# Dealing with homophobia for Olympians



Australian climber Campbell Harrison has not only garnered attention for his remarkable sporting achievements but has also made waves for his bold stand against homophobia. Although Harrison did not qualify for the final round of the men's boulder and lead competition in Paris, his presence and actions have sent a powerful message.

Campbell Harrison first captured widespread attention when he secured his place at the Olympic Games last November. Celebrating his triumph, Harrison shared a tender kiss with his boyfriend Justin, an intimate moment captured and shared across major Olympic social media platforms. Unfortunately, the joyous occasion was tarnished by a torrent of homophobic abuse from online trolls, so severe that certain media outlets, including Daily Mail Australia, chose not to publish the vile comments.

Reflecting on his journey after failing to reach the finals in Paris, where he finished tied for 19th with a score of 9.4, Harrison remained resolute.

"Qualifying was so hard and getting through everything to be here was really tough. It was just not my day," admitted Harrison. Nevertheless, he took the opportunity to reflect on his journey, saying, "It's pretty crazy. This morning, when I woke up, I was kind of emotional. I thought 'oh, I guess I'm an Olympian now'. So that's kind of wild. At the end of the day, that was the big goal."

After his semi-final performance in Paris, Harrison once again locked lips with his boyfriend Justin, symbolically reaffirming his stance against the homophobic vitriol he faced. In a previous statement, Harrison highlighted the ongoing challenges faced by queer athletes. "We often tell ourselves that society as a whole is becoming more progressive, or that things are 'getting better.' But the reality is....there's a reason why you see so few out, queer athletes in sport. And that's because we're still not safe here…yet. Pride matters. Representation [also] matters. It's homophobes and bigots that should feel unwelcome in sport. Not me. Not Justin. Not queer people just trying to live our lives without having to lie about and hide who we are."