

Identity, Community, Connection

Acknowledgement

Qtopia Sydney acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, sea and waters on which we work, live and engage. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We are honoured to continue the rich history of storytelling that has taken place on Country for generations.

Identity, Community, Connection at Qtopia Sydney

The Identity, Community, Connection program is designed as a 3 hour program of learning. The program is centred around the key themes of inclusivity, advocacy, community outreach and leadership.

While the program is recommended at 3 hours, and for students Year 7 – 12, run time can be amended on request, and even extended to a full day program. The content delivered will be age/stage appropriate, and can include references to conversations that you have had in class about relevant topics.

Whilst Qtopia Sydney uses the experiences and stories of the LGBTQIA+ community and its allies to inform this program and its case studies, students are encouraged to examine these learnings through their own lenses. As such, these programs speak more to general community experience, than the experience of a single community.

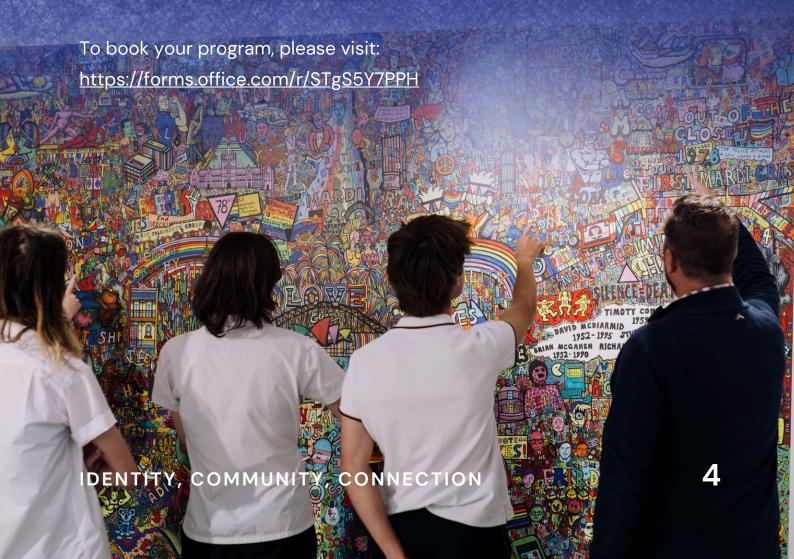
Schools have the flexibility to choose the case studies and guest speakers which are available, age and stage appropriate and in line with their student needs and school ethos and context. We are happy to discuss with you what is best for your students in the context of their learning, and also for the size of the group.

Both the case studies and guest speaker theme can be requested by schools prior to attending the program through the booking form.

Identity, Community, Connection at Qtopia Sydney

Accompanying learning opportunities are provided prior to attending Qtopia Sydney and after the visit as well. The program can be used in its entirety, or teachers may select some sections of the program to complement learning for their student and school context. It is recommended that the learning is of adequate duration to allow students the opportunity to build in-depth knowledge, understanding and skills.

Teachers who would benefit from conversation with the Department of Education regarding specific curriculum linkage are encouraged to reach out.



Program **Plan**

Time	3 hours
Program Structure	Time to explore exhibitions, talk by guest speaker, workshop activities and discussion
Materials Required	Source pack (1 copy per group of 4), paper, pens or pencils

NOTES FOR EDUCATORS

OVERVIEW

Identity, Community, Connection is a program that invites students to engage with the history of their community in new ways, fostering a deeper understanding of their own identity and how it fits within greater society. The program encourages the development of social and cultural literacy as well as providing a framework for understanding and supporting identity and cultural expression.

By investigating pioneers within the community as well as pivotal moments in history, students will investigate the importance of community and historical change, understanding how these factors can impact our wellbeing.

Program Plan

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Have a better understanding of the challenges that the LGBTQIA+ community have negotiated.
- Understand the importance of community and personal connections
- Be more inclusive in their words and actions
- Value and celebrate diversity

During this visit students will:

- Have the opportunity for Individual and group reflection and exploration of identity.
- Explore our exhibition through a case study activity that focuses on community leaders and key historical moments.
- Hear from a guest speaker about the importance of community and connections.
- Participate in the creation of 'legacy gifts' that will contribute to a social project. This service activity allows students to better understand small acts of kindness and far-reaching leadership and legacy.

