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4 MAR 2016

NSW Police Force apologises to the '78ers

Just over a week after the NSW government and Fairfax media issued their apologies to the '78ers, on the eve of Mardi Gras 2016, the NSW Police Force issued their apology.

The NSW Police Force is marching proudly this weekend with the LGBTI community as we celebrate this year's Mardi Gras.

We will also be providing what we hope will be a very safe and secure environment for participants and spectators to enjoy themselves - free from any troublemakers.

This year's Mardi Gras does have special significance given the apology delivered to the original participants – the 78ers – issued by the NSW Parliament a week ago.

That was a very special moment for that group and for the broader LGBTI community.

I can tell you that I spoke with our Commissioner this morning – and I have his full support in saying that the NSW Police Force is sorry for the way that first Mardi Gras was policed back in 1978.

For that – we apologise - and we acknowledge the pain and hurt caused by police actions back then.

We do understand the apology issued by the Parliament was on behalf of all NSW government agencies but we felt it important that the NSW Police perspective is well understood.
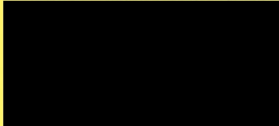
I work very closely with the LGBTI community and I understand the depth of feeling about the role of police back in 1978. Our relationship these days is healthy, positive and progressive. That wasn't the case back then.

Today's Force is a very different organisation. We are diverse and we're proud of that diversity.

We have come a long, long way. We have had our own journey.

Last year we celebrated 25 years of our Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer Program. These officers do wonderful work around the state and I know their work is very much appreciated.

We are very happy that our officers are welcomed again as part of the Mardi Gras – and I can assure you they will march with pride tomorrow night.

Superintendent Tony Crandell
NSW Police Force
Corporate Sponsor Sexuality & Gender Diversity