



Pride in Law

NSW CHAPTER

FEATURE ARTICLE

COURT UPHOLDS PROTECTIONS FOR TRANSGENDER ATHLETES

By Miku Nakamura (she/they), NSW Advocacy Officer

The recent decision in *Smith v Blanch [2025] NSWCA 188*, is a landmark moment for LGBTQIA+ rights in Australia. The case was about the targeted online harassment of Stephanie Blanch, a transgender woman who played community football in Wingham, NSW.

Kirralie Smith, spokesperson for Binary Australia, repeatedly misgendered Blanch, circulated her photographs without consent, and campaigned to exclude her from women's sport. These posts gained significant traction online.

Blanch sought an Apprehended Personal Violence Order (APVO) under the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007 (NSW), saying she was concerned with the ongoing harassment and intimidation. While the Local Court accepted that Blanch's fears were genuine, it found that Smith's conduct was not enough to warrant an APVO.

On appeal, the District Court overturned that finding and granted the order. Smith then challenged the decision in the NSW Court of Appeal, arguing both jurisdictional error and a constitutional breach of the implied freedom of political communication.

Ultimately, the Court of Appeal dismissed Smith's application and upheld the APVO. The Court emphasised that the purpose of the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act is protective. Intimidation includes harassment, especially where it exploits vulnerabilities such as gender identity.

Importantly, the Court recognised that the impact of such conduct must be assessed in light of the protected person’s personal circumstances. For Blanch, being singled out and misgendered online had serious and ongoing consequences.

Balancing rights, the Court held that while political advocacy is protected, it cannot override another individual’s right to safety and dignity. The protection against harassment outweighed any incidental restriction on Smith’s political speech.

This case marks an important development in affirming that legal protections extend to transgender and gender-diverse individuals against targeted harassment. It underscores that hate speech and public vilification, even under the guise of “political communication,” can constitute intimidation justifying court intervention.

For LGBTQIA+ communities, the decision provides reassurance that the law recognises the harm caused by gendered and transphobic harassment and will prioritise protection over the weaponisation of free speech claims.

Want to write an article for the newsletter?

Contact [**communications.nsw@prideinlaw.org**](mailto:communications.nsw@prideinlaw.org) for a copy of our Submission Guidelines, or for more information.

Meet Rohan!

Meet Rohan Hora (he/him), Pride in Law National Director (Marketing and Communication)

Who am I?

Hi Pride in Law readers, my name is Rohan and I'm Pride in Law's new National Director for Marketing and Communications. I'm so excited to be joining the very capable team at Pride in Law to help advocate for all members of the LGBTQIA+ community in the legal industry.

I'm a 30-year-old cisgender queer man and my pronouns are he/him. I'm passionate about queer advocacy and look forward to bringing that passion to this role. I work in the renewable energy space by day and in my spare time I'm a wedding musician, singing and playing piano for weddings across Sydney. I've been doing this as a side hustle since I was 17 and it's a great fun fact to whip out during a dreaded ice breaker. I'm an avid consumer of movies, a frequent user of letterboxd (@brohan11), and I'm a voracious reader. Although I like to keep myself as busy as possible, I adore cooking and hanging out with my gorgeous kitten Charlie (or Charles when he's being mischievous).



What is My Role at Pride in Law?

The National Director Marketing and Communications role is a brand new one at Pride in Law. In my eyes, the role of marketing and communications is to amplify the work undertaken by an organisation, and as a result the organisation's reputation. By implementing a strong marketing and

communications plan, an organisation can expand their voice to reach a larger audience, providing a bigger platform for their advocacy. Pride in Law has already done amazing work speaking out for queer people in the legal space so I hope to amplify this work through my role over my term as National Director to create a greater platform for our advocacy.

My experience in marketing and communications has been rich and varied. I have a degree in Media, majoring in communications and journalism. I did this alongside my Law degree at UNSW in Sydney. From here, I worked for five years managing the media monitoring services for the NSW Ministerial offices, working across traditional and social media for political stakeholders. This was an incredibly niche job that taught me a lot about how to handle communications spaces to create and shape stories. Like many others, during the pandemic I also became heavily involved in TikTok, with doomsScrolling and meme posting becoming a regular part of my day. After going viral a few times, I eventually became a TikTok content creator for various political organisations, using my platform to engage young people in politics. I'm hoping to bring my experience particularly with social media, to grow the presence of Pride in Law!



What Are My Plans at Pride in Law?

Over the coming months, I'll be working to revamp Pride in Law's social media guidelines and policies to create a strong direction for our organisation. I'll also look to work directly with each chapter to find out what works and what doesn't. I'm excited to work collaboratively with every President and Communications Officer to create a strong voice for Pride in Law.

I'm currently the only national director based in NSW so I'm excited to get and meet all our members at the various events thrown by our wonderful NSW chapter. If you see me around, please don't hesitate to come and say hi!

If you'd like to get in touch about opportunities for Pride in Law in the media or on socials, please send me a message at marketing@prideinlaw.org.au. I'm looking forward to meeting all our amazing members as we embark on a journey to grow the brand and reputation of Pride in Law.

Volunteers wanted!

We are expanding our Chapter Executive team!

