



FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE NETWORK

Forcibly Displaced People Network: 2022-2023 Annual Report

About us

The Forcibly Displaced People Network (FDPN) is an Australian organisation dedicated to advocating for LGBTIQ+ individuals who have been forcibly displaced from their homes due to persecution based on their gender identity or sexual orientation.

FDPN proudly stands as the first registered organisation led by LGBTIQ+ people who have experienced forced displacement.

FDPN is at the forefront of efforts to raise awareness about unique challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ refugees, people seeking asylum, and migrants. Our work is geared towards promoting intersectional policies and services.

FDPN's role as a catalyst for change is unwavering. Through our national and international work, we are amplifying voices, paving an inclusive path towards fulfilling potential and shaping a future where every individual not only survives but thrives. With an unwavering commitment, we persistently work towards a future that upholds, celebrates, and safeguards the rights and dignity of forcibly displaced LGBTIQ+ people.

Our vision is to create a world where LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people are included in society, are safe, free, and supported.

Forcibly Displaced People Network Ltd.

ABN: 18640534023

E: admin@fdpn.org.au | W: <http://fdpn.org.au>

Twitter: @FDPN_LGBTIQ | Facebook & Instagram: @FDPN.LGBTIQ



Our team

Board of directors

Renee Dixon

they/them

Co-founder, Chairperson

Renee Dixon is an emerging academic and co-founder of the Forcibly Displaced People Network. More than ten years ago, they were forced to leave Ukraine.

Renee is at the forefront of efforts to raise awareness about the unique challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants, nationally and globally.

Renee advocates for intersectional policies and services to be provided to LGBTIQ+ individuals who have been uprooted from their homes to create a more just and equitable society.

Renee is leading the first organisation in Australia led by LGBTIQ+ displaced people. They are building bridges to make systematic changes for LGBTIQ+ displaced people.

Danijel Malbasa

He/him

retired from the Board in 2023

Danijel Malbasa has been working as an employment and workplace relations lawyer for over 12 years. Prior to joining Australia's largest blue collar trade union where he works as a Senior National Legal Officer, he worked in corporate law firms in Adelaide, Perth, and Melbourne.

He holds degrees in Law, International Relations and Masters in Law (Employment Law and Workplace Relations). He is admitted as a Solicitor and Barrister in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and in the High Court of Australia.

He regularly appears in the Fair Work Commission, Federal Court of Australia, Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal representing employees and organised labour.

Since 2009, driven by personal experience of living through multiple wars and spending several years living in a refugee camp, Danijel has been working on various initiatives to better support people seeking asylum and refugees in Australia. This included participating in the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) Advocacy and Power Program in 2010 aimed at empowering people with a lived experience to become advocates. He volunteered as a Migration Agent and Solicitor at various community legal centres, such as Refugee Legal Inc., assisting people seeking asylum to complete their protection visas.

His advocacy on forced displacement has been published in The Age, The Guardian, and in three books of short stories published in 2021 aimed at humanising the refugee experience.

Danijel regularly appears on panels discussing the plight of refugees including ASRC Telethon, Refugee Alternatives Conference, Communities in Cultural Transition Forum. He served on the advisory committee for the National Refugee-led Advocacy and Advisory Committee (NRAAG).

Lavanya Kala

She/her

Secretary

Lavanya Kala is an experienced policy and government relations professional. She has a Bachelor's in Communications (Social Inquiry) from the University of Technology Sydney and extensive knowledge of social policy, politics and not-for-profit management. Lavanya has particular expertise in migration, human rights and gender equity issues. In June 2018, Lavanya was selected as one of only two civil society representatives to attend the 38th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. She has also contributed to the 70th Session of CEDAW. Lavanya is a proud feminist, giving her time to a number of not-for-profits in the past decade aimed at supporting women and girls, including Mahboba's Promise, the National Committee for UN Women and the Harmony Alliance – Migrant and Refugee Women for Change.

Lotte Wolff

She/her

Board Director

Lotte has experience working in research, NGOs, international organisations and the private sector on public policy issues including migration, human rights and public health. She has a Master of Development Studies and has worked for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, contributing to ethical decision-making and culture change within the organisation.

She has conducted research into the refugee status determination process in the Netherlands and Australia and how decision-makers privilege queer identities according to heterosexist, cis, white, settler-colonial and Western norms. Lotte continues to pursue her academic interests at the intersections of postcolonial, gender and queer theory, and migration governance.

Mohamed Al Abri (محمد العبري)

He/him

Board Director

Mohamed (مُحَمَّد) is a queer leader who is passionate about community work, is also part of the FDPN Advisory Committee, The ACT LGBTIQ+ Ministerial Advisory Council and has volunteered for over 14 years with LGBTIQ+, Environmental, and community organisations.

