



14 October 2022

ACON RESPONSE TO MEDIA WATCH

Statements to be attributed to ACON CEO Nicolas Parkhill

ACON describes the AWEI as being closely modelled on the Stonewalls' Diversity Champions Workplace Equality Index. Further, the AWEI is 're-calibrated' every three years with 'changes in current Australian practice and that which is measured by peer organisations internationally'. Do those organisations include Stonewall/Diversity Champions program? How closely does ACON collaborate with Stonewall on the index?

The association between ACON's Pride in Diversity and Stonewall is historical.

The instruments used by Stonewall informed the set-up of the process utilised by the AWEI more than a decade ago. Since then, the AWEI has been localised to Australia. It has changed significantly over the last 13 years to reflect the Australian context.

The AWEI is no longer guided by the Stonewall index.

Currently, there exists no ongoing collaboration between Pride in Diversity and Stonewall on the development or implementation of the AWEI.

We review like-international indices to see where international best practice lies to ensure multinational member organisations based in Australia are aligned with their international offices.

What is ACON's relationship with the ABC? Does ACON provide the ABC with advice / guidance on editorial, corporate, or recruitment language?

We have not, and do not, provide any advice or guidance whatsoever on any editorial matters at the ABC, including on direction, coverage, policy, language or style or anything else related to the ABC's editorial processes.

How the ABC determines, administers, and implements its editorial standards is a matter for the ABC.

Our relationship with the ABC is that it is a member of our Pride in Diversity program, which assists employers with the LGBTQ component of their diversity and inclusion strategy. This is similar to other programs that assist organisations with women (gender), First Nations people, people with disability, and cultural and linguistically diverse components of an organisation's employee diversity and inclusion strategy.

We provide language advice only on best practice and inclusive language as it relates to human resources and workplace matters.

Pride in Diversity members strive to be inclusive of all employees and create inclusive workplaces for all Australians. Pride in Diversity provides members with LGBTQ subject matter expertise in this aspect of their diversity and inclusion strategy.

Has the ABC been marked down or lost points in the AWEI for critical or negative coverage of LGBTQI issues?

The manner in which the ABC covers LGBTQI issues editorially, or the tone or angle in which they are presented, does not impact their AWEI assessment.

Has the ABC been rewarded or earned points in the AWEI for positive coverage of LGBTQI issues?

The manner in which the ABC covers LGBTQI issues editorially, or the tone or angle in which they are presented, does not impact their AWEI assessment.

Two media initiatives by the ABC – *Innies and Outies* podcast and the Mardi Gras broadcast – each received a point.

Points were given for the ABC's internal communication strategies on its intranet that highlighted staff initiatives around diversity and inclusion.

What did the ABC pay to ACON/Pride in Diversity in the last financial year for program membership, training products, in house training/ consultancies, award attendance and conferences?

In the 2021-2022 financial year, we received from the ABC:

- \$6600 on 2 July 2021 for Pride in Diversity membership renewal for 2021-2022
- \$4317 on 17 August 2021 for tickets to the Pride in Practice Conference
- \$1727 on 2 September 2021 for tickets to the Pride in Practice Conference
- \$2964 on 11 April 2022 for tickets to the Australian LGBTQ Inclusion Awards
- \$6600 on 23 June 2022 for Pride in Diversity membership renewal for 2022-2023

Why did ACON/Pride in Diversity withdraw from the Uni of Melbourne panel discussion, Pride and Prejudice in Policy?

The health and wellbeing of our staff and communities are paramount. Commentary on social media about the panel discussion in the lead up to the event had turned into a debate about trans people rather than our diversity and inclusion work.

It is harmful for our communities when their right to exist is debated in a public forum. Following a reassessment of risk, we determined that our participation in the event could compromise the safety of our staff and people in our communities. Safeguarding the welfare of our people was our top priority.

It should be noted that other panelists also withdrew from this event.

SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT

The goal of *Pride in Diversity* has always been to work with employers to create more inclusive workplaces for LGBTQ employees. *Pride in Diversity* is not a public advocacy program. Its remit is strictly related to workplace diversity and inclusion practice.

Diversity and inclusion programs for people of diverse sexualities and genders have come under sustained attacks globally. These are concerted efforts to undermine progress for LGBTQ

communities with a particular focus on stopping the advancement of the rights and recognition of trans and gender diverse people, particularly trans women.

ACON is proud of the work we do in improving the health and wellbeing of sexuality and gender diverse communities. We know that health and wellbeing outcomes of LGBTQ people are directly related to experiences of stigma, prejudice, discrimination, and abuse in many settings, including the workplace.

Pride in Diversity's 2022 Australian Workplace Equality Survey of 45,000 employees showed a downward trend in the percentage of people being out to everyone who they work with, falling from 66% in 2020 to 58% in 2022. Another 33% said they felt they wouldn't be accepted by some members of their team, and 19% said being out at work would negatively impact their career progression.

Further, results from 2021 found that only 28% of respondents would consider themselves an active ally to LGBTQ people, 11% did not feel managers/team leaders would address bullying and 14% of respondents witnessed negative jokes/commentary targeting LGBTQ people.

Research also demonstrates a link between LGBTQ Australians not feeling safe at work and negative mental health outcomes. La Trobe University research from 2020 found 57.2% of more than 6,000 surveyed LGBTQ people were experiencing high or very high levels of psychological distress, while 41.9% reported thoughts of suicide over the past 12 months.

We will continue to deliver services and programs that improve and strengthen our communities' health and wellbeing – including initiatives that foster diversity and inclusion – and provide support to those that share our purpose.

ENDS