



**Parents & Friends of Lesbians and Gays NSW Inc.
(Incorporating Western Sydney)**

November 2014 Newsletter *VOLUME 17-ISSUE 10*

The AGM & Christmas Party for PFLAG NSW Inc. (Incorporating Western Sydney) will be on Saturday, 22 November at 2pm. **Please bring a plate to share.** The meeting and party will be held in the Conference Room, Wesley Lodge Motel, Cnr. Hawkesbury & Queens Roads, Westmead and is very close to Westmead Hospital and Train station. **Car entry is only from Hawkesbury Rd via a boom gate.**

*Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year*

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

President's Report

"In my view, taking the hostility experienced by LGBTIs upon ourselves and choosing to defend them instead of judging them, is perhaps the need I see most urgent and universal right now in the life of the church. We need to stop the bullying that goes on in schools. We need to help persuade countries to change their laws, starting with those countries that still consider homosexuality to be a crime. The church can lead by example." – Joseanne Peregin, Co-ordinator of Drachma Parents, the affiliated organisation of Drachma, Malta's Catholic LGBT organisation, in her presentation to the Vatican's Synod on Marriage and Family.

Joseanne goes on to say: *"It is important that we reduce the number of attempted suicides by educating people, so as to respect diversity. Immediately following the Bishops' Synod, the Catholic Church would do well to implement better ways of expressing its support in a concrete and outward way. We should insist on this. If we don't, who will?"*

Joseanne and other Drachma parents have been in dialogue with their Bishop, the president of the Bishops' Conference of Malta, over several years. When Bishop Mario Grech, in his presentation, called for a church that is more accepting of its LGBT members, it was reported as "an important lesson about the power of Catholic parents advocating for their LGBT children." Thanks to Mal McPherson for alerting us to this inspiring and encouraging story.

Another story that inspired and encouraged us was the little known one of the Lesbians and Gays from London that supported the coal miners during their year-long strike in 1984 in the UK under Margaret

Website www.pflagaustralia.org.au Email info@pflagaustralia.org.au

Meeting held 4th Saturday of each month

(22 Nov)

Thatcher. This poignant tale is featured in the movie “Pride”, which is now showing in cinemas around Sydney. Ray & I had the pleasure of viewing it on opening day at The Dendy Opera Quays and I know member, Natalie, raved about it when she saw it at a preview. Director Matthew Warchus said he hoped the film would get as far as country towns where being gay can still carry a stigma. It’s a must see!



Thanks to Jackie Braw for involving PFLAG in the GLLO training at Goulburn Police Academy on October 9. Narelle, Ray & I were involved in a speed networking exercise with the Gay & Lesbian Liaison Officers and there wasn’t a dry eye in the house after Narelle had told her personal story.

It was great to hear that Gay Rights Activist, Rodney Croome, has been named Tasmania’s Australian of the Year. Rodney has been a vocal advocate for gay rights over many decades. PFLAG was invited to co-ordinate a nomination for Rodney as Australian of the Year. Shelley Argent kindly agreed to do this and I was very pleased to write a reference in support of his nomination.

Congratulations to Rodney on this very well-deserved award.

It was very heartening to hear Federal Opposition Leader, Bill Shorten, advocate for Marriage Equality in his speech to the Australian Christian Lobby’s National Conference. Mr Shorten was upfront about his opposition to the Christian Lobby’s anti-marriage equality views and religious-based discrimination against the LGBTI community. He remarked: “*Religion and faith should never be used as a means to justify sexuality based division and exclusion*”.

Thanks to Ruth & Ron for representing us at the Commonwealth Bank’s LGBTI support group “Unity” meeting at Olympic Park on October 24. Ruth told her story to a very receptive audience and she and Ron answered questions. The members were very interested in the work of PFLAG and invited them to take part in future Unity events.

Congratulations to Ruth & Ron on the arrival of their new little grandson, Indiana, born 10 weeks prematurely to their “adopted” daughter, Michelle and her partner, Matt. A little brother to Isaac, Chloe, Tilly and Zoe. The photo shows Michelle with Indiana.



