



Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2022

## Albany Pride Festival 2023: Bigger and more diverse

Albany Pride is excited to announce the launch of the Albany Pride Festival 2023 program – featuring an impressive and diverse lineup of events.

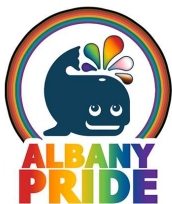
Albany Pride Festival will return in 2023 from **Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> – Sunday, 12<sup>th</sup> March**. The theme for this year's Pride Festival is “Let's Get Visible”, with visibility and inclusion being a guiding focus for the program – and providing a fun, ‘80s-esque design theme.

The Pride Festival will bring the usual mix of frivolity and celebration, drag, arts events, active games and competitions, and family and youth events, but the upcoming festival has had a particular concentration on providing a more diverse range of events, and a focus on accessibility and inclusion.

As well as providing a time of celebration and community for the region's local LGBTIQ+ community, the Albany Pride Festival has grown to become a tourist event for the region, bringing in hundreds of visitors providing a boost for the local economy – and a time to show off everything Albany/Kinjarling and the surrounding regions have to offer as a place to visit, and indeed, live.

### Visibility, accessibility, and inclusion

Visibility and inclusion have been vital parts of the planning process right from the beginning of the Pride Festival, and following on from the Pride Festival 2022, the planning committee has taken serious steps to make the Pride Festival more accessible and therefore inclusive.



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Working with Living Proud's *Queer & Accessible* project, the Albany Pride Festival team was able to attain an evaluation of the venues for the Festival and their ability to meet accessibility requirements. In 2022, Albany Pride Festival was able to welcome Australian sign-language interpreters to a couple of events for the first time, including at our family and community-focused Fair Day, while providing quiet and sensory spaces.

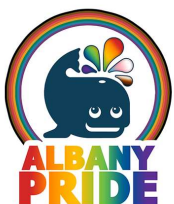
“Inclusion has always been at the forefront of our objectives,” says Millie Reid, Albany Pride Vice President, “but working with Living Proud and members of our community surrounding accessibility has been an immensely positive learning experience for us all, and really enlightened us as to what inclusion looks like; what inclusion is. This is a long-term commitment for us.”

Visibility is particularly important in rural and regional areas for LGBTIQ+ people, particularly in areas where more conservative opinions and misconceptions of LGBTIQ+ people exist. As such, visibility has been a key part of Albany Pride's objectives.

“It's important to show young LGBTIQ+ people – and also older LGBTIQ+ people – that are struggling with their sexuality, gender, or intersex status that there is a future for them; to show that LGBTIQ+ people do lead successful, happy lives,” says Albany Pride President and social worker, Annie Arnold. “Visibility is about showing society that we live normal lives, that we contribute to our society and communities like everybody else does.

“Showing that LGBTIQ+ people can thrive, and not just survive, is crucial.”

The Albany Pride Festival committee has committed 15% of all sponsorship funding goes to accessibility and inclusion for the 2023 Festival, to ensure that as many of the events as possible are inclusive of accessibility needs, and the Festival can be enjoyed by as many people as possible.





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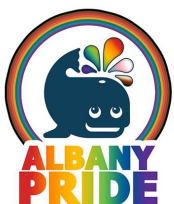
Tiger Bird, Albany Pride’s Media Coordinator says: “The wonderful thing about the Queer community is our diversity, and I think that’s something to embrace and cherish. We transcend so many different demographics, we’re made up of people of different generations and different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and we’re from different socio-economic backgrounds. Some of us are neurotypical, some of us are neurodivergent. Some of us have accessibility needs, some of us don’t. Our sexualities and gender identities are diverse. As a community, we’re as diverse as greater society is.

“I think that diversity is our strength. But in the past, I think the community has sometimes neglected that, and I’m glad Pride organisations and communities are working to address that, particularly in the face of increasing antagonism and division in society. Pride should be a time for us to be able to be ourselves, to be visible, to participate and to celebrate.”

### Something for everyone: the lineup

As usual, Albany Pride Festival 2023 will provide the opportunity for members of the community to party and let their hair down, but also other events with broader appeal, such as arts events, training sessions, and community get-togethers.

“What I love about the upcoming lineup is that we’ve got a lot to offer people who aren’t so keen on the loud parties and dancefloors,” says Millie Reid, “We’ve got a lot of arts events, and many other activities we haven’t included before. We’ll be hosting a sports carnival and given a lot of the media commentary surrounding inclusion in sports, this is very important.”



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Fun and frivolity can be guaranteed with the return of firm favourites **Drag Brunch** and **Drag Bingo**, featuring long-term Pride Festival talents **BarbieQ**, **Alexas Armstrong** and **Veronica Jean-Jones**, who will provide plenty of entertainment with their sharp and outrageous humour and world-class Drag routines.

