



Pride in Law

NSW CHAPTER

MEET YOUR NEW PRESIDENT



BENJAMIN KOVAL (HE/HIM)

Senior Privacy Officer, Endeavour Group and President, Pride in Law (NSW Chapter)

Ben is a Senior Privacy Officer in Endeavour Group, the President of Pride in Law (NSW Chapter), and a passionate advocate for the LGBTIQ+ community. He has been active in community organisations since 2009 starting at the Australian National University and now in Pride in Law. His professional career started in the arts and media sector working at the ABC. As a lawyer he has worked in a variety of practices but has found his love for privacy while working in a public law practice. Currently, he works in house advising on privacy matters.

Since joining the profession, Ben has been active on internal pride committees and came to Pride in Law to help build its presence. A key focus of Ben's role is to bring the LGBTIQ+ community together within the profession. Whilst the NSW Chapter is in its early stages, he has successfully organised a number of events building the membership base and has huge plans in the future.

Letter from the President

By Benjamin Koval (he/him)



Dear Members,

As we welcome the new year, there have been some changes in the NSW Chapter of Pride in Law. Jess Lehmann has stepped down as President, and I (Ben Koval) have been elected to take her place by the NSW Executive Committee. Jess, a founding member of the NSW Chapter and a dear friend, worked tirelessly to build Pride in Law NSW into a thriving LGBTIQA+ legal community. My lasting memory of her will be when she, without hesitation, stepped into the role of President in March 2024, immediately to deliver an inspiring speech at our NSW Chapter Launch. Her words continue to inspire me, and I'm sure she will remain a strong supporter of Pride in Law. I am deeply grateful for her leadership throughout 2024 and feel truly humbled to take on this role—though I have big shoes to fill.

2024 was a momentous year for Pride in Law NSW. Some of my personal highlights include:

- Listening to the inspiring speeches of Justice Richard Weinstein and Justice Jeremy Kirk in the Banco Court in March for our official launch (and being in the same room as Justice Michael Kirby).
- Moderating a panel with LGBTIQA+ lawyers, including Taylah Spirovski (HWL Ebsworth), Chris Maibom (DLA Piper), and Sanjay Alapakkam, on coming out in the legal profession, with support from Angie Zandstra and the College of Law.
- Attending the panel “Bringing Your Whole Self to the Law” at UNSW, moderated by Jess Lehmann (Pride in Law) and Conna Leslie-Keefe (UNSW Law Student’s Society), featuring Gillian Mahony SC (8 Wentworth), Nicole Evans (Managing Director, Barker Evans), and Christopher Pearce (Senior Lecturer, UNSW).
- Celebrating 2024 with Cassandra the Queen on the terrace at the College of Law in November.

- Most importantly, 2024 saw long-awaited legislative changes in NSW, including the banning of conversion therapy and the passing of the Equality Bill. We commend these reforms, and I am committed to using this momentum in 2025 to continue advocating against discrimination and for LGBTIQ+ rights.

To kick off 2025, we will be hosting and collaborating with sponsors on some exciting events, details of which we'll share in the coming weeks (including information on how to get tickets). But I want to put out a call to you, our members: if there's an event or issue you'd like Pride in Law to support or advocate for, or if you'd like to get involved, please reach out. This newsletter is one of the ways you can engage, share your insights, and contribute to the work of the executive committee, ensuring that you have a voice in our community.

I look forward to my term as President and the exciting possibilities 2025 will bring.

And as we wrap up, here's a little legal humour for you:

Why did the lawyer dog become so successful?

Because he was great at sniffing out the truth and always had a *paws-itively* strong case!

With Pride,
Ben

*If you have an idea for a name for this newsletter, or would like to write an article, contact us at **communications.nsw@prideinlaw.org** with your submission idea.*

FEATURE ARTICLE

TRIGGER WARNING

UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

By Charlotte Kuszelyk (she/her)

A recent study from NSW indicates that child sexual abuse, particularly in an online setting, may be a very normalised concept amongst Australian men. Online child sexual abuse (OCSA) is an extremely difficult crime to link to offenders and as such greater tools of offender identification are needed. This article argues that financial institutions are in a unique position to identify early signs of OCSA and as such, amendments should be made to current mandatory reporting legislation to include financial institutions.

