



## Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays NSW Inc.

(Incorporating Western Sydney)

### June Newsletter

The next meeting of PFLAG NSW Inc. (Incorporating Western Sydney) will be held on **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2008 at 7.30 pm** – We meet at the Conference Room, Wesley Lodge Motel, Cnr. Hawkesbury & Queens Roads, Westmead. **Important change: car entry is only from Hawkesbury Rd via a boom gate. Please use key entry number “1111”.** This code is allocated only on PFLAG meeting nights. The Wesley Lodge is very close to Westmead Hospital and Train station.

**For Information contact: Judy on (02) 9869 1454 Postal Address: PO Box 3751, Marsfield NSW 2122. Email: jr\_brown@bigpond.net.au**

**June 2008-VOLUME 11-ISSUE 5**

#### **President's Report – June 2008**

On the morning of Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> May, Shelley Argent, our National Spokesperson and President of PFLAG Brisbane, was interviewed on Radio National's "Life Matters". When asked to describe the range of feelings that parents go through when their child has "come out" to them, Shelley said that most parents go through shock, tears, anger, bargaining with God (if they are religiously inclined) and then gradually start on the long road to acceptance. However, she said, on the way, they go through feelings of shame, blame, guilt, fear and denial. Shelley remarked that the "acceptance time" varies, but, if parents read and seek help, then it probably takes about a year on average. Shelley added that some parents may take 10 to 15 years to finally accept the situation, because they are in denial. Shelley likened the "acceptance process" to grieving. Shelley stated that most young gay and lesbian people know from an early age that they are "different", but often don't "come out" until much later, either for fear of disappointing their parents or of being thrown out of home. She added that the longer that they put off "coming out", the more chance they have of experiencing depression or alcohol problems. Shelley commented that no-one chooses their eye colour and that it is the same for sexual orientation. It is not a choice!

That evening, at our family meeting, as I recanted what Shelley had said that morning, the nodding of heads told me that the feelings that Shelley had expressed were resonating with most people in the room.

So, it is important that parents seek help in their journey of acceptance of their gay or lesbian child and it is equally important that those of us who have been through that journey are there to offer that much needed support. I hope to see many of you at our June 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting, where Matthew Vaughan from ACON will be our guest speaker.

Remember, as Rudy always said: "When you don't need PFLAG anymore, that's when PFLAG needs YOU!"

**Judy**

**Website:-[www.pflgaustralia.org.au](http://www.pflgaustralia.org.au)-Email [editor@pflgaustralia.org.au](mailto:editor@pflgaustralia.org.au).**

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Meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month

## **PFLAG's Involvement with Colo High's "Crossroads" Program**

On Thursday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, Carol McCance, Jye Bryant and I spoke to approximately 140 Year 11 Colo High School students as part of their "Crossroads" program at the North Richmond Panthers Club. We were asked to speak under the banner of "Looking at Diversity." Carol and I spoke about what PFLAG does and shared our experiences as mothers of a gay son. Jye spoke of his experience as a young gay man and helped to dispel the many myths associated with "being gay", the Mardi Gras, etc. He also told the students that he was hoping to be able to perform one of his plays during the World Youth Day festivities. Both groups of students listened attentively and politely asked pertinent questions at the end. It was great to have Jye address the students, as being a young person, close to them in age, they were able to relate well to him. The teachers at Colo High School are to be congratulated on their superb organisation of this program, as are the students on their positive attitude and receptiveness to the program.

**Judy**

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## **LIBERALS BETRAY EQUALITY PLEDGE** by Harley Dennett (Sydney Star Observer 5/06/08)

The Opposition will block all 100 same-sex equality amendments until at least September, but a number of Liberal MPs are unhappy with further delays.

It is also understood the Attorney-General has been given advice that the reforms cannot be backdated if the bill isn't passed by 1 July.

Earlier suggestions of a quick Senate inquiry to clarify the intentions of the superannuation same-sex equality bill could be over quickly were squashed by Liberal leader Brendan Nelson just before it passed the lower house last week.

"This is not a delaying tactic. It is more important that this be done properly, than it be done immediately," Nelson said.

He raised the potential weakening of the status of marriage in federal law and the inclusion of same-sex couples in a broader category of interdependency as issues that needed further scrutiny by a Senate committee.

"A common example is of two unmarried sisters who decide to live together as a household and do so throughout all of their adult lives," he said.

"Should they not have the same rights in relation to property, taxation and superannuation as two gay people who decide to do the same in a sexual relationship?"

