



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

## **October 2015 Newsletter - VOLUME 18 – ISSUE 9**

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

The next meeting will be:

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October at 2pm** in the Conference Room, Wesley Lodge Motel. Wesley Lodge is situated at the corner of Hawkesbury & Queens Roads, Westmead, opposite Westmead Hospital and within walking distance of the railway station.

**Car entry to the Wesley Lodge carpark is 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](mailto:jr_brown@bigpond.net.au)

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## President's Report

***"It would be good if everybody did come out and we lived in a society where that would be accepted as easily as left handedness and eventually we may get there."*** – Former High Court Judge, Michael Kirby to Benedict Brook in Star Observer, September 2015. He goes on to say: ***"But we're not there yet and it's therefore important that people should face the realities of the challenge that a lot of young people face in coming out and be understanding, kind and supportive."***

This attitude is what Mollie Smith, founder of PFLAG in Western Sydney in 1995, has been endeavouring to engender in parents, whose children have come out as gay, for the last 20 years. Mollie told the Star Observer in March, 2014: ***"The saddest thing for me is seeing young people rejected because of their sexuality – rejection because they may be slightly different."*** Her advice to parents was to love their kids and try to understand them. We are very proud that Mollie was honoured as a finalist in the "Health & Wellbeing" category of the 2015 ACON Honour Awards at "The Ivy" on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations to Anthony Venn-Brown from Ambassadors and Bridge Builders International, who won the category, for over 20 years of providing leadership for LGBTI people of faith and for working to bring ex-gay/reparative/conversion therapy practices and organisations to an end in Australia. To us at



PFLAG, Mollie will always be "our local hero".

Amongst our visitors to our stall at the Parramatta Pride Picnic on September 27 was Steve, one of the 78ers, who bravely took part in the first ever Mardi Gras in Sydney and would have experienced the same fear and discrimination that Michael Kirby faced in those early days, when homosexuality was illegal. He revealed to us that he was one of the well-wishers, who waved us parents off at Central Station recently, prior to our journey to Canberra. Another visitor was a young

man, who spoke to Marilyn early in the day and then returned at the end of the day and spoke to me about his experience of coming out to his family and how grateful he was that they had been very accepting of him. He just wanted to thank the parents at PFLAG for their work in keeping families together. I found it very heartwarming talking to these people and I feel that the Pride Picnic is a great opportunity for members of the GLBTI community, who may feel isolated, to interact with others in the broader community for their improved health and wellbeing.

Thanks to Pam for attending the Parramatta Queer Forum Meeting on Tuesday, October 6, at Parramatta Town Hall, where they were conducting a review of the Parramatta Pride Picnic.

Thanks to Jackie Braw and NSW Police for inviting PFLAG to attend the 25 Years and GLLO –ing Conference to be held at Goulburn Police Academy from October 21 –23. There will be a special dinner on the Thursday night to celebrate the 25 years of Gay & Lesbian Liaison Officers in NSW. Narelle and I look forward to attending.

I was very sad to hear today, Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October, that Lauranne Byrne, wife of Greg, and joint coordinator with him of PFLAG Great Lakes/Manning, had passed away after many years of undergoing treatment for cancer. Our thoughts and sympathy go out to Greg and their 7 children on their loss of an amazing wife and mother.

If you'd like to join the PFLAG table at "Stella Does Bingo" at MCC Good Shepherd, Granville on Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm, please ring Judy on 9869 1454. It's always great fun. See details later in newsletter.