Congratulations are also due to newsletter editor, Karen and Gerard Brunton on the recent engagement of their son, James to Theresa and to Tony & Bernadette Sutton from Bathurst on the upcoming marriage in Victoria of their daughter, Anne to fiancé, Jeremy.

Thanks to our October guest speaker, Robert French from the Pride History Group, who really opened our eyes to the treatment of gay people over the course of history in Australia. I thought Robert’s remark: “*A gay life is a silent one!*” was insightful, as he said that much of what happened to gay people in the past had been removed from the history books. He advised us to ensure that our PFLAG history is preserved for future generations. Thanks to Mollie, who facilitated the meeting for us and to all who came along to support.

Thanks to Pastor Robert Clarke and MCC Good Shepherd, for their wonderful hospitality at “Stella Does Bingo” on November 7. It was a fun night thanks to Stella, aka Fr Stephen, we caught up with many friends and came away with lots of great prizes.

It’s been another busy year for PFLAG and I must thank our wonderful secretary, Narelle, Vice-President, Ruth, Treasurer, Ron and all the conscientious committee members and members who have supported us throughout the year. Special thanks must go to Karen Brunton, who has produced and distributed our monthly newsletter for many years through the generous sponsorship of the Brunton family business. Karen will be unable to continue in her role, due to increasing work commitments. Thank you Karen & Gerard for the enormous service you have given to PFLAG.

I'd like to pay tribute to Adolfo, who is retiring after more than a decade of service to the PFLAG committee, initially assisting his wife, Vicky, to co-ordinate the Penrith branch and featuring with Vicky in our DVD "Bouncing Castle", which was co-produced by their daughter, Vanessa. Adolfo has been a wonderful support at Mardi Gras over the years, where he has always proudly carried the PFLAG banner to demonstrate his love and support for the LGBTI community. His irrepressible charm has been an asset at Fair Day, where he, along with JP, always sold the most raffle tickets. At meetings, Adolfo was the "ideas" man and was always great at sourcing merchandise for us. You will be missed, Adolfo! We feel very privileged to be a part of this PFLAG committee, with the long-lasting friendships we have made and the respect we are afforded as PFLAG's representatives. We would warmly welcome new members to join the committee. Just phone me on 9869 1454 or Narelle on 9874 3624 and we'll happily nominate you.

If you haven't renewed your membership, please do so prior to the AGM, if possible.

NB: The first meeting for 2015 will be Saturday, January 24.

Mardi Gras will take place on March 7, 2015. If you wish to join the PFLAG contingent, contact Judy on 9869 1454 or email: info@pflagaustralia.org.au. Further info will be on the website in the New Year.

I hope that many of you will be able to attend the AGM and Christmas Party on Saturday, November 22nd @ 2pm. Please bring a plate of finger food to share. BYOG if you wish. Tea/coffee/juice/soft drinks provided. I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a happy and healthy 2015.

Judy

PFLAG Newsletter

As from 2015, all newsletters will be sent via email. Could recipients who currently receive a mailed copy, please notify us of an email address

(info@pflagaustralia.org.au). If you still require a mailed copy, please advise Judy on 9869 1454

Bankstown Corner Youth Health Service

I spent some time with the Corner Youth Health Care Centre at Bankstown on 7 Oct last. The meeting had been arranged by two local health care workers and the discussion centred on GLBTI issues. I spoke about my experience as a parent of a gay son, particularly on my reaction at the time he came out.

The young people present were very interested in my talk and asked several questions mainly relating to my attitude at that time and how they feel in relation to their own parents and their attitudes.

I was particularly taken by one young lady, a Muslim who had come out to her very strict parents, she was dealing with the love she felt for her family, their love of her and the difficulty her situation posed. I really felt for this young woman who essentially simply wants to be who she is.

I talked at length about the services available and the role of PFLAG. I also talked about how proud they should feel about themselves and that they are entitled to be treated equally in their own country. I spoke about marriage equality and urged them not to sit on the side lines and wait for others to do it for them. I urged them to stand up against prejudice and to take their opportunity to change the world in which they live and will shortly control.

