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When the glitter settles: safety and hostility at and around gay and lesbian public events

Stephen Tomsen
Kevin Markwell

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GPO Box 2944

Canberra ACT 2601

Tel: (02) 6260 9200

Fax: (02) 6260 9299

Email: front.desk@aic.gov.au

Website: <http://www.aic.gov.au>

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Foreword

Organisers indicate they consider public events such as the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras to be safe. However, the visual displays of sexuality which characterise this event have been found to be a cause of hostility towards lesbians and gay men. This report found that forty percent of participants at such events reported witnessing some form of hostility, but only a small number of incidents are reported to police. Those incidents that are officially recorded are likely to be the more serious forms of violence which in effect results in an underestimation of the extent of the hostility participants witness and are subject to.

Views about the prevalence of hostility towards gay men and lesbians in different locations have a close relationship to their perceptions of personal and collective safety. This report details how gay men and lesbians deliberately engage in certain strategies in order to reduce the chance of unwanted and hostile attention during different stages of large-scale public events.

The amount of violence at night-time leisure events has historically been variable and responsive to policing techniques and event planning and organisation. While participants are more concerned with personal safety, event organisers view safety issues on a whole-of-crowd level. These viewpoints should not be seen as mutually exclusive and although event planning and policing have done

much to reduce serious violence during large-scale events, there is room for direct consideration of the concerns and suggestions of event participants, as raised in this report.

Management strategies for safety at public events have not previously been linked to specific analysis of gay and lesbian events and participants' perceptions of safety. In order to obtain a national perspective, an internet-based questionnaire survey was set up that sought information concerning gay and lesbian participants' perceptions of safety and experiences of hostility, threats and violence before, during and after large scale events. Based on responses from 332 people, the survey suggests people feel most at risk travelling to and from the event, and more than 80 percent blamed the negative effects of alcohol and drugs.

This report seeks to assist and inform violence-prevention policies for large-scale events. It explores how public celebrations accommodate the tension of visible sexual diversity with the ideals of a carnival atmosphere and examines factors which can enable containment or reduction of intolerance, disorder and violence.

Judy Putt
General Manager, Research
Australian Institute of Criminology

Contents

| | |
|-----|---|
| iii | Foreword |
| vii | Acknowledgements |
| vii | Glossary |
| vii | Abbreviations |
| ix | Executive summary |
| 1 | Introduction |
| 3 | Rationale, aims and process |
| 4 | The research process |
| 6 | The survey |
| 7 | Key findings of the survey |
| 7 | Demographics |
| 9 | Attendance at events |
| 12 | Aspects of events that are attractive |
| 14 | Behaviour during events |
| 14 | Opinions on event crowds |
| 15 | Perceptions of safety at events |
| 17 | Strategies to reduce incidence of unwanted attention |
| 19 | Incidents of abuse and violence witnessed and experienced |
| 22 | Organisers' perceptions of safety |
| 24 | Discussion and conclusions |
| 26 | References |
| 28 | Appendixes |
| 29 | Appendix A: Organisations contacted |
| 31 | Appendix B: Questionnaire responses, section A |
| 32 | Appendix C: Questionnaire responses, section B |
| 34 | Appendix D: Questionnaire responses, section C |
| 36 | Appendix E: Questionnaire responses, section D |

Figures

| | |
|----|---|
| 7 | Figure 1: Respondents in each gender category |
| 8 | Figure 2: Respondents in each sexual identity category |
| 8 | Figure 3: Respondents in each age group |
| 9 | Figure 4: Respondents in each highest education category |
| 9 | Figure 5: Attendance at given events |
| 10 | Figure 6: Travel to events |
| 11 | Figure 7: Respondents' attraction to given aspects of events |
| 11 | Figure 8: Relative frequency of events avoided for reasons of safety and comfort |
| 13 | Figure 9: Relative frequency of reasons for avoiding events |
| 13 | Figure 10: Respondents attracted to given aspects of the Mardi Gras |
| 14 | Figure 11: Respondents who participated in risky behaviours |
| 15 | Figure 12: Respondents' opinions on events' ratios of heterosexual men and women |
| 15 | Figure 13: Respondents' opinions on events' ratios of gay men, lesbians, transgenders and bisexuals |
| 16 | Figure 14: Respondents perceiving themselves as being safe at different stages of events |
| 16 | Figure 15: Relative frequency of given strategies |
| 18 | Figure 16: Events' relative frequency of witness reports of hostile incidents |
| 18 | Figure 17: Perpetrator–recipient relationships in witnessed hostile incidents |
| 20 | Figure 18: Relative frequency of notable witnessed hostile incidents |

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|
| 21 | Figure 19: Event distribution of hostile incident experienced | 33 | Figure 24: Relative frequency of respondents' reasons for avoiding GLBT dance parties or events |
| 21 | Figure 20: Relative frequency of hostile incident experienced | 34 | Figure 25: Relative frequency of respondents' reasons for avoiding all large public events |
| 23 | Figure 21: Relative frequency of reasons given for having been targeted with hostility or violence | 34 | Figure 26: Respondents' opinions on the functioning of the Mardi Gras |
| 23 | Figure 22: Respondents choosing factors as important in creating conflict and rowdy behaviour | 35 | Figure 27: Respondents' opinions on the functioning of other GLBT events |
| 33 | Figure 23: Relative frequency of respondents' reasons for avoiding the Sydney Mardi Gras | | |

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Glossary

heterosexual area: physical space at an event that is predominantly occupied by heterosexual people

homophobia: a term originally meant to define an irrational fear of homosexuals that has been broadened in meaning to cover wider expressions of anti-homosexual hostility, bias and prejudice

intersex: individuals having genetic, hormonal and/or physical features that may be thought to be typical of both males and females.

transgender: a self-description assumed by people refusing orthodox masculine/feminine categories of identity

pride march: a political march or rally in support of homosexual rights and usually with a celebratory aspect

queer: an open or undefined sexual identity that is assumed by people rejecting classification within the conventional homosexual/heterosexual distinction

Abbreviations

GLBT: gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual

SGLMG: Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras

Executive summary

This report explores aspects of safety and hostility as perceived and experienced by participants at large-scale gay and lesbian events held in Australia. These public celebrations have considerable economic, social and cultural benefits, and they contribute significantly to a cosmopolitan image of the cities in which they are held. In particular, the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (SGLMG) is known internationally as a major festival and attracts substantial numbers of both domestic and inbound tourists. The report examines the results of an internet-based questionnaire survey that sought information concerning participants' perceptions and experiences of hostility, threats, and violence before, during, and after these events. Event organisers, police, and public officials involved in planning and regulation generally stress the order and goodwill of these occasions. Nevertheless, this study suggests that:

- There is a steady undercurrent of hostility, abuse and unreported violent attacks at these events, particularly in the aftermath of the SGLMG parade.
- Survey participants felt notably unsafe or threatened in relation to post-event interactions at the SGLMG parade.
- Hostility, abuse and attacks reflect sexual prejudice as well as the more general safety issues of large night-time events: mass discomfort, collective intoxication, drug use, late-night transport, and finding an optimal degree of crowd supervision and surveillance.
- Although event planning and policing have done much to reduce serious violence in the immediate context of the event, there is room for further direct consideration of the concerns and suggestions of event participants of the sort that are raised in this report.



Introduction

In recent decades, matters of order and crowd safety at public events have become a focus of innovative planning and management strategies by public officials, event managers, police, and community-based organisations that emphasise cooperative regulation (Abbott & Abbott 2000; Durrheim & Foster 1999; Getz 2005). Yet these strategies have not yet been linked to or drawn knowledge from the specific analysis of gay and lesbian events and participants' perceptions of safety. Such events have become more public and grand in scale and are widening in number, and, despite a national history of legal and cultural censure of overt homosexuality, the trend has been very pronounced in Australia (Willett 1997). Like many other public 'special events', large-scale gay and lesbian celebrations are a form of collective public display characterised by temporary disorder and suspension of normative values and practices among crowds. These events now include street parades that involve visible, explicit, unconventional displays of sexuality, with many elements associated with 'carnival', including spectacle, parody, and social transgression (Johnston 2005; Waitt & Markwell 2006).

These celebrations are public occasions that in a spectacular way celebrate alternative sexualities and gender identities. The atmosphere created at such events allows many gay men and lesbians to

collectively display their sexuality in contexts that would be likely to attract public condemnation, ridicule or abuse in other circumstances. Whereas hostility and resentment might be the everyday response to overt displays of transgressive sexuality, a temporary suspension of social norms at these events may even mean some suspension of sexual prejudice. Research now recognises sexual identity as a dynamic and situational phenomenon. In turn, this suggests that reactions to such sexualities might also be highly variable. Nevertheless, in mixed social settings that include large crowds and heavy drinking, this may have quite uncertain outcomes in different groups' experience of safety and hostility. Collective norm suspension has been used to explain problems of law-breaking behaviour and disorder in a range of contemporary leisure situations (Presdee 2000).

In the Australian context, SGLMG attracts much interest through the staging of the annual parade, which attracted crowds, mostly heterosexual, estimated between 400,000 and 600,000 in the early to mid 1990s (Carbery 1995) and 450,000 in 2005 (Gould 2005). Debates regarding the cultural and social significance of such events continue, with commentators discussing whether participation in or televised viewing of public events can substantially reduce community prejudice (Haire 2001: 97–111). Previous research has largely framed harassment

and hostility as being due to a relatively fixed set of individual attitudes, and has ignored the situational nature of reactions to such public displays of sexuality. This report provides a broad perspective on whether hostility is wholly or partially suspended at different public events, and on the scale and extent of violent incidents that do occur. It examines the results of an internet-based questionnaire survey that sought information concerning gay, lesbian and queer participants' perceptions and experiences of hostility, threats, and violence before, during, and after these events. Open and closed questions focused on respondents' participation in events, perceptions of safety, fear of violence, actual experiences of hostility and violence during event stages, and on comparisons with the same matters in other contexts.

The report is structured in the following way:

- **Project rationale, aims and process:** the rationale of the project was to better understand issues of violence related to prejudice and to more broadly contribute to understanding of successful management practices of large public events.
- **The survey, key findings, and discussion:** this section of the report focuses on the findings of the survey, drawing out respondents' participation in events, perceptions of safety, and actual experiences of hostility and violence at different times and places during large-scale events, providing a broad perspective on whether hostility is extensive at different public events and on the scale and extent of incidents that do occur.



Rationale, aims and process

Public gay and lesbian celebratory events have a major economic and social benefit. An evaluation of the 1998 SGLMG estimated that the event injected \$99m into the city's economy and made a net addition of more than \$41m nationally (Marsh & Levy 1998). An estimated 5,190 international and 7,341 interstate visitors attended that year. Notwithstanding this economic benefit, these events have all the ingredients of a serious law and order problem. Such ingredients include a rule-breaking atmosphere, large crowds (more than 600,000 in peak years in Sydney) that include young heterosexual men who may not be sympathetic to transgressive sexualities, and common alcohol consumption. Visible displays of sexuality are cited by researchers as regular causes of hostility towards lesbians and gay men (Mason 2001; Stanko & Curry 1997).

Increasingly, human sexuality is understood as a dynamic and fluid form of social practice (Connell & Dowsett 1992; Greenberg 1988). A growing amount of research suggests that sexuality is not a fixed or determined facet of an individual's psyche. But although these fluid understandings have come to dominate cultural studies of sexuality, they have not been applied to studies of harassment and violence. Much existing research is attuned to varieties of individual prejudice but fails to attend to the social and contextual factors that may suspend hostility. This project broadly conceptualised a negative

individual or collective reaction to homosexuality in men and women as homophobia and broadly examined this reaction as it related to negative reactions towards bisexuality and transgender people.

Recent evidence and official reports indicate that sexual prejudice is a widespread problem in Australian society, linked with incidents of serious harassment, discrimination, assault, and homicide (Mason & Tomsen 1997; Plummer 1999; Van de Ven et al. 1998). It has been linked to instances of homelessness, substance abuse, school failure, and suicide among young gay men and lesbians (Mason & Tomsen 1997; Nicholas & Howard 1998). At the same time, the growth and form of public gay and lesbian events now defies conventional thinking about homophobia. Although organisers of such events may typically claim they are virtually problem-free, a detailed study of participants' perceptions of safety has not been previously attempted.

Views about the prevalence of hostility in different locations have a close relationship to perceptions of personal and collective safety by lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people, and shape choices in regard to leisure patterns. Globalised communities and gay and lesbian media generate a high degree of collective knowledge about tolerance and safety in certain places. At the same time,

commercialised subcultures promote a celebratory lifestyle free of traditional geographical constraints. Officials, media, and tourism industries in a variety of urban locations welcome visitors through cosmopolitan imagery and encourage leisure spending in connection with attendance at large gay and lesbian events (Markwell 2002). The current and potential economic benefits of these events in Australia are considerable, yet their continuing success and growth will turn on local participants' and tourists' enjoyment and experience of tolerance and safety. These cannot be guaranteed without informed reflection on the means to contribute to them.

The distinct qualities of these occasions may have given rise to an assumption that their good official safety record has little to offer a general understanding of event management. Such an assumption disregards the major scale and organisational complexity of these events, their operation by minorities with a past history of poor police relations, and the involvement of many young heterosexual participants engaged in heavy drinking. This last feature of public events is generally assumed to have a major relationship to problems with policing, disorder and violence. Thus, this project sought also to elucidate the contextual and social factors that produce successful celebratory event management and crowd control.