Thanks to all who came along to our September family meeting and to Ruth for facilitating. I hope that many of you will be able to attend the next Family meeting on October 24, for, as Rudy always says: ***"When you don't need PFLAG anymore, that's when PFLAG needs YOU to help others!"*** Judy

### PFLAG NSW Contacts

Region	Contact/s	Phone	Email
Penrith	Carol	02 47354680	
Northside (Sydney)	Maree	02 8959 2830	
Blue Mountains	Ruth & Ron Green	02 4757 4864	
Central Coast	Helen	0431 863 799	pflag.nsw.centralcoast@gmail.com
Northwest	Val Harris	02 6769 7552	
	Fay Heywood	02 6785 7325	
Wagga Wagga	Cheryl Harvey	0439 488 202	cheryl28june@gmail.com
Bathurst	Tony & Bernadette Sutton	02 6331 7267	nottus2@bigpond.com
Albury Wodonga	Sarah	0419 019 254	pflagalburywodonga@gmail.com
Great Lakes/Manning	Greg Byrne	0427 918 568	gregbyrne3@bigpond.com
Coffs Harbour	Leanne		pflagcoffs@gmail.com
Newcastle/Hunter	Michelle Lancey		pflag.hunter@gmail.com

### Upcoming Family Meetings

All will be held at Wesley Lodge, Westmead:

- October 24<sup>th</sup>
- November 28<sup>th</sup>
- December: There will be no meeting.

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## Parramatta Pride Picnic, 27<sup>th</sup> September

A great day was had by all at the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Parramatta Pride Picnic held at the River Foreshore Reserve. Although the sun didn't shine until later in the day, approximately 300 people came along and joined in the festivities. LGBTI agencies and social, sporting and advocacy groups were represented on the stalls as well as the NSW Police, MCC Good Shepherd, Wear It Purple, media organisations and of course, PFLAG.

Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Scott Lloyd, gave a welcoming and affirming opening speech. A number of Parramatta City Councillors and council staff also came along, as did local Federal Members of Parliament, Julie Owens and Julia Finn.

All ages enjoyed the face-painting with Elizabeth and the games, especially the parachute games, drag races and the ever popular tug-of-war, generously organised by Richard from Team Sydney. Team Sydney also donated some great prizes and showcased their Martial Arts activities.



The Western Suburbs Haven ran a very successful and yummy BBQ and there were a number of other delectable food choices available this year. Laydee KinMee did a great job as MC, assisted by Portia Turbo, as well as entertaining us with her wonderful singing. The Sydney Homotones, DJ Grahame and many award-winning vocalists provided fantastic entertainment. Most fun was had with our four-legged friends in "Doggywood" and we must thank Pandora Box for doing a great job as host.

Thanks must go to Marilyn, Natalie & Ray for their help in setting up, manning and dismantling the stall and providing support to the many visitors and to Arthur for taking care of our First Aid whilst wearing his other hat of St. John's Ambulance. The rainbow merchandise sales amounted to \$302. It was lovely to see Ronny & Darek and their 3 lovely children, Olivier, Lili and Mathieu.

Thanks to Gavin Prendergast from ACON and the members of the Parramatta Pride Picnic Working Party for organising it and to all who came along to support. **Judy**

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## PFLAG NSW AGM

**Our AGM will be held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2015, at our family meeting. Please refer to the AGM notice sent separately with the email / letter that delivered this newsletter to you.**

### 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.

## Honour Awards 2015

**From David Wilkins, Events & Fundraising Coordinator, ACON:**



“Dear Honour Awards Finalists,

Thank you for being part of the 2015 Honour Awards.

Last night's event was a truly inspirational and thoroughly entertaining evening and a great celebration of the dynamic spirit of NSW's LGBTI community.

We congratulate all of you on your selection as finalists and thank you for the contributions you are making across our community.

We also raised a total of \$50,000 for community initiatives supported by ACON and Aurora, which is the best result ever for this event”.

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## NSW Young Nationals vote in favour of Marriage Equality

Well done and thank you to the NSW Young Nationals, who on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August, issued this announcement:

“The NSW Young Nationals have voted in favour of marriage equality at their Annual Conference in Corowa, becoming the first youth division of a conservative political Party to do so in Australia.

With this motion, the NSW Young Nationals have acknowledged the importance of marriage equality to young people in regional Australia.