Run **Sheet**

Time	Instructions	Materials		
INTRODUCTION				
20 minutes	 Introduction Acknowledgement of Country Welcome video to be played Provide overview of Qtopia Sydney, including history of the building and the importance of community spaces Provide overview of program including relevant activities 	Welcome video		
ACTIVITY: CASE STUDY				
75 minutes	 Students introduced to their case studies (one per group) and provided with instructions about how to engage with the content they are searching for in the exhibitions Students informed that all case study questions can be answered as a group, and that some of the answers can be found in the exhibitions, and some will require deeper thinking and use of personal experience Case Study (45 minutes) Students are sent into the exhibition space with a map and their case study, and must find the relevant exhibition referenced in the case study provided 	Source pack Paper Pens/ pencils		

	 Students are informed that it is their choice as to how they divide their time, but within the 45 minutes they must find answers to the provided questions as well as prepare to present their findings to the wider group Presentation (30 minutes) As a group, students will present their findings on their relevant case study and reflect on their understanding of the themes explored in both the case study and the exhibition 			
ACTIVITY: LEGACY GIFTS				
30 minutes	 Students introduced to the concept of legacy gifts the significance of leaving an impact after your visit Students informed that in the making of this legacy gift, they will make something for themselves, someone they know, and someone they will never meet Rainbow Shoelace Project Introduction video of Abbie is played, providing an overview of Rainbow Shoelace Project and why it exists Students are instructed to package rainbow beads to be delivered to a different school, spreading the message of inclusivity All packaged beads are placed in one container so students have a physical representation of the work they have done 	Video of Abbie Beads Rainbow Shoelace cards Plastic bags		
ACTIVITY: SELF-GUIDED TIME IN EXHIBITIONS				
20 minutes	 Students invited to further explore the exhibitions, providing an opportunity to engage with spaces outside of their allocated case study 	n/a		

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	 Students encouraged to ask questions about anything in the exhibitions that needs further clarification or about anything that particularly engages them Facilitator and two volunteers to be stationed around the exhibitions in order to answer questions 			
ACTIVITY: GUEST SPEAKER				
30 minutes	 Guest Speaker One of the listed guest speakers will speak to the group about their experience of understanding their identity and finding their community (20 minutes) Students invited to ask questions of the guest speaker in order to develop a deeper understanding of the speaker's story 	n/a		
REFLECTION AND FAREWELL				
20 minutes	Facilitator leads discussion with the group on what they have learned about the importance of community, encouraging them to reflect on what can be learned from both past leaders and the leaders that inspire them now. Farewell • Students thanked for spending their time at Qtopia Sydney and encouraged to spread what they have learned about identity and community to other students at their school Pack up • Students collect bags and head to meeting point to be collected by bus	n/a		



Sisters of **Charity**

Location: Ward 17 South

In 1984, the first AIDS patient in Australia was diagnosed and Australia suddenly faced the devastating HIV/AIDS epidemic. St Vincent's Hospital Sydney and the Sisters of Charity immediately stepped up to the challenge, opening Ward 17 South, the first HIV/AIDS ward in Australia.

The Sisters of Charity who staffed St Vincent's were called saints by those in their care and lived out their charism of ministering to the marginalised, poor and sick in the face of hostility. Colleagues and hospital staff treated them with fear and apprehension, they received criticism from the wider society, and condemnation from within the church. Yet without the sisters' witness, thousands of men would have died alone and uncared for, even ostracised by their families.

In addition to facing death, a number of patients felt alone as some family and friends turned their backs. The courage and commitment of the Sisters of Mercy during this horrendous time never wavered.

On a particularly painful day I was in the nurses' station shedding tears after the death of yet another patient. Sister Margaret Mines, our Pastoral Care Worker, came and put her arms around me. I said, "Sister I don't think I can do this anymore, it is too hard." I will never forget that she said to me, "It is because it is hard that we should do it."

Sisters of **Charity**

Location: Ward 17 South

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

HISTORY

- 1. There were two 'mottos' of the sisters of Ward 17 South. Can you find them?
- 2. List the key dates and events in the history of Ward 17 South.
- 3. How did the Sisters show compassion and leadership in care for their patients?

