

PRIDEFEST LAUNCH SPEECH: Male Co-President 2012 – Paul van Lieshout Hunt

Good evening, ladies, gentlemen, members of the press...distinguished guests all.

I'd quickly like to also acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, of elders past and present.

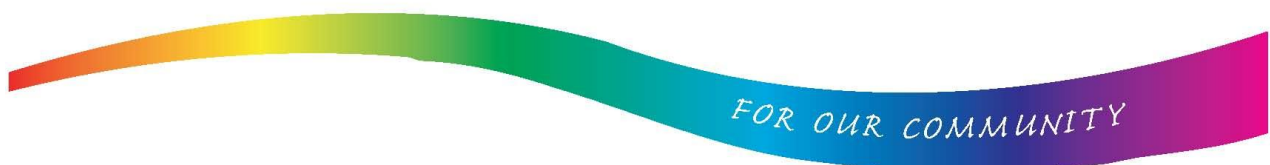
Welcome, to the launch and the birth of a brand new festival.

Pride WA, an organisation that has existed for twenty-three years. A long time for any organisation...there've been some amazing festivals, some fantastic events and many memories made.

However, not everything was as fabulous as it seemed. Being a volunteer based organisation, running a volunteer based festival, with limited resources is hard enough...but when the organisation is severely under-developed, in a city where arts' funding is scarce, it makes the management and direction of the festival a nightmare.

The burnout rate of Board Members or Committee Members meant that knowledge wasn't properly passed on; much of the history of Pride is gone forever. Because of this, Pride WA has never moved forward, never taken the opportunities to grow, develop or change. One might say...Pride missed the boat. For a very long time I feel Pride lost its way. If you look at the very constitution, on which the festival bases itself...the very mission of the organisation wasn't being upheld for quite some time. I promise you a festival that will base itself on those values and that mission.

Our mission is to; encourage the cultural expression and celebrate, champion and support the rights and the freedoms of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other sexually and gender diverse people living in Western Australia.



2012...is an opportunity. We're running the entire organisation and festival in a different format. There are many changes. Most notably, the very name of the festival has been changed. What was "Pride Month" has now evolved into PRIDEFEST. A festival of light. A festival of energy, love, compassion, freedom, a festival to inspire acceptance, a time to remember, a cause for equality, a festival of creativity and arts...and awesome events and activities.

The changes also include paid staff. With a modest increase in funding we hope to bring a highly qualified consultant into the arena to help grow the festival and make sure it reaches its potential. For those of you who don't know Marija, I'm sure you'll get the chance.

With the birth of the new festival, I hope members; past, present, future will support the future of PRIDEFEST.

I thank the 2011 and 2012 Committee for bringing new life, opportunity and ideas to the organisation and the festival. The current Committee are working incredibly hard to recognise the potential of PRIDEFEST. This festival, can and will be, one of WA's premier festivals.

PRIDEFEST isn't just a series of events that we call a festival. It is an opportunity, a chance...to learn more about your community...a chance to build relationships...and grow. It is a chance to have your say, a chance to define yourself, a chance to show your love.

So I invite you, all, members of Pride WA, supporters of the LGBTI community to come forth this October-November and celebrate, champion and support our Pride Community through this fantastic festival.

To PRIDEFEST .

