



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

January 2014 Newsletter VOLUME 17-ISSUE 1

Happy New Year!

The next meeting of PFLAG NSW Inc. (Incorporating Western Sydney) will be on Saturday, 25 January at 2pm in the Conference Room, Wesley Lodge Motel. The Wesley Lodge is situated on the 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.**

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

"What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived – It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead." – Nelson Mandela, whose very significant life of 95 years ended on 6/12/13.

Whilst being mostly remembered for his battle against racial prejudice and bringing down apartheid in South Africa, Nelson Mandela is also remembered for his fight for LGBTI rights and his contribution to HIV and AIDS awareness. He has left a lasting legacy.

Shelley Argent, PFLAG's former National Spokesperson, is someone who has devoted a significant part of her life to the fight for these same rights in Australia. Shelley was featured in the "Star Observer" of December 20, after being forced to stand down from her position due to ill-health. Shelley was awarded Senior Queenslander of the Year in 2011 and has been compared to PFLAG's worldwide founder, the late Jeanne Manfred, by Jody Huckaby, Executive Director of PFLAG in the US. Her efforts have been praised by Rodney Croome, Australian Marriage Equality National Director and many high profile politicians. MP for Sydney, Alex Greenwich, said: "Her hard work over many years, including hundreds of painful hours in federal parliament, has made Australia a safer and better place for the LGBTI community." Shelley has handed over the National Spokesperson reins to Donna Goddard, current President of PFLAG Brisbane. Donna is also featured in this issue and speaks about her plan for a Safe Schools Qld campaign and her lobbying of the Federal Government and intention to work closely with the Federal Cross Party Working Group to achieve marriage equality.

Congratulations to PFLAG ACT members, Ivan Hinton and his partner, Chris Teoh, and the other 30 couples, on their recent marriage in Canberra on December 7. Canberra's Telstra Tower was lit

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in rainbow colours at midnight on December 6 to signify the first same-sex weddings that took place from 12:01 am on December 7. Although the High Court overturned the ACT same-sex marriage legislation on December 12, in their eyes, friends and family consider they're still married. Australian Marriage Equality will continue to work on reforms for marriage equality after the High Court clarified that federal parliament could create national laws without the need for a referendum. Malcolm Turnbull pushed for the Coalition to be given a conscience vote on future marriage equality bills, commenting that Australia was "out of step" with cultural neighbours like NZ, the UK and Canada. I received a call from BBC News on December 12, seeking comment on the overturning of the ACT legislation by the High Court. As Ivan and Donna were unavailable, they conducted the interview with me on skype.

Thank you to all who attended our AGM and Christmas Party on November 23rd. I would like to also thank Ian Werner for acting as returning officer for our elections. The results are as follows:

President: Judy Brown

Vice-President: Ruth Green

Secretary/Public Officer: Narelle Phipps

Treasurer: Ron Green

Newsletter Editor: Karen Brunton

Publicity Officer: Ray Brown

Education Officer: Sue Mico

Librarian: Louise Pethybridge

Committee members: Adolfo Gonzalez, Pam & Arthur Garske, Carol McCance, Gillian Maury, Marilyn Godfrey, Anne Mainsbridge, Les Mico, Geoff Thomas.

I would like to thank the committee members for assuming their roles for 2014 and particularly welcome new member, Louise Pethybridge.

N.B. Committee members, members, family and friends, who wish to participate in **PFLAG's 2014 Mardi Gras** contingent on **March 1**, should **register** with **Narelle ASAP**, either by emailing info@pflagaustralia.org.au or phoning on 9874 3624 or 0401 699 298, as numbers are limited.

Details are on the calendar section of the website: www.pflagaustralia.org.au or on PFLAG Sydney facebook page.

Narelle and I attended the University of Western Sydney forum "Connecting the West: Sexuality, Education and Health" on November 27. The speakers included Clara Adams, Youth Health Promotion Officer: Same Difference Program - Family Planning NSW, Sujay Kentlyn, Project Officer Outrageous Ageing, Pastor Sue Palmer, Open Door Congregation Blue Mountains, Nick Ten Caten, Youth Liaison Officer Mondo Project Penrith City Council and Jacqueline Ullman, School of Education UWS. This forum served as a great medium for information sharing and networking.

