



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

**June 2015 Newsletter: VOLUME 18 – Issue 5**

PFLAG NSW Inc. (Incorporating Western Sydney) meets on the **4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of every month.**

The next meeting will be: **Saturday, 27th June at 2pm.**

**Venue:** Conference Room, Wesley Lodge Motel, Hawkesbury Rd, Westmead. Wesley Lodge is situated at the corner of Hawkesbury & Queens Roads, Westmead, opposite Westmead Hospital and within walking distance of the Train station.

**Car entry to the Wesley Lodge carpark is from Hawkesbury Rd via the boom gate, just past the Queens Rd intersection**

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

In This Issue:

[President's Report](#)

[Parents' Bus Ride to Canberra](#)

[Gayby Baby: The Review](#)

[Colo High School Talks](#)

[IDAHOT Day - Newcastle](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Regular Announcements](#)

[Dates for Your Diary](#)

[Contacts](#)

## President's Report

***"This is different from other countries, because it was the people who gave it to us, not a legislature."*** – Nick O'Connell, 42, from a rural area in County Kilkenny in the Irish Midlands, commenting on the overwhelming 'Yes' result in the Irish Referendum on Marriage Equality, as reported in the New York Times on 24/05/15.

Nick said he had been too afraid to come out as gay until his mid-20s and added: ***"Today I'm thinking of all those young people over the years who were bullied because of their sexuality. This vote was for them too."***

Ray and I were on a European river cruise when the result of the Irish Referendum was announced. We were very pleased to see that it was featured as the top news story 2 days in a row in the Canadian newsheet issued on our boat, the Emerald Sky.

I would like to thank our secretary, Narelle, vice-president, Ruth and all the committee members for all their hard work whilst we were away. As you will see, they have all been kept very busy.

Thanks to Ron, who joined me in addressing the Westpac Bank employees in a lunchtime meeting on May 11 in the city of the employee action group, Global, whose aim is to build a safe and respectful work environment for all LGBTI employees.



Kristina Bennett from Westpac reported fantastic feedback from the audience. Great to see that Westpac Global has been awarded the LGBTI Employee Network of the Year and that the HSBC Bank, whom we had addressed in 2014, received the Achievement Award for Most Improved. Plus, the Westpac Group ranked number 2, after Price Waterhouse Coopers in the Australian Workplace Equality Index. These rankings are determined annually by "Pride In Diversity", Australia's only employer support program for LGBTI workplace inclusion.

Thanks to Ruth & Ron for their involvement in the IDAHOT events in the Blue Mountains on May 17.

Thank you to Carol & Geoff for representing PFLAG at the talks to Colo High School students at Richmond Panthers Club on June 11. See Carol's report later in the newsletter. Thanks also to Carol for attending the IDAHOT event at Penrith on May 17.

Gillian reported on PFLAG's involvement in the activities of the GLBTI world at the Surry Hills Police Community Engagement Meeting on May 27. Thank you also to Gillian, Jean-Pierre, Narelle, Adela and Susana for attending the wonderful documentary film "Gayby Baby", featured in the Sydney Film Festival. See Gillian's comprehensive review later in the newsletter.

It seems a great time was had by all at MCC Good Shepherd's Stella Does Bingo night on May 29. Apparently PFLAG members came away with some lovely prizes.

[Return to top](#)

We were very fortunate to again be chosen as one of the co-recipients of the proceeds of the Sydney RAMS Ten Pin Bowling League's Charity Bingo Night on June 13, which was held at the St. George Rowers Club at Wolli Creek. It was such a fun night and I even managed to win a bottle of wine. At the end of the evening, both PFLAG and MCC Welfare Services were presented with a cheque for \$800 each to assist us with our work. We would like to thank the Sydney RAMS for their generosity.