PDHPE

- 1. The Sisters of Charity were there with these sick people when their families were too frightened to be around. Why was that important?
- 2. What personality traits would a sister working on ward 17 south need?
- 3. Imagine you have done a tough day working in Ward 17 South, what might you do to take care of your own health?
- 4. How many other occupations can you think of where someone puts others first?

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

- 1. In a time of real community need the Sisters of Charity stepped in and provided valuable support, what other community groups were founded and what role did they play?
- 2. How can we actively demonstrate our commitment to supporting others, not just through words, but through consistent and meaningful actions?
- 3. What are some different communities that you are a part of? List as many as you can.

Sisters of **Charity**

Location: Ward 17 South

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY STUDIES

- 1. What is stigma? What effects can it have?
- 2. For many LGBTQIA+ people, the family dynamic is made up of something called a chosen family the people around us that feel like home, whether or not they are related. What does your chosen family look like?
- 3. The Sisters embraced patients with love and provided care in a non-judgmental way, even when great stigma surrounded their patients, can you think of another example of this kind of non-judgmental care?



Location: 1978: Hour by Hour

The 78ers are a significant group in the history of LGBT rights in Australia. They are the courageous individuals who participated in the original Sydney Mardi Gras on 24 June 1978, which was not only a celebration but also a critical protest for gay and lesbian rights. This event marked a turning point in the fight against discrimination and police brutality towards the LGBT community.

Following a request from the International Solidarity movement in the USA to do something in Australia, a small group gathered in a kitchen in Glebe to make a plan. What was meant as a peaceful celebration a 'Mardi Gras' soon became a protest in response to police brutality.

The first Mardi Gras was met with severe police violence, leading to the arrest and public shaming of many participants. The protestors faced not just immediate physical harm but also long-term psychological trauma. Despite these challenges, the 78ers continued their activism, organizing further protests and marches in the face of adversity. Their actions included:

- Protesting at Darlinghurst and Central Police Stations on 25 June 1978.
- A demonstration at Central Court Sydney on 26 June 1978, where 300 people protested outside the closed court, resulting in seven arrests.

Location: 1978: Hour by Hour

- A gay rights march from Martin Place to Darlinghurst Police Station on
 15 July 1978, with 2,000 participants and 14 arrests.
- A march down Oxford Street from the 4th National Homosexual Conference to Taylor Square and Hyde Park on 27 August 1978, which saw 300 participants and 104 arrests.

In the aftermath of the first march, the Sydney Morning Herald published the names, occupations, and addresses of those charged, causing further distress and invasion of privacy.

The legacy of the 78ers is profound. In 1997, a small group from the original activists came together to plan the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Sydney Mardi Gras parade in 1998. This group officially took on the name '78ers' and has since led each year's Mardi Gras parade, symbolizing the ongoing struggle and celebration of LGBT rights.

Their impact extends beyond the parades. On 25 February 2016, the New South Wales State Parliament made a formal bipartisan apology to the 78ers. This apology acknowledged the injustices they suffered and the courage they displayed in their fight for equality. Additionally, the Sydney Morning Herald issued an apology for its role in exacerbating the harm caused to the 78ers by publishing personal details of those arrested.

Location: 1978: Hour by Hour

The 78ers include notable activists such as Ken Davis, Garry Wotherspoon, Kate Rowe, Jacqueline Hyde, Peter Murphy, Julie McCrossin, Peter de Waal, Peter "Bon" Bonsall-Boone, Robyn Plaister, Robyn Kennedy, Ron Austin, Diane Minnis, Lance Day, and Lance Gowland, among others. These individuals and many unnamed participants have contributed significantly to the progress of LGBT rights in Australia and continue to inspire future generations.



Location: 1978: Hour by Hour

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

HISTORY

- 1. The 78ers used phone lines and letters to contact each other one by one to organise protests. In 2024, how would you communicate with your network to encourage advocacy and activism?
- 2. How would McCarthyism have impacted attitudes towards the LGBTQIA+ community in Australia?
- 3. What other significant moments in history can you think of that have sparked such monumental social change?

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

- 1. What do you believe is the impact on wider society of restricting the freedoms of one minority group?
- 2. How did the social and cultural identities of the 78ers impact the way they are treated by the wider community?
- 3. Why do you think so many LGBTQIA+ subcultures emerged during this period?
- 4. From interacting with the exhibition and the notes, what can you see were the differences for men and women who participated in the 1978 protests?

