strategy and appoints Dr Michael Woolbridge as its senior advisor on AIDS issues.	SSO 681

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24 September 2003		Chris Puplick announces he will stand down as chairman of the Board of Governors of the AIDS Trust of Australia, a position he has held since 1996.	SSO 681
24 September 2003		South Sydney Council votes to offer Erskineville Town Hall to Pride for an annual rental of \$67,000. The Luncheon Club and the FitX Gym will not be accommodated at Erskineville.	SSO 682
27 September 2003		40,000 turn up on a windy Saturday for the annual AIDS Trust Food and Wine Fair in Hyde Park.	SSO 682
October 2003	UK	The Anglican archbishop of Sydney, Peter Jensen suggests the Australian church break ties with the US communion after the appointment of openly gay Reverend V. Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire in August.	SSO 683
October 2003		The Luncheon Club relocates to the Gordon Ibbet Community Centre, Kellick Street, Waterloo.	SSO 684
October 2003	US	US President George Bush proclaims 12-13 October to be Marriage Protection Week, an initiative which will include protecting marriage as a heterosexual institution.	SSO 684
October 2003	Canberra	Amendments to the <i>Superannuation (Government Co-contribution For Low Income Earners) (Consequential Amendments) Bill</i> which would have given equality for same sex couples is defeated in the Australian Senate, when the Liberal Government gathers support from Independent senators.	SSO 686
October 2003		NSW Ombudsman Bruce Barbour tables his annual report in state parliament which includes the results of his investigation of Anti-Discrimination Board (ADB) president Chris Puplick's "unreasonable and unjust" handling of a case brought before the ADB by a friend.	SSO 687
4 October 2003		Almost 10,000 attend <i>Flesh – undressed</i> Annual Sleaze Ball, the annual fundraiser for New Mardi Gras	SSO 683
26 October 2003		The shadow Labor Federal attorney general, Robert McLelland announces the ALP will look at implementing registers for homosexual couples rather than pursuing same-sex marriage.	SSO 686
November 2003		The firm Lawler Partners is appointed receiver of the lease of the Oxford Hotel. In August lessee Richard Wynne is sued by landlords Barry Toomey and Ron Pantlin for moneys owed.	SSO 687



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November 2003		Negotiations between the Federation of Gay Games and the Montreal delegation break down, leaving the Federation looking for another host city.	SSO 688
November 2003		Queer Screen Limited records a loss of \$57,817 for the 2002/2003 financial year. The loss is blamed in part on a decrease in ticket sales and a bad debt owed by the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.	SSO 689
5 November 2003		Four South Sydney councillors question the allocation of the Erskineville Town Hall to the Sydney Pride Centre.	SSO 688
12 November 2003		The Channel Nine network airs a “roast” of TV host Ian ‘Molly’ Meldrum, despite homophobic comments made by <i>Footy Show</i> host Sam Newman.	SSO 687
18 November 2003	Boston, US	The Supreme Court of Massachusetts rules that same-sex couples have the right to marry under the state’s constitution.	SSO 689
20 November 2003		The stories of 300 transgendered people around the world who have been killed are honoured in a ceremony at the Gender Centre.	SSO 690
21 November 2003		South Sydney Council launches its partnership register. Its first registration day is 7 February 2004.	SSO 690
26 November 2003	Darwin	The NT Parliament passes the Gay and Lesbian Law Reform package – equal age of consent; removal of discriminatory exemptions from the territory’s Anti-Discrimination Act and legal rights for same sex couples.	SSO 691
29 November 2003		Lou-Anne Lind is elected as Sydney Pride Centre Co-President after previously serving four years.	SSO 691
30 November 2003		The re-designed Taylor Square is launched by the mayor of South Sydney, Tony Pooley.	SSO 689
December 2003		A San Francisco health official warns Sydney’s gay community to hear “honest talk” about the risks of crystal meth use, to avoid the problems now facing the US gay scene.	SSO 692
December 2003		<i>Getting it: Gay Men’s Sexual Stories</i> , edited by Robert Reynolds and Gerard Sullivan is released.	SSO 692
December 2003		Gav and Waz, gay stars of the reality home make-over show, <i>The Block</i> join 50 volunteers to make over the new home of Twenty10 and the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service in Bedford Street, Newtown.	SSO 693



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Date	Location (if not Sydney)	Event	Reference
December 2003	US	Three senior US military officers out themselves to challenge the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy forcing gay men and lesbians to keep their sexuality a secret.	SSO 693
1 December 2003		Sydney Lord Mayor, Lucy Turnbull is named the new Chair of the Board of Governors of the AIDS Trust of Australia.	SSO 691
9 December 2003		A Bangladeshi gay couple who had been refused protection visas will have their case re-heard after the Refugee Tribunal’s decision was overturned by the High Court.	SSO 692
16 December 2003		A NSW Government report <i>You Shouldn’t Have to Hide</i> is released. It is based on a survey of LGBT people of experiences of homophobic abuse and violence and reports 56% of respondents experienced such an event in the previous 12 months.	SSO 693

Sources:

SSO = Sydney Star Observer

