



Pride in Law

NSW CHAPTER

FEATURE PROFILE

MEET HUGH-ANGUS

Meet Hugh-Angus Bright (he/him), Community Officer NSW
Executive Committee Member

Hello, Pride in Law friends! My name is Hugh Bright, the proud and very new Community Officer for the New South Wales Chapter of Pride in Law. Although I am only taking my first steps on what I hope to be a career burgeoning with opportunity and purpose, I am excited to bring a new perspective to the incredible work already being done in this organisation.

To start off, a little bit about me. Cliché to start at the beginning, I know, but my experiences are deeply rooted in my upbringing. As the youngest of six children to a priest and special education teacher from Newcastle, I have always competed for a voice to use for positive change. Through high school, I was rarely the student at the front of the room writing answers and innovations up on the board. Instead, I quietly and diligently worked while observing the gravitas of my peers.

I never felt I could be an advocate, especially not for myself.

When finishing the HSC, I put down a Bachelor of Laws at the University of Newcastle as a placeholder when I was unsure of where I wanted to go. Because I was accepted, I felt obliged to attend at least a week. After two years of study, a placeholder of space became a purpose, a challenge of my intelligence that I eagerly attacked. Now, as I head towards the end of my third year, I have found a passion – albeit on shaky foundations of self-doubt – for international relations, diplomacy, and constitutional law.



As I build towards my future career, I am always humbled to see where the quiet kid from Lambton High School went in his professional development. Constructing a feeling of being worth something, of someone seeing me for what I was worth and investing effort into my goals, is where I want to ground my work with Pride in Law. I want to channel that determination and courage across the state, helping to build an organisation that uplifts those professionals and students who need an advocate but do not know where to even begin.

I have always been aware of my privilege. The unconditional support of my family, the ability to pursue whatever goals I set my mind to, to dream big despite the end goal being out of reach. For me, a voice is one of the most powerful tools we can possess, and those people who have one should always work to uplift the voices of those around them. Advocacy naturally followed, but I never knew where I could direct my attention and forge a lasting impact that serves the community.

Here is where I begin my journey with Pride in Law. The once quiet observer, the once self-doubting law student – these have all turned me into a voice prepared to serve the community. Building a constellation of advocates across the state is central to my rationale in serving alongside the incredible executive team at Pride in Law, and I am exceedingly eager to serve the community through my work.

I like to think I am many things; a 20-year-old student, a somewhat talented barista (come check me out at Corner Lane Espresso, New Lambton!), an aspiring politician, and a budding diplomat. Above all, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to serve you and the NSW legal community.

Feel free to get in touch with me to discuss anything! You can find me on LinkedIn, Hugh-Angus Bright, or community.nsw@prideinlaw.org.



What's Going on In Aus?

When Law Enforcement Meets Queer Bodies: Reflections on the NSW Strip-Search Case

Lauren Devine (she/her) - Advocacy Officer

The recent ruling in *Raya Meredith v State of NSW* has captured public attention—and rightly so. Beyond its legal significance, this case hits many queer people deeply. It lays bare how policing powers intersect with gender, bodily autonomy, shame, and trauma in ways that are all too familiar to queer communities.

What happened?

In 2018, while entering the Splendour in the Grass music festival, Raya Meredith was singled out by a drug-detection dog, taken to a makeshift cubicle, and strip-searched. The search involved instructions to remove all clothes, to lift her breasts, bend over, and remove her tampon - all while a male officer entered the cubicle without warning.

In September 2025, the NSW Supreme Court found this search was unlawful. Raya Meredith won \$93,000 in damages for assault, battery, false imprisonment, and aggravated damages.

The legal team argued - and the court agreed - that police lacked just cause: a drug dog indication alone does not satisfy the legal requirements for a strip search.

Why this matters to the queer community

Bodily autonomy and gendered power imbalance: For many queer people, particularly trans, non-binary, intersex folks and those whose bodies or gender expression do not conform to normative expectations, any encounter with policing - especially invasive searches - can trigger fear, shame, dysphoria, or trauma. A forced strip search under those conditions is more than just a legal wrong: it's an affront to dignity.

Intersection with sexual violence & trauma: Being searched in ways that mirror sexual assault (e.g. being forced to expose genitals, being told to remove menstrual protection) is distressing - and when it happens without consent, it's traumatising. Many queer people have histories of violence, abuse, or violation; being subjected to a strip search without safeguards can reopen those wounds.

Visibility, privacy & gender policing: The case reinforces that visibility of the body is still policed. What gets judged as "appropriate" or "inappropriate" often follows gendered and heteronormative lines. A search that forces someone to "lift breasts," or inspect genitals - even under law - implicitly treats certain bodies as suspect. For queer folks who already experience scrutiny (for how they dress, present, love, or desire), this can feel like an extension of everyday violence.