Interdependent relationships are currently being considered by a House of Representatives committee separately from the equality reforms.

Shadow Attorney-General George Brandis faced the gay community to explain the back-flip on queer radio station Joy Melbourne the next day.

He reaffirmed the bipartisan support for the removal of discrimination but said the superannuation bill and the later omnibus bill, yet to be introduced, needed to be scrutinised together.

He distanced himself from the divisions in the Liberal party and said he would be "piloting these measures through the Senate on the Coalition's behalf".

However, he could not guarantee the Opposition would support the backdating of the reforms to 1 July this year, first suggested by Shadow Treasurer Malcolm Turnbull.

Liberal MPs Turnbull, Christopher Pyne, and Petro Georgiou gave unqualified support to the first equality bill without amendment last week.

"With an issue of such importance and magnitude, it would be more unusual if there were not such an inquiry. That said, an inquiry into this bill in particular should be able to be completed before June 30 — an outcome that I would welcome," Pyne said.

Georgiou even called it a shame the previous Howard government could not have achieved this reform. But a number of Coalition backbenchers were opposed to same-sex relationships receiving the same benefits as married couples. Independent MP Bob Katter equated the reforms to the death of civilisation.

Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby Co-convenor Emily Gray said if there were any other issues the Coalition had with the legislation it needed to make them public now.

"If it's just the children and interdependency issues then the gay and lesbian community should be angry," she said.

Attorney-General Robert McClelland hit back at the Opposition saying the legislation was time critical.

"The only reason to refer this legislation to a Senate committee would be to achieve a prolongation and extend the discrimination that currently exists against same-sex couples, discrimination which the opposition leader and many opposite are determined — and we appreciate their genuineness — to remove," he said.

## **Western Sydney News**

The Parramatta Queer Forum has set the date for this year's Parramatta Pride Picnic. It will be held on Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> September from 11am – 4 pm at Site 23 in Parramatta Park, the same venue as last year. Keep this date free, as this year's Parra Pride Picnic promises to be even bigger and better than last year's.

The Mail-Out of our PFLAG information kit to the service-providers in the Parramatta City Council area has now been completed. This should improve the awareness of PFLAG in the area.

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## **Cardinal Pell cancels sexuality forum**

This forum was to be held on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> July at 8pm at North Sydney. Unfortunately Cardinal Pell has instructed Magis to cancel the forum. It is hoped that this forum can still proceed on the same evening at an alternate venue. Contact PFLAG on [jr\\_brown@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jr_brown@bigpond.net.au) or phone Judy on 9869 1454 for updates of this event.

The forum was to be hosted by MAGiS, which is a long-term project designed to foster Ignatian Spirituality in young adults aged 18 to 30. *The aim of MAGiS is to produce leaders—people with a sense of God's place in their lives and a capacity to do something to build a better world.*

**“Living a Christian Commitment: Different Sexualities.”**

**A forum for Catholic youth/ their mums and dads, family, friends, priests and youth ministers' and all who are interested in a discussion of how young Catholics with different sexualities can live their Christian commitment.**

Through the sharing of personal story, reflection and drama, this forum will explore issues of different sexualities and living as a Catholic. Speakers include a parent couple actively involved in their parish who have two gay sons, a youth worker from a NSW leading gay and lesbian youth service and a young gay Catholic sharing his story. The keynote speaker is a Jesuit priest and psychologist who works in the areas of masculinity, gender issues and sexuality.

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## **GLBT Interfaith Service Wednesday Evening June 18**

With a grant from Marrickville Council, *Acceptance Sydney* is hosting an Interfaith Service on Wed 18 June at 7.30pm at the **Seaview Street Community Hall, Dulwich Hill**, behind the library.

Come and join *Acceptance* and a number of other GLBT faith groups celebrate the 30th anniversary of the first Mardi Gras march and build a gay friendly interfaith community!

The Interfaith Service will be approx 1 hour and refreshments will follow.

Everyone, family and friends are warmly welcome.

To RSVP or get more info email Tim at [luxor104@hotmail.com](mailto:luxor104@hotmail.com)

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## **Claiming our Place - Celebrating our Diversity**

**Sunday July 13, 2.30 pm Pitt Street Uniting Church, Sydney**

On the eve of World Youth Day, GLBT people of faith, and their friends, gather in the heart of Sydney to celebrate our lives and offer witness and challenge to the Church and to our society.

