

ECSTATICA GALACTICA: SIX PLANETS ALIGN ABOVE MARDI GRAS PARADE NIGHT

CSIRO and Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras mark a rare planetary alignment on 28 February

SYDNEY, NSW, AUSTRALIA, February 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Sydney's biggest night of pride will unfold beneath a rare cosmic spectacle this year, with six planets appearing to align in the evening sky on the night of the 2026 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade.

Shortly after sunset on Saturday, 28 February, Mercury, Venus, Neptune, Saturn, Uranus and Jupiter will appear in a striking westward line, a perspective effect created by the way planets orbit the Sun along a shared plane. While separated by millions to billions of kilometres in space, from Earth they will look as though they are lining up in formation.

In the spirit of this year's Festival theme, ECSTATICA, the collective joy felt when communities gather in public space, Mardi Gras and CSIRO are calling the moment: ECSTATICA GALACTICA.

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras CEO Jesse Matheson said, "On 28 February, Sydney won't just light up. It will align. ECSTATICA is about shared joy, visibility and that electric moment when thousands of people move together through the city. To have six planets appearing to align in the sky on Parade night feels like the universe is marking the moment with us. ECSTATICA GALACTICA is a night where the city, community and even the sky come together."



A Cosmic Explanation

Suzy Jackson, CSIRO Senior Engineer, a transgender woman who will be marching in this year's Mardi Gras Parade as part of the CSIRO team, said the planetary alignment offers a rare and beautiful perspective effect.

"For those on the east coast, look west just after sunset on 28 February," Jackson said. "Venus will likely be the brightest object visible, with the other planets stretched across the same section of sky. They aren't actually close together, they're millions to billions of kilometres apart, but from our perspective, they appear in a striking alignment."

Jackson has worked in astronomical space technology across Australia for 27 years and currently leads operations at the European Space Agency's New Norcia ground station in Western Australia.



"As a trans woman, science has always been a place where your mind matters more than how you look," she said. "To share both science and community on the same night feels incredibly special."

Viewing conditions will depend on local weather and light pollution. Observers are encouraged to allow 10–15 minutes for their eyes to adjust to twilight and to find a clear western horizon.

Parade Night Under The Planets

More than 10,000 marchers, over 170 floats, and 250,000 spectators will transform Oxford Street, Flinders Street and Anzac Parade into one of the world's largest celebrations of LGBTQIA+ identity, visibility and expression.

As communities gather below, six planets will appear to align above a rare celestial backdrop to a night defined by pride, protest, creativity and collective power.

EVENT DETAILS

Festival dates: 13 February – 1 March 2026

Festival theme: ECSTATICA

App: Free to download via App Store and Google Play

More info: www.mardigras.org.au

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EDITORS NOTES

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (SGLMG) is an LGBTQIA+ not-for-profit member-based organisation that produces the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade and Festival and several other events and supportive initiatives throughout the year. SGLMG was built on the foundations laid by early community activists who fought for LGBTQIA+ rights in a time of widespread, institutionalised oppression and discrimination. Year-round, SGLMG also develops initiatives that celebrate LGBTQIA+ identity, champion creative expression, challenge injustice, and elevate diverse voices. The organisation proudly provides a platform for SOGIESC communities to share with the world.

CSIRO

CSIRO, Australia's national science agency, solves the greatest challenges through innovative science and technology—partnering across industry, government and community to deliver real-world impact in areas from space and astronomy to health, climate, energy and beyond. Learn more at csiro.au.

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