It was the first time I had such an experience and I have to say I was impressed by these young people, their manner and their honesty.

Geoff Thomas

Red Ribbon Making Day

World AIDS Day is on December 1. Volunteers are required to assist with making red ribbons at the ACON café, 414 Elizabeth St. Surry Hills from 11am – 4pm on November 15. Snacks and refreshments provided. RSVP to David Wilkins: dwilkins@acon.org.au or 0413 510 172.

Pollys Christmas Dance @ Annual Charity Presentation

When: Saturday, December 6, 8pm until late.

Where: Roundhouse, University of NSW, Anzac Parade, Kensington.

Tickets: \$30 prepaid/ \$40 at door.

Bookings: Call 9560 4736 or email bookings@thepollysclub.com.au

DocLIST

The Australian Lesbian Medical Association has a great new resource for lesbian, bisexual and queer women on the DocLIST website: www.doclist.com.au/links. Here they will find a huge number of groups, organisations, services and other resources. Links provides services to gay and bisexual men as well as gender diverse people.

Appeal for members to join the Committee

If PFLAG has been a support to you in the past, maybe you would like to consider offering yourself as a committee member to **help to keep PFLAG viable**. Committee meetings are held bi-monthly, on Saturdays, prior to family meetings, and are a great way of developing camaraderie between the members. There are two major events each year with which we require assistance: Fair Day in late February (our major fundraiser) and Mardi Gras. Both of these events are very rewarding and a lot of fun, but can only happen if we have enough people on the ground to help out. There are other opportunities throughout the year if you wish to become further involved. Present committee members have found that working together for the betterment of PFLAG has helped them on their journey of acceptance. PFLAG is a well respected organisation in the community and this has been achieved through the dedication and hard work of committee members. Think about this and if you feel that you could give the time, complete the form at the end of the newsletter and either post it in or hand it in at the October meeting. Your offer of assistance would be greatly appreciated.

New PFLAG Apparel We now have for sale: PFLAG T-shirts @ \$25 each and white PFLAG caps @ \$10 each. We also have rainbow umbrellas and kites @ \$15 each or 2 for \$25 and rainbow lanyards and PFLAG badges @ \$3 each or 2 for \$5. Contact Judy on 9869 1454 or see us at the meetings.

Civil Marriage Celebrant - Rev Robert Clark from Metropolitan Community Church of the Good Shepherd, Granville, is a **Civil Marriage Celebrant**. You can check out his website: www.weddingswithflair.net

Renewal Notice Reminder Please do not forget to renew your membership for 14/15! Thanks to all the members who have renewed already. If you joined after 30 June 2014, you are deemed to be financial until end of 2015.

EMAIL ADDRESSES

If you are on email, please help us reduce our costs by sending us an email with your details (which will remain confidential) and all future information will be emailed to you

Upcoming Events:

AGM & Christmas Party - Saturday 22 November @ 2pm

World AIDS Day Mass @ St. Joseph's Catholic Church Friday, November 28 @ 8pm :, Bedford St. Newtown

World AIDS Day Service & Transgender Day of Remembrance @ MCC Good Shepherd, Sunday, November 30 @ 6.25pm: 37 East St. Granville

Christmas Service @ MCC Good Shepherd Sunday, December 21 @ 6.25pm: 37 East St. Granville.

MCC Petersham Christmas Eve Service @ Sydney Town Hall. Wednesday, December 24 @ 7.45pm

PFLAG Northside: Maree. 02 8959 2830

PFLAG Blue Mountains: Ruth & Ron Green 02 4757 4864

PFLAG Central Coast: Helen 0431 863 799 pflag.nsw.centralcoast@gmail.com

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

PFLAG Wagga Wagga: Cheryl Harvey 0439 488 202 cheryl28june@gmail.com

PFLAG Bathurst: Tony and Bernadette Sutton 02 6331 7267 nottus2@bigpond.com

PFLAG Albury Wodonga: Sarah 0419 019 254 pflagalburywodonga@gmail.com

PFLAG Great Lakes/Manning: Greg & Lauranne Byrne 0427 918 568
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