The overall aims of the project were:

- to explore how public celebrations accommodate the tension of visible sexual diversity with ideals of carnival in attempts to ensure a safe and ordered event
- to determine the extent and character of expressions of hostility at these celebratory events
- to examine factors that enable containment or suspension of intolerance and the potential for disorder and violence in public celebratory events.

The research process

The overall project involved various fields of information collection: document analysis, participant observation at events, focus groups, and a survey questionnaire. Observations were made by the chief investigators from 2004 to 2007.

The analysis of focus groups is discussed in Tomsen (2008).

The focus of this report is on key findings from the online survey questionnaire entitled 'Safety and hostility at and around gay and lesbian events', on the University of Newcastle website, made accessible between August 2004 and June 2005. The questionnaire was piloted using a sample of 25 people, and adjustments were made to improve readability and to remove ambiguities. Designed to be as user-friendly as possible, it incorporated digital colour photographs in order to enhance appeal, and a simple and straightforward layout in order to maximise the rate and proportion of usable questionnaires returned (Dillman, Tortora & Bowker 1999; Fricker & Schonlau 2002).

A non-probability, convenience strategy was employed in gathering the sample for the survey. Though it is not possible to measure exact prevalence of hostility and violence via a non-random sample, the purpose of the questionnaire was to garner a broad overview of the occurrence of these phenomena at the events studied. Advertisements promoting the questionnaire were placed in wide-ranging media and web outlets (see Appendix A for full details), including:

- Community-based gay and lesbian organisations (n=17) e.g. Bobby Goldsmith Foundation, The Gender Centre
- Relevant government department agencies (n=9) e.g. Victoria Police, New South Wales (NSW) Attorney General's Department
- Online gay and lesbian groups (n=29) e.g. Gaynet
- Yahoo and msn web-based gay and lesbian chat groups (n=45)
- Gay and lesbian magazine advertisements (n=7) e.g. *Blaze* magazine (SA), *Lesbians on the Loose*
- Gay and lesbian event-based organisations (n=5) e.g. FEAST (SA), Mardi Gras (NSW)

Advertising targeted gay and lesbian press in each Australian capital city, and a media release was prepared and distributed to mainstream and gay/lesbian media. This resulted in several radio interviews of the chief investigators and a small amount of editorial coverage in the gay and lesbian press. In addition, 25 online chat groups and email

lists were contacted and given information about the survey to pass on to members. Considerable effort was made to promote the survey throughout Australia in order to obtain a nationwide sample, but ultimately 50 percent of the sample were residents of NSW, and 50 percent of those were based in Sydney.

Pragmatic considerations influenced the use of a web-based survey. The survey was relatively inexpensive to construct and maintain. It was easily promoted throughout Australia to its target population through media and email lists. The returned questionnaires were relatively easy to

transfer data from for quantitative analysis. The study assumed that a large proportion of the target population had access to the internet, but must acknowledge the limitations identified by Dillman, Tortora & Bowker (1999), including variable computer literacy and access to the internet and limitations imposed by connection speeds, computer memory and download times, which may have affected the constituency of the sample and so place constraints on the generalisability of the data.

The survey



A total of 332 people from around Australia participated in the online survey questionnaire. The survey gathered a broad overview of information about respondents' perceptions of safety while participating in or watching events in Australia. Detailed questions concerned the number, form and apparent motive of any hostile or violent incidents that were witnessed or directly experienced. Generally, respondents drew upon their experiences of the following events: SGLMG, Melbourne Midsumma, Perth and Brisbane Pride, and Adelaide Feast (although the SGLMG was the primary event due to the predominance of respondents from NSW and Sydney in particular). Additional questions directed at respondents who had been involved in events in organisational roles asked for their opinions about the causes of conflict and aggression and the most effective strategies to minimise it.

The questionnaire contained 43 separate questions, including multiple option, multi-part, and Likert scale statements as well as a number of open-ended questions. It was organised into five sections:

- **Section A:** Background information on the participant (e.g. age, sexual identity, occupation)
- **Section B:** General questions relating to gay and lesbian events that the participant had attended (e.g. event name, frequency of attendance)
- **Section C:** Questions relating to the event with which the respondent was the most familiar (e.g. attractiveness of event, opinion of event)
- **Section D:** Questions concerning incidents of harassment and physical violence that participants have experienced at any gay and lesbian event (e.g. number of incidents, type of incident)
- **Section E:** Questions for those people who have been involved in the organisation of gay and lesbian events (e.g. opinions on the cause of conflict at events and on how a positive atmosphere is created)

The survey sought a broad perspective on whether hostility is wholly or partially suspended at different public events, and on the scale and seriousness of violent incidents that do occur.

Key findings of the survey

Demographics

This section of the survey sought to place key findings in the context of background information on the participants. Section A compiled the basic demographic data on the participants (detailed in Appendix B). The majority (56%) of the 332 survey respondents were male; 41 percent, female; and three percent, transgender and intersex respondents.

Just over half of the survey respondents identified themselves as gay (either male or female); 30 percent as lesbian; almost eight percent as bisexual; and 4.5 percent as heterosexual (this latter group was excluded from subsequent analysis of survey responses). The survey sample was limited in ethnic diversity, with nearly all respondents identifying themselves as Australian citizens (97%) and most having an Anglo or Australian ethnic background (84%).

Figure 1 Respondents in each gender category (percent)

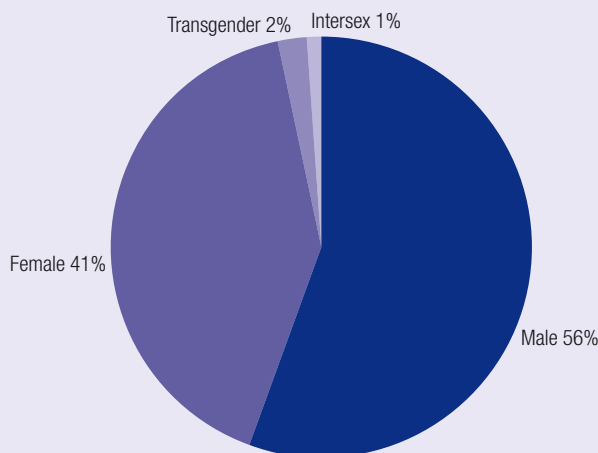


Figure 2 Respondents in each sexual identity category (percent)

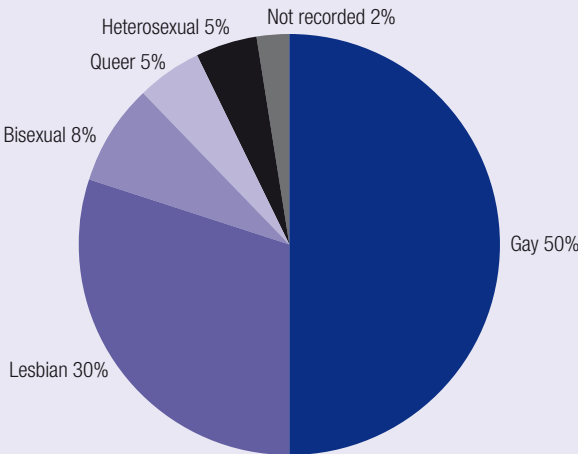
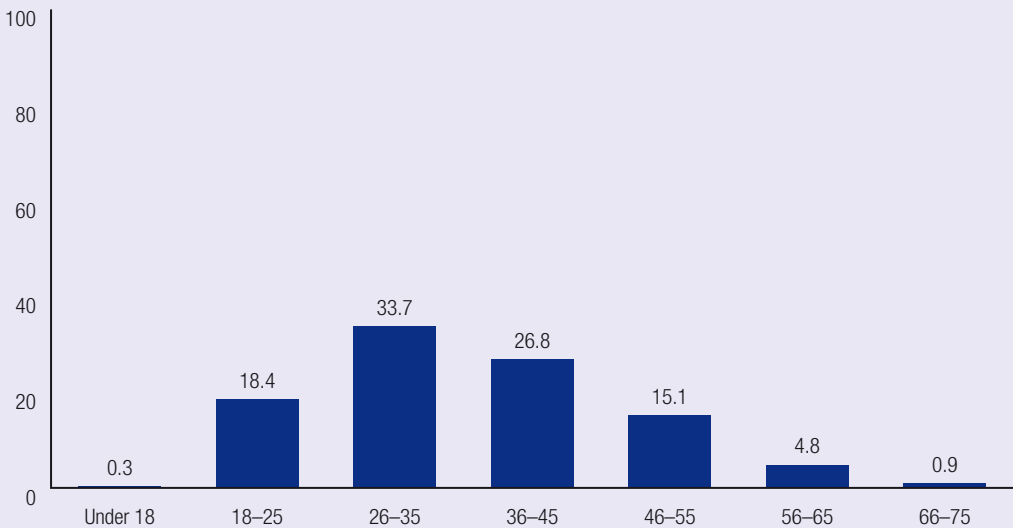


Figure 3 Respondents in each age group (percent)



The participant group largely comprised young, educated, working professionals. Half of the respondents were 26 to 45 years old, and 18 percent were 18 to 25 years old. The sample was well educated, with 40 percent holding a bachelor degree and 27 percent having postgraduate qualifications. Most of the sample were employed (76%), 13 percent were students, and seven percent were pensioners or had retired.

Fifty-four percent were employed in some form of professional or managerial role; 14 percent in customer service/sales/clerical; three percent in trades; and 1.5 percent in manual/blue-collar work. Almost half (49%) of the sample came from New South Wales; a further 15 percent from South Australia; almost equally 10 percent each came from Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland; and five percent came from Tasmania.

Figure 4 Respondents in each highest education category (percent)

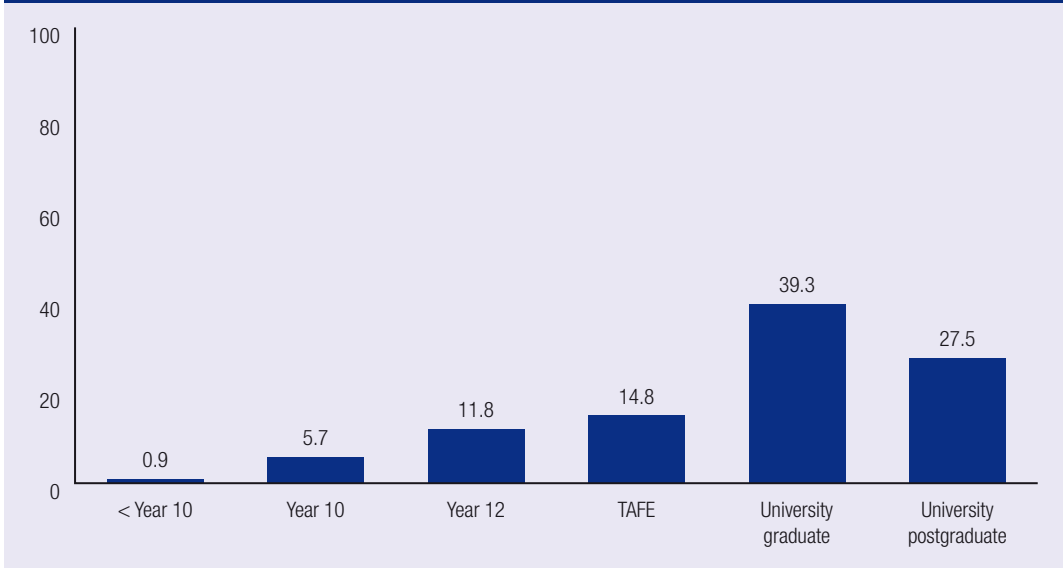
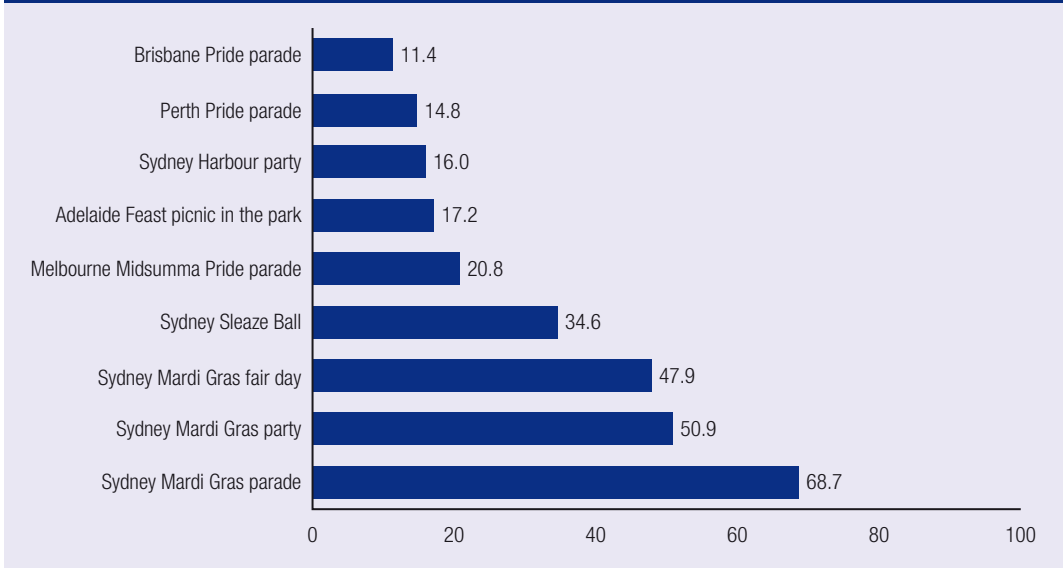


Figure 5 Attendance at given events (percent respondents)



Attendance at events

This section asked participants to respond to a series of questions relating to events that they had attended from a list of the largest and most prominent events in Australia (e.g. SGLMG, Adelaide Feast, Brisbane Pride). The attendance referred to either their participation in, or observation of, events and included each event's various divisions

(e.g. Adelaide Feast Dance Party, Adelaide Feast Picnic in the Park).