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY STUDIES

1. What do you believe is the impact on the wider community of restricting the freedoms of one minority group?

Location: 1978: Hour by Hour

- 2. For 78ers that could not be their authentic selves with their families, how do you think this impacted their wellbeing?
- 3. For many LGBTQIA+ people, the family dynamic is made up of something called a chosen family the people around us that feel like home, whether or not they are related. What does your chosen family look like?

PDHPE

1. For 78ers that could not be their authentic selves with their families, how do you think this impacted their wellbeing?

Location: Becoming

Roberta Perkins was a pioneering Australian sociologist and author whose work significantly impacted the understanding and support of marginalized communities. Born in 1940 in Sydney, Perkins overcame numerous personal challenges including poverty and police brutality which drove her to pursue an education at Macquarie University, where she earned her Ph.D. in Sociology.

Perkins' academic work was a first in Australian research focussing on the lives and struggles of transgender individuals, and she was instrumental in advancing the visibility and rights of the transgender community in Australia. Her seminal research provided an in-depth analysis of the social, economic, and psychological issues faced by transgender people, challenging widespread misconceptions and advocating for their acceptance and integration into society.

Beyond her academic contributions, Perkins was a dedicated activist and community leader. She founded the Australian Transgender Archives, preserving critical historical documents and fostering a deeper understanding of transgender experiences. Perkins also established several support services, including the Gender Centre in Sydney, which continues to provide essential resources, counselling, housing assistance and advocacy for transgender individuals.

Location: Becoming

Throughout her life, Roberta Perkins remained committed to social justice, using her expertise to influence policy changes and promote inclusivity. Her legacy is marked by her unwavering dedication to education, community support, and the fight for equal rights, leaving a lasting impact on Australian society. Perkins passed away in 2018, leaving behind a profound legacy of compassion and advocacy.



Location: Becoming

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

HISTORY

- 1. Roberta was a strong activist and fought tirelessly for housing, protection, and greater understanding of transgender individuals. In 2024, how would you fight to have your voice heard to encourage advocacy and activism?
- 2. October 1982 was the first time that legislation around the transgender community was challenged and reconsidered. Can you think of another moment in history when a group stood up for their rights and won? What was the impact?
- 3. Just as history develops, so does language. What do you think is the reason for having older or 'outdated' language in an exhibition?

PDHPE

1. What do you think is the impact on someone's wellbeing if they are not able to live as their authentic selves?

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

- 1. Imagine you are a researcher like Roberta Perkins. Find something in this exhibition that you would like to have a deeper understanding of and take notes to report back to the wider group.
- 2. Roberta Perkins left behind a profound legacy. What sort of legacy do you want to leave behind? How do you want to be remembered?

Location: Becoming

3. In October 1982, the first transgender protest took place in Australia, where members of the transgender community sought to challenge a judgement made by a magistrate. What was the societal impact of this protest? Some information can be found in the exhibition, but we also encourage you to discuss your own ideas about potential impacts.

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY STUDIES

- 1. What does a community leader look like to you?
- 2. In response to challenges faced by Roberta's community, a number of community groups stepped up to provide support. Can you find the names of some in this exhibition?
- 3. What is something you would like to change in your community? How would you start to incite that change?

Location: First Activists

Note: This story features the name and image of a deceased First Nations person

Malcolm Cole's early life began in the small community of Ayr in Far North Queensland in 1949. He and his twin brother Robert were very close from a young age, often playing tricks on people due to their identical appearance. Their childhood was marked by a strong religious upbringing, as their family was deeply involved with the church.

Being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, South Sea Islander, and gay was challenging during that time, which eventually led Malcolm to move to Sydney with his brother. In Sydney, Malcolm discovered his love for dance. He toured with the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre and was involved in teaching dance in schools across Sydney. His dedication to dance and his community led him to co-host "Blackout" on ABC TV with Lillian Crombie in 1989, a show that focused on the First Nations community in Australia.

While it is now a tradition for the First Nations float to lead the Sydney Mardi Gras parade, it wasn't always the case. In 1988, during a year of Bicentennial celebrations and national debate Malcolm led the first ever Australian first nation's float in the parade's history.