ABC TV issued an invitation to PFLAG to attend the special edition of Q & A, titled "Q & Gay", screened live on Thursday, June 18 from the ABC's Ultimo studios. Thanks to Geoff, Gillian, Jean-Pierre, Susana & Vanessa and those other PFLAG members who participated.

Thank you to all who came along to support others at the May 23<sup>rd</sup> Family Meeting. I hope to see many of you at the Family Meeting on June 27<sup>th</sup>, where Erin Gough, author of "The Flywheel", will be our guest speaker. Remember Rudy's adage: "When you don't need PFLAG anymore, that's when PFLAG needs **YOU** to help others!"

**Judy**

### **Proposed Bus Ride to Canberra: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September**

Shelley Argent, PFLAG National Spokesperson, writes:

I am in the VERY early stages of considering organising a bus ride to Canberra, or if people prefer, they can fly and then to converge on Parliament on the one day. **However, before I start planning:**

We need enough parents, **no LGBTI** this time, we need parents, grand-parents, aunts and uncles.

The plan is possibly Monday 7<sup>th</sup> Sept, which will allow people time to get to Canberra over the weekend and then if necessary fly home that night to be ready for work the next day.

**Please note this is just an idea**, I won't be making plans to do this for a couple of weeks if I go ahead, but I am checking on people's interest to act.

I would need people from each State to organize their regions. There is a lot of work involved. Organizing accommodation, bus, meetings with MP's etc. and probably hardest of all is getting everyone on to the same page.

If we can make this happen it could be fantastic, but this is up to everyone to help me out.

*Could you imagine a crowd of parents in Parliament House wanting marriage equality??*

For those who are concerned about what to do or say, don't worry we can walk you through this. We did it once with LGBTI people and it worked well.

*Regards,*

Shelley Argent OAM

National Spokesperson PFLAG, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

**If you are interested: reply to Shelley at:** 0409 363 335 **OR** [www.pflagbrisbane.org.au](http://www.pflagbrisbane.org.au)

[Return to top](#)

## Gayby Baby: The Review (Sydney Film Festival)

Several PFLAG members went to see Gayby Baby, a documentary which premiered in Sydney at the Sydney Film Festival. There may have been other members who went, but those I know of were Narelle, Susana, Adela, Jean-Pierre and me (Gillian.) It is the story of 4 children aged 11 and 12 (wrestling fan Gus, Western Sydneysider Ebony, serious Matt and Fiji-based Graham) growing up with same-sex parents, and their challenges and joys.

It was everything a good documentary should be – delightful, poignant, informative, very well written and often hilariously funny. We saw the families interacting, and dealing with the normal stresses and worries of everyday life, just like families with heterosexual parents.

The stories were gripping from start to finish. Graham had been fostered by his two fathers at the age of 5. He had not spoken at all until that time. We were not given details, but the assumption was that he had suffered some form of neglect. The dads subsequently adopted him. To see his progress in speaking, reading and self-confidence was heart-warming.

Clever Gus would have been a challenge for any parents. His mothers managed him excellently. He was a ‘bush lawyer’ who could talk his way out of anything!

Ebony’s mothers struggled financially, and had a baby with serious medical problems, but still managed to support Ebony in her musical ambitions. We felt it would have been more difficult for Ebony to be accepted by her peers in Western Sydney (for having same-sex parents) than perhaps children living in say the Inner West.

Matt’s mothers (the whole family of 4 had been invited to dine with Julia Gillard when she was Prime Minister) had many discussions about religion. One of the mums was very religious, and Matt was questioning seriously and respectfully whether he believed in God, as he understood God thought same-sex people were sinful.

After the Sunday session, we were fortunate enough to have the entire cast and Director Maya Newell (herself a ‘Gayby’ with two mothers) on stage to answer questions. The children, now 15 or so had grown into very confident, mature and impressive young people.

Two things struck me: 1) that children with same-sex parents are frequently very protective of their parents, and often don’t tell them if others make derogatory comments about gay people and 2) that really, all parents do their very best, and at least in this documentary, the eight parents are doing better than most!

