



# The Inaugural Same Same 25 Announced Last Night

*Australia's 25 most influential gay and lesbians*

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Press  
Release

A member of the Sound Alliance Group

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*A Judge, A Cowboy and A Pop Singer walk into an Art Gallery...*

In an Australian first, national gay and lesbian website **SameSame.com.au** announced the 25 Most Influential Gay & Lesbian Australians at an event held at the Art Gallery of NSW last night. What have been nicknamed 'the Gaylies', the list included the likes of pop singer Darren Hayes, musical theatre star iOTA and one of the greatest sportswomen that Australia has produced, Hockeyroo Alyson Annan.

The event saw an honest and at times emotional speech from modern day cowboy Adam Sutton that had the crowd including Senior Sergeant Joy Murphy of Victoria Police, Justice of the High Court of Australia Michael Kirby, Malcolm and Lucy Turnbull and photographer William Yang silent and transfixed for ten minutes. Co-founder of Same Same, Tim Duggan says: "A list like this has been a long time coming. Australia is now at a stage where we see gay and lesbian people having a huge amount of influence in lots of different fields. The Same Same 25 is a fascinatingly diverse list of people from all walks of life with one thing in common – they exert a large influence over their chosen profession."

The 25 were publicly nominated over the course of four weeks, driven through the [samesame.com.au](http://samesame.com.au) website and supported by a national media campaign. Hundreds of nominations were received, sifted through and considered by the eight selected judges, one of which is TV personality Andrew Mercado who also hosted last night's event. "It's a real honour to be involved with the Same Same 25," says Andrew. "I think it's really important to have positive gay role models out there. It's also important for straight people to see gay people excelling in their fields. And of course, it's great for young gay people out there to have something to aspire to."

All the members of the 25 are unanimously thrilled at being on the list. It's a diverse list, a list covering a broad range of ages, locations and fields of endeavour. There are some names people will already know, some others that they won't but will now – and it's sure to spark plenty of debate.

## **The 25 Most Influential Gay & Lesbian Australians are** *(in alphabetical order)*

- **Alyson Annan.** One of the greatest sportswomen that Australia has produced, Annan is often referred to as the best hockey player in the world. She currently lives in Holland where she just gave birth to her first child with her wife and former rival, the Captain of the Dutch hockey team.
- **Neil Armfield.** The Artistic Director of Company B at the Belvoir Street Theatre since its inception, which has consistently produced ground-breaking work and fostered the talent of many of our current leading actors.
- **Andrew Benson.** As a proudly gay school teacher and the performer Aunty Mavis, Benson has had a large influence over his community and the lives of many students coming to terms with their sexuality.
- **David Berthold.** Theatre director and mentor to many rising talents of the stage, Berthold has most recently been responsible for bringing the irrepressible 'Holding The Man' to countless standing ovations and three sold-out seasons.
- **Bob Brown.** The leader of The Greens is a strong campaigner for same-sex equality and proudly lives his life in the public eye and the Australian parliament.
- **Graeme Browning.** Known for being both the Creative Director of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, as well as the drag performer Mitzi MacIntosh, Browning is an inspirational example of a community advocate, fundraiser and leader.
- **Stevie Clayton.** As the CEO of ACON she walks a fine line, managing one of the largest community organisations in the country and providing invaluable services to the community for which it is responsible.
- **Glyn Cryer.** The Chair of Melbourne's Midsumma has led the Festival through three successful years as one of the cultural highlights on the Australian calendar.
- **Vicki Harding.** Well known as one of the lesbian mums from Playschool and the author of the "Learn To Include" children's books. This lesbian activist, her partner and her daughter have become positive role models of gay parenting in Australia, spreading the message of equality far and wide.
- **Darren Hayes.** The former lead singer of Savage Garden is using his celebrity to help push the gay and lesbian cause, proudly marrying his boyfriend in London and telling John Howard exactly where he can shove his lack of recognition for gay marriage in his home country.