Of the 15 events that respondents listed as having attended, those associated with the SGLMG attracted the largest proportions (see Figure 5). This was unsurprising given that half the sample was drawn from NSW and that most respondents were from Sydney. Almost 70 percent of the sample had attended the SGLMG parade, 51 percent had

attended the dance party that follows the parade, and 48 percent had attended Mardi Gras Fair Day. The next most frequently attended events were SGLMG Sleaze Ball (35%), Melbourne's Pride parade (21%), Adelaide's Picnic in the Park (18%), Sydney Harbour Party (16%), and Perth Pride parade (15%).

A rather high level of event mobility also characterised the sample. Many respondents (more than 70%) indicated that they are most likely to travel to events within their own city, but 25 percent indicated that they travelled interstate to attend a gay and lesbian event, and a further 16 percent travelled from their regional residence to the state capital to attend an event. Many respondents identified multiple routes, depending on the event (see Figure 6).

Although arising from international Pride marches, Australian (and Aotearoa/New Zealand) GLBT events appear to largely reconfigure the traditions of protest and resistance that characterise their North American and European counterparts. Mardi Gras, for example, takes place at night, altering the traditional street parade with flamboyance and subversive theatricality, conceived perhaps as performance and entertainment more than as political protest (Johnston 2001; Waitt & Markwell 2006). Indeed, although event organisers continue to stress the political significance and meaning of these

occasions, participants in the survey largely point to the importance of more social- and community-oriented aspects of the occasions. In particular, respondents found the enjoyment or fun of events, the celebration of GLBT culture, the sense of community, and the experiences of a special occasion most attractive, high percentages scoring each of them. The sense of political significance was a less attractive aspect, suggesting that the events are valued more as 'fun' celebrations than as politically motivated events (see Figure 7).

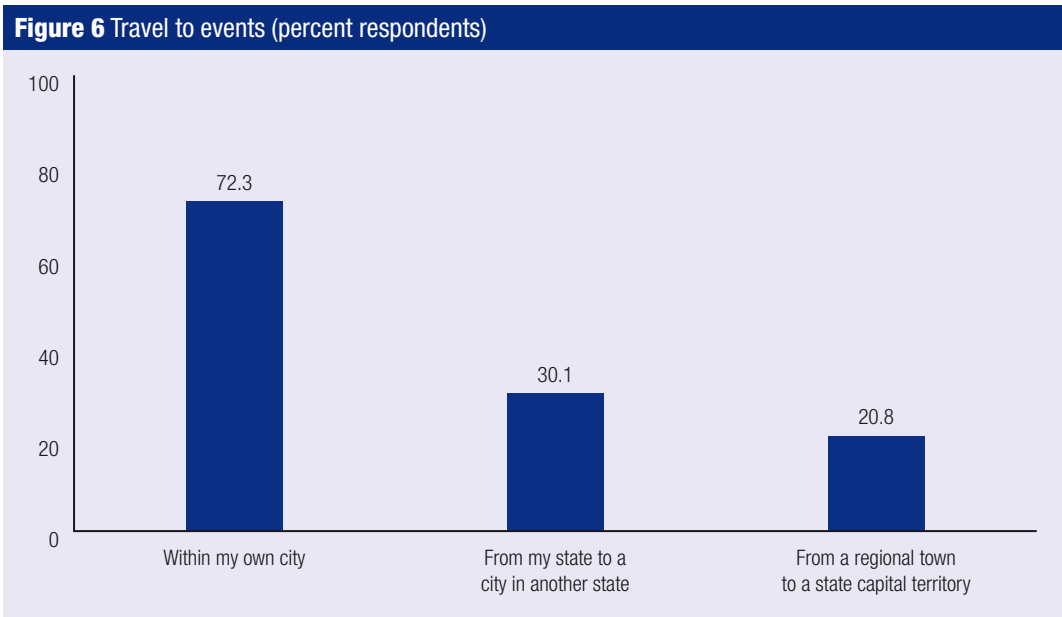
For most people, attendance at these events provided opportunities to 'hang out with friends' (comment by male, aged 26–35) both interstate and nearby. Respondents were hesitant to suggest that these events offered a chance to be more open about their sexuality, but many commented on the importance of affirming sexual identity publicly as part of a community, as detailed by the following respondents:

To march in the pride parade is to really be out—before everybody. For one day in the year the queers reclaim the streets. We climb out from under our rocks and march with Pride.

Female, aged 45–55

In my opinion, we are family and if we have no one else we have each other.

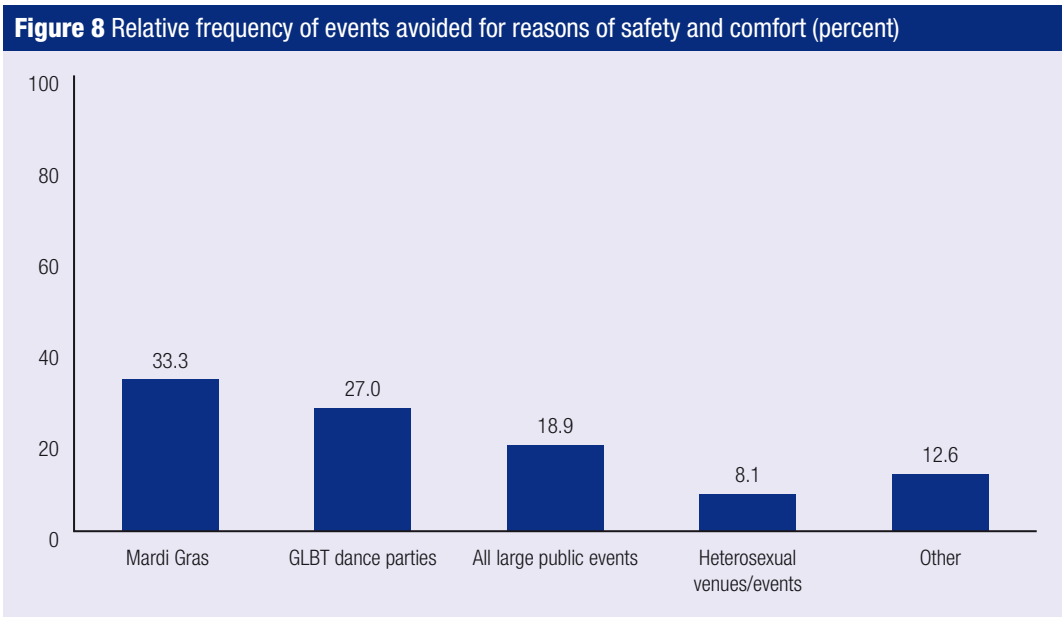
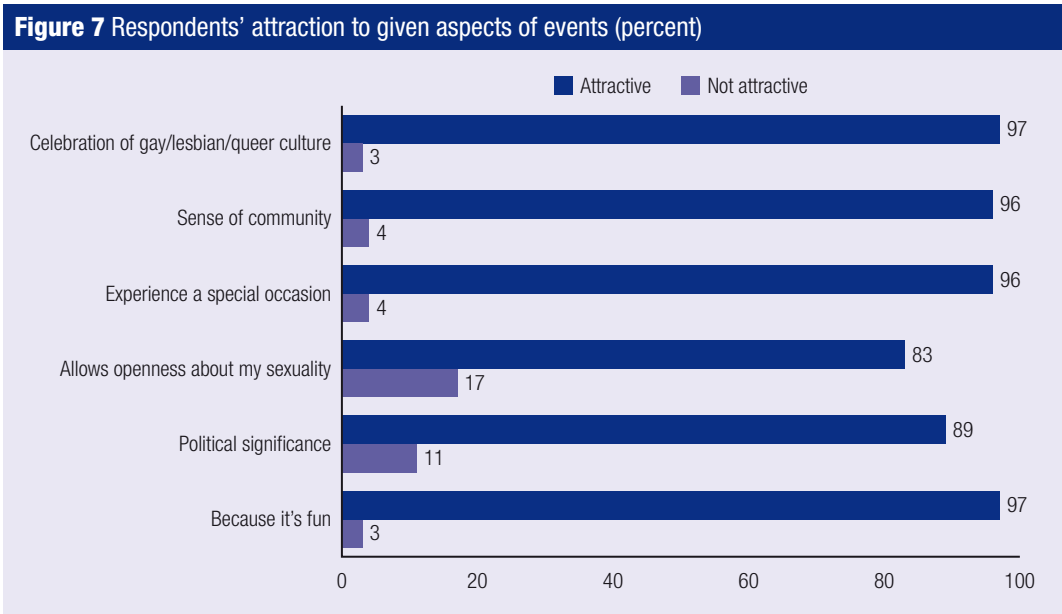
Male, aged 18–25



The practice of group identification and affirmation was identified as a central and enticing aspect of these events, such that it offers an opportunity ‘to feel normal!’ as one lesbian (aged 36–45) remarked, or for one gay man (aged 36–45) ‘to be myself’. The detailed responses confirmed the sense of people being attracted to events for the opportunity to socialise, particularly valuing attendance as a group activity that affirms sexual identity and generally

provides further support to members of the community.

Despite the generally positive sense of attraction, more than 65 percent of the survey group stated that they avoided certain events because of safety and comfort issues. Of those who did avoid events, 63 percent were male. Moreover, younger respondents appeared more likely to avoid events than did others: 75 percent of 18- to 25-year-olds,



around 65 percent of 26- to 35-year-olds and 36- to 45-year-olds, and just 45 percent of 46- to 55-year-olds (see Appendix C for full details).

All respondents were asked to comment on the particular events they avoided and their reasons for avoiding them. Figure 8 lists the events that respondents identified as ones they actively avoid. As can be seen, the Sydney Mardi Gras rates highly, with more than 30 percent indicating this specifically as one event that they avoided due to safety and comfort concerns. Dance parties were also singled out as events in which participants felt unsafe or uncomfortable. Nearly 20 percent of respondents expressed concerns for safety at all large public events, suggesting that serious safety and comfort concerns were more generalised ones for certain people. Interestingly, respondents indicated 'heterosexual venues' and events as those least likely to be avoided, though it is not clear what sorts of venues and events they referred to.

The detailed reasons provided for respondents' avoidance of certain events confirm that direct expressions of hostility are not always the primary issue affecting people's social activities (see Figure 9). Heterosexual dominance or homophobia was noted by a little over 15 percent of the survey group as a reason for avoiding events, but more general safety, crowding, and comfort issues were important in the accounts of survey respondents. Overcrowding and associated issues of discomfort were the most highly rated reasons for avoiding events (more than 30%), as several participants describe:

Most really big dance parties and Mardi Gras are just like being in a herd of cattle. Don't really find them enjoyable if there is no space to move.

Male, aged 26–35

Over the drugs and overcrowding of dance parties. Too dangerous and aren't fun anymore.

Male, aged 26–35

The more general effects of drugs and alcohol were also noted as exacerbating homophobic behaviours, such that some events have 'too many drunk heterosexual people attend[ing] making homophobic comments' (male, aged 26–35). Additionally, bisexuals, transgenders, and in a few cases lesbians felt uncomfortable at certain events due to what they

regarded as the exclusionary actions of majority sexual groups. As one female respondent (aged 46–55) explained, 'As a bisexual, I've given up attending gay events because of constant disapproval and even abuse'. This issue of exclusion within the GLBT community was particularly associated with dance parties and clubs rather than with events such as the Mardi Gras (see Appendix C for comparison by event).

Participants were asked to select one event with which they were the most familiar upon which to answer a series of questions (e.g. attraction to event, opinion of event). Once again, the majority of responses in this section of the survey related to the Mardi Gras (54%), with lesser percentages relating to the other major events: Adelaide Feast (13%), Perth Pride (10%), Melbourne Midsumma (10%), and Brisbane Pride (7%).

Aspects of events that are attractive

In describing the attraction to certain events, responses were similar in pattern to responses to the question relating to all events. Challenging traditional notions of Pride marches as protest and resistance events, the survey group prioritised the fun, celebration and sense of community of all individual events. Figure 10 gives the breakdown of respondents' rating, as attractive or not, various reasons for attending the Mardi Gras, the least attractive aspects being the 'political significance' and the 'opportunity to be individually more open about sexuality'.

In the more detailed responses, respondents confirmed the general attraction to these events as the opportunity to socialise: 'All my friends go, so it's a bit of a group thing' (female, aged 26–35). More particularly, this opportunity to socialise was valued as a community event and one that was publicly and proudly displayed. One female (aged 18–25) explained that the event makes 'our community visible to onlookers after work in the centre of the city'. A male respondent (aged 36–45) stated, 'I don't celebrate Christmas with my family so the Parade is my Christmas!'