Disproportional impact & discrimination: Existing data shows that marginalised groups, such as young people, First Nations people, etc, are disproportionately affected by strip searches in NSW. While the reports do not always break down data by sexuality or gender identity, queer people are likely among those who are overrepresented in these encounters. Fear of discrimination may also discourage reporting or complaining.

What can we learn?

Legal safeguards need clarity & enforcement: Laws ought to clearly define when strip searches are allowable, provide stronger protections especially for minors, and ensure non-consensual exposure (e.g. of genital areas, or forced removal of menstrual products) is never routine.

Training & oversight: Police and other officers need trauma-informed training, especially about gender diversity, sexual identity, and the history of abuse. Oversight mechanisms must be empowered, transparent, and accountable.

Consent & respect in practice: Even when a strip search is found to be lawful, the manner in which it is conducted matters. Private spaces, same-gender or preferred gender officers where possible, full explanation, limits on who may enter, respect for bodily integrity and choice are vital.

Alternative approaches: Over-reliance on drug detection dogs, or suspicion alone (especially of low dosage or “personal use”), should not automatically lead to strip searches. There should be less invasive means first.

This case is a reminder that change is possible, and that legal systems can hold authorities accountable. For queer people, it underscores both the fragility of bodily rights under law, and the power of courage, advocacy, and collective action. Raya Meredith's case gives visibility to the experiences many have long known but have rarely seen recognised in the courts.

When the law fails to protect the most vulnerable bodies, or even treats them as suspect by default, it's not just a legal failing. It's an issue of justice, equality, dignity. Through the NSW strip-search ruling, there is an opportunity to reimagine how policing, law, and queer lives intersect. Pride in Law will continue to watch, to listen, and to demand that justice means all bodies are valued, respected, and safe.

[Want to read the judgment?](#)

Full citation: *Meredith v State of New South Wales* (No 5) [2025] NSWSC 1133

Upcoming Events

Beyond Postcode 2000: How to Build Your Career and Community Outside of Sydney — and the Role of Allies

Pride in Law has collaborated with Sparke Helmore to bring a panel event themed “Beyond Postcode 2000: How to Build Your Career and Community Outside of Sydney — and the Role of Allies” to spotlight prominent legal professionals from the Hunter region who have successfully built careers outside of Sydney while contributing meaningfully to strong LGBTQIA+ communities.

Date: Thursday, 30 October 2025

Time: 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM AEDT

Location: Sparke Helmore Lawyers, Level 7, 28 Honeysuckle Drive, Newcastle NSW

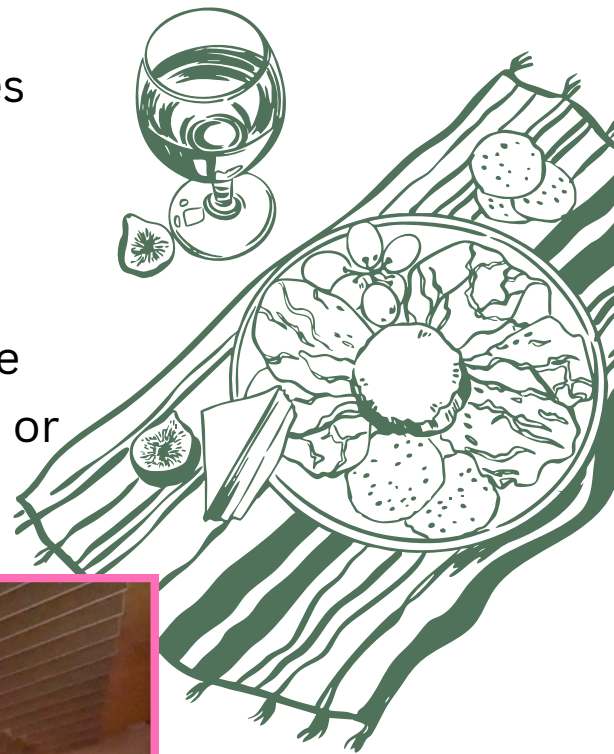
Register here:

<https://events.humanitix.com/pilxsparkehelmorenewcastle>

Pride in Law Supper Club

The Pride in Law Supper Club is a recurring event series, aimed at bringing together people with shared stories and experiences from different parts of our rainbow community.

To be the first to hear about each exclusive dinner first sign up to our mailing list [here](#), or email events.nsw@prideinlaw.org



Save the date: End of Year Event

Pride in Law NSW and College of Law are coming together again to bring you our third annual End of Year Celebration!

We're changing things up a bit this year, so keep an eye on our socials and emails for details.



DETAILS:

Thursday 20 November

6pm

Dress code: Semi-formal

Want to Join the Team?

We are expanding our team with two new positions!

The NSW Chapter of Pride in Law are looking for a passionate and dedicated new members of our executive, in the Community and Communication roles!

We are looking for two **Communications Officers** who will assist with our social media, newsletter and making sure we are talking with our community!

