

# AGA End of Year Report

## Introduction

A Gender Agenda have achieved so much in the past 12 months! We have held several major events in addition to our regular community picnics, dinners and other informal events. We've formed a number of new support groups, and seen our membership grow from 8 members to 35 in a single month! Our public profile in Canberra, nationally and even internationally is sky rocketing, with increasing contact with human rights and gender diversity groups all over Australia, and even some International groups.

## Goals From 2008

At the end of 2008 we set some goals for 2009, and I'm pleased to be able to report that we achieved the majority of them, and then some extra!

### Gender Diversity Day

For Gender Diversity Day 2009, A Gender Agenda held the most well attended picnic we've ever had. There dozens of people, and everyone had a great time. WIN Television even made an appearance, responding to the media release that we sent out the week before.

### Mardi Gras

We attended Mardi Gras under the banner of Tranny Panic! with a couple of dozen friends and supporters. We looked fantastic in our lime green t-shirts with gender-positive slogans and "Gender Rights are Human Rights" written on them. The art work from our placards went on to be exhibited at an Art Exhibition in Glasgow, and two local exhibitions.

### The Butch Auction

The Butch Auction was our Contribution to Trans Day of Action! While trans folk were hitting the streets and protesting in New York City, we were hitting HUSH Bar, and partying, all in the name of awareness raising! There were performances from a local Drag King Troupe, a belly dancer, and we auctioned off several butches, including someone who came all the way from Melbourne for the event.

### Trans Mens Get Togethers

We've continued to hold get togethers for the local trans men and FTM Genderqueers. There have been a number of new faces at our dinners, and several new friendships have formed across the year.

### **Education and Training**

We didn't end up being able to hold the workshops that we had intended to hold in the second half of this year, because we have been so incredibly busy with other things. We have however participated in several training sessions and educational panels and forums. We have provided volunteers training for the AIDS Action Council, and spoken to Teaching Students at UC, in addition to being involved in the ANU Ally Program in the first half of the year.

### **Film Festival Becomes Art Exhibition**

The Breaking the Binary Film Festival has been held over for a future time, this year we decided that we were better equipped to hold an Art Exhibition, and so the "Gender Rights! Art Exhibition" was born. Pink Tennis sponsored the event, and artists from Sydney and Melbourne, as well as local talent participated. One of our members sold two of her fabulous poster designs through this event.

### **Community Growth and Development**

A Gender Agenda had 8 paid members at the beginning of the year, but with our new website, its easier than ever for people to sign up and join us. Since launching our online sign up process in November, membership has grown to 37 paid individual members, and one member organisation. Our website is attracting more hits, with a traffic increase of about 25% in the last month. In addition to this, we have also seen an increase in the utilisation of our email lists and increased attendance of events.

### **Support Group Report**

We have established several new groups, including an email list for trans women and MTF genderqueers, a list for partners of trans people, and a group for under-30s. A couple of these groups are still so new that they only have half a dozen members so far. The Youth Group has been running for a couple of months now, and is going great guns! They have a total membership of 15 people, with a general attendance of events usually coming out at 7-8 young people at each event.

### **General and Special Event Attendance**

The attendance of community events such as picnics, BBQ's, dinners, tupperware parties, art exhibitions, themed parties, trans day of remembrance, and so on, is definitely up from last year, with it being unusual not to get at least 15-20 attendees to regular events, and often having closer to one hundred show up to special events. We've got a number of new regulars, and people are starting to travel from surrounding regions and towns to visit us. We even had people come from as far away as Melbourne and Sydney for special events such as the Butch Auction party and the Gender Rights Art Exhibition.