Figure 9 Relative frequency of reasons for avoiding events (percent total reasons)

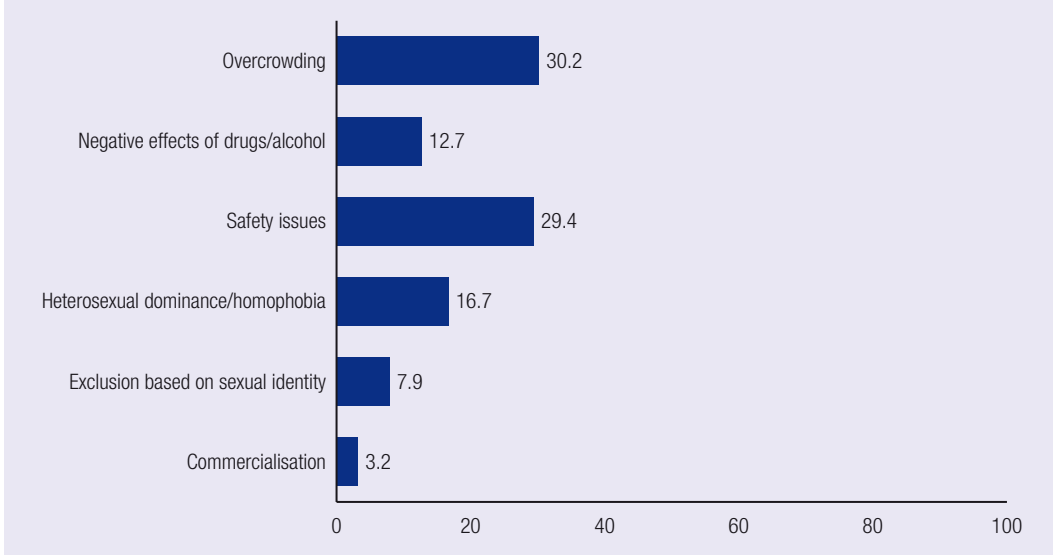
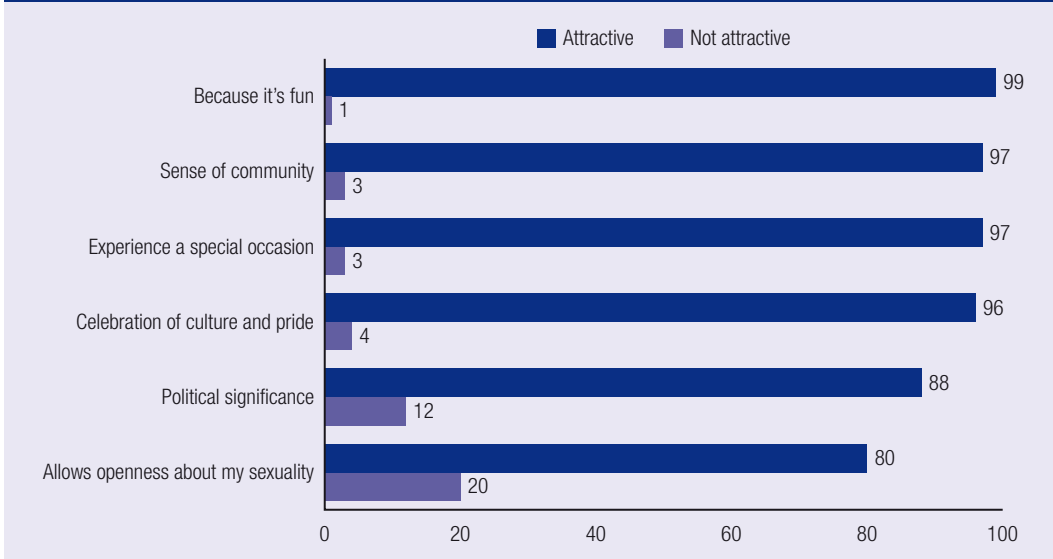


Figure 10 Respondents attracted to given aspects of the Mardi Gras (percent)



In these responses, the feature of a relaxed and family environment was also raised, particularly in relation to the daytime events associated with each major festival (e.g. Sydney Mardi Gras Fair Day, Adelaide Feast Picnic in the Park). As a male respondent (aged 46–55) explains in relation to the Sydney Fair Day:

Most people are sober, it's a day for kids and dogs, meeting up with the ex's. It is a real family day. It is my favourite day of the year.

Events held during daylight hours avoid many of the hazards of performance-based night-time events such as the Mardi Gras. Because attendees at events like Fair Day and Brisbane Pride Picnic are not divided into audience and spectator, there may be less social tension, and the lines of social difference that characterises the SGLMG parade are absent. Furthermore, as these events take place during the day, the opportunities for overt hostility and violence are more limited.

Behaviour during events

Participants were asked a series of questions about their own personal behaviours that could make them feel more unsafe (see Figure 11). Twenty-seven percent of the sample (56% male) claimed that they engaged in behaviour at a gay and lesbian event that could be described as placing themselves at greater risk of homophobic hostility. In addition, the age group most likely to engage in greater risk-taking at such an event is that of the 26- to 35-year-olds, with a gradual decrease to the 46- to 55-year-olds, of whom only 21 percent took greater risks at gay and lesbian events (see Appendix D). Such behaviours included interacting freely with strangers (28%), flirting (18%), ‘flaunting one’s sexuality’ (16%), walking alone in an unfamiliar place (13%), recreational drug use (9%), greater than normal alcohol consumption (7%), and a greater openness to engage in sexual activity (7.5%). In relation to sexual health risks, only 0.5 percent of the sample suggested that they were more likely to engage in unsafe sexual practices.

Opinions on event crowds

Previous research and community surveys have associated the presence of young male heterosexuals with public abuse and violence

(Herek & Berrill 1992; Mason & Tomsen 1997). To delve further into perceptions of safety, the survey asked respondents to comment on their feelings about the perceived proportion of heterosexuals at events and on the mix of different subsections of the GLBT community in order to elucidate any notions of exclusion within the community itself (see Figures 12 and 13).

The majority of respondents support the numbers of heterosexuals who attend events. As one female (aged under 18) explains: ‘That’s what the Mardi Gras is all about. I think it’s great there’s such a mix of people celebrating’. Moreover, many respondents see the inclusion of heterosexuals as vital so as to involve family and friends: ‘Lots of us have straight friends and it’s good to have them there with us at our special events as I go to theirs’ (male, aged 46–55); ‘Community isn’t just people who are all the same—it’s friends, relatives, and neighbours too’ (transgender, aged 46–55). The large neutral positioning (31%) on heterosexual crowds represents a conditional sense of acceptance such that they are welcome ‘as long as it is respectful participation’ (male, aged 26–35). Eight percent of respondents indicated that they were entirely opposed to any heterosexual participation in events. One respondent stated, ‘I have to live in a heterosexual world 24/7, I wish they would respect our space, and show that respect by not attending’ (male, aged 36–45).

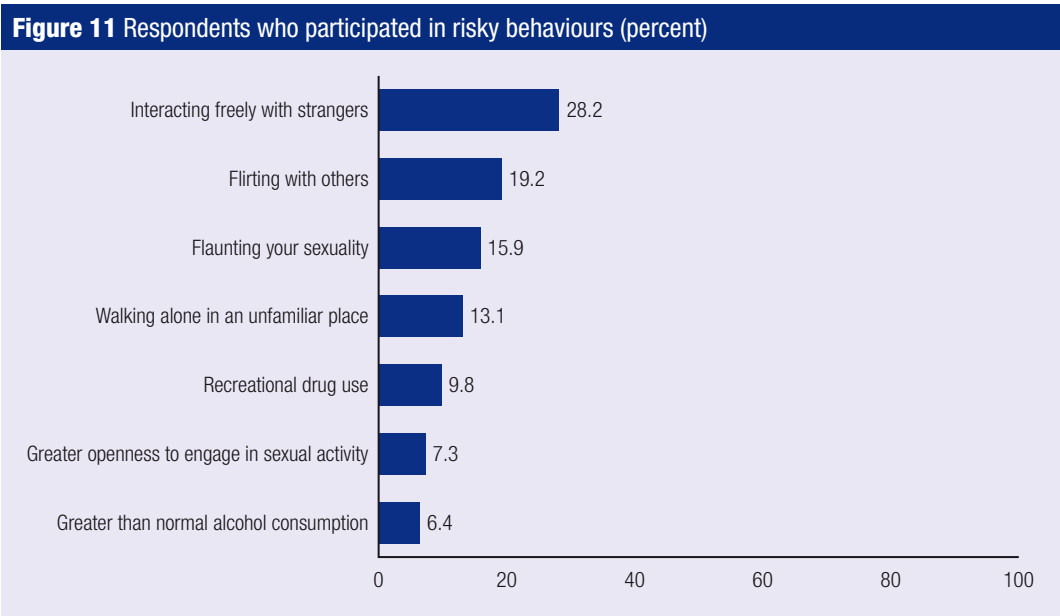


Figure 12 Respondents' opinions on events' ratios of heterosexual men and women (percent)

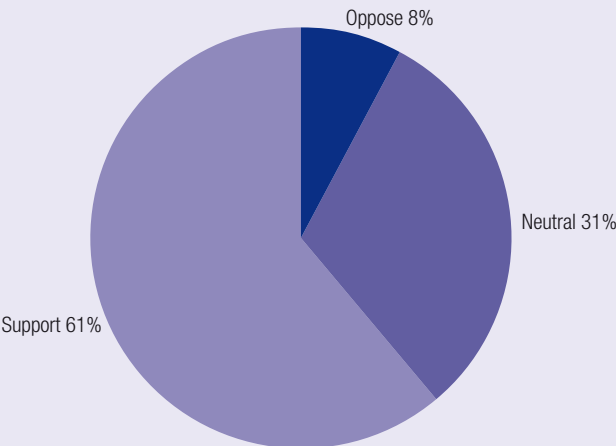
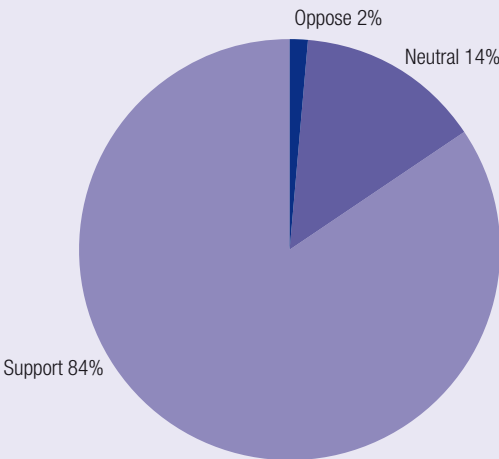


Figure 13 Respondents' opinions on events' ratios of gay men, lesbians, transgenders and bisexuals (percent)



In response to a question on the proportions of different sections of the GLBT community at events, respondents indicated widespread support (84%). There was, however, an underlying theme of discrimination and exclusion within the community, as described here:

For too long the BT & I portions of our community have been used to bolster numbers whilst their issues are ignored. I say we need more Bi, Trans

& Intersex visibility at queer pride events.

Female, aged 26–35—Melbourne Midsumma

Perceptions of safety at events

Asked to comment on feelings of safety in relation to the behaviour of other people at an event that they

had participated in (excluding the data set from the Mardi Gras parade, which is analysed separately), 85 percent of the sample felt safe or very safe travelling to the event; 94 percent, while waiting for the event to start; 95 percent, during the event; and 73 percent, immediately after the event had taken place. Of participants who attended the Mardi Gras parade, however, 82 percent felt safe or very safe travelling to it; 87 percent, waiting for the event to start; 91 percent, during the event; and only

61 percent, immediately after the event had taken place. Perceptions of safety lessened sharply after the event was over. Respondents who attended the Mardi Gras parade reported lower perceptions of safety than attendees of other events, with just 55 percent feeling safe at a recovery party and 45 percent feeling safe while travelling home. (See Figure 14.)