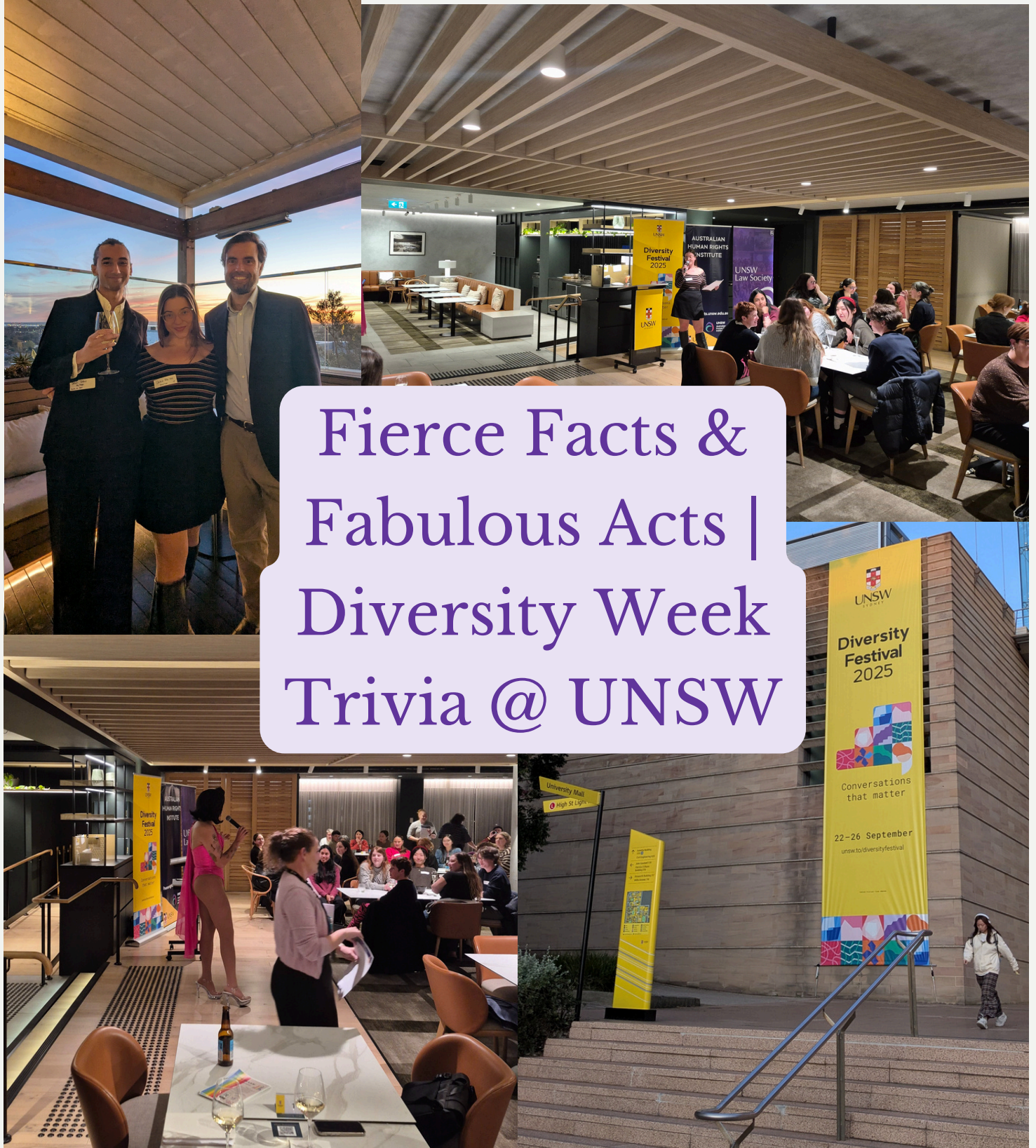
Pride in Law is looking for volunteer Communications Officers to help us share our story and connect with our community. This role involves running our social media channels, creating fun and engaging posts, and putting together our regular newsletter to keep members in the loop. If you enjoy writing, have an eye for design, and love celebrating diversity in the legal profession, this is a great opportunity to get creative and make an impact. It's a flexible commitment of a couple of hours each week, and you'll be working alongside a passionate committee to help amplify LGBTIQ+ voices in law.

This is a dynamic role that requires a creative spirit and eye for detail.

Email president.nsw@prideinlaw.org for more!



Recent Events



Fierce Facts &
Fabulous Acts |
Diversity Week
Trivia @ UNSW



LGBTIQA+
Leadership Summit 2025
Out Loud. Out Front.

📍 SYDNEY MASONIC CENTRE (SMC)
📅 11 - 14 November

Anthony Callea
ARIA Award-Winning Recording Artist & LGBTQIA+ Advocate

Joel Creasey
Comedian, TV Host & LGBTQIA+ Advocate (I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here!)

EVENT PARTNER:
 PRIDE IN LAW

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

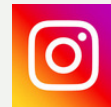
📍 Sydney

📅 11-14 November 2025

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

Want more Pride in Law?

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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