



Pride Toronto response to CAP recommendations

Feb. 17, 2011

This is a historic moment for Pride Toronto and our community. Rather than continue down a divisive path which other Prides have taken, resulting in their collapse or a split into two separate cultural and political events, we in Toronto have decided to come together to reaffirm that our Pride is important and to search for ways to improve how Pride serves our diverse communities.

Pride is simultaneously a cultural and political event, and it is often difficult to achieve a balance of those two forces that satisfies everyone. But Pride Toronto's top priority remains service to the LGBTTIQQ2SA community.

I would like to state that the Board of Pride Toronto formally accepts the recommendations of the Community Advisory Panel in principle. We have not yet had the time to review the full report in great detail, but we accept the progressive spirit of the report and its many well-considered recommendations.

We are pleased to see that several of the recommendations align with the priorities that the Board has already set for itself this year, including greater fiscal oversight, greater engagement with the community, and a reduction in the amount of public programming. We agree that the most essential elements of Pride are the three parades.



Before I tell you what concrete actions we plan to take immediately, I would like to make a very sincere apology on behalf of Pride Toronto to the entire community for the events of the past 12 months which have proven so difficult.

We fully acknowledge that mistakes were made. We have not had adequate financial controls in place and that has threatened the viability of Pride.

Tonight, we commit to an overhaul of our financial practices and full repayment of last year's deficit before 2014.

We did not take a firm and consistent stance with regard to political messaging in the Parade. We apologize for the uncertainty and negative reactions many people experienced as a result.

We have not reached out as we should have to our marginalized communities. I would like to extend a special apology to members of the Trans community for the less than respectful way that Pride has treated you. We failed to consult with Trans people on many issues over the years and that has resulted in a great lack of trust in Pride.

Likewise, our relationship with racialized communities, especially Blockorama, has at times been disrespectful and not inclusive. Our outreach to certain other groups has also been weak or non-existent. We apologize to everyone for our past failures to engage and listen to many of our primary stakeholders and



supporters. From this point forward we will strive to reflect our community's diversity in our organizing team and the many events of the Pride Festival.

Now, I would like to outline the actions that we plan to take immediately in response to the report.

First, we will immediately recruit community leaders to form the recommended CAP Implementation/Policy Advisory Committee. (recc. 26)

Second, together with them, we will commence search for a new Executive Director. (recc. 10)

Third, with the Implementation Committee, we will consult with our staff and committee coordinators to solicit their input on how to best implement CAP recommendations. Implementation of the recommendations will be done within our resources, and in the short, medium- and long-term.

Fourth, we will thoroughly review the 2011 festival budget with professional financial consultants to ensure that our revenue and expense projections are realistic, and that the budget includes a substantial repayment of a portion of the deficit in this year. (recc. 18)

Fifth, we will set up a new WorldPride 2014 planning committee that includes community stakeholders. (recc. 22)



Sixth, we commit to delivering a downscaled Pride Festival in 2011. (recc. 1)

We will need some time to work with the Implementation Committee to review and plan how to actualize CAP's other recommendations. Certain initiatives may require more public consultations, by-law changes, approval from our Members etc. but we commit to responding as quickly as we can to the rest of the report.

Pride Toronto thanks the members of the Community Advisory Panel for the heroic effort they have made in holding the consultations and delivering this extensive report for us. We were exhausted just reading it, I can't imagine how many hours you have selflessly contributed to ensuring the well-being of Pride. We thank you for supporting us and leading us to this turning point in our history.

We also want to thank every person who attended a CAP consultation meeting and honestly shared their views. We have never had a feedback mechanism before and we definitely need to continue hearing back from you. We now know how much the community is invested in Pride and we are grateful to hear your views.

It is our hope that together with the community, Pride can now begin to write a new chapter of reconciliation and positivity.



As we build toward hosting WorldPride in 2014 we will need you more than ever. The event will showcase Toronto to thousands of visitors and will include a strong focus on human rights around the world and a kick-ass celebration of our proud history, our beautiful diverse communities and our fantastic creativity.

I would like to reach out to all members of the community to participate more actively in Pride. We need you to volunteer, join our planning committees, become Members and run for Board positions. We can only become more inclusive if you join with us in the many aspects of Pride Toronto. It is a huge event and only happens because of the hard work of many, many volunteers throughout the year working with our small but dedicated staff team.

And, if we do this right, we can create a successful new structure for engaged community relations that can serve as a model for other troubled Pride organizations around the world.

Thank you.