



# PETER TATCHELL

**Born:** 25 January 1952, in Melbourne, Australia

**Organisation:** Peter Tatchell Foundation

One of the world's best-known human rights campaigners, Peter Tatchell has been at the forefront of the fight for LGBTQ+ equality for several decades.

Tatchell was 19 when he left his homeland for London, UK; he was already open about his sexuality and soon joined the Gay Liberation Front, with whom he was part of the capital's first Pride march in July 1972.

With a degree in sociology and a passion for justice, he joined the Labour Party and was the Constituency Labour Party candidate for the 1983 Bermondsey by-election, which he lost to the Liberals amid a personally gruelling, homophobic campaign in which he was assaulted in the street and had a live bullet put through his letterbox.

Tatchell's reputation for direct action grew with the formation of OutRage! in 1990, a group that courted controversy by threatening to expose public figures who condemned homosexuality in public while leading gay lives in secret.

For over 30 years, he has campaigned consistently for LGBTQ+ rights in Commonwealth countries, and made headlines for attempts in

1999 and 2001 to make a citizen's arrest of the then Zimbabwean dictator Robert Mugabe. On the second occasion, he sustained permanent damage to his eye in an attack from Mugabe's bodyguards.

His international human rights work led to the Peter Tatchell Foundation being set up in 2011. It gained charitable status seven years later, at a time when he was pushing then PM Theresa May to apologise for the colonial-era anti-LGBTIQ+ laws that Britain imposed on so many Commonwealth countries.

While May did express "deep regret" for the legacy, Tatchell bemoaned the fact that her speech was not given in front of Commonwealth leaders, who he continues to lobby to this day.

***"The Commonwealth says that its aim is to work via consensus - this means colluding with homophobic regimes... in all but a handful of Commonwealth countries, LGBTQ+ people have no protection against discrimination and hate crime. This is particularly outrageous given that prejudice and discrimination is so widespread among Commonwealth populations."*** ([Metro.co.uk](https://www.metro.co.uk/news/10000000/peter-tatchell-attacks-commonwealth-leaders), June 2022)

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