Highly recommended. The documentary was crowd-funded initially by 1600 donors, many of them PFLAG members, and all of whom were named in the credits. It was also one of six priority projects funded by the Marrickville arm of the Sydney Community Foundation.

General release will be in a few months. The doco 1<sup>st</sup> premiered in Toronto and New Zealand prior to Sydney. It is likely to be picked up by many International Festivals. It should be on SBS or ABC in the future. There is a good chance that it will win the best doco of the Sydney Film Festival!

Gillian and JP

[Return to top](#)

## Colo High School Talks

### Carol's Report

We were warmly welcomed, as usual, and our sessions went well. I spoke first and did my usual talk about being the mother of a gay son, adding a bit more about PFLAG. Geoff spoke about his growing up in a homophobic society – in his own home, then in the army, which he joined as a 15 year old and then working as a plumber. He explained how he had to change his prejudices when his son came out and how he has now become an advocate for GLBT people and their rights to equality. Two teachers also spoke. It was a good mix of stories and the students were very attentive. Certainly Colo High School is a very gay-friendly school and the students are much the same. The Deputy Principal thanked Geoff and I for being there.

### IDAHOT Day: Newcastle



Michelle Lancey, PFLAG Newcastle / Hunter Coordinator, sent us this lovely photo from their IDAHOT Morning Tea, held Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May outside Newcastle Library. PFLAG and ACON shared the event with volunteers and found this an excellent way to get the parents' message across, as we can see!

### Upcoming Events



#### **Family Meeting 27<sup>th</sup> June: Special Guest Speaker**

Author Erin Gough will attend our June Family meeting, and will be speaking about her new book, *The Flywheel*. Erin's book, launched in Sydney just recently, describes a young woman coming to the realization that she is lesbian. This promises to be a wonderful opportunity for PFLAG parents – 'old' and 'new' – to hear from another young woman as she describes her own journey.

[Return to top](#)

### **Proud Parenting Seminar: 30<sup>th</sup> June, Mid Mountains Community Centre**

Please see the separate attached flyer that accompanies this newsletter for full details.

Cost is free; please RSVP by 25<sup>th</sup> June to (02) 4728 4800.

### **Polly's Club: Fourth of July Birthday Show @ The Roundhouse, UNSW**

We're all looking forward to our Birthday Show at the Roundhouse.

It's a real theme this year, as Sue-Ellen and the Pollys present "Fourth of July – The Pollys want YOU!!!"

Prizes for best dressed – so break out the red, white and blue! See you @ the Roundhouse, UNSW, Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup> from 8pm- till late!

Full bar and snacks available for purchase. (Note - no byo!)

After the show, we'll feature special guest DJ, Justin Scott.

To book seats, please call David on 9557 6739 or email: [bookings@thepollysclub.com.au](mailto:bookings@thepollysclub.com.au).

Tickets: \$30 prepaid by credit card EFT or \$40 at the door.

### **Same Sex Dancesport Competition: Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July, Petersham Town Hall**

F.I.E.N.D.S. presents Sydney's Same Sex Dancesport Competition on 11<sup>th</sup> July.

Tickets at: [www.trybooking.com](http://www.trybooking.com) (search by date) or at the door.

Adults \$30 / Concession \$20 / Child \$5

Further information: <http://www.sydneyamesexdancing.com>

[Return to top](#)

## Regular Announcements

### 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](http://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.

## Diary Dates

Upcoming family meetings:

- June 27<sup>th</sup>
- July 25<sup>th</sup>
- August 22<sup>nd</sup>
- September 26<sup>th</sup>

**Contacts:**

**PFLAG Penrith:** 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 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  
gregbyrne3@bigpond.com

**PFLAG Coffs Harbour:** Leanne: pflagcoffs@gmail.com

**PFLAG Newcastle/Hunter:** Michelle Lancey pflag.hunter@gmail.com