The recently released New South Wales report, 'Identifying and understanding child sexual offending behaviour and attitudes among Australian men' (the report) identified that 1 in 6 Australian men have sexualised feelings towards children and that 1 in 10 Australian men have sexually offended against children.[1] Of this abuse, online child sexual abuse (OCSA) was noted to be the most prevalent form of sexual offending, with at least 66% (or two-thirds) of child sexual abuse occurring via an online platform.[2]

Abundant research in child sexual abuse, in combination with the new prevalence rates highlighted in the report, illustrates that the Australian criminal justice system is struggling to target, prosecute and convict child sex offenders, particularly in an online setting. Consequently, OCSA remains a prominent issue within the Australian community.

This article suggests that reform is needed to current mandatory reporting legislation in Australia, to aid in better detection and prosecution of OCSA offenders earlier, and without the need for victims to initially disclose abuse to law enforcement agencies.

In line with the recommendation of the recent study, it is argued that particular attention should be paid to financial institutions as mandatory reporters, as financial institutions can algorithmically track and identify transactions that may be indicative of OCSA, often times before law enforcement are even aware of an individual's criminality.[3] The ability of financial institutions to assist in the detection and prevention of OCSA has also been recognised by the Australian Federal Police, the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children and the Australian Institute of Criminology. [4]

Mandatory reporting by financial institutions also aligns with the Australian government's National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse, which strongly encourages close partnerships between the financial sector and law enforcement to address the prevalence of OCSA.[5] Moreover, many international government and non-government organisations are also calling for greater responsibility by financial institutions in preventing OCSA.[6] ■

[1] Australian Human Rights Institute et al, Identifying and understanding child sexual offending behaviours and attitudes among Australian men (Report, November 2023) 3.

[2] See *ibid* 13.

[3] Hee-Eun Lee, 'Detecting child sexual abuse material: A comprehensive survey' (2020) 34 *Forensic Science International: Digital Investigation*.

[4] Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre et al, *Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Children for Financial Gain: Financial Crime Guide* (Report, December 2022) 3.

[5] Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, 'Child Sexual Abuse', National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030 (Webpage) < <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/access-and-accountability/our-commitments/child-safeguarding/child-sexual-abuse>>.

[6] See International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, *Following the financial footprint of technology-facilitated CSE* (Webpage, 17 October 2023) < <https://icmec.org.au/blog/following-the-financial-footprint-of-technology-facilitated-cse/>>. See also Silvija Kurpena, 'Banks can help protect children: FinCEN advises on child sexual exploitation', RedCompass Labs (Webpage, 12 October 2021) < <https://blog.redcompasslabs.com/banks-can-help-protect-children-fincen-advises-on-child-sexual-exploitation>>.

Member Spotlight

Meet Charlotte Kuszelyk



Charlotte Kuszelyk (she/her) is a final year law student with the University of Newcastle, Australia. She holds a bachelors in Criminology with Distinction from the same University.

Charlotte is a passionate advocate in the Criminal Justice space. Dedicated to providing alternative pathways to incarceration for young people and seeking justice for individuals who are victims of child sexual assault.

Charlotte identifies as a proud queer woman, her hobbies include reading, swimming at the beach, and spending time with her cat Biscuit.

Thank you Charlotte for your wonderful contribution to the Pride in Law NSW newsletter!

Want to write a piece?

Send submissions to communications.nsw@prideinlaw.org

Recent Updates

PRIDE IN LAW X AUSTRALIAN LAWYERS HUMAN RIGHTS

By Lauren Devine (she/her)

Pride in Law recently joined the University of Newcastle Centre for Law and Social Justice at their Human Rights Symposium in Sydney to discuss anti-discrimination laws and how they work in NSW to protect the LGBTQIA+ community.



