



OUT LEADERSHIP

APAC SUMMITS

SYDNEY · TOKYO · HONG KONG

POST-SUMMIT REPORT





Todd at the 2023 Asia Summit Hong Kong VIP Dinner hosted by HSBC

Dear Leaders,

In October and November of 2023, Out Leadership returned to Sydney, Tokyo, and Hong Kong for our 9th Annual Australia Summit and our 10th Annual Asia Summit.

The Australia Summit marked our second voyage down under this year, a reprise of February’s visit for the 45th Anniversary of Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras and Sydney WorldPride. Since our inaugural Summit in Australia nine years ago, Out Leadership has proudly partnered with remarkable organizations to champion marriage equality and combat religious discrimination. Post-WorldPride, we’ve harnessed substantial momentum through our OutQUORUM board diversity initiative, fostering unprecedented inclusivity within Australian businesses. At our return this October, we were proud to continue advocating for further inclusion in a country with a strong appetite for progress.

The Asia Summit was bookended by critical advocacy wins. As the Summit began, major judicial victories in both Japanese and Hong Kong courts further solidified decades of grassroots activism, behind-the-scenes negotiation, and backing from business leaders in support of LGBTQ+ equality. At the Summit’s close, Hong Kong welcomed thousands of LGBTQ+ athletes from around the world as host of the 2023 Gay Games to proudly showcase the strength and pride of the LGBTQ+ community in defiance of vocal but shrinking opposition.

We still have enormous strides to make in achieving full equality for LGBTQ+ people across the world. Sodomy laws remain in place across much of the Asia-Pacific region, and same-sex marriage is only fully recognized in Taiwan, Australia, and New Zealand. However, I am heartened by the dedication I see from leaders like you – making concrete investments in advancing LGBTQ+ equality day after day, and year after year. Thank you for your support.

In Service,

Todd Sears
Founder & CEO
Out Leadership

The Out Leadership 2023 Australia Summit was hosted by:



The Out Leadership 2023 Asia Summit was hosted by:



Out Leadership Global Sponsors:



Key Learnings

Advancing LGBTQ+ Inclusion in the Board Room

At Out Leadership, we believe that a company's governors must be representative of all key stakeholders and recognize a multitude of metrics for diversity.

OutQUORUM aims to eliminate structural roadblocks to board diversity by measuring both the number of sitting LGBTQ+ corporate directors and the number of companies that include gender identity and sexual orientation as a metric for board diversity, as well as providing resources and programming to create the demand and supply needed to address the absence of diverse representation in the boardroom. We know that more diverse leadership teams make better business decisions, and that means improved profits for you and your organization.

Out Leadership's annual report on LGBTQ+ Board Diversity began measuring the representation of LGBTQ+ people on corporate boards in Australia and Hong Kong for the first time in 2023. Currently, just **5.3% of component companies in the Hang Seng have LGBTQ+ inclusive board diversity policies. In Australia, just seven companies on the ASX 200 (3.5%) included**

LGBTQ+ leaders in their definition of board diversity.

Earlier this year, we celebrated 45 years of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras with a historic gathering of **45 CEOs to advocate for greater LGBTQ+ inclusion in Australia**. We challenged Australian business leaders to expand that number to 100% of companies on the exchange by 2024.

In the United States, the OutQUORUM data has been instrumental in driving the adoption of LGBTQ+ inclusive diversity policies. For example, between 2022 and 2023, **the number of companies that included sexual orientation and gender identity in their definition of diversity increased by 1,556% on the Nasdaq and 466% on the Fortune 1000.**

These measurements are a benchmark and a foundation for progress. As we call attention to gaps in representation, we can remove the barriers to inclusion and work toward the placement of LGBTQ+ individuals into senior governance roles.



(L-R): **Evie Bruce**, Group General Council, Head of Legal and Governance Group, Member of Executive Committee, Macquarie Group Ltd. and **Todd Sears** at the 2023 Australia Summit VIP Dinner hosted by Macquarie

Celebrating 10 Years of Advocacy in Asia

Out Leadership convened the first-ever LGBTQ+ business summit in Asia in 2013, co-hosted by **HSBC** and **Barclays**, which sparked a renewed debate about LGBTQ+ equality in Hong Kong when HSBC illuminated its iconic, skyline-defining headquarters into a giant rainbow. The summit expanded in 2014, with more than **400 business leaders and 22 CEOs** rejoining HSBC featuring a discussion with **Manvendra Singh Gohil**, the world's first openly gay prince.

The summit expanded further in 2015 with the addition of **OutNEXT** and in 2016 with the first-ever **OutWOMEN+** event in Asia, hosted by **Standard Chartered** and featuring openly LGBTQ+, Paralympic medalist **Theresa Goh**. In 2018, Out Leadership added its board diversity initiative, **OutQUORUM**, to the Asia Summit and presented an OutWOMEN+ event featuring **Gigi Chao**, Executive Vice President of **Cheuk Nang Holdings** and Out Leadership board member.