Location: First Activists

The float was a satirical take on the arrival of the First Fleet, with Malcolm Cole dressed as Captain James Cook. This portrayal was particularly poignant against the backdrop of Australia's bicentenary celebrations, which marked the 200th anniversary of the First Fleet's arrival at Botany Bay. The float featured a tall ship, was named 'The Aboriginal Boat' and saw Cole and his seamen re-enact the arrival of the First Fleet, it was pulled by a group of white people, symbolizing the reversal of roles and highlighting the impact of colonialism on Indigenous peoples

As described by J. Stapleton in the Sydney Morning Herald at the time, the float depicted "the tall, striking figure of dancer, Malcolm Cole, dressed as Captain Cook with a black Sir Joseph Banks and two black sailors beside him in a boat pulled by a white man." "It is enough trouble being black, let alone gay," Cole told the publication. "That is why I am determined to put this float in the Mardi Gras." Malcolm's portrayal of Captain Cook was a form of protest and a way to bring attention to the history and ongoing struggles of Indigenous Australians. It was a bold and creative expression that resonated with many and remains a memorable moment in the history of the Sydney Mardi Gras.

Location: First Activists

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

HISTORY

- 1. What is the historical significance of Macolm Cole dressing as Captain Cook during the Mardi Gras Parade?
- 2. Can you think of another moment in history when someone has represented themselves in an unexpected way?
- 3. Malcolm Cole was an activist, and used his art to advocate for his community. What does activism look like to you? How would you advocate for your community?

PDHPE

1. How does seeing yourself represented impact your wellbeing? How would you feel if you were watching the Parade and your community wasn't invited to participate?

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

- 1. What is the significance of including a First Nations float in the Mardi Gras Parade for the first time?
- 2. What is the cultural impact of Malcolm's choice to dress up as Captain Cook during Mardi Gras?
- 3. What do you think inspired the decision to have the First Nations float lead the Mardi Gras Parade?

Location: First Activists

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY STUDIES

- 1. When looking at the range of voices from within First Nations communities, it is important to consider the way different communities connect with one another. Can you find an example in this exhibition of First Nations artists or activists communicating something in an alternative way?
- 2. What are some ways you can welcome a new group into your own community? What would you do to make sure they feel represented?
- 3. For many LGBTQIA+ people, the family dynamic is made up of something called a chosen family the people around us that feel like home, whether or not they are related. What does your chosen family look like?



Location: Crime to Freedom

The 20th century in Australia witnessed significant changes in attitudes and legal frameworks related to LGBTQIA+ rights. Male homosexuality was initially prosecuted as a criminal act in every jurisdiction of the newly federated Commonwealth. However, over the last 30 years of the century, those laws were gradually consigned to history. While the law explicitly criminalized male homosexuality, all members of the LGBTQIA+ communities endured discrimination and persecution. Despite the unjust legal framework, some LGBTQIA+ Australians managed to avoid criminal prosecution and gain acceptance within their communities.

Some key figures—both lawyers and politicians—who played pivotal roles in LGBTQIA+ law reform in Australia:

- Don Dunstan and Peter Duncan: Were instrumental in decriminalizing male homosexuality in South Australia. On September 17, 1975, South Australia became the first state in Australia to take this significant step, marking a turning point in LGBTQIA+ rights.
- Michael Kirby: The Honorable Michael Kirby, a former High Court Justice, has been a tireless advocate for LGBTQIA+ rights.
- Dr. Bob Brown: Bob Brown, an openly gay individual, became a
 member of the Tasmanian Parliament in 1983. Despite Tasmania being
 the last remaining state to decriminalize homosexuality, Dr. Brown's
 persistence and advocacy contributed significantly to legal change.

Location: Crime to Freedom

 Carmen Lawrence: As the Premier of Western Australia, Carmen Lawrence led the Labor government that removed consenting homosexual activity from the criminal code in December 1989. The law passed in March 1990, marking a critical milestone in LGBTQIA+ rights in Western Australia.

These individuals, along with many others, have left indelible marks on Australia's LGBTQIA+ history, championing equality, acceptance, and legal reform.



Location: Crime to Freedom

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

HISTORY

- 1. List with dates some of the community actions that led to legislation change in NSW.
- 2. Name three community organisations that arise to challenge the legal inequalities.
- 3. Name some of the other advocates that fought for change? What were their actions?