Thanks to Acceptance Sydney, who invited us to their World AIDS Day Mass at St. Joseph's, Newtown on November 29. This is always a very moving liturgy and Ray & I were pleased to be a part of it. We also attended their Christmas Mass on December 20. We also enjoyed networking with others at Lord Mayor Clover Moore's Christmas celebrations for volunteers at Sydney Town Hall on December 8 and at Twenty10's End of Year celebrations on December 19. We would like to congratulate Brett Paradise, who has been appointed ED of Twenty10, replacing Rebecca Reynolds. We were very warmly welcomed by Pastor Robert Clarke at MCC Good Shepherd Granville's Christmas Service on December 22. It was great to hear of the wonderful pastoral work of John Donohue and Ian Werner in visiting prisoners and asylum seekers, especially their friendship of and their advocacy for a gay asylum seeker from Villawood, who had sought help from us a short time ago. This is real Christianity in action.

Many thanks to Gaspar, who has been acting as our webmaster for many years on a voluntary basis. In the past week, Gaspar had the need to move the website to a new host. Dominic, who assists us with computer issues, has liaised with Gaspar to facilitate the move to our new host. As a self-confessed luddite, there is only a limited amount of computer-speak that I can absorb, so I am most grateful to them both for their massive efforts and to Narelle, who has been taking notes.

I hope to see many of you at our first Family Meeting for 2014, on **Saturday January 25**, for as Rudy always says: *“When you don't need PFLAG anymore, that's when PFLAG needs YOU to help others!”*

Judy

Judy

Fair Day and Request for Help

Fair Day is on Sunday 9th February 2014 in Victoria Park, Camperdown.

Fair Day is a family fun day full of entertainment, food, fashion and stalls. Lots to see, do, buy and eat! It is traditionally the Mardi Gras' season's biggest day-time event. Each year dedicated PFLAG people set up the



stall early on the Sunday morning. We spend time chatting to our many visitors, giving out information, brochures and booklets, selling our rainbow merchandise, having a good look around, generally having a fun time, and then packing up at 4 pm.

This year, we will have for sale our rainbow fold-up umbrellas, kites, neck lanyards, PFLAG badges, caps, limited T-shirts and our DVD "Bouncing Castle".

Our raffle prize will be a beautiful SEIKO Premier Kinetic Direct Drive watch, kindly donated by Jason Lancett from SEIKO. The watch is featured in the new ad later in the newsletter. Tickets are \$2 each, 3 for \$5, 7 for \$10, 15 for \$20.

Helpers are very welcome and essential!

Fair Day is also a major fund-raising opportunity for us. Come for a couple of hours or for the day and enjoy the camaraderie, and the chance to talk about PFLAG.

This year we need people power to help set up the stall early on the Sunday morning (say 8.30 am - the parking is usually pretty good at that time) and also to help dismantle the stall about 3.30-4 pm.

Please phone Narelle on 98743624 to register your enthusiasm and your willingness to assist.

Australian Lesbian and Gay Life Stories Oral History Project

The Australian Lesbian and Gay Life Stories Oral History Project is run by Macquarie University in conjunction with the National Library Australia. They are recording up to 60 interviews of lesbian and gay people and these will be deposited with the NLA. The interviews are "whole of life" but also aimed at gauging changing attitudes to homosexuality in Australian society and would like to include lesbian and gay people of all ages, including those who live outside the main capital cities.

For more information, go to www.Australianlesbianandgaylifestories.org.au

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Little Black Dress Run

Each year Sydney Frontrunners, an LGBTI running group, organises an event known as the 'LITTLE BLACK DRESS RUN'. This run generates much-needed **funding for Camp Goodtime - a volunteer-run camp organised by Sydney Children's Hospital for children living with HIV**. Hundreds of people will pull on their finest frocks and accessories and join superstar hostess *Joyce Maynge* for a family-friendly 2km fun run, walk, or high-heeled totter around Darling Harbour – the event is a part of the official 2014 Mardi Gras Festival calendar.