The Asia Summit expanded to Japan in 2019, when Out Leadership convened senior business leaders in Tokyo to advocate for marriage equality, hosted by **Nomura**. In 2022, Out Leadership convened the first-ever gathering of CEOs in Japan to discuss LGBTQ+ equality and continue the push for marriage equality, hosted by **HSBC**.

Celebrating LGBTQ+ Progress in Japan

Out Leadership kicked off the **10th Annual Out Leadership Asia Summit** with a VIP reception in Tokyo, hosted by **HSBC**. Guests were welcomed by the United States Ambassador to Japan, **Rahm Emanuel**. Ambassador Emanuel emphasized the importance of promoting equality and human rights at the highest levels of the Japanese government and underscored the critical role business leaders play in promoting LGBTQ+ equality.

"Businesses have a unique role to play in the fight for equality, as you control the diversity of your workplace through hiring, promotions, and customer relations – and more importantly as you embrace a set of values and set an example for society at large," the Ambassador said. **"Not only is equality the right thing to do, it also makes good business sense."**

Ambassador Emmanuel has championed LGBTQ+ equality initiatives throughout his career, as a United States Congressman, as Mayor of Chicago, and as Chief of Staff to President Barack Obama.



Top: Joy Ho, General Manager, **Unilever Japan**, Todd Sears, Edward Weeks, President & CEO, **HSBC Japan**, Takeshi Nakao, Managing Partner, **Freshfields Japan**, Eric Yaptangco, Division Director, **Manila Technology** and Office Head, **Macquarie**; Bottom: Rahm Emanuel's welcome remarks

The reception featured an impressive panel including **Edward Weeks**, President and Chief Executive Officer, **HSBC Japan**; **Joy Ho**, General Manager, **Unilever Japan**; **Takeshi Nakao**, Managing Partner, **Freshfields Japan**; and **Eric Yaptangco**, Division Director, **Manila Technology** and Office Head, **Macquarie**.

The Summit coincided with big wins for the LGBTQ+ community in Japan. Transgender plaintiffs secured another victory in October 2023 as justices on the Supreme Court unanimously overturned a requirement that mandated sterilization surgeries for people seeking to legally change their gender. The decision follows another October ruling in favor of a transgender man who requested to change his legal gender without undergoing gender confirmation surgery. The United Nations and the World Health Organization consider mandatory sterilization surgeries to be a violation of human rights. Japan is the only G7 nation that does not allow same-sex marriage.



Clockwise from top left: The 2023 Asia Summit CEO Dinner hosted by HSBC and Swire; Luanne Lim, CEO, HSBC Hong Kong, at the 2023 Asia Summit VIP Dinner Hong Kong; Todd Sears and Gigi Chao, Activist and Out Leadership board member at the 2023 Gay Games in Hong Kong; The 2023 Asia Summit OutWOMEN+ Dinner hosted by HSBC

Gay Games in Hong Kong

Amidst the backdrop of tightening Beijing rule and a stream of pro-equality victories on the bench, thousands of athletes at the quadrennial Gay Games in Hong Kong shone a luminous rainbow of strength and solidarity over a traditionally cloudy regional attitude toward LGBTQ+ rights.

While the Games proceeded largely without incident, the lack of support from the city's leadership was palpable. Eight representatives to Hong Kong's parliament supported a petition from conservative groups calling for the event to be canceled, accusing organizers of promoting LGBTQ+ ideologies in contravention of the city's national security law, implemented in 2019 amid pro-democracy protests. Hong Kong's official tourism site did not mention the Games. In mainland China, authorities have tightened restrictions on LGBTQ+ activism. Pride events in Shanghai have been suspended indefinitely, and Beijing's decades-old LGBTQ center has shut down.

Other lawmakers have shown stalwart support. **Executive Council member Regina Ip** noted that Hong Kong intended to position itself "in the forefront of the world's most open and liberal cities" in order to remain competitive as an international city and global financial hub.

The Hong Kong Gay Games kicked off with its Opening Ceremony on November 4th and celebrated its Closing Ceremony on November 11th. **Over 2,000 athletes from 45 countries and territories competed in the Gay Games**, hosted concurrently in Hong Kong and Guadalajara. After recent Hong Kong court wins for the LGBTQ+ community in public housing and inheritance rights, the Games illuminated the movement for greater equality for underrepresented sexual orientations and gender identities in the Special Administrative Region of China and in Asia more broadly.

This year, Out Leadership was proud to partner with the Gay Games, which was co-hosted between Hong Kong and Guadalajara beginning on November 3rd. Out Leadership supported Hong Kong in its original bid to host the Games in 2017 – led by **Out in HK** and **Dennis Philipse**.



About Out Leadership

Out Leadership is the world's premier global platform for businesses to drive LGBTQ+ equality.

We work closely with the world's leading companies to develop extraordinary talent, produce cutting-edge research, advance powerful advocacy, and improve business outcomes.



Out Leadership is a **certified B Corporation**, which means we have voluntarily met the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose.

Join us and play a part in the fight for equality.

To get involved: info@outleadership.com.

Out Leadership Member Companies





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