Mohamed brings with him experience in stakeholder engagement and HR practice. Mohamed is of Arab heritage, grew up in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates and arrived in Australia in 2007 as an international student.

Olga Cherniak

She/her

Treasurer

Olga has extensive experience working in research, policy, and the not-for-profit sector on the issues of migration, settlement, gender, and health. She holds a Master of Science in Economic Behaviour and Governance from Kassel University in Germany.

Over the last few years, Olga has been working in the Australian migration and settlement sector, contributing to the improvement of migrant and refugee wellbeing and life in Australia. Olga also has experience working with migrant and refugee communities in several countries.

These experiences have given her relevant insights into best practice and gaps that different systems might have.

Olga has worked on healthcare cultural competencies, multilingual strategic emergency communications, violence prevention frameworks and improving educational outcomes for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Olga is committed to improving the settlement outcomes for migrants and refugees in Australia, with particular focus on LGBTIQ+ displaced people.

Ryan Figueiredo

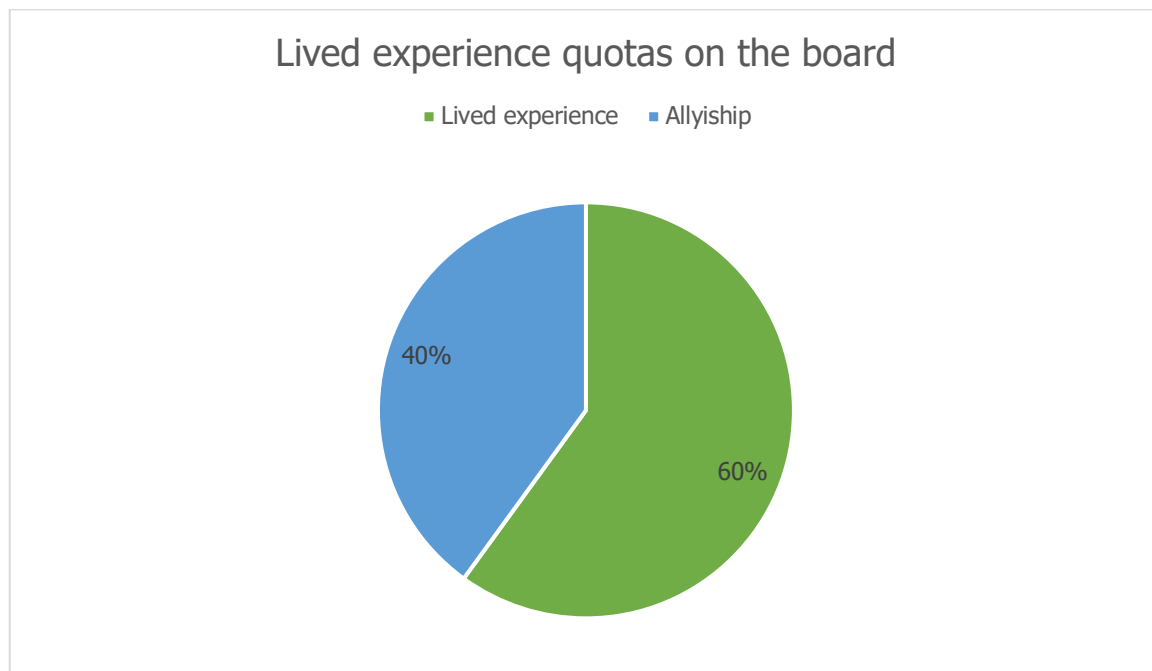
He/him

Board Director

Ryan is the founder and Executive Director of Equal Asia Foundation – a regional LGBTIQ+ non-profit think-tank and innovations incubator based in Bangkok. Equal AF's work is focused on future scoping and future-proofing around issues such as ageing, climate change, mental health, and financial citizenship for LGBTIQ+ communities in Asia.

Ryan has worked in the non-profit and management consulting space for over 18 years. At Equal AF, Ryan leads regional and national multi-specialisation initiatives that address some of the deep-seated inequities in the LGBTIQ+ movement. In 2018, Ryan was selected as one of the Human Rights Campaigns Global Innovators. In 2019, Thomson Reuters Foundation named him a Global Changemaker for his work. In 2020, he was recognised as a Global Change accelerator by the Resource Alliance. Ryan sits on a number of International LGBTIQ+ advisory and mentorship groups.

Ryan is a formerly displaced person and is now deputy chair of the women, gender and diversity working group of the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network. He is an alumnus of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and has trained in clinical trials at the London School of Tropical Medicine, and in population ageing at the University of Oxford.



Organisational capability growth

In a commitment to bolster our governance this financial year we invested in the capability building. Our directors completed comprehensive training through the Australian Institute of

Company Directors and training focused on financial management and their associated duties. To ensure compliance with the pertinent legislation set forth by the ACNC and ASIC, FDPN has meticulously developed internal policies and procedures.