Higher levels of safety were perceived leading up to and during the event, but some respondents

Figure 14 Respondents perceiving themselves as being safe at different stages of events (percent)

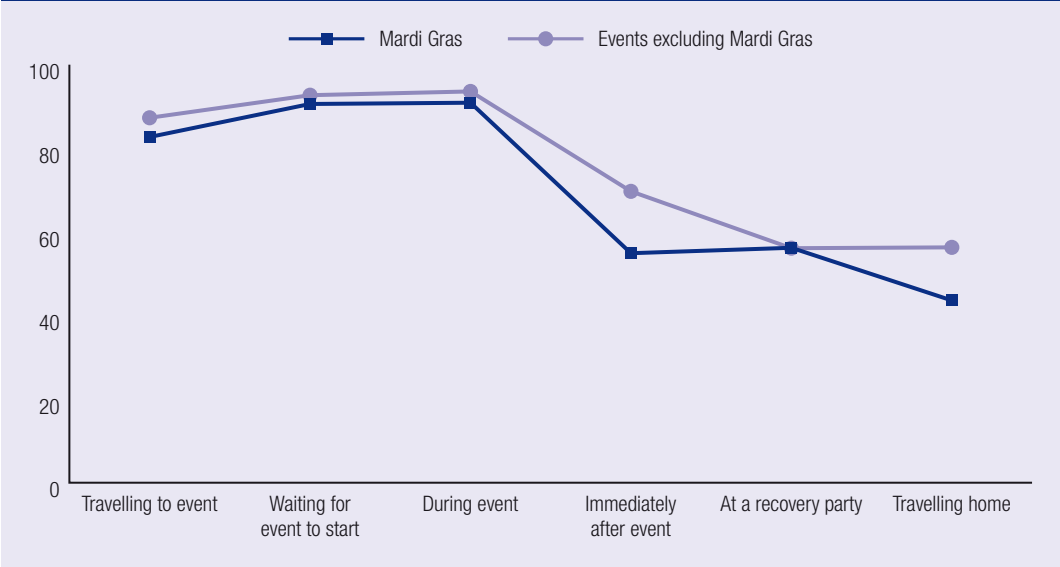
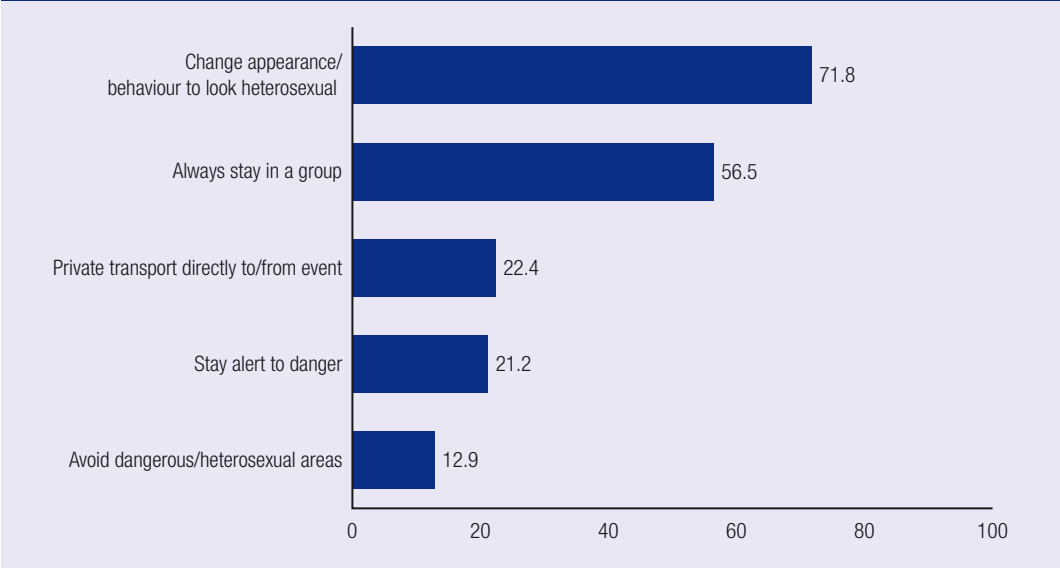


Figure 15 Relative frequency of given strategies (percent)



did experience some kind of harassment or abuse on their way to or during it. Most of the comments concerning the marked shift in atmosphere following the cessation of an event were related to the SGLMG parade. A common observation was that the end of each parade resulted in a chaotic and unstructured period, providing opportunities for various forms of abuse to take place:

Sydney Mardi Gras parade and party [are] getting too mainstream and with that brings homophobes, especially at the end of the parade, I don't feel safe sticking around so you leave quickly.

Male, aged 26–35

Mardi Gras parade seems to be getting more and more aggressive after the glitter settles. Drunk people (in my experience, young men), who are interested in provoking lesbians and gay men for sport.

Female, aged 26–35

A volatile mix of large numbers of often intoxicated people moving around in all directions is created immediately after the (night-time) Mardi Gras parade has ended with the sudden rupture of the barricades that had formed an effective boundary between parade participants and spectators. In this atmosphere, a number of people felt threatened and at risk, or indeed had experienced some form of unwanted attention or abuse. Formal and natural surveillance by security, event officials and concerned bystanders could be easier at events with a daytime focus, such as those in Melbourne and Brisbane.

A strong opinion emerged that it was in travelling to and particularly from the event, whether on foot or by public transport, that people were at greatest risk. Some people specifically mentioned incidents that had occurred during travel to the event, but by far the majority of cases occurred during travel home. As one gay male (aged 18–25) commented, 'The problem is not so much at the event, but getting back to various corners of Sydney via public transport or taxi. That is very daunting'. A lesbian (aged 18–25) commented, 'I don't worry about my safety while I'm there. I worry about my safety when I'm travelling back out west [western suburbs of Sydney], and I'm the only queer person on the train,

and you can tell that I'm gay—I don't try to hide it. So the event itself isn't the problem. It's the [broader] community'.

Strategies to reduce incidence of unwanted attention

Many respondents deliberately engaged in certain strategies in order to reduce the chance of unwanted and hostile attention at different stages of the events. Thirty-eight percent of the survey group, fairly equally divided between males and females, indicated that they enacted strategies in order to reduce the chances of unfriendly attention before, during or after events. Those in the 18–25 and 26–35 age groups were most likely to undertake such behaviour (41% and 43% respectively; see Appendix D). Those respondents indicating that they engaged in safety strategies identified a range of them, as shown in Figure 15.

Several different kinds of behaviour that could draw anti-homosexual hostility or sexual harassment from men were avoided. In particular, strategies reflected a view that the body and its presentation were vital aspects of personal safety and risk (Mason 2001), with nearly 40 percent of comments falling into this category. A number of respondents described how they would avoid using makeup or dressing in clothing that could be construed as being in some way provocative on their way to or from an event, or covering themselves up with a long coat to conceal their appearance; 'Do not put on makeup or extravagant dress whilst on the train to and from my suburb' (male, aged 18–25). Many respondents also indicated that this change in bodily appearance specifically involved 'acting straight' as they walked to and from an event.

In particular, respondents regarded it as important to avoid showing any overt signs of affection for their partners or friends. For example, 'I hate myself for being like this, but I'm reticent about showing too much affection to another man in public when heading to or coming home from the party' (male, aged 36–45). Women stated that they avoided making eye contact or engaging with straight men,

due to the possibility of unwanted sexual advances. Men were more likely to dress down so as to avoid violence from other men. Over all, most respondents' comments focused squarely on their bodies as the factor that could attract risk. The freedom to express one's sexuality is traded off against safety.

Remaining as part of a larger group and avoiding being placed in a position in which an individual was alone were also noted (31%) as important strategies

for avoiding unwanted attention. Moreover, 12 percent of respondents indicated that they utilise private transport (and remain wary of public transport) to reduce unwanted attention when getting to and from events. An awareness of the geography of the area in which the event was occurring (e.g. heterosexual areas; 7%) and staying alert to danger in general (12%) were also critical strategies. Back and side streets in particular were

Figure 16 Events' relative frequency of witness reports of hostile incidents (percent)

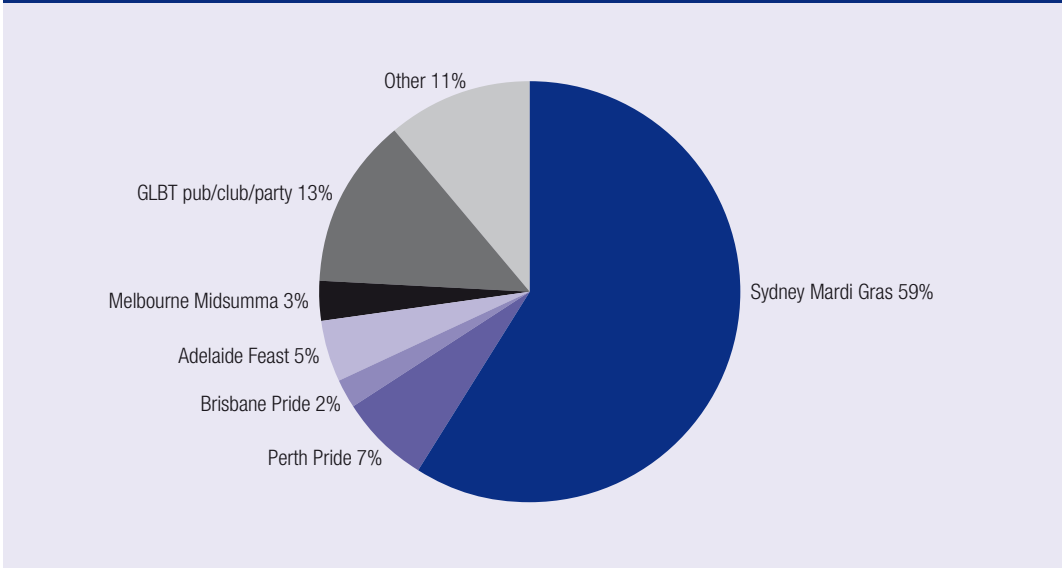
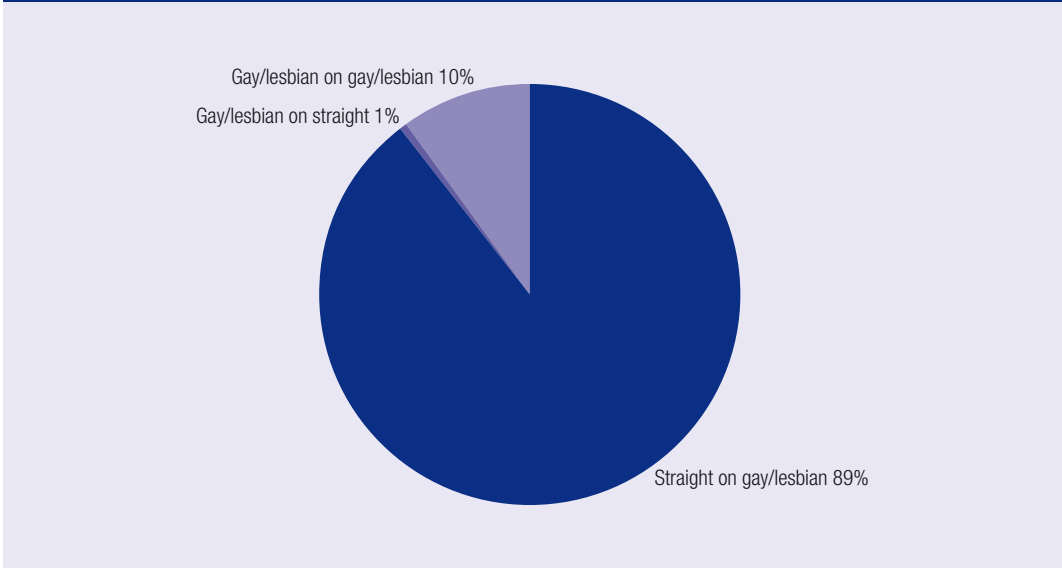


Figure 17 Perpetrator–recipient relationships in witnessed hostile incidents (percent)



avoided as places considered potentially dangerous. As one woman (aged 26–35) commented:

After the [Mardi Gras] parade there is a lot of abusive and sometimes violent behaviour from (to generalise) drunk straight men, which makes me as a woman feel uncomfortable and unsafe. So I am always alert for this and try to avoid such people and walk away from the parade with friends and with the crowd rather than being on my/our own in a quiet street.

GLBT events endeavour to provide safe spaces, but their borders are limited and they cannot guarantee safety once participants leave venues. As such, people undertake certain strategies in order to ‘never be alone, always have friends around’ (male, aged 18–25), ‘stay in a group of friends and don’t make eye contact with unfriendly-looking strangers’ (female, aged 18–25), or ‘monitor other people’s behaviour, body language carefully’ (male, aged 56–65).

Incidents of abuse and violence witnessed and experienced

This section of the survey was divided into questions concerning incidents of harassment or physical violence involving other people that the respondents had *witnessed* and incidents of harassment or physical violence that the respondents had personally *experienced* at any gay and lesbian event (e.g. number of incidents, type of incident).

Incidents of harassment or physical violence witnessed

Respondents gave a combined estimate of at least 545 reports of witnessed incidents involving other people as victims, 59 percent of these occurring at the Sydney Mardi Gras (fair day, parade and party; Figure 16). This result is unsurprising given the frequency of attendance at these events. When attendance is considered, the proportions of incidents witnessed at events in Perth (7%) and Adelaide (5%) appear to be high. It is also possible that some incidents were witnessed by more than

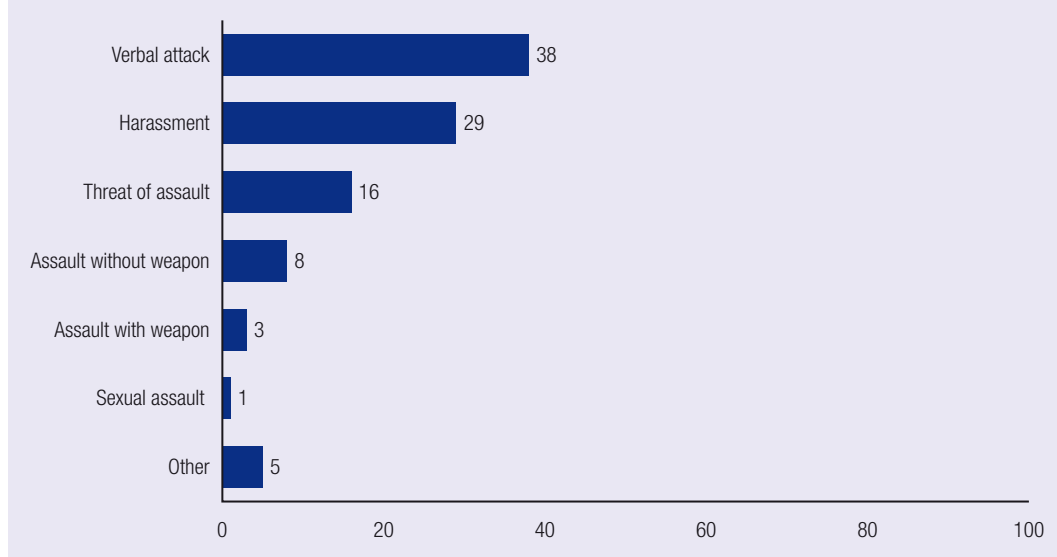
one respondent, although the additional comments did not suggest this. The total number of incidents is closely linked to sample size. Therefore, the high proportion of people witnessing one or more incidents is a more significant finding. Forty percent of the sample had witnessed some form of hostile incident or incidents at an event. Almost a quarter of the sample had witnessed one or two such incidents, 15 percent had witnessed three to five incidents, and almost nine per cent had witnessed six or more incidents. The majority of respondents (89%) described the incident as involving ‘straights’ abusing or attacking gay men or lesbians (see Figure 17), so the following discussion focuses on this particular type of incident. Additionally, 10 percent of respondents described incidents of hostility between minority sexual groups.