PDHPE

- 1. Being open and authentic is something that we encourage and promote today but this was not always the case. Why is it important to be able to be open and authentic?
- 2. Being an advocate can be risky What risks might be involved?

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

- 1. What are some of the characteristics that someone fighting for change needs?
- 2. What is a social issue or inequality that you are aware of? What steps could you take to effect change?
- 3. Why do you think it took Australia so long to achieve marriage equality in comparison to other countries?

Location: Crime to Freedom

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY STUDIES

- 1. What are some of the important pieces of legislation that exist to protect everybody human rights?
- 2. Why do you think it took Australia so long to achieve marriage equality in comparison to other countries?



Rainbow Shoelace **Project**

When Abbie Kelly started making up little packs of rainbow beads for LGBT kids and their friends to thread on their shoelaces in Broken Hill, she had no idea the idea would catch the imagination of people the world over.

The idea came to Abbie when she was worried about wearing Pride flag-coloured beads on her converse to high school, as she was worried that she would be bullied. Abbie felt scared and alone. Abbie realised that other queer kids might be feeling the same way and decided that it would be great for a queer kid to feel that they are supported by seeing their peers wearing Pride flag-coloured beads.

"I identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community and [when I first started school] it felt like there was no-one else like me," she said. "I eventually found out I had friends and peers feeling that way too, so I decided, why not start something that can help people?"

Coming out and exploring your queer identity can be daunting for any young person, and living in an isolated community, more than 600 kilometres from any capital city, can add to the sense of isolation. Abbie says the beads are a small way to offer support.

Rainbow Shoelace **Project**

"Since starting this project I feel so much more comfortable with who I am as a person." The project has quickly grown since its launch in March 2022, thanks to social media.

"When we started, we were giving away a hundred packs of beads a week in Broken Hill alone," Abbie said. "Now, we have given away over 55,000 packs of beads in Australia, and we're going global."



What is a Legacy Gift?

If your legacy is what you leave behind, a legacy gift is what you can leave behind for others. Students are invited to package rainbow beads so that Abbie's message of inclusivity can be shared with schools around Australia.

After learning about the importance of community, students will have the chance to put these learnings into action by packaging these beads to ensure that other schools will be encouraged to celebrate diversity and inclusivity every day.

From the pioneers explored in their case studies to the guest speakers that share their own stories of connection and community, students are encouraged to consider their own legacy, and what they wish to leave behind for others.

Students will package one for themselves to take back home with them, one for someone they know who would benefit from this gift, and as many as they can to be sent to other schools.



Guest **Speakers**

Note: this is a list of guest speakers that may be provided to speak to your group on the day. Specific guest speakers will be subject to availability.

All guest speakers will discuss their personal journey of discovering their identity, connecting with their community, and the importance of being an ally to those who need it.

IAN ROBERTS

lan Roberts was the best-paid player in the brutal world of Australian rugby league - but it took years for him to make the biggest and bravest play of his life. Roberts came out as gay in 1994 and continued to play top tier club football until his retirement in 1998.

JEREMY SMITH

A survivor of conversion therapy and one of the lead advocates for a nationwide ban on the practice, Jeremy is an accomplished artist who uses his art to map out his world.

GREG FISHER

The journey from jail cell to CEO is not easy, but Greg Fisher had a dream to create the largest centre for Queer History and Culture in the world.

Greg shares how vital community is when you want to make change – whether it's personal change, or on a much grander scale.

Guest **Speakers**

STEVE SPENCER

Steve Spencer is a passionate and prominent advocate within Sydney's LGBTQIA+ community. His collaborative and multi-disciplinary approach to community-building and addressing inequities has spanned a variety of important areas. As a bisexual man living with HIV, Spencer brings his lived experiences together with his broad connections across community, health, government, research and business to create positive impacts.

HANNAH MALARSKI

Hannah knew who she was from an early age, and resigned herself to believing that she would never be able to live as her true self. An award-winning NIDA playwriting graduate, Hannah uses her art to reflect on the joys of living authentically.

ROSIE NIVEN

A theatre maker and youth counsellor, Rosie struggled for years to find the language to describe who she truly was, and the community that would help her to do so. Rosie is an advocate for creative expression as a form of therapy, and uses her work as a Director to highlight the importance of uplifting marginalised voices.