

PRIDE INTERVIEW

In the lead up to WorldPride Deniz Agraz spoke to Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan about her interests and passions for LGBTQ+ initiatives and some of her recent research.



Can you talk about your research interests and how your passion for LGBTQ+ initiatives started?

I research the intersections of Indigeneity and queerness as they are related to so-called Australia. My interest in exploring this field came about due to my own experiences as a queer Indigenous person. I am interested in identifying how these identities co-exist while often invisible, erased, and silenced. My research is about raising awareness, ensuring inclusivity, and amplifying the voices of Indigenous LGBTQ+

peoples and communities.

Tell us about your most recent project.

One of my most recent projects was in collaboration BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation alongside research colleagues Karen Soldatic and Linda Briskman, which investigated the social and emotional wellbeing of Indigenous queer youth. We took a strength-based approach and interviewed a group of Indigenous queer people aged 14 to 25 to capture their experiences and needs regarding their social, cultural, and emotional wellbeing, we asked our participants what makes them feel well and whether they feel supported.

A significant number of participants reported not feeling supported by the youth and health service providers. Experiences of discrimination and cultural inappropriateness are commonplace for Indigenous LGBTQ+ people, and these negative experiences can lead to poorer social and emotional wellbeing.

While there's limited funding allocated to/for queer services, those services do not adequately consider the needs and wants of Indigenous LGBTQ+ people. My research provides an evidence base that is aimed to progress, lobby and

advocate for the needs and wants of Indigenous LGBTQ+ people.

What are some of the challenges of studying this area?

I think, one of the main challenges of studying this area is that Indigenous queer people are seen as 'statistically insignificant'. Due to low numbers, there aren't a lot of affordances allocated, and the group is missed along people's radars as being important. However, in part, the reason for this low number is because Indigenous queer people do not want to participate in some of these spaces due to the lack of quality.

Much of my research is about uncovering why Indigenous people are not engaging with these services and exposing those reasons, so these challenges can be overturned.

How do you engage with your research participants?

I engage with my research participants in multiple ways and on multiple levels. It's an interesting field for me to work at, because I am both an insider and an outsider. I work with a lot of people that I am personally connected with. However, I spend a lot of time building trust with those who don't know me. I respect the

participants who work with me, and it is both a privilege and a responsibility to serve them.

“Love, joy, and pride in what I do! Knowing that I contributed to making the world to be better is my biggest motivation”

– Corrinne Sullivan on what motivates her.

For people and services who work with or provide services for the LGBTQ+ communities, what would you like to tell them/what would you like them to take from your research?

That we matter, and the service providers need to do better! Not doing anything is being complicit. The change starts with listening to what Indigenous queer peoples need and want and responding accordingly.

What can you say about the impact of your research?

Some of my research has been utilised by community groups, such as BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation, to advocate for Indigenous LGBTQ+ people. Alongside an array of research publication, we also co-produced with community partners BlaQ the '[Dalarinji – Community Roadmaps](#)' which includes a set of strategies and actions to drive transformative change that aims to reflect the perspectives and aspirations of Indigenous LGBTIQ+ young



people and the community more broadly.

How do you feel about Sydney hosting the 2023 WorldPride?

Having WorldPride in Sydney this year is the catalyst for bringing attention not only to the vitality of our community but also sets an agenda for what is essential in this nation-state and across Oceania. There are Indigenous queer people across the South Pacific where the laws still prohibit homosexual activity, and I hope our work will advocate for Indigenous peoples globally.

Any WorldPride events people should be keeping an eye on?

Absolutely! There will be several opportunities for Indigenous queer creatives to exhibit their talents. Some of these events are open to everyone, but some are only for First Nations people. For example, check out the program for Marri [Madung](#)

[Butbut – Many Brave Hearts](#), which will be held at Carriageworks during Sydney WorldPride 2023.

- Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan

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