Each respondent was asked to describe one witnessed hostile incident of this sort that was notable in their overall experience of event attendance, against a series of matched categories. One hundred and fifty-one incident reports were categorised in this way. Of these, 38 percent included verbal attacks, 29 percent included some non-verbal form of harassment, 16 percent related to some kind of direct threat of physical assault, eight percent were assaults without weapons, three percent were assaults with weapons, and one percent was sexual assault (see Figure 18).

Everyday forms of sexual prejudice are grounded in collective gendered identity, and behaviours that have been termed ‘hatred’ comprise contradictory and varied phenomena (Tomsen 2009). Furthermore, violence and many other crimes directed at gay men, lesbians, and transsexuals are not wholly distinct in form from other forms of masculine violence.

Previous researchers of homophobic violence have found higher levels of abuse and harassment of lesbians, and higher levels of physical assault directed at gay men, than of the general population (Tomsen & Mason 2001). Such gender differences arose in the detailed accounts of the closely witnessed incidents. More females than males (34% to 31%) recounted incidents of abuse, harassment and threats. More males than females (11% to 8%) gave accounts of direct physical assaults (with or without weapons).

Figure 18 Relative frequency of notable witnessed hostile incidents (percent)



Incidents of harassment or physical violence personally experienced

Nearly 30 percent of the respondents had personally experienced some form of harassment or physical assault at a public event. The majority of this group had experienced one (45%) or two (21%) incidents only. Respondents gave a combined estimate of at least 290 personally experienced incidents, with over 50 percent of these occurring at the well attended events such as Sydney Mardi Gras (fair day, parade and party; Figure 19). The majority of respondents (81%) stated that the incident they had experienced related to homophobia (Appendix E).

Figure 20 gives a breakdown of the types of personally experienced incidents. More gay men than lesbians related the detail of hands-on street violence and how they were threatened, punched and bashed by apparently heterosexual males in the streets nearby after this event. For example, one described how after the parade:

My partner was punched in the face without any provocation. By a young male walking in a group of males in the opposite direction. They walked on and were lost in the crowd.

Male, aged 26–35

By contrast, a number of lesbians record that heterosexual men approached them suggesting

some form of sexual activity and were verbally abusive when their overtures were rejected. For example,

I was watching the [Mardi Gras] Parade from the Colombian Hotel with my girlfriend and a straight man kept telling me how I was turning him on and asking if he could watch my girlfriend and I have sex. He kept getting upset when I told him he was inappropriate and then pursued me twice more in the evening to continue the issue.

Female, aged 26–35

It appears from the data that relatively few incidents occurred during the Mardi Gras parade itself. Safety became a preoccupation of respondents when the parade was over and the crowd had dispersed. One respondent commented,

After the parade finished the mood immediately changed and it felt dangerous and ‘edgy’ getting back to the hotel. The crowds were huge and I was surprised by the levels of verbal abuse and harassment and homophobic comments I witnessed.

Male, aged 26–35

On some occasions the threat of violence translated into actual physical attack:

A group of straight youths were picking on single males in the post-parade crowd and landing

Figure 19 Event distribution of hostile incident experienced (percent)

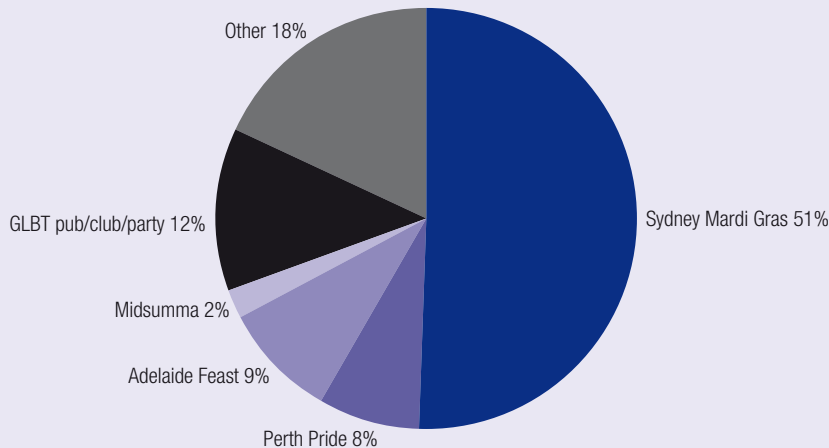
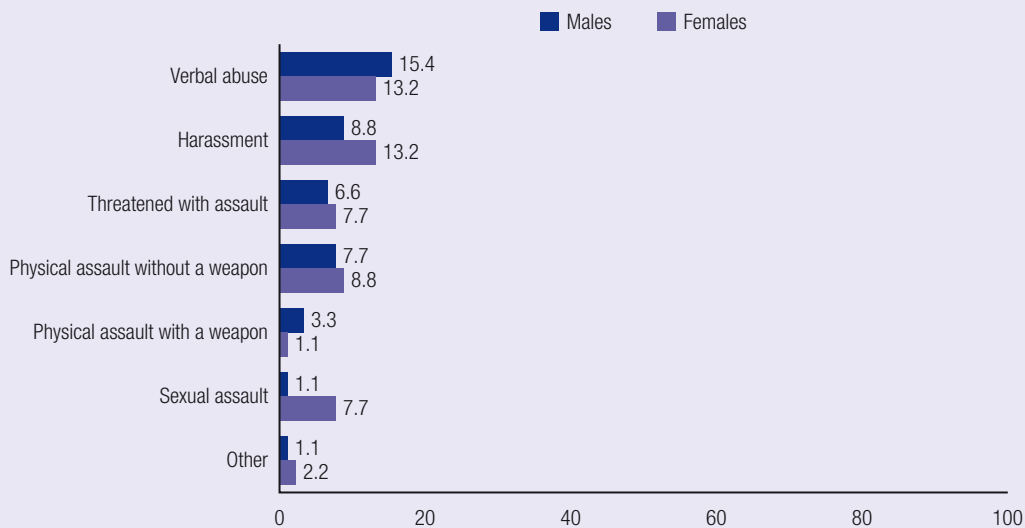


Figure 20 Relative frequency of hostile incident experienced (percent all experienced incidents)



martial arts style flying kicks to their head and kicking them while down on the road.

Male, 46–55

A group of about four men aged about 25 to 35 (they appeared to be drunk) threw milk crates, bottles and kicked a heavy road-barrier over in a fit of machismo at the end of a Mardi Gras parade in the middle of Oxford Street. I was a parade marshal that year and fortunately for me

the police were on the scene in seconds and quick to act. The verbal abuse was definitely anti-gay in content.

Male, aged 46–55

Whereas respondents found some level of informal protection against verbal abuse from the crowd, formal protection by authorities was necessary to counter acts of violence. However, as the crowd dispersed at the end of the parade, policing became

much more difficult because the physical boundaries containing the event had diminished. The following comment by a lesbian recalling an incident following the end of the Mardi Gras parade is particularly revealing:

A group of young guys followed us up the street yelling homophobic abuse. Felt very threatened and everyone just ignored what was happening. After Mardi Gras, everyone forgets what they've just seen and become homophobic again.

Female, aged 36–45

This comment proposes that homophobia is to some extent suspended during the actual performance of the parade, but that a 'return to normal' occurs soon after the parade comes to an end. This abrupt shift in atmosphere, mood and behaviour was described by a number of men and women in the sample, yet its explanation is not clear. It could be that the state of chaos and confusion that many in the sample described as occurring once the parade has ended facilitates the open expression of aggression and violence. Excessive alcohol consumption and a heightened sexualised atmosphere created by the parade also play a part. Evidently, some of the perpetrators feel ambivalent or irritated by the visible displays of queer sexualities on show during the parade but are only given freedom to fully vent these feelings once the parade has finished. Furthermore, previous research on drinking-related public violence in Australia indicates that a high incidence of aggression, conflict between men and harassment of women typifies many scenes of collective public drinking (Tomsen 1997; Tomsen, Homel & Thommeny 1991). These may be the elements of the 'normal' public circumstances that return at the end of each parade.

Respondents were further asked to make an open comment on what they believed had led to their being targeted. Figure 21 shows the proportions of groups of these comments.

More than 30 percent of respondents felt that it was their visibility and their bodies that resulted in the incident. As one lesbian explains, 'we looked like dykes' (female, aged 36–45). Although more than 20 percent of respondents categorised the incident

as 'simply homophobic' (male, aged 36–45), others (18%) suggested that they more generally presented an easy target for people wanting to engage in any form of violent activity; 'I was just walking down the street and they saw an opportunity to upset someone' (male, aged 46–55); '[the incident] would have happened whether the Mardi Gras was on or not, it was just idiots being idiots' (female, aged 18–25).

Organisers' perceptions of safety

People who had been involved in the organisation of gay and lesbian events were asked their opinions on the cause of conflict at events and on how a positive atmosphere can be created. The responses related to involvement in the organisation of the Mardi Gras (56%), Brisbane Pride (18.4%), Adelaide Feast (12.4%), Melbourne Midsumma (7%), and Perth Pride (5.4%). Organisers were asked to rate fixed choices of what they believed to be important factors in influencing the conflict and rowdy behaviour at events (Figure 22). A factor that more than 80 percent named was the negative effects of drugs and alcohol, especially at the night-time events. Inconsiderate behaviour, crowding and homophobia were also seen as creating instances of conflict.

Over all, the majority of organisers (87%) indicated that they were satisfied with the strategies adopted to enhance safety at the event, yet offered further open comments on the ways in which safety could be enhanced. While participants referred to personal appearance and individual and group measures to enhance safety, event organisers focused on authority, organisation, and tolerance as key issues. When asked 'How can safety be enhanced?', organisers responded, 'more police', 'more visibility in the media', 'more understanding', 'more tolerant security', 'more crowd control at smaller rural venues', and further 'use of drug rovers and marshals'. Their concerns were with structure rather than experience, and comments reflected their obligation to protect the crowd as a whole.

Figure 21 Relative frequency of reasons given for having been targeted with hostility or violence (percent)

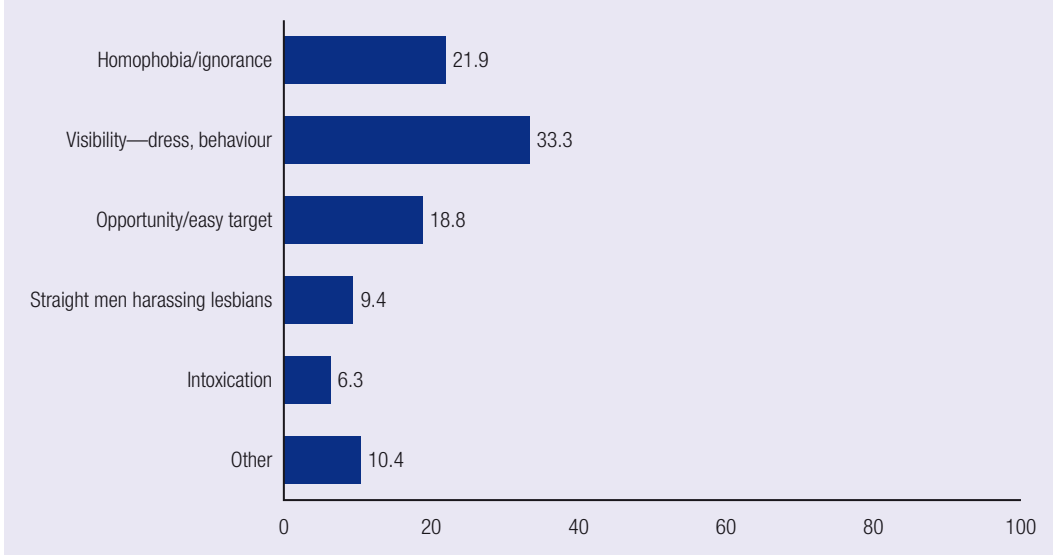
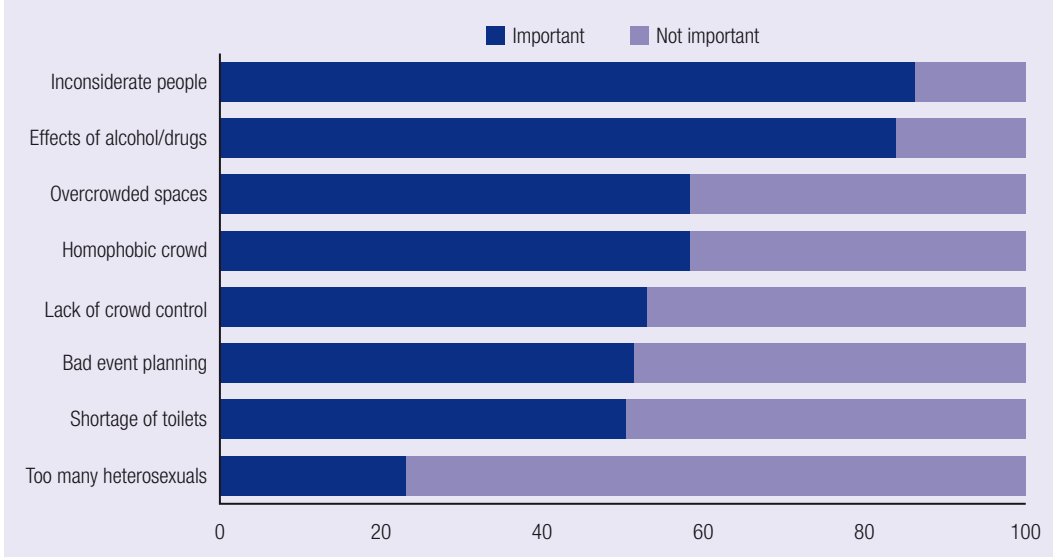


Figure 22 Respondents choosing factors as important in creating conflict and rowdy behaviour (percent)





Discussion and conclusions

Officials, media and tourism industries in a variety of urban locations welcome visitors via cosmopolitan imagery and encourage leisure spending in attendance at large gay and lesbian events (Markwell 2002).

