

# IRIS NETWORK CELEBRATES DIVERSITY IN HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS OFFICES AROUND THE GLOBE

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Firm news

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The Herbert Smith Freehills IRIS Network is today marking IDAHOT Day with celebrations across its global offices. The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT) is the largest LGBTI solidarity event in the world, and the firm events in offices across EMEA, Asia and Australia are a reflection of its longstanding commitment to LGBTI inclusion.

Justin D'Agostino, Global Head of Disputes, Regional Managing Partner Australia & Asia, and the firm's IRIS Network Executive Sponsor, noted the important role the Network plays in the lives of LGBTI staff and allies in overcoming homophobia and discrimination.

"Out in the world we see daily reminders of the challenges that LGBTI individuals face. These events for IDAHOT Day represent our commitment to, and celebration of, gender identity and sexual orientation diversity and our belief that true inclusion means everyone should feel safe to bring their 'whole selves' to work."

Some of the events the firm is holding include:

- In **London** the IRIS Network is launching its charity partnership with FFLAG (Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), a voluntary organisation which provides support to parents and their LGBT children. IDAHOT 2017 has a focus on families and the event will align the aims of IDAHOT Day with the strategic goal of the partnership with FFLAG.

- Herbert Smith Freehills' **Melbourne** office is celebrating IDAHOT Day with a panel discussion of leading lesbians in the field of sport and business, facilitated by the Executive Director of the Victorian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Catherine Dixon. Panellists will include Kelly Applebee, former Victorian cricket captain and Diversity Manager for the AFL Players' Association, and Fiona Smith, leading business executive, and former Company Secretary at Murray Goulburn and Deputy Company Secretary BHP Billiton.
- In **Hong Kong**, Herbert Smith Freehills is a sponsor of the Hong Kong LGBT+ Inclusion Awards. The awards are presented as a gala dinner at Island Shangri-La, and as a member of the judging panel Justin D'Agostino will present the LGBT+ Executive Sponsor Award.
- In **Perth**, the IRIS Network has partnered with Woodside's LGBTI network, Spectrum, to host a joint IDAHOT day event for employees of Woodside and Herbert Smith Freehills. Woodside and Herbert Smith Freehills will be joined by other members of the LGBTI and allies networks from other organisation in Perth including Shell and GE and will also hear from PRIDE WA on its upcoming initiatives to support LGBTI inclusion in Western Australia.
- The firm's **Brisbane** office is hosting guest speaker Nat Cook, Olympic gold and bronze medallist for beach volleyball and the first Australian woman to compete at five Olympic Games. As a proud member of the LGBTI community, she will share her insights about the importance of promoting inclusion in sport, and the far-reaching benefits this has for the community.
- In **Germany**, Managing Partner Dr Ralf Thaeter is marking the event with a reiteration to all staff about the firm's commitment to LGBTI inclusion and a celebration of the themes of IDAHOT day.

Mr D'Agostino added: "Our global IRIS Network provides an important and safe platform to connect LGBTI partners and staff and their allies from all of our offices. We launched the IRIS Network from our regional networks in December 2016 to bring together our regional networks and create an alliance that allows for the sharing of ideas, resources and support."

First created in 2004, IDAHOT Day is observed on May 17 annually and draws attention to the violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTI people internationally.



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**As a graduate who is constantly learning and meeting people, IDAHOT Day is a comforting reminder that I can always be myself around my peers and colleagues. It's always reassuring to know that individuality is valued by everyone around me."**

**JULIEN ROSENDAHL**



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**This year, the theme of IDAHOT is family. What a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the contribution and value that each of our colleagues bring as members of our diverse and inclusive HSF family."**

**BIANCA JANOVIC**



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**IDAHOT day enables our firm to celebrate our unwavering values that make every partner, employee and client worthy of respect.”**

**ANTHONY WOOD**



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**I am proud to be part of a firm that has been at the forefront of LGBT inclusion for over a decade and which continues to lead the way.”**

**JUSTIN D'AGOSTINO**



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**“ I feel very lucky every day when stepping into our Paris office and being able to be who I am. I am thankful that the firm asks us to promote our values of respect and inclusion, as it is not always common to discuss LGBT issues in the workplace.”**

**HANIF BADOURALY**



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**“ With a theme like family this year, IDAHOT day reminds us that within the LGBT community family does not just reference something you are born into, but it also relates to those we choose to surround ourselves with and make our family. Every day when I walk into my office, I am grateful that I chose to be surrounded by colleagues, mentors, and friends who celebrate and support me and my community.”**

**SEAN IZOR**



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**“ It is in each other’s shadows that we flourish” says an old local proverb. Here, that’s true. Our Herbert Smith Freehills family brings together: LGBT people who are able to be themselves and thrive, a lot of passionate allies, and management committed to diversity and inclusion.”**

**JUDE COPELAND**