

## NSW Health Minister Gives Green Light to LBGTQI March

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Today the **NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard** has given a green light to a Sydney LBGTQI protest against homophobic legislation on Saturday, agreeing with protest organisers that the right to protest can be balanced with public health and safety risks.

The NSW Health Minister's exemption can be read [here](#).

This is the first time the NSW Health Minister has granted an exemption to a protest during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the Minister's exemption, NSW Police withdrew their opposition to the [Take Over Oxford Street](#) march.

Previous cases in the NSW Supreme Court, including a National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) [rally](#) in Sydney and a #BlackLivesMatter [rally](#) in Newcastle, have also concluded that the freedoms of speech and assembly can be maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Protest organisers, [Pride in Protest](#), have said in their [press release](#):

“This is a massive win for not only the right to protest, but for the queer community to say that the fight against transphobia and homophobia cannot wait. The police will not stand in the way of our community demanding our rights this Mardi Gras.”

[National Justice Project](#) lawyer **George Newhouse**, who represented the protest organisers in court, has said:

“Today the NSW Health Minister has taken action to safeguard the LBGTQI community's right to be heard. We congratulate Mr Hazzard's commitment to balancing health and safety risks with the right to protest.”

“The National Justice Project has been central in securing COVID-safe protest rights on three occasions. We hope that this decision by the Health Minister provides a clear indication to the NSW Police that in future cases the freedoms of speech and assembly can be balanced with community health and safety.”

National Justice Project Solicitor **Eric Zhang** has said:

“Our clients are committed to protecting the health and safety of protesters and the community, and they have developed a COVID-safe plan that details how people will register, wear masks, sanitise, and maintain social distance during the protest.”



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**05/03/2021**

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