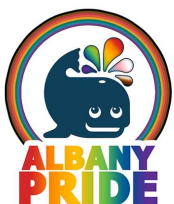
Australian singer-songwriter, musician and human rights campaigner **Abbe May** will be performing at the Town Hall for a very special performance, right at the heart of our city – bringing old favourites and new material from her forthcoming album.

Fringe Festival talent – performance artist and Drag King **Justin Sider** – returns to Albany/Kinjarling to bring their critically-acclaimed show *Dickless* to the Albany Entertainment Centre – where he will thrust his way through the fourth wall to explore themes of Queerness, being transgender, toxic masculinity, male identity, mental health, and body positivity. Justin will also be the host, along with Peachy Sparkles, of a *Drag and Draw* event, for a spectacular night of life drawing with a twist.

Circus troupe **Kinetica** once again return to the Albany Entertainment Centre with an all-star cast of aerialists, acrobats, burlesque performers and drag with *Slumber Party*, for a wild-night of candy-fueled shenanigans.

There'll be a special Film Harvest film screening during the Pride Festival, and the opportunity to participate in a Clay Meditation and screen-printing session with Art Jam. In conjunction with Crooked Images, there'll be a chance for women and non-binary people to celebrate beauty, diversity and strength through the female lens with a Nood Shoot.

For those enjoy physical activities, we'll be welcoming another special Pride parkrun around Mount Clarence, an indoor Rock Climbing session, a Roller Derby, and a Sports Carnival which will welcome participants and spectators alike.



In conjunction with GRAI and Living Proud, the Albany Pride Festival will provide training sessions on LGBTIQ+ inclusion and awareness, with an *LGBTI People in Aged Care* training session, and a *Pride in Diversity* event respectively.

Discussions surrounding the LGBTIQ+ community will take place with a *Politics at the Pub* event and a special Pride-themed TEDx Salon event. A very special event will take place on the 8<sup>th</sup> March in honour of International Women's Day.

For those who prefer a more casual get-together, Albany Pride Festival will host two daytime community picnics, where everyone is welcome to socialise, relax, and enjoy some food.

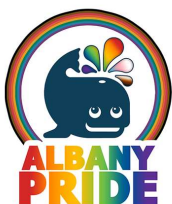
Celebrations will be promised with an '80s Dance Party – where all attendees will be expected to grab their leg warmers, headbands and fluro tights to see the Pride Festival in with a bang! More information about this exciting event will be released in the New Year.

Of course, no Albany Pride Festival would be complete without the return of Fair Day – the heart of the Pride Festival – where pets and families can attend the Town Square to browse stalls, watch some entertainment, and of course, take part in our annual Dog Show!

### **A chance for the region to shine**

The Albany Pride Festival isn't just important for the LGBTIQ+ community in the region, but a chance to display the beauty and attraction of the region to visitors, so that'll they'll visit again in the future, providing a boost to tourism, which is essential for our local economy.

“One of the great things about the Albany Pride Festival is the amount of visitors we get coming from outside of the region to join us for the Festival,” says local farmer and Albany Pride treasurer, Darren Moir, “The overwhelming feedback is that they had a



great time, and fell in love with Albany. Many of them were visiting Albany for the first time and had admitted they hadn't thought of visiting – but did so because of the Pride Festival. We've even had people say they want to move here, and some have!

“We know the region has a lot to offer people, and we love giving people from outside the region the chance to see that.”

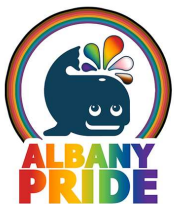
### The '80s backdrop for the Festival

The theme of “Let's Get Visible”, of course, is directly reminiscent of the Olivia Newton-John hit *Physical* but was a theme that was decided on before Newton-John's passing this year.

“We decided on the theme ‘Let's Get Visible’ quite early on in the year,” says Tiger Bird, “We were coming up with ideas for our Pride Party theme, and after throwing around a few suggestions, we decided on an '80s theme, because it's fun and provides ample inspiration for dressing up, but also because the '80s were quite an important time in LGBTIQA+ history.

“Naturally, when discussing visibility and the '80s, it was only a matter of time before we started humming the words ‘let's get visible, visible...’, and so it stuck. Unfortunately, Olivia passed away a few months later, but given her cemented status as a gay icon, it also takes on an extra meaning.”

### About Albany Pride Festival





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Albany Pride Festival first started in 2016, comprising of a handful of events over a weekend. Since then, it's grown significantly, growing to the current program of over twenty individual events across ten days.

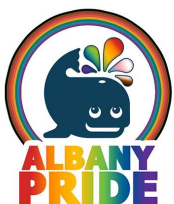
The Albany Pride Festival is run by Albany Pride, the region's only acknowledged local service, support or network for LGBTIQ+ people in the region, and helps to fund our year-long outreach programs and events for the community.

More information about Albany Pride, and what we do, can be found on our website:

<https://albanypride.com.au>

**Albany Pride Festival 2023 runs from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2023.**

**The full lineup of events – and to get tickets, visit <https://albanypridefestival.com.au>**



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