The current and potential economic benefits of these events in Australia are considerable, yet their continuing success and growth will depend on the real experience by local participants and tourists alike of tolerance, security and enjoyment. This cannot be guaranteed without informed reflection on the means to enhance safety at these events. Furthermore, these events are made possible by a wide sense of goodwill and voluntary labour from GLBT communities. Such communities must connect meaningfully with these special events for the continuing cultivation of a 'transgressive' image that has been a hallmark of their success. Any sense of serious and widespread threat perceived by participants at these and similar events will potentially undermine the long-term viability of these occasions.

It is therefore concerning that police intervention was referred to in only four of the questionnaire respondents' 151 detailed incident reports of hostility. Similarly, the total number of hostile incidents witnessed by respondents at these events vastly outweighs the acts of harassment

and violence monitored or recorded by community groups, the media and police agencies. This study has uncovered an undercurrent of hostility and forms of incivility at these special events. Both this incivility and more overt threats and attacks can elude official notice but generate considerable discomfort among participants and shape future decisions about attendance. (Local Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project reports for 1996, 1998, 1999, 2001 and 2002 recorded 33 matters of violence directly and indirectly related to Mardi Gras events and the associated festivals. These included 14 incidents while watching or leaving the parade, seven incidents while arriving at or leaving the post-parade party, and two incidents after Fair Day. The tendency to monitor the more serious cases of attack is reflected in the information that 12 of these matters required medical attention, with five requiring hospitalisation [AVP annual reports 1996–2002].)

Although 40 percent of the sample had witnessed some form of hostility, the majority of reports concerned incidents occurring at or after the SGLMG parade. Travelling home from this event was the most cited single risky aspect of event participation. Respondents perceived that there was a substantial change in mood at the end of the parade, and indeed this was when hostility and violence were most likely to occur. Completion of the Mardi Gras parade led to a difficult-to-manage

situation for GLBT people. Participants used individual and group strategies of their own to reduce incidents of unwanted attention, including changes in self presentation, behaviour and routes taken to and from the event.

The lower occurrence of overt hostile acts during the parade appears to be due to a series of general factors. There are reduced social opportunities to act out violence during the actual event. A high amount of official and police supervision reflects intricate, long-term planning between many stakeholders. In fact, the organisers of these large-scale events with heavy drinking, huge crowd numbers, uneven and narrow street spaces, etc., have achieved a remarkable degree of local success in curtailing aggression and violence at these events. It can also be hypothesised that the entertaining spectacle offered to all onlookers leads to a frequent (but not universal) temporary suspension of sexual prejudice and overt related hostility.

This may appear to be an extraordinary feature of events of this type. Abuse and violence on the periphery of these events and after them may also appear to be the inevitable result of such large-scale night-time event participation. Yet a similar suspension and the trading of aggression for entertainment do characterise many other large-scale public celebrations (firework displays, New Year's Eve, Australia Day celebrations, rock

concerts, sporting events etc.), and the actual means for stimulation of this pattern of celebration with limited aggression is a new challenge for event planners and organisers in general (Abbott & Abbott 2000). The amounts of violence at night-time leisure events have historically been quite variable and obviously responsive to changes in styles of policing and degrees of event planning and organisation. These various general planning and safety matters are not unique to these events; other large-scale public special events share them, suggesting that useful comparisons and communication between the planners and the managers of different events would benefit all parties.

In light of the important concerns about safety that have been voiced by respondents in this survey report, discussion of safety matters could cover more aspects of event participation and travel. Participants at events studied in this report focused on individual and group strategies for safety from crime, whereas event organisers stressed organisational measures such as crowd supervision and intensive policing. These ought not to be seen as opposing viewpoints: the provision of safety at such large-scale public events is clearly the responsibility of all parties involved, including participants, organisers, security staff, police, and local authorities.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Organisations contacted

| Organisation/group | Details of survey advertising |
|---|---|
| ACON (NSW) | Notification and link to survey sent out via email contacts |
| Adelaide casuals | Posted advertisement |
| All the kings men | Posted advertisement |
| ALSO Foundation (VIC) http://www.also.org.au/index.htm | Email notification |
| Attorney General's Department (NSW) | Advertised on Attorney General's newsletter and on website |
| AussieSports | Posted advertisement |
| AVP | Advertised in e-newsletter |
| AVP (VIC) http://www.antiviolence.info/asp/ | Email notification |
| bgaymacarthur | Posted advertisement |
| BiMenSydney | Posted advertisement |
| Blaze Magazine (SA) | Advertisement published (Issue 105 – 18/2/05) |
| bluecollarmates | Posted advertisement |
| Boddy Goldsmith Foundation | Notification and link to survey sent out via email contacts |
| Brissie | Email notification |
| Country Network | Email notification |
| Dikes on Bikes (VIC) http://www.aardvark.net.au/~dobvic/index.html | Email notification |
| FEAST http://www.feast.org.au/index.php | Email notification |
| Gay and lesbian counselling service http://www.glcsnsw.org.au/index.html | Email notification |
| Gay And Lesbian Equality (WA) Inc GALE http://www.galewa.asn.au/ | Email notification |
| Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby (NSW) http://www.girl.org.au/ | Email notification |
| gay_australian_you... | Posted advertisement |
| gay_men_in_country... | Posted advertisement |
| gay_surfers_austra... | Posted advertisement |
| gay_teens2001 | Posted advertisement |
| GayAustralia (website) http://www.gayaustralia.com.au/ | Posted advertisement and background of survey |
| Gaybisa | Posted advertisement |
| Gaybris | Posted advertisement |
| GaynBiGuysfromMelb | Posted advertisement |
| Gaynet http://www.gaynet.com.au/ | Posted advertisement |
| gayyouthofperth | Posted advertisement |
| Gender Centre | Notification and link to survey sent out via email contacts |
| http://groups.msn.com (9 Gay and Lesbian Groups) | Posted advertisement |

| Organisation/group | Details of survey advertising |
|---|--|
| http://groups.yahoo.com/group/36 Gay and Lesbian Groups | Posted advertisement |
| LCGB | Email notification |
| LOTL Magazine—Lesbians on the Loose | Advertisement published (Issue 73 – March 2005) |
| MCV and Fellow Traveller | Advertisement published (Issue 216 – 18/2/05) |
| melbourneguys | Posted advertisement |
| melbourneyouthglt | Posted advertisement |
| Midsumma Melbourne http://www.midsumma.org.au/index.cfm?event=home | Email notification but no extended contact list |
| NAPWA (Sydney) | Notification and link to survey sent out via email contacts |
| New Mardi Gras http://www.mardigras.org.au/ | Notification and link to survey sent out via email contacts |
| newcastleguys | Posted advertisement |
| NSW Police | Email notification |
| OutinPerth Magazine | Advertisement published (Issue 42 – 1/3/05) |
| OutNZ magazine http://www.outnz.net.nz/ | Notification and link to survey on website |
| P-FLAG (Perth) www.pflag.org.au | Notification and link to survey sent out via email contacts |
| P-FLAG (VIC) | Notification and link to survey sent out via email contacts |
| Pride Brisbane http://www.pridebrisbane.org.au/ | Notification and link to survey sent out via email contacts |
| Pride Western Australia http://www.pridewa.asn.au/ | Notification and link to survey sent out via email contacts |
| Queensland Aids Council | Email notification |
| queerdogs | Posted advertisement |
| queertas | Posted advertisement |
| rockygays | Posted advertisement |
| SINSydney | Posted advertisement |
| Special Publications | Advertisement published in Queensland Pride (Issue 209 – 1/3/05) |
| Sydney Bisexual Network | Posted advertisement |
| Sydney Leather Pride http://www.sydneyleatherpride.org/ | Posted advertisement |
| sydneybareback | Posted advertisement |
| Sydney Star Observer | Advertisement published (Issue 752 – 17/2/05) |
| sydneywankclub | Posted advertisement |
| SX Magazine | Advertisement published (Issue 213 – 24/2/05) |
| Tasmanian Council on AIDS | Email notification |
| Twenty10 | Email notification |
| VicAIDS | Email notification |
| Victoria Police | Email notification |
| Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby http://www.vglrl.org.au/ | Email notification |

Appendix B: Questionnaire responses, section A

| Q1 You are? | | |
|-------------|-----------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent |
| Male | 185 | 55.7 |
| Female | 136 | 41.0 |
| Transgender | 8 | 2.4 |
| Intersex | 3 | 0.9 |
| Total | 332 | 100.0 |

| Q2 Please choose the word that best describes your sexual identity. | | |
|---|-----------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent |
| Gay | 165 | 50.0 |
| Lesbian | 99 | 30.0 |
| Bisexual | 26 | 7.9 |
| Queer | 17 | 5.2 |
| Heterosexual | 15 | 4.5 |
| Other | 8 | 2.4 |

| Q3 What is your age? | | |
|----------------------|-----------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent |
| Under 18 | 1 | 0.3 |
| 18–25 | 61 | 18.4 |
| 26–35 | 112 | 33.7 |
| 36–45 | 89 | 26.8 |
| 46–55 | 50 | 15.1 |
| 56–65 | 16 | 4.8 |
| 66–75 | 3 | 0.9 |

| Q6 What is your race/ethnic origins? | | |
|--|-----------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent |
| Anglo/Australian | 272 | 84.0 |
| African | 2 | 0.6 |
| Asian | 8 | 2.5 |
| Australian Aboriginal/ Torres Strait Islander | 6 | 1.9 |
| Mediterranean | 9 | 2.8 |
| Middle Eastern | 1 | 0.3 |
| Pacific/South Sea Islander | 1 | 0.3 |
| Other | 25 | 7.7 |

| Q7 What is your highest level of education? | | |
|---|-----------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent |
| Left before year 10 | 3 | 0.9 |
| Year 10 | 19 | 5.7 |
| Year 12 | 39 | 11.8 |
| TAFE (technical college) | 49 | 14.8 |
| University/college graduate | 130 | 39.3 |
| University postgraduate | 91 | 27.5 |

| Q8 Which one of these best describes your occupation? | | |
|---|-----------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent |
| Paid work/self-employed | 251 | 76.1 |
| Unemployed | 3 | 0.9 |
| Student | 43 | 13.0 |
| Pensioner/sickness benefits | 16 | 4.8 |
| Home duties | 6 | 1.8 |
| Retired | 7 | 2.1 |
| Other | 4 | 1.2 |

| Q9 If you are in paid work or self-employed— which one of the following best describes your current occupation? | | |
|--|-----------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent |
| Manual work/blue collar | 5 | 1.9 |
| Skilled trade | 9 | 3.4 |
| Customer service/sales/clerical | 45 | 16.9 |
| Professional/managerial | 178 | 66.9 |
| Other | 29 | 10.9 |

Appendix C: Questionnaire responses, section B

| Q10 Events attended and frequency of attendance | | | |
|---|------|--------------|----------|
| Event | Once | 2 to 5 times | 6+ times |
| Adelaide Feast Dance Party | 15 | 18 | 3 |
| Adelaide Feast Picnic in the Park | 10 | 30 | 17 |
| Adelaide Feast | 25 | 48 | 20 |
| Brisbane Pride Dance Party | 16 | 15 | 3 |
| Brisbane Pride Parade | 10 | 21 | 7 |
| Brisbane Pride Picnic | 17 | 19 | 5 |
| Brisbane Pride | 43 | 55 | 15 |
| Melbourne Midsumma Dance Party | 27 | 13 | 4 |
| Melbourne Midsumma Pride Parade | 35 | 24 | 10 |
| Melbourne Midsumma | 62 | 37 | 14 |
| Perth Pride Parade | 23 | 21 | 5 |
| Perth Pride Party | 19 | 11 | 0 |
| Perth Pride | 42 | 32 | 5 |
| Sydney Mardi Gras Fair Day | 30 | 65 | 64 |
| Sydney Mardi Gras Parade | 47 | 101 | 80 |
| Sydney Mardi Gras Party | 51 | 70 | 48 |
| Sydney Mardi Gras | 128 | 236 | 192 |
| Melbourne Rawhide | 8 | 6 | 1 |
| Sydney Harbour Party | 21 | 26 | 6 |
| Sydney Sleaze Ball | 32 | 52 | 31 |
| Other | 61 | 84 | 38 |

| Q11 How far do you travel to attend these events? | | |
|---|-------|---------------------|
| | Count | Percent respondents |
| Within my own city | 240 | 72.3 |
| From my state to a city in another state | 100 | 20.8 |
| From a regional town to a state capital territory | 69 | 30.1 |
| From a country outside Australia | 5 | 1.5 |
| Total | 332 | |

| Q13 Do you avoid events? (percentage of each sex) | | |
|---|-----|----|
| | Yes | No |
| Male | 63 | 47 |
| Female | 37 | 53 |

| Q13 Do you avoid events? (percentage of each age group) | | |
|---|-----|----|
| Age | Yes | No |
| < 18 | 100 | 0 |
| 18–25 | 75 | 25 |
| 26–35 | 65 | 35 |
| 36–45 | 62 | 38 |
| 46–55 | 46 | 54 |
| 55+ | 94 | 6 |