When: Sunday 16 February

Where: Cockle Bay Wharf – In front of the IMAX/Convention Centre

Registration: 9.30am (10am start time)

Misunderstanding on Gay Matters

Lack of knowledge exists on homosexuality. It is important for people to be informed on LGBT (lesbian gay bi-sexual and transgender) issues and that it is from birth and not a choice. Also not a sin. Main stream churches and ministry training colleges are recognising and teaching this now. Homosexual was not a word until 1889. There are NO passages of scripture in the Bible that refer to homosexuality as we understand it today! The sections and words that some associate with homosexuality are NOT in either the Greek or Hebrew language.

There are other interpretations for the four sections in the Bible on homosexuals. It appears twice in the Old Testament (Genesis & Leviticus) and twice in the New Testament by Paul in 1 Corinthians & 1 Timothy. Theologians are adamant that each one of these scriptures has been taken out of context. The story of Lot and the angels is about the town's inhospitality, greed and lack of social justice. In Matthew 10 there is a parallel story with Jesus and the disciples. Leviticus says homosexuality is detestable but it says the same about eating shell fish, pork and wearing different types of fabrics together. Deuteronomy says to kill your children if they are disobedient. And to kill your wife if she is not a virgin on the wedding day. We don't do that today.

The Greek word in the Bible translates to pedophilia, dehumanising rape, prostitution, as opposed to committed caring relationship between 2 consenting adults. The homosexuality Paul spoke of was molestation and promiscuity Not committed same sex relationships or people who are born gay. We have NO examples in scripture of current issues. We can't condemn gays as sinners on these 2 passages. Gays mostly discover their orientation in childhood.

There are many parts of the Bible that we don't observe today. Being a progressive society slavery has been abolished, racism is unacceptable, we don't kill witches today. Also we have equality of women and have interracial marriages. Other interpretations of the Bible have been studied. Discrimination of LGBT people is the last barrier that has to be overcome. We don't stone a woman caught in adultery today. The Bible is not meant to be taken literally. If it is then all those other parts and the whole of the Bible would have to be taken literally as well. We are not in the 1st century now and we live in a different culture.

Jesus says in Matthew 19 that the eunuch is born that way and eunuchs were homosexual. In Acts 8 Phillip baptised a eunuch and it says into the kingdom. Nature is not uniform and people may be albino, left handed, the Bible addressed generality. Just as we are born with different eye colour the LGBT person is born that way. Jesus said NOTHING about homosexuality and much about loving

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all people marginalised or despised. He condemned greed and lack of commitment to God's justice more than lack of faith or anything else. Beware of Pauline moral requirements being interpreted as Jesus commands. Jesus' message was love, care for and accept all, especially those on the edges of society. He said not to judge others. When LGBT people are excluded or condemned this is in opposition to Jesus' message.

Discrimination is very damaging to gays and can lead to mental illness and suicide. Suicide remains a major cause of death in Australia and one of the three leading causes of death among people aged 15-34 years. Rates are generally higher amongst rural and regional dwellers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. LGBT people are at an increased risk.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suicide_in_Australia - cite_note-6#cite_note-6 It is recognised that approximately 10% of the population identify as LGBT. Being gay is not a choice.

Ann coordinator pflagcapricornia (Parents & friends of lesbians & gays)

Thank you Ann, from PFLAG Capricornia, for forwarding this article.

February Newsletter

There will not be a newsletter in February. The next newsletter will be sent in March.

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 13/14! Thanks to all the members who have renewed already. If you joined after 30 June 2013, you are deemed to be financial until end of 2014.

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.

NSW Inc. PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians of Gays) is a group of people who share common experiences and provide support for each other. We listen and love. We help families have open, positive and loving relationships with their GLBT children and we work for their civil and human rights.

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Upcoming Events:

Family Meeting - Saturday 25 January & 22 February @ 2pm

Fair Day - 9 February

Mardi Gras Parade - 1 March

PFLAG Penrith: Vicki 02 4730 4660 or Carol 02 47354680

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

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

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

PFLAG Great Lakes/Manning: Greg & Lauranne Byrne 0427 918 568
gregbyrne3@bigpond.com

PFLAG Coffs Harbour: Leanne: pflagcoffs@gmail.com

PFLAG Newcastle/Hunter: Michelle Lancey 0403 730 257 pflag.hunter@gmail.com



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