A young homosexual man living in regional NSW is six times more likely to commit suicide than members of the community as a whole<sup>1</sup>.

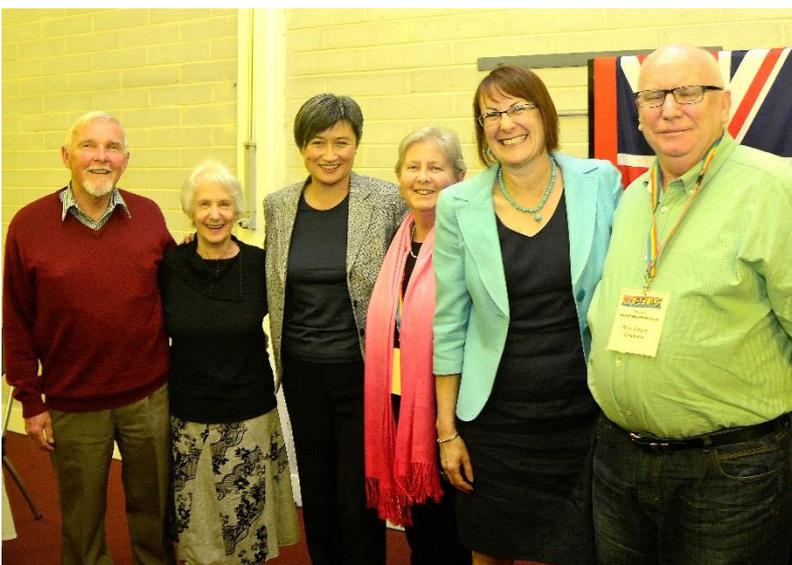
This motion says that a same sex relationship is equally as important and valid as a heterosexual relationship.

In the early 1970s, the Young Australian Country Party, as we were then, passed a motion to legalise homosexual acts between consenting adults in private, ten years ahead of the ultimate passing of legislation on that matter.

This outcome continues a proud NSW Young Nats tradition of working within The Nationals to push the envelope in terms of policy, challenging our senior counterparts and leading the debate on important issues to young people in regional NSW”.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Rural suicide and same-sex attracted youth: issues, interventions and implications for rural counsellors’, *The International Electronic Journal of Rural and Remote Health Research, Education, Practice and Policy*, K. Quinn, Deakin University 2003

## Dinner with Penny Wong



Ron and Ruth Green (Blue Mountains), along with Tony and Bernadette Sutton (Bathurst) attended a dinner with guest of honour, Penny Wong on 3<sup>rd</sup> October at Katoomba Community Hall. Also attending were Doug Cameron and Susan Templeman. A number of pertinent issues of the day were discussed, including marriage equality.

Thank you Ron, Ruth, Tony and Bernadette for representing PFLAG.

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## Upcoming Events

### **Stella Does Bingo: Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October**

MCC Good Shepherd Western Sydney invites you to our fund-raiser "STELLA DOES BINGO" Friday October 30th 2015 @ 7pm at 37 East Street Granville.

**Bookings:** With Pastor Robert on 0412 481 195 or email: [lingling@ozemail.com.au](mailto:lingling@ozemail.com.au) by 28th October.

Tables of 8 or individual - nibbles on table but remember BYO drinks. Tea and coffee available.

**Cost:** Bingo Books \$10 or \$20

### **Casa Latina – Rainbow Families Halloween Disco Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October**

142 Addison Rd Marrickville 3pm – 6pm

#### **Entry \$10 – KIDS FREE**

\*Lucky Door Prize \* Sausage Sizzle \*Refreshments and Treats

Contact: [info@rainbowbabiesandkids.com.au](mailto:info@rainbowbabiesandkids.com.au)

## Regular Announcements

### PFLAG Merchandise

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 2015- 2016. Thanks to all the members who have renewed already. If you joined after 30 June 2015, you are deemed to be financial until end of 2016.