Figure 23 Relative frequency of respondents' reasons for avoiding the Sydney Mardi Gras (percent)

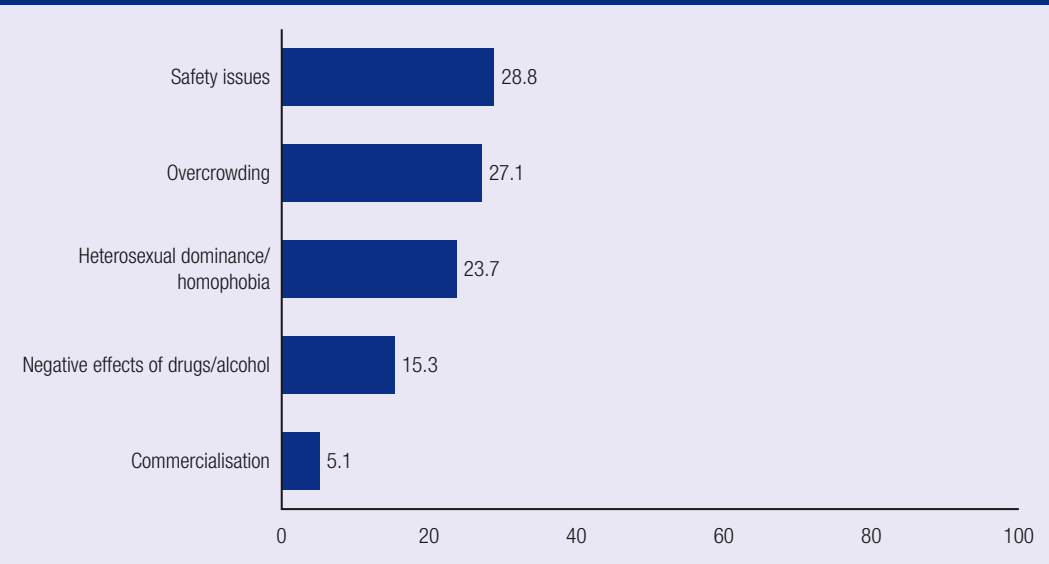


Figure 24 Relative frequency of respondents' reasons for avoiding GLBT dance parties or events (percent)

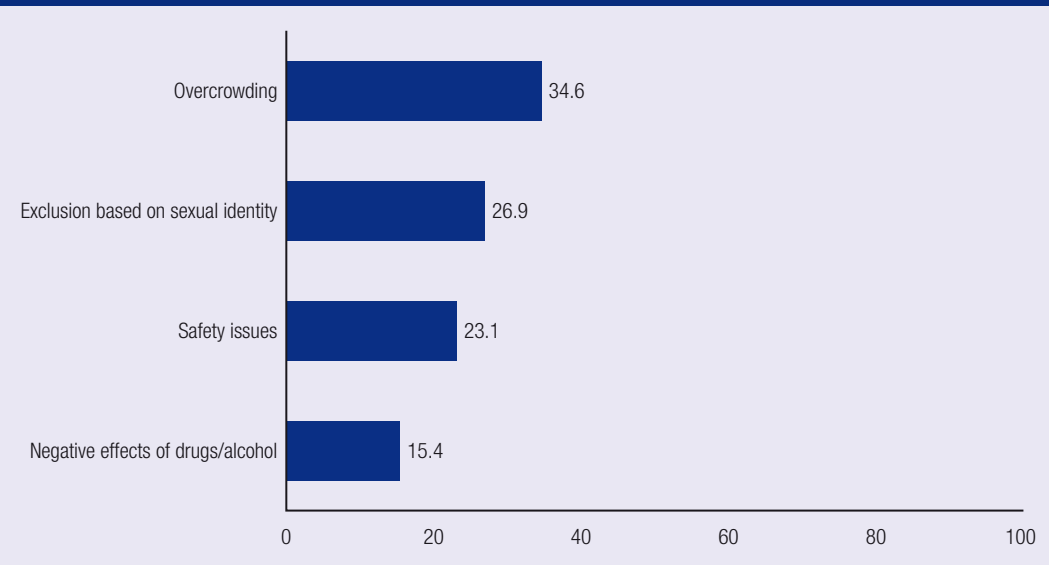
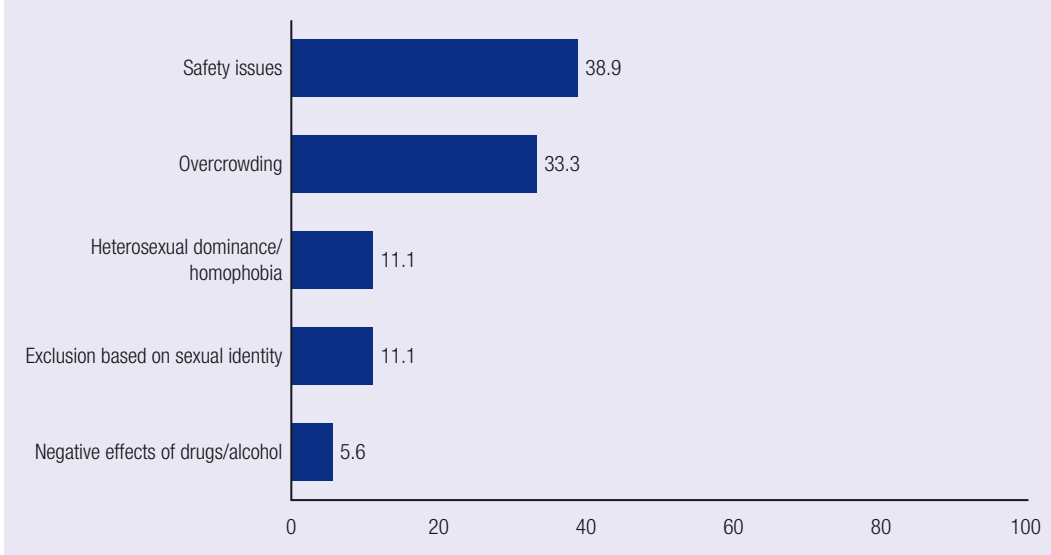


Figure 25 Relative frequency of respondents' reasons for avoiding all large public events (percent)



Appendix D: Questionnaire responses, section C

Q16 Opinion on the functioning of certain aspects of GLBT events

Figure 26 Respondents' opinions on the functioning of the Mardi Gras (percent)

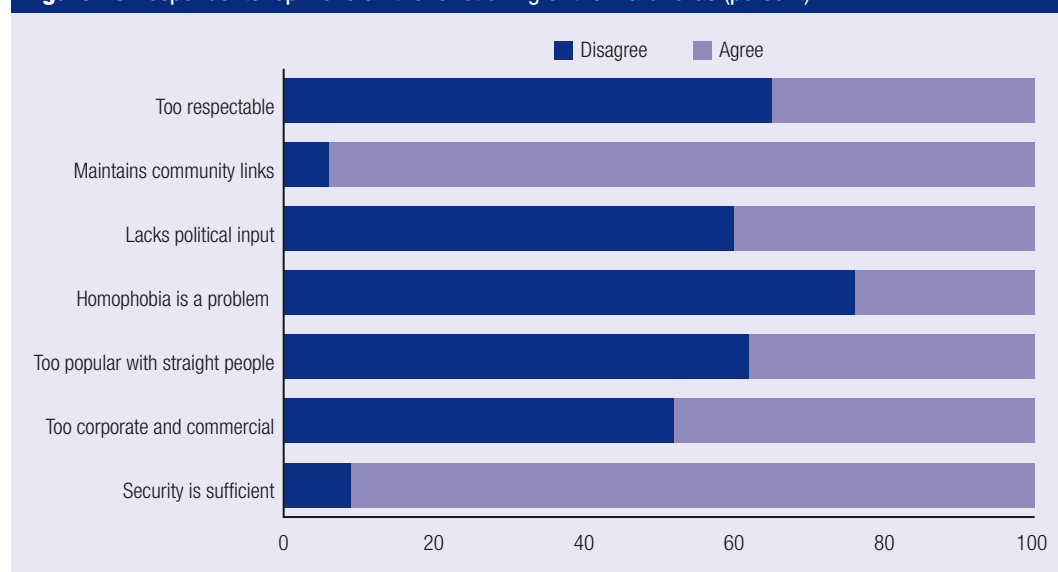
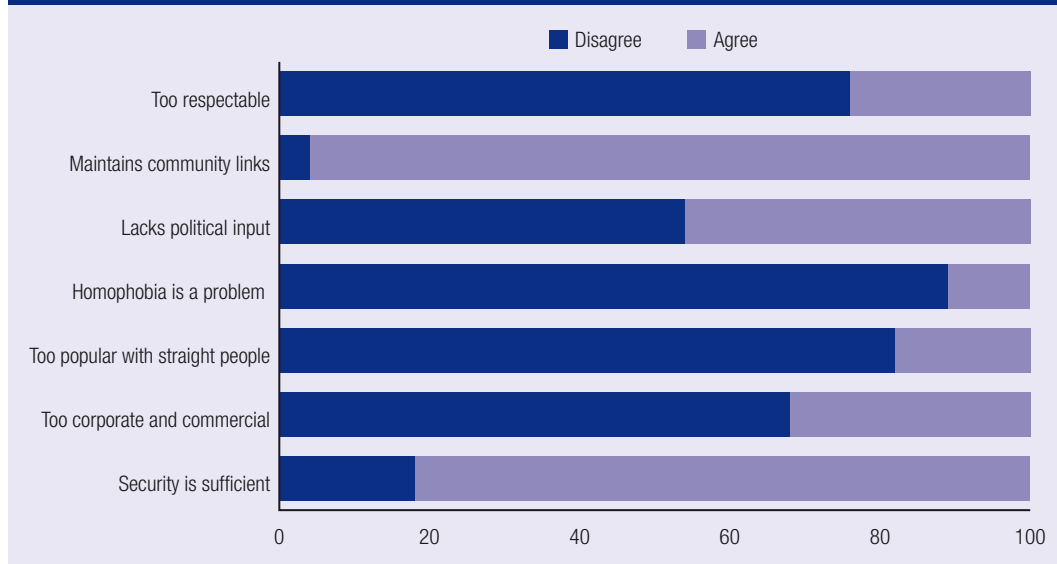


Figure 27 Respondents' opinions on the functioning of other GLBT events (percent)



Q17 Do you engage in greater risk taking?
(column percent)

| | Yes | No |
|--------|-----|----|
| Male | 56 | 58 |
| Female | 44 | 42 |

Q17 Do you engage in greater risk taking?
(percent)

| | Yes | No |
|-------|-----|-----|
| < 18 | 0 | 100 |
| 18–25 | 40 | 60 |
| 26–35 | 30 | 70 |
| 36–45 | 25 | 75 |
| 46–55 | 21 | 79 |
| 55 > | 29 | 71 |

Q22 Are there any things you do to reduce the chances of unfriendly attention? (column percent)

| | Yes | No |
|--------|-----|----|
| Male | 50 | 61 |
| Female | 50 | 39 |

Q22 Are there any things you do to reduce the chances of unfriendly attention? (percentage of each age group)

| | Yes | No |
|-------|-----|-----|
| < 18 | 100 | 100 |
| 18–25 | 41 | 59 |
| 26–35 | 43 | 57 |
| 36–45 | 33 | 67 |
| 46–55 | 36 | 64 |
| 55 > | 28 | 72 |

Appendix E: Questionnaire responses, section D

| Q26 Have you witnessed any incidents of harassment or physical violence that involved other people at any event? | | | Q27 Have you personally been the victim of harassment and/or physical violence at any event? | | |
|--|--------|---------|--|--------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | | Number | Percent |
| Yes | 134 | 40.6 | Yes | 91 | 28.7 |
| No | 196 | 59.4 | No | 226 | 71.3 |
| Total | 330 | | Total | 317 | |
| Q26g Was the incident you witnessed related to homophobia? | | | Q27g Was the incident you experienced related to homophobia? | | |
| | Number | Percent | | Number | Percent |
| Yes | 120 | 86.3 | Yes | 83 | 81.4 |
| No | 19 | 13.7 | No | 9 | 8.8 |
| Total | 139 | | Total | 102 | |

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Using the results of an internet-based survey, this report explores aspects of safety and hostility as perceived and experienced by participants at large-scale gay and lesbian events held in Australia.

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