

MEDIA RELEASE
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Outgames closing touches hearts

The 2nd AsiaPacific Outgames closed in Wellington on March 19, with two nights of parties and a simple but moving Closing Ceremony.

The open air ceremony was conducted in the same city centre square where Outgames participants had gathered for the first time a week earlier. Under a deep blue autumn sky, the week's events were recalled and the volunteers who had made them possible were thanked.

A streamer for Wellington 2011 was fixed to the Outgames flag, which was then presented to a representative from Vancouver, where the North America Outgames will be held in July.

Later, as a full moon rose in the Wellington sky, the closing party sparked into life.

Looking back on the week, Outgames Co-chair David Hindley said the organising team were delighted at how things had gone. "There were so many highlights during the week: the participants' march to the Opening Ceremony; the Governor-General's welcome; the cultural dinner. We saw top-class sports performances. The human rights conference, with over 300 people attending, was an extraordinary event."

"But always, it is the individual experiences and stories which are the most touching. Meeting young activists like Roshan from Nepal, having volunteers like Michael from Germany giving long hours of work. The greatest gift of events like the Outgames is the opportunity to share the lives of people you would never otherwise meet."

Among many notable successes of the 2nd AsiaPacific Outgames, one was the welcome from a head of state – a world-first for this type of event – and the other was the very high level of participation from women, at over 40% of participants.

Very strong support from the trans community, especially in the Human Rights Conference, was another notable feature.

David Hindley said that the Outgames was likely to report a "very good" financial result once final accounts had been prepared.

It is highly likely that funds will be available for distribution to GLBTI community groups around the Asia Pacific region. An announcement about this is likely in a few months' time.

The 2nd AsiaPacific Outgames was held March 12-19 in Wellington, New Zealand.

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