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- **iOTA.** This hard working performer has recently blossomed into one of our finest musical theatre stars. With his rare talent, this commanding performer and rockstar has moved from 'Hedwig and the Angry Inch' to Graeme Murphy's 'Berlin' and soon will be the new star of the 'Rocky Horror Picture Show'.
- **Ghassan Kassisieh.** The youngest member of the Same Same 25 is the spokesman for the Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby and at a young age has amassed an enviable fountain of knowledge. He is one to watch out for over the coming years as he lobbies for equality in all walks of gay and lesbian life.
- **Justice Michael Kirby.** Justice of the High Court of Australia. There are few who would dispute the influence of one of the highest judicial representatives in the country. Justice Kirby has been a vocal opponent of the discrimination against same-sex couples and is an important ally to every gay and lesbian in Australia.
- **Bevan Lee.** The Head of Creative Drama and Development at the Seven Network has been wholly or partly responsible for many of the greatest Australian drama shows over the past few decades. From 'Home and Away' to 'Blue Heelers' and 'Always Greener', Lee has an eye and knowledge of what Australia wants to see, and has managed to slip important gay messages into mainstream Australian television.
- **David Marr.** Journalist, author and TV host, Marr has had a wide and diverse career. From his current job as feature writer for the Sydney Morning Herald, to biographies on famous Australians like Patrick White and hosting Media Watch during the cash-for-comment scandal, Marr has always combined influence with intelligence.
- **Jenni Millbank.** The UTS Law Lecturer is currently on sabbatical in Italy, and is responsible for authoring many of the influential reports that are used as the basis for law reform. Millbank most recently authored the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission report that was recently tabled and debated in parliament.
- **Tom McFeely.** The owner of the venue The Peel in Melbourne has been a welcome voice in the mainstream media. Most notably, McFeely took a controversial and important stance on preserving gay spaces that reverberated all around the world.
- **Joy Murphy.** Senior Sergeant Joy Murphy of Victoria Police was recently named the Most Outstanding Female Leader by the Australasian Council of Women in Policing. Her work in establishing the Gay and Lesbian Police Employee Network has been instrumental to members of the Australian police force.
- **David Page.** The actor and composer and integral member of the Bangarra Dance Theatre has received four Deadly awards, an ARIA nomination, was given the first Indigenous Artist Award for The Sidney Myer Foundation in 2000 and continues to advance both indigenous and gay causes in his highly respected work.
- **Adam Sutton.** This modern day cowboy has helped raise the profile of rural Australia, as well as breaking stereotypes wherever he goes. The subject of many features, most notably ABC's 'Australian Story', his biography 'Say It Out Loud' has helped give a voice and hope to countless people all over the country.
- **Anthony Venn-Brown.** A former preacher with the Assemblies of God church, Venn-Brown has dedicated his life to bridging the gap between those inside the church and their stance on homosexuality. His autobiography 'A Life Of Unlearning' has helped many people in situations similar to his own.
- **Brian Walsh.** The Executive Director of Television and Marketing at Foxtel is one of the highest ranking people in Australian television. Having been with Foxtel from the very beginning, Walsh has had a huge influence in directing one of Australia's most high-profile corporations.
- **Penny Wong.** Wong has been a member of the Labor Party representing South Australia in the Senate since 2002. She was the first openly lesbian and first Asian-born female member of the senate and has been a vocal critic of John Howard's ban on same-sex unions.
- **Dr. Ron Woods.** Dr Woods is widely regarded as one of Australia's leading market economists, and is well known for being ahead of the curve in assessing the direction of the economy. He was recently the head of investment strategy at Challenger and is highly influential in the world of finance.
- **William Yang.** As a social essayist and photographer, Yang has been one of the most instrumental documenters of Australian life over the past few decades. His widely praised, internationally renowned slideshows and exhibitions are fine examples of his influence in documenting the social fabric of Australia as it has matured and changed.

Photos and profiles on the Same Same 25 are viewable at [www.samesame.com.au/25](http://www.samesame.com.au/25)

To interview co-founder of SameSame.com.au Tim Duggan & members of the 2007 Same Same 25 please contact PR & Communications Manager for Sound Alliance - Jay Hemsworth on **Tel:** 612 2 9282 4026 - **Mob:** 0404 398 512 - **Email:** [jay@thesoundalliance.net](mailto:jay@thesoundalliance.net)