Staff

In 2022-23 financial year we had 3 part-time staff (with one having finished with FDPN, and one on a short-term contract) and 3 contractors (with one having finished with FDPN).

Lived Experience Advisory Group

We have established a lived experience advisory group comprising 15 LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced individuals, funded by ACT Health Directorate. We extend our thanks to the dedication, commitment, and the quality of work that the Advisory group brings.

Membership

As of 30 June 2023 we had 21 members, out of which 52% were people with lived experience.

Gratitude to our volunteers

We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to the many individuals who generously devoted their time and expertise to enhance our endeavours. Special acknowledgment goes to the advisory group of the LGBTIQ+ settlement survey, with particular gratitude extended to Dr. Brandy Cochrane. Dr. Cochrane not only played a pivotal role in shaping the survey's design but also lead data analysis, data presentations, and provided unwavering support to FDPN in every conceivable manner.

We also extend our appreciation to the following members of the advisory group for their invaluable contributions to survey design and promotion:

- Eman Ezekiel
- Supul W.
- Elena Fox
- Umar Sherif
- Cristina de Nicolás Izquierdo
- Aisya Zaharin
- Sandra Elhelw Wright
- Julia Frumina
- Tristan Dang
- Dr. Saan Ecker
- Manu Kailom

Furthermore, we are deeply thankful to Che Bishop and more than 20 dedicated volunteers whose efforts ensured the seamless and exceptional experience of Queer Displacements.

Our gratitude also extends to our former board director, Danijel Malsaba, for his remarkable contributions to the organisation's development and policy work. Tristan Dang deserves special mention for his outstanding work on submissions.

We would like to recognise the unwavering commitment of Kausalya S., Noushin B., Alex D., Eman E., and Li-Min Lee to the mission of our organisation.

To all those who have been part of FDPN's journey, we offer our sincere and heartfelt thanks. Your support has been invaluable, and we look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts in the future.

Gratitude to our funders

This financial year we focused on securing larger grants addressing systemic issues.

We thank the following funders who have supported our work:

- ACT Health Directorate: a project on increasing sexual health literacy and reducing risky behaviours for LGBTIQ+ migrants and refugees" (until 2024)
- Pride Foundation of Australia: supported the employment of a project coordinator and an admin assistant (completed) and provided secretariat services for the national coalition on LGBTIQ+ migration and asylum justice (in progress).
- ACT Government Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs: a capacity-building project for the organisation and LGBTIQ+ displaced people (until 2025)
- Hands Across Canberra and Chief Minister's Charitable Fund: community retreats (until 2023).
- Asylum Seekers Resource Centre: on a capacity-building project for the financial health of the organisation (until 2024).
- STARTTS: development of a self-advocacy manual for LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people (until 2023).
- The Social Policy Group: development of an online training for interpreters (until 2023).
- Department of Home Affairs: partial small funding of the analysis of the LGBTIQ+ settlement survey (completed).

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous donors whose unwavering support empowers us to continue our vital mission and make a positive impact on the lives of those we serve.

Flagship Projects

Queer Displacements Conference

The Queer Displacements Conference stands as a unique and vital gathering in the Asia Pacific, amplifying the voices and experiences of forcibly displaced LGBTIQ+ individuals. With a diverse representation spanning Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, Afghanistan, Thailand, Canada, Ukraine, the US, South Korea, Nepal, Germany, Scotland, and beyond when considering our homelands, the event drew a robust attendance of 200 participants. Of these, 53 individuals shared their firsthand experiences, and 34 received full funding covering travel, accommodations, per diems, and conference registration, enabling their participation in the conference.

The conference served as a platform for candid and imperative discussions surrounding the persistent challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced individuals when settling in host countries and their homelands. It resounded with resolute calls for the recognition and

resourcing of LGBTIQ+ refugee-led initiatives, emphasising their irreplaceable role in advocating for the community. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the numerous individuals and organisations who played pivotal roles in shaping the Queer Displacements Conference into a truly community-centred event.

We would like to acknowledge the invaluable partnerships with the Western Sydney University Social Justice Network and Equal AF, which were instrumental in bringing the 2023 Queer Displacements conference to fruition.

Lastly, we express our sincere appreciation to our esteemed sponsors, including ACON, the Department of Home Affairs, ANU Gender Institute, Meridian ACT, MYAN Australia, Pride Foundation Australia, Rainbow Railroad, Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA), Settlement Council of Australia, Settlement Services International - SSI, STARTTS, Canada Down Under, Thorne Harbour Health, and Welcoming Australia, whose support made this event possible and impactful.