**Moderated** by David Marr

**Presiding Minister:** Rev. Andrew Collis

**Music by** Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Choir

**Speakers:**

**Rev. Dorothy McRae-McMahon**

Minister-in Association with South Sydney Uniting Church, Co-editor South Sydney Herald, author and liturgist

**Michael Bernard Kelly**

Gay Catholic educator, author, Convenor of the Rainbow Sash Movement, spiritual activist

**Anthony Venn Brown**

Former Assemblies of God leader and founder of Youth Alive (NSW), now Gay Ambassador, Author & Co-convenor of Freedom 2 b[e]

**David Reeder**

Long-time parishioner, Christ Church St. Lawrence Anglican Church, Lecturer in Information Science at TAFE in Sydney

and **a panel of young LGBTQ people from various Christian churches.**

Co-sponsored by Pitt Street Uniting Church, the Sydney Star Observer and the South Sydney Herald

**Website:-[www.pflagaustralia.org.au](http://www.pflagaustralia.org.au)-Email [editor@pflagaustralia.org.au](mailto:editor@pflagaustralia.org.au)**

Meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month.

## **POLICE TO RECOGNISE GLLO WORK** by Harley Dennett (SSO 5/06/08)

NSW Police have moved to train more Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers across the state and improve customer service at Surry Hills following the release of the findings from last year's GLLO survey and homophobic violence forum.

The plans include improvements to GLLO training and increased accountability for the work they do with new GLLO reports to management. parts of the GLLO role will also be integrated into other senior command roles.

Superintendent Donna Adney, who has taken on the role of Corporate Spokesperson for Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Issues, has written to community stakeholders from last November's round-table meeting on homophobic violence hosted by Police Minister David Campbell to advise of the changes.

"This reporting mechanism will also assist in building a better picture of GLLO work performed across the state," Adney wrote. "Additionally, customer service duty officers will be encouraged to adopt an oversight role assisting the GLLO and community interactions and capacity building within commands."

Adney said the senior officer support would strengthen the GLLO role in the community and police hierarchy.

However, the survey of 60 GLLOs from among the 134 across the state found the limited capacity for GLLOs to conduct proactive work was not well understood by the community, and it was not appropriate for GLLOs to be given total responsibility for all matters involving the gay, lesbian and transgender communities.

NSW Police has maintained that GLBT victims can approach any officer.

Adney's letter also confirmed that Surry Hills Police were receiving a number of reports relating to homophobic violence, which she has called on the community to do since taking over as Local Area Commander earlier this year.

"Because many homophobic incidents are reported to Surry Hills command it is important that Surry Hills officers are trained in data recording and victim support," she wrote.

Under the new procedures, when an assault is reported the officer handling the case must record whether all statements have been obtained and whether a seven-day victim follow-up has been completed. Victims and witnesses will be asked if they feel there were any specific motives for the assault, such as homophobia, and victims will be provided with support information.

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## **METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH SYDNEY**

### **QUORUM - 2008**

Taxi Club, 40-42 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst

**"What People and Events Have Inspired Me?"**

<b>MULTICULTURE</b> <u>June: Monday 23rd</u> Carmen (2003 NZ Hero Lifetime Achievement Awardee) Nafiz Rahim (Muslim community)	<b>DRAG</b> <u>July: Monday 28th</u> Marcia Monterey (Drag Queen)
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**Further Details contact Glenn Boyd on 02 9569 5122 or 0438 690 921  
or email: [glenn.boyd@gmail.com](mailto:glenn.boyd@gmail.com)**

### **PFLAG NSW: Next Family Meetings**

**June Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> @7.30pm Guest Speaker: Matthew Vaughan from ACON**

**July Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> @7.30pm**

### **PFLAG Penrith: Next Bi-Monthly Meeting Tuesday, August 12<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**

Please ring for confirmation. Contacts **Vicki** on 02 4730 4660 or **Carol** 02 47354680

**PFLAG Mosman: Contact Maree Ph. 02 99397706**

**PFLAG Central Coast/Newcastle: Contact Shelagh 02 49773271**

**[contact@newcoastmcc.org.au](mailto:contact@newcoastmcc.org.au)**

**PFLAG Northwest: Contacts Val Harris 02 6769 7552 or Fay Heywood 02 6785 7325**

**PFLAG Bathurst/Orange: Contact Tony Sutton 02 6331 7267**

**NSW South Coast: Contact Catherine Horsley 02 44214752 Email: [kkean@aapt.net.au](mailto:kkean@aapt.net.au)**