Pride in Law partnered with Australian Lawyers for Human Rights to deliver a panel on the current state of the law, amendments that have occurred over time, and changes that are required to better protect the rights of LGBTQIA+ people in accordance with international human rights obligations.

Bethany Butchers (Advocacy Officer at PIL NSW), Lauren Devine (Advocacy Officer at PIL NSW), Nicholas Stewart (President Australian Lawyers for Human Rights & Partner at Dowson Turco Lawyers), Katie Green (CEO Inner City Legal Centre), Justin Ellis (Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Newcastle), and Alistair Lawrie (Director of Policy and Advocacy at the Equity and Justice Centre) sat in a round table discussion to discuss some of the most prominent issues facing the LGBTQIA+ community, including the recent amendments to the *Anti-Discrimination Act*, religious exemptions to discrimination, policing, and the recent Special Commission of Inquiry into LGBTIQ hate crimes.

One of the biggest concerns for the LGBTQIA+ community in NSW is the scope of the current anti-discrimination framework. Unfortunately, the ADA is not a comprehensive legislative mechanism that protects the rights of all people in NSW on the basis of their sex, sexuality, or gender identity, and has failed to keep up with our evolving understanding of the LGBTQIA+ community. The NSW anti discrimination framework is far narrower than the Commonwealth framework and does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity, but rather restricts its protections to people who identify as being a member of a different sex. ■

Celebrating 2024

The Pride in Law NSW End of Year Celebration was a fantastic way to celebrate queer excellence in the legal sector, and close out an incredible year. The evening was filled with plenty of laughter, connection, and celebration of our achievements in advocacy and community building, as well as a captivating performance by drag artist Cassandra the Queen.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our sponsors, The College of Law Australia and Bridges Lawyers, for their generous support, and to Michael Zanetti for beautifully capturing the event. [Check out the rest of the photos on our Facebook page!](#)

As we look ahead to 2025, we're excited for more impactful advocacy and memorable moments. Thank you to all of our members, sponsors, volunteers, and support network for a fabulous 2024!



Proud Pets

With paws, purrs and pride... Pride in Law NSW is embracing diversity in our furry, feathered and scaly friends!



INTRODUCING...

HASHBROWN AND BUDDY

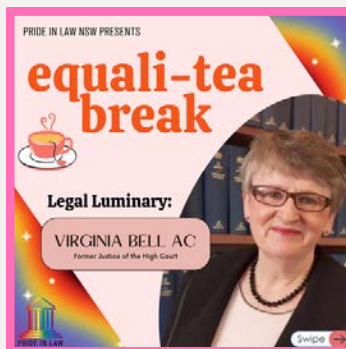
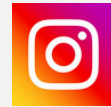
*Paw-rents: **Beth Butchers**, Pride in Law NSW Advocacy Officer (they/them) and **Alex Butchers** (she/her)*

Hashbrown (top) and Buddy (bottom) are two loveable and high-energy dogs who love to take long walks with their paw-rents and chasing the ball in the yard (endlessly). Both love to wear their winter outfits and being as trendy as possible. Hashbrown and Buddy love to snuggle up on the couch and watch musicals (sometimes singing along with the occasional awooooo).

Is your pet filled with pride? Introduce them to us with some photos and fun facts! Send submissions to communications.nsw@prideinlaw.org

Want more Pride in Law?

FOLLOW @PRIDEINLAW ON



OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE: <https://www.prideinlaw.org/>

Write for us!

This newsletter is a place for you, our members and sponsors! We accept all kinds of submissions, including:

- Feature articles about LGBTIQ+ news or issues
- Spotlight on legal professionals, students or organisations doing great things for LGBTIQ+ people
- Letters from our sponsors or members, about your work, aspirations or journey
- Pets with Pride (incl. photos!)
- Any other ideas you might have!

Send submissions to communications.nsw@prideinlaw.org