### **Alliances with Other Community Organisations**

A Gender Agenda is receiving more attention and support from other community organisations than ever before. We're officially a member of the National LGBT Health Alliance, ensuring that there is a voice for Sex and Gender Diversity on a national level. We've worked with the AIDS Action Council, particularly on diversity training and the gender library. QWire have been fabulous, and the Youth Group have been working

with them to try to get a youth project off the ground. Pink Tennis sponsored our Art Exhibition, and were very encouraging and complimentary about how that turned out. We're also linking in with organisations in Sydney and Melbourne, particularly Scarlet Alliance in Sydney, the Trans Melbourne Gender Project and Transgender Victoria.

## **Lobbying and Political Alliances**

This year A Gender Agenda has continued our work lobbying the local government to improve the situation for sex and gender diverse people in the ACT. We have built good working relationships with various MLA's and with both the National and ACT Human Rights Commissions.

### **The Legislative Assembly**

A Gender Agenda have met several times with MLA's, most notably Shane Rattenbury from the Greens. Mr Rattenbury has assisted us in putting Questions on Notice to the Attorney General, and requesting an investigation by the Human Rights Commission into Human Rights violations against sex and gender diverse people by the ACT Government. We have also made an effort to build relationships with other MLA's, inviting all of the MLA's to our Gender Rights Art Exhibition, which was held in the Legislative Assembly itself, and also inviting them to attend our Transgender Day of Remembrance Memorial.

### **Human Rights**

A Gender Agenda continues to seek full and complete human rights for Sex and Gender Diverse people. Last year we were heavily involved in the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissions enquiry into sex and gender diversity. Our hard work was recognised when HREOC invited Peter to make a speech at the launch of the Sex Files Report that came out of the enquiry.

We also have a growing relationship with the ACT Human Rights Commission. They have been extremely supportive of our lobbying of the Legislative Assembly, and sent a speaker to our Gender Rights Art Exhibition. They are currently pressuring the ACT Government for trans law reform on our behalf.

In addition to this, Amnesty International spoke at Transgender Day or Remembrance this year and our relationship with the Green's continues to improve, and we've met with Shane Rattenbury several times, and we will be consulted by the Greens again in the New Year regarding trans law reform.

## **Fundraising and Grants**

We need money to complete a number of our projects, and thankfully we're slowly seeing our income increase. We've received about \$1000 since November in donations from community members, specifically for developing a community space. We also made about \$1200 at the Butch Auction Fundraiser. Most of our income has been through grants though. Notably:

- We received \$1500 from the AIDS Action Council for the purchase of books and other resources for our Gender Library

- We received \$1500 from Pink Tennis to hold the Gender Rights! Art Exhibition
- We very recently received \$5000 from Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs for the purchase of equipment for use by our volunteers. (This grant will be spent in 2010)

We encourage all members to let us know about grants, sponsorship, and other funding opportunities you know of.

## **Projects that are Underway**

A Gender Agenda have started several new projects this year, and will be looking for community support to continue those projects and preferably accelerate them during 2010. Those projects include:

### **The Gender Library**

The Gender Library is a collection of about 200 books and other resources that have been purchased with the funding from the AIDS Action Council, or have been donated by the sex and gender diverse community of Australia. Most of the books were given to us by local community members, but people in Melbourne and Sydney have also donated items. Hares and Hyena's in Melbourne, and the Bookshop Darlinghurst in Sydney both gave us generous discounts on our purchases, and the Feminist Bookshop in Sydney threw in a bonus book for free, with the books that we purchased from them.

Currently, we are working on getting those books input into a catalogue, and finding a location to house them so that they are available for browsing by the community. In the New Year the catalogue will be available to members, so that you may borrow by request.

### **Community Space Consultations**

In November A Gender Agenda and NewCTN combined forces to hold a community consultation regarding establishing a physical community space for the Sex and Gender Diverse community of Canberra. This process is now underway, but we look forward to getting more input and participation from our members. The next consultation will be a Visioning Exercise, and will probably be held in February of 2010.

### **Members Meetings**

Previously the committee has determined the direction of A Gender Agenda, however, now that we have more members, we look forward to being able to have more direction coming from our membership base. We have an intention of having members meetings 6 times a year from 2010 onwards.