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HOMEcomings 2009 The 20th Annual Pride Festival

The 2008 Pride Committee has taken the unusual step of choosing a theme for the following year prior to the announcement of a new committee. Continuing the momentum of a very successful year, the new theme is part of a grand plan to capitalise on the successful reinvention of the brand, and create a 20th Annual Festival bigger than any WA has seen in more than a decade.

The 2009 theme is **HOMEcomings**.

With a focus on tradition and commemoration, it is hoped this theme will not only draw many Perth expats back home, but will also provide some strong family entertainment on Northbridge's biggest night of the year.

According to Wikipedia, Homecoming refers to the "*welcoming back of former residents and alumni and, is a tradition in several universities, colleges and high schools in North America. It usually includes activities for students and alumni, such as sports and culture events and a parade through the streets of the city or town.*"

"This theme gives us many opportunities to celebrate our past, inviting many of the people who have contributed to the Pride community over 19 festivals to return and help us celebrate how far we've come" says Kieran Bycroft, 2008 Festival Coordinator.

"Also, Perth has a high emigration rate. Many people who are born and grow up in Perth fly the coup, leaving for bigger cities around the world. This is particularly evident within Perth's GLBT community.

"Homecoming is our invitation to those who have chosen to leave Perth to return for the 20th Annual Pride Festival".

There are several elements to the Homecoming tradition that will be applied to the festival and its preceding events in 2009. These include the Homecoming Parade, Homecoming Dance, Homecoming Court and, of course, the Homecoming King & Queen.

The Homecoming King & Queen are chosen from the Homecoming Court – the first element of this ambitious theme. The Homecoming Court usually consists of seniors in high school or college. Classmates traditionally nominate students who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to contribute to their school.

Pride WA's Homecoming Court will be chosen by public vote, with anyone able to be nominated.

"The political climate for GLBT Western Australians has changed considerably over the past two decades" says 2008 Pride Co-President Sharlene Dixon.

"The Homecoming theme provides us with an avenue to celebrate the hard work and contributions of the many people who have been a part of this family throughout this journey."

Pride WA particularly hopes to locate members of the 300 plus crowd that rallied Parliament House on October 22, 1989, the event that prompted the birth of the organisation the following year.

Once the Homecoming Court candidates are announced, the entire student body votes for the Queen and King by secret ballot.

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Pride WA Inc. aims to encourage the cultural expression and celebrate, champion and support the rights and freedoms of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other same sex attracted people living in Western Australia.

“This will be the most fun part” says Pride Co-President Andrew Baietta.

“Pride WA does not see gender as an issue here. We cannot wait to see who wins what!”

Nominations for the Homecoming Court will commence at our Quiz Night on Friday 27th February, 2009. Nominations will be tallied and The Homecoming Court will be announced at the Annual Quiz Night mid-year. Voting will then commence for the Homecoming King & Queen.

The Homecoming King & Queen will be announced at the Homecoming Festival Launch, and will feature prominently throughout the festival, as well as head the “Homecoming” Parade – the 20th Annual Pride Parade.

The traditional nature of the theme and its festival-closing parade is hoped to bring even more spectators than last year’s Reinvention of the event.

“Over the years, Pride WA has moved to make the Annual Pride Parade – Northbridge’s biggest night – a family event” says 2008 Parade Convenor, Charles Denham.

“Pride’s Homecoming Parade will have all the elements of a traditional homecoming, providing entertainment for the entire family”.

The parade will again celebrate the Homecoming Court, with the King & Queen having their own float. Pride WA will also be searching throughout the year for a marching band – as well as marching boys and girls – from within the GLBT community and beyond.

Mr Denham sees the theme, as well as its early announcement, as a positive step toward encouraging tourism and parade participation – something that has lacked in recent years.

“People and organisations will have ample time to organise their floats this year, and this theme will hopefully encourage even more creativity than 2008” he says.

The 2009 Pride WA Homecoming Festival will run from
Sunday 26 September to Saturday 31 October 2009.

The 2009 theme will be officially launched at tonight’s Pride WA Summer Quiz Night
Italian Club, 217 Fitzgerald Street, North Perth

For further information on Pride WA Inc. contact Kieran Bycroft at media@pridewa.asn.au
Or visit our new site at www.pridewa.asn.au