LGBTIQ+ Community Refugee Sponsorship

We have forged a partnership with Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA) to facilitate the community sponsorship of LGBTIQ+ refugees. LGBTIQ+ refugees often encounter discrimination, employment barriers, and high rates of gender-based violence, both prior to seeking safety and after arriving in Australia. The 2023 FDPN national survey underscored the challenges faced by this group, including isolation stemming from insufficient support within ethnic or LGBTIQ+ communities. Our collaborative efforts with CRSA will position us as a central resource and capacity-building organisation, dedicated to achieving equitable settlement outcomes, mitigating potential harm, and nurturing a more inclusive and welcoming society for all.

Sponsoring an LGBTIQ+ refugee through the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP) presents an opportunity to champion the rights and empowerment of displaced individuals. By joining forces with FDPN, we can ensure that the settlement experiences of LGBTIQ+ refugees in Australia are enriched, ultimately contributing to the creation of a more inclusive society.

Learn more and get involved: <https://fdpn.org.au/thrive-together/>

Impact to Date:

- 1 LGBTIQ+ person resettled and 4 waiting to be matched with groups.
- 11 information sessions held with 45 people participating
- 3 training delivered to sponsor groups

We were able to expand our reach and form new connections through this project.

Inhabiting Two Worlds At Once

In 2021 FDPN ran the first Australia-wide survey to comprehensively capture the experiences of displacement and settlement of LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people.

The aim of this survey was to collect information about the experiences and barriers of LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people in Australia so we can advocate for more welcoming and inclusive support.

This is a very important survey. Such comprehensive information has not yet been collected in Australia.

We collected the comprehensive data about LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people in Australia, their experiences in Australia and where they seek help. Collected data will be used to advocate for better support for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. This matters because we, as LGBTIQ+ displaced people, remain unseen and unheard in Australia where we deserve equal opportunities to call Australia home.

The development of the survey was funded by the ACT Government Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs. Parts of the analysis after the data was collected was supported by the Department of Home Affairs.

Download the final report here: <https://fdpn.org.au/survey-lgbtiqua-displacement/>

Our work

We Mobilise, Educate and Lead.

Mobilise

National Coalition on LGBTIQ+ Asylum and Migration Justice

We have been funded by the Pride Foundation of Australia to provide secretariat to the National Coalition on LGBTIQ+ Asylum and Migration Justice. Currently, we are working on the development of Roadmap for Action, a comprehensive set of recommendation to achieve inclusion, safety and justice for LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people.

Policy and Advocacy on LGBTIQ+ Forced Displacement

- We made representations to the Department of Home Affairs on various LGBTIQ+ displacement issues.
- We made submissions on migration and humanitarian policy with the focus on LGBTIQ+ displacement issues.

International Impact

- We attended the follow-up roundtable of the 2021 UNHCR Global Roundtable on LGBTIQ+ Forced Displacement.
- We began planning a workshop for UN member states and international NGO on effective pledging with a focus on LGBTIQ+ displaced people in preparation to the Global Refugee Forum. The workshop will be organised in partnership with Equal Asia Foundation and R-Seat in Geneva, Switzerland.

Educate

Evidence Building

In addition to convening the 2023 Queer Displacements Conference and launching the Inhabiting Two Worlds report, we built the evidence on the issues of LGBTIQ+ displacements through the following:

- Conducted a community consultation on competencies for settlement services with LGBTIQ+ displaced people, commissioned by the Settlement Council of Australia.
- Created unique content on LGBTIQ+ forced displacement through social media, newsletters, and blogs.

- Participated in events across Australia and conducted media interviews.
- Held a stall for World Refugee Day at Parliament House.
- Presented FDPN at the Sydney World Pride Human Rights Conference.

Lead

Capacity building and community events for LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people

- Ran Let's connect retreat for LGBTIQ+ forcibly displaced people (with funding from Hands Across Canberra)
- Delivered a training on grants writing (with funding from Pride Foundation of Australia)
- Delivered a training on self-advocacy (with funding from Pride Foundation of Australia)
- Organised the first ever Mardi Gras Float
- Distributed access to the learning subscription MasterClass for free
- Run an Online dating and safety workshop
- Run Safe and Healthy community forums on sexual health
- Facilitated connections, referrals to relevant services for community
- Continued the operation of the LGBTIQ+ Advisory Committee

Building capacity of services

- Continued engaging services to pass the online training module for services on the inclusion of the issues of LGBTIQ+ forced displacement. In this financial year 298 people passed the training.
- Delivered training sessions for NSW Health Department
- Partnered with Settlement Council of Australia to deliver a range of professional development session for their membership comprising of one webinar and 2 trainings.
- Delivered lectures on LGBTIQ+ forced displacement for students of Monash University and Curtin University
- Delivered a series of trainings for services as a part of the Asia Pacific Network of Refugees training.