The NSW Chapter of Pride in Law are looking for passionate and dedicated new people to join our Executive, in the Communications Officer and Community Officer roles!

Our **Community Officers** are our eyes and ears with other organisations and allies across NSW. The Community Officer connects us with other groups within the LGBTIQA+ community, including regional professionals, to collaborate with Pride in Law.

We are also seeking two new **Communications Officers** who will assist with our social media, newsletter, communicating with our members, and making sure we are talking with our community! This is a dynamic role that requires a creative spirit and eye for detail.

Want to hear more?

Email president.nsw@prideinlaw.org for details!





PRIDE IN LAW NSW SUPPER CLUB SAPPHIC SOCIAL



THURS 9 OCT | 6.30PM

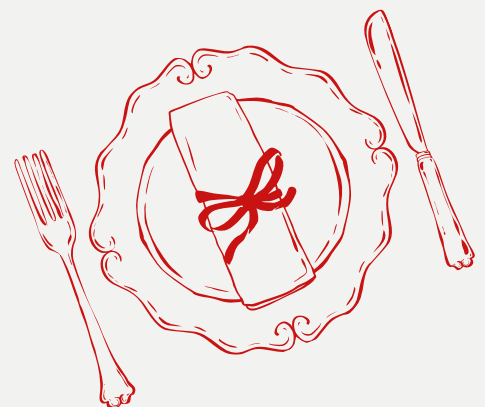
Join us for a night of warmth,
elegance and glamour...

SPACES LIMITED

Secret Darlinghurst
location

\$150 non-members
\$100 members

**TICKET INCLUDES DINNER
(SET MENU) AND DRINKS**







Pride in Law is proud to be supporting the LGBTIQ+ Leadership Summit 2025, a landmark event dedicated to empowering LGBTIQ+ leaders, driving workplace inclusion, and breaking down barriers across industries.

This year's summit features inspiring keynotes, honest conversations, and practical workshops that go beyond talk and into real change. Whether you're an established leader or just starting your journey, this is your chance to connect, learn, and grow alongside an incredible community of advocates and allies.

As a valued member of the Pride in Law network, you can receive 20% OFF your ticket using the code: **PRIDEINLAW**

 Use the code PRIDEINLAW at checkout for 20% off

 Sydney

 11-14 November 2025

Learn more and register now: <https://www.theleadershipinstitute.com.au/lgbtqa-leadership-summit/>

What's Going on In Aus?

BISEXUAL VISIBILITY IN THE AFL

Lauren Devine (she/her) - Advocacy Officer

In August 2025, former West Coast Eagles defender Mitch Brown made history by becoming the first male Australian Football League (AFL) player, past or present, to publicly come out as bisexual. His announcement is more than a personal milestone; it marks a pivotal moment for inclusion, visibility, and cultural change in one of Australia's most traditionally masculine sports.

For over 100 years, no male AFL player had publicly identified as gay or bisexual. Brown's decision to come out shattered that silence, challenging the deeply entrenched hyper-masculine culture that has long dominated the league. During his playing career, Brown said he often stayed silent in the face of homophobic comments, fearing judgment or exclusion.

Brown's announcement comes at a time when the AFL is grappling with its own inclusivity. Just days before his story broke, another player was suspended for a homophobic slur. Brown's courage has reignited calls for systemic change, including better education and safer environments for queer athletes.

The response to Brown's announcement has been overwhelmingly positive. From his ex-wife and children to AFL clubs and LGBTQIA+ advocates, many have praised his bravery and honesty. Health Equity Matters called it a "historic moment," while Pride Cup CEO Hayley Conway said it was "incredibly significant" for both the AFL and LGBTQIA+ communities.

Mitch Brown's story is a reminder that representation matters. It challenges outdated norms, opens doors for others, and helps build a more inclusive future—not just in sport, but in society. As Brown himself said, "If this helps even one person, it will have been worth it."



Proud Pets

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



*Do you have a Proud Pet (or two)?
Introduce them to us with some
photos and fun facts! Send
submissions to*

communications.nsw@prideinlaw.org

INTRODUCING...

MOCHI

Paw-rent: Laura Melrose, NSW Vice President of Pride in Law

Mochi is the dog of a million nicknames. Mop, Bunny, Noodle Poodle, Mochi Tamagotchi, Edamame, Bean Aggregation Device, Fluff Tornado... The list goes on.

A cavoodle with personality of epic proportions, she has only been resident of this world for just over a year, but the joy she has brought to it is already beyond all imaginings.

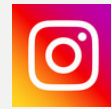
Mochi loves bushwalks, chasing sticks, dirty puddles, and jumping on logs to get a treat (pictured). She learned to roll over in two days yet somehow keeps conveniently forgetting that she's not allowed on the bed. Unless it's storming. Or she has a sore paw. Or I had a bad day.

Her daily duties include supervising the neighbourhood birds, wrestling her squeaky toy crocodile (usually during a Teams meeting), and snoozing in a sunbeam. It's a hard life, but someone has to do it.

Mochi is everything I aspire to be.

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
- Proud Pets (incl. photos!)
- Any other ideas you might have!

Send submissions to communications